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THE HINDU

Discord in Puducherry

The CM's protest against the L-G raises key issues that must be resolved early

This round of conflict between Puducherry Chief Minister V. Narayanasamy and Lt. Governor Kiran Bedi has been more serious than those in the past. Mr. Narayanasamy sat in protest for six days, before the two could meet to hold talks to resolve a set of issues he raised in a letter earlier this month. He has been opposing what he calls Ms. Bedi's "high-handedness" and tendency to interfere in the administration. The two have had differences on many issues over the last two years. Such problems are an obvious consequence of the political structure of Union Territories, in which the Administrator, as the nominee of the President, enjoys powers superior to the Chief Minister and the Council of Ministers. The trigger for the latest standoff seems to have been Ms. Bedi's move to enforce the rule for two-wheeler riders to wear helmets. While the Chief Minister believes it can be enforced only after raising awareness, Ms. Bedi wants it implemented immediately. However, the Chief Minister insists that his protest has nothing to do with this. He lists the blocking of welfare schemes such as the free rice scheme and enhanced scholarship for Scheduled Caste students, among other actions of the L-G, as the real issues. Whatever be the origin of this conflict, the sight of a Chief Minister on an indefinite dharna is not seemly. It could not have gone on indefinitely, and the fact that a dialogue was formally initiated, albeit after much delay, is a welcome development.

Central to the conflict is the question whether Ms. Bedi is acting within her powers or exceeding her brief in seeking to play a proactive role in the affairs of the Union Territory. Under the Constitution, the territory belongs to the President, who runs it through the L-G as Administrator. However, under Section 44 of the Union Territories Act, 1963, the Administrator has to act on the 'aid and advice' of the Council of Ministers. At the same time, any difference of opinion between them can be referred to the President, and in the meantime the Administrator's action prevails on any urgent matter. This scheme, which gives a clear edge to the Centre, can work only if there is harmony between the Council and the L-G. It would be unfortunate if individuals occupying Raj Nivas in any Union Territory with a Legislative Assembly get carried away and ignore or undermine the elected body. Last year, ruling on the limits of the L-G's powers in Delhi, the Supreme Court stressed the need for the L-G as well as people's representatives to "function in harmony within constitutional parameters". The L-G was cautioned against having a hostile attitude towards the Ministers. There is no reason why that principle cannot be extended to Puducherry, which has a longer record of elected governments.

The bane in Spain

Snap elections could deepen fissures in its fragmented polity

he snap poll called for April 28 by Spain's minor-Socialist Party government could deepen the lacksquare fissures in the fragmented polity. The new antiimmigrant Vox party, which made inroads in December in Andalusia, Spain's most populous region, is the latest addition to the smaller formations that can hold the balance in a future coalition. The stability of the shortlived government of Prime Minister Pedro Sánchez, whose fall has triggered the third general election since late 2015, had been under threat from the start. It was propped up last June by Catalan separatist parties, which were bound to turn into a liability for Mr. Sánchez. For the governing Socialist Party has, no less than the conservative People's Party, consistently regarded the Catalonian demand for separation as a violation of the integrity of the Spanish union. The previous centreright government took a hard line on the separatist cause: it dissolved the regional parliament and imposed rule from Madrid following the October 2017 referendum and the unilateral declaration of independence. But Mr. Sanchez's efforts to renew a political dialogue have proved futile in the face of the volatility. Last year's commemorations marking Catalonia's national day and the first anniversary of the controversial 2017 plebiscite saw large turnouts at separatist protests. Meanwhile, a recent government proposal to appoint a rapporteur to negotiate with the secessionists has been condemned as a betrayal by the conservatives. The anti-government protests drew large crowds championing a united Spain and demands to vote out the Socialists.

A trial that started last week against the masterminds of the 2017 referendum is the latest flashpoint. Many of the defendants appearing before the Supreme Court were part of the regional Catalan government and face long prison terms if convicted. The trial has sealed any hope of the Socialist government conceding its coalition Catalan allies' demand for a referendum on statehood. Within days, the separatists hit back, voting down the national budget, alongside the Opposition conservatives whom Mr. Sánchez unseated in June. Whereas prolonged instability has marred Spanish politics in recent years, the country had so far seemed immune to the populist surge spreading across the rest of the European Union. The entry of the extreme right Vox party to the Andalusian legislature has unsettled that *status quo*. The Socialists are expected to emerge as the single largest party in April, but well short of a clear majority. The two centre-right parties are also unlikely to muster enough numbers to form a government on their own. Opinion polls indicate that Vox could have a significant presence in the next parliament and be in a position to play kingmaker. This is not an attractive prospect for either the majority of moderates or the Catalan separatists. Spain needs stability at any cost today.

Not without an explanation

Judges must give their reasons in writing for recusing themselves from specific cases



SUHRITH PARTHASARATHY

Then must a judge disqualify herself from hearing a case? Must decisions of this gravity be left to the wisdom of individual judges? Under what circumstances does a decision of recusal transgress a judge's general responsibility to sit and deliver impartial justice? Should not a judge who disqualifies herself be compelled to deliver an order explaining her reasons for recusal?

Cases at hand

These questions have been brought to sharp focus with a rash of recusals made by judges of the Supreme Court over the course of the last few weeks. In one case alone - challenging the appointment of M. Nageswara Rao as interim director of the Central Bureau of Investigation - three judges recused themselves. First Chief Iustice Ranjan Gogoi disqualified himself, purportedly because he was set to be a part of the selection committee tasked with choosing a new CBI Director. He then assigned a bench presided by Justice A.K. Sikri to hear the case. But Justice Sikri too recused, on grounds, one assumes, that he was part of a panel that removed the previous CBI Director Alok Verma from his post. Next, Justice N.V. Ramana recused himself for apparently personal reasons. "Nageswara Rao is from my home state and I have attended his daughter's wedding," he told the petitioner's counsel. However, none of these orders of recusals was made in writing, and, by themselves, the professed oral reasons for the decisions do not quite point to why the judges ought to have thought themselves incapacitated.

The recusals in the CBI case weren't the only ones to make the news. Last month Justice U.U. Lalit recused himself from hearing the dispute over land in Ayodhya after senior advocate Rajeev Dhavan pointed out that the judge had appeared for former Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Kalyan Singh in a related contest. Although Mr. Dhavan said he had no specific objection to Justice Lalit continuing to hear the case, the judge, the court's order notes, "expressed his disinclination to participate in the hearing any further." But because we don't have a written order specifically justifying the recusal, it's difficult to tell whether the disqualification was really required.

Last September two judges of the Gujarat High Court withdrew from a set of controversial cases by merely saying, "not before me." Similar orders were passed by three judges of the Nagpur bench of the Bombay High Court, who refused to hear a plea filed by a lawyer Satish Uke concerning the death of Judge B.H. Loya. Unsurprisingly, though, none of the judges recorded their reasons in writing, allowing, in the process, plenty of scope for conjecture and surmise.

In taking oath of office, judges, both of the Supreme Court and of the high courts, promise to perform their duties, to deliver justice, "without fear or favour, affection or ill-will". While "fear and favour", as Stephen Sedley, a former judge of the Court of Appeal of England and Wales, has

written, are "enemies of independence, which is a state of being". affection and ill-will "undermine impartiality, which is a state of mind". The purpose of recusal, Mr. Sedley added, is to underpin these twin pillars of independence and impartiality. A decision, therefore, on a demand for a judge's disqualification is an especially solemn one. A gratuitous recusal, much like a failure to recuse when faced with genuine conflicts of interest, traduces the rule of law. To withdraw from a case merely because a party suggests that a judge do so impairs judicial fairness. It allows parties to cherry-pick a bench of their choice.

Formulating rules

Given these implications, one can be forgiven for thinking there exists a set of concrete rules that tell us when a judge must recuse herself. But as T.R. Andhyarujina wrote some years ago, what we really have are different elucidations of a principle against an apprehension of bias. No doubt, in some cases, prejudice is presumed – for example, where a judge has appeared for one of the litigants at some stage in the same dispute. It's also by now an axiomatic rule that no person should be a judge

in her own cause. But there are cases where somebody else's cause becomes the judge's own.

In disputes where a judge has a financial interest in the litigation, where a judge owns shares in a company which is party to the case, the fact of owning shares is, in and of itself, considered a disqualification. This rule is derived from an 1852 House of Lords judgment, which held that Lord Cottenham ought not to have delivered a verdict in a case where he owned shares in one of the parties to the litigation. The tenet here appears clear enough, but it's today muddled by the ubiquity of shareholdings by judges and judges' relatives – Mr. Sedley cites the example of a 1980 appeal against Shell and BP in which "the registrar of civil appeals was unable to assemble three judges who had no shares in either defendant." Invariably, therefore, when a judge owns shares in one of the litigants what we expect is disclosure of the fact, and if neither party objects one might think it's acceptable for the judge to hear the case. But in the absence of a well-defined rule that helps establish a basic standard, a decision of this kind can prove troubling somewhere down the line.

The closest we've come in India to carving out a definite rule was a formulation made by Justice J. Chelameswar in his opinion in *Supreme Court Advocates-on-Record Association v. Union of India* (2015). Here, the 99th constitutional amendment was challenged, and a claim was made seeking Justice J.S. Khehar's recusal. The plea was rejected, but Justice Chelameswar attempted to establish something akin to an elementary canon. "Where a judge has a pecuniary in-

terest, no further inquiry as to whether there was a 'real danger' or 'reasonable suspicion' of bias is required to be undertaken," he wrote. "But in other cases, such an inquiry is required, and the relevant test is the 'real danger' test."

Even with this formulation, what constitutes real danger of bias remains a matter of construal. And whether an individual judge should be allowed to decide for herself on pleas of recusal is equally a point of contention. Yet the test does provide a plausible solution, so long as judges make their choices by reducing their reasons to writing. For when judges choose without a rational motive, without expressing their decisions in writing, they hurt the very idea of judicial rectitude.

Equally destructive

Ultimately, a mistaken case of recusal can prove just as destructive to rule of law as those cases where a judge refuses a recusal despite the existence of bias. We mustn't allow recusals to be used as a tool to manoeuvre justice, as a means to picking benches of a party's choice, and as an instrument to evade judicial work. As the Constitutional Court of South Africa held, in 1999, "the nature of the judicial function involves the performance of difficult and at times unpleasant tasks," and to that end judicial officers "must resist all manner of pressure, regardless of where it comes from. This is the constitutional duty common to all judicial officers. If they deviate, the independence of the judiciary would be undermined, and in turn, the Constitution itself.'

Suhrith Parthasarathy is an advocate practising at the Madras High Court

The contractual functionary

Sanitation workers represent a wider phenomenon of exploitative contractual work



KRISHNA KUMAR

newage pipes and drains represent the bleaker side of India's struggle to modernise its cities. Last month, Kishan Lal, 37, a sanitation worker, died inside an underground drain in the nation's capital. Called to repair a blocked drain in the Wazirabad area of Delhi, he had no safety kit with him. The details of his death that have appeared in newspapers make for sordid reading: he died of asphyxiation. When he did not come out, the police and fire department were called. They could not find him. It was the National Disaster Response Force that found his body after an eight-hour search. Reports of deaths in similar circumstances appear regularly in the local press in different cities. They attract public attention for a day or two, but fail to sustain it.

Caste and contract work

Caste and contract work
Reports identified Kishan Lal as a
'contract worker'. The meaning of
this term has grown and the scope
of its use has greatly expanded over recent decades. Depending on
who your contractor is, you could
have a vastly different experience
of work under a contract. There
was a time when the term was

used only in the context of private sector employment because the government alone gave 'permanent' appointments. Economic reforms introduced under liberalisation changed that.

From the early 1990s, government jobs could also be given on contract. Among sanitation workers, thousands in each major city are serving on contract. Few statistics exist to guide us in the jungle of norms and procedures governing contractual work. We also don't know the share of permanent staff in the total sanitation staff in the country. What we do know for certain is the relation between caste and contract work in the sphere of sanitation. Sanitation workers on contract mostly belong to the Scheduled Caste (SC) category. Surveys indicate a small proportion of other castes in permanent sanitation staff. It is also reported that these non-SC permanent functionaries often get proxy workers from SC backgrounds to do the actual work. So, the bond between caste and work continues to be strong decades after B.R. Ambedkar had analysed and highlighted it.

In the case of sanitation, contract work means gross vulnerability and exploitation. The terms of contract are minimalist, and a contractor feels free to enhance his own share of the contract with impunity, by nibbling away the worker's share. Though the government is supposed to regulate the functioning of this contract, it



does not show much active interest in doing so. It has been following the general policy of privatisation as a matter of faith, without putting in the effort it takes to work out the details for different sectors and departments. The realisation that one solution does not solve every problem is absent. Such a realisation is also unpopular, especially among people who present themselves as the gurus of efficiency. A tacit pact guides their relations with the bureaucracy. Hardly any politician in office has the time or the inclination to disturb this pact and force both sides – the efficiency gurus and the civil servants - to take stock of different nooks and crannies of the vast apparatus of the state. Decline in efficiency and quality of different services is quite apparent to the public, but it is flatly denied by political leaders, civil servants and consultants.

Quality takes a hit

They also deny the urgency of reviewing the working of the contractual system in areas directly

related to welfare, such as sanitation, health and education. Little attempt has been made to study how contractual work has affected reliability in the postal services, railways and accounts. Even in functions such as data gathering, which are crucial for economic planning and decisions, the contractual workforce has proved detrimental to quality. In a paper published in the Economic and Political Weekly (February 15, 2014), Professor Sheila Bhalla made this point with reference to the use of contractual enumerators in the National Sample Survey

In many spheres, contractual appointments do not involve a private contractor, but that makes little difference to the quality of work done. In education, for instance, many State governments have been hiring teachers on contract. Their service conditions are totally different from those serving as permanent staff, yet they are expected to deliver higher quality in teaching. The mantra upholding this expectation is that contractual teachers will work harder because they are insecure. In State after State, this mantra has not borne fruit, but no one wants to acknowledge that. Nor do governments want to admit that contractual work in professions such as teaching discourages motivation to improve one's performance. The reathat contractual son is functionaries see no definite prospect of a career or future in the same profession. Also, their wage is much too small to sustain the growth of substantial professional commitment.

The case of sanitation workers on contract is worse. They work for small-time contractors who have absolutely no idea of the role ____ of a sanitation worker. The contractor feels free to exploit the worker, conveniently hopping over whatever barriers and checks, including digital devices, that the government attempts to use for providing financial security to the worker. The government – in the case of sanitation, it is often the municipality - shows little sustained interest in imposing stringent norms for provision of equipment, including those for safety, necessary for sewer cleaning. As for training, no one seems to believe that sanitation involves complex work, requiring both knowledge and training. Such a thought is fully precluded by the strong and enduring bond that exists between caste and sanitation. Sanitation campaigns do not articulate an acknowledgement of the relationship between the caste system and cleaning jobs. An ideological barrier prevents such articulation. The media too does not highlight the connection between caste and cleaning. That is why whenever sanitation workers die in underground drains, the news simply passes into unsorted history.

Krishna Kumar is a former director of the

$LETTERS\ TO\ THE\ EDITOR\ \ \ Letters\ emailed\ to\ letters\ @thehindu.co. in\ must\ carry\ the\ full\ postal\ address\ and\ the\ full\ name\ or\ the\ name\ with\ initials.$

No cover

The decision to withdraw state security cover to separatist leaders in Kashmir, which the Home Minister referred to obliquely as "acting against those who get money from across the border and are hand in glove with Pakistan's ISI", is a step in the right direction (Page 1, "J&K administration withdraws security to separatist leaders", February 18). The money saved should be utilised for the welfare of ordinary Kashmiris. Separatist leaders have been enjoying the best of both worlds. This is also the time for the cover of all protected persons, including mainstream and separatist leaders, to be reviewed. C.G. KURIAKOSE,

■ A number of steps may have been taken after the

Pulwama terror attack. But what we need to do, most of all, is to address the core issue: why is it that the educated Kashmiri youth is being drawn to terror? Kashmir, a festering wound, needs a multi-pronged strategy that can prove effective.

SANGEETA KAMPANI, New Delhi

■ In an atmosphere of heightened emotions, one would tend to applaud the decision. But this is a case of emotions overtaking judicious reasoning. So long as separatist leaders continue to be Indian subjects and as long as the perception of a threat to their lives remains, it is incumbent on the government to provide them adequate protection. At a time when proactive steps are needed to win over the Kashmiri mainstream, arm-

twisting instead of reaching

out will be counterproductive and deepen the alienation. AYYASSERI RAVEENDRANATH, Arannula. Kerala

■ It is clear that neither the U.S. nor China can influence Pakistan so that it turns over a new leaf as long as the state is controlled by the all powerful Pakistan Army. The peace overtures made so far by the deep state seem to be an eyewash. To add to this is the attitude of the leaders of various political parties in the Kashmir Valley who do not seem sincere about ending terrorism. The numerous separatist outfits too have their own agenda. Ultimately it is innocent civilians who are paying the price.

A. MICHAEL DHANARAJ,
Coimbatore

■ Reports of Kashmiri students facing intimidation following the Pulwama terror

strike are unfortunate. The very idea of India is one that is rooted firmly in its pluralistic character and liberal and secular outlook. What binds Kashmir to India is not a military force or a political pact signed decades ago, but the un-selfconscious movement of people from Jammu and Kashmir to other parts of the country in search of jobs and better opportunities. It stems from the idea of India that they can find a home anywhere in the country. We should not let this idea of India be besieged by forces inimical to the unity and integrity of the country. It is incumbent upon the administration. civil and political leadership to maintain peace. M. IEYARAM. Sholavandan, Tamil Nadu

Verified The Reade

The Readers' Editor's column (OpEd page, February 18) and the former

RE, K. Narayanan's column, "Venturesome, vainglorious" (April 13, 2009), prove that The Hindu is still guided by the principles laid down in the very first editorial titled "Ourselves" (September 20, 1878): "The principles that we propose to be guided by are simply those of fairness and justice ... "I am reminded of the time when I had sent my article, "Learning from the birds", to be published in the Open Page. I was asked about the veracity of the accompanying photograph, of a sunbird which had built its nest from a hook on the ceiling of our verandah, feeding its nestlings. The article/photograph were published on May 12, 2015 only after the picture was found to be authentic. SUKUMARAN C.V., Palakkad, Kerala

Immigration debate
In the U.S., the basic
institutions that make up a

successful democracy have been compromised for sheer political gains, and this is sure to have multitudinous ramifications (Editorial. "Strange emergency", February 18). If the exorbitant amount of money that could be set apart to splurge on "the Wall" is channelled towards affordable and quality education to the children of immigrants, they could metamorphose from "drug dealers" to becoming indispensable assets of There is no doubt that U.S.

There is no doubt that U.S. President Donald Trump needs to enlighten himself about immigrants having played a paramount role in helping the U.S. become a superpower and engendering "the American dream".

dream".

JACOB J. PUTHENVEETTIL,

Chennai

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CM VK

THE HINDU DELHI TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 19, 2019

India's options after Pulwama

India would do better than Pakistan in a conventional war, but it may or may not remain conventional



HAPPYMON JACOB

The deadly terror attack against a Central Reserve Police Force (CRPF) convoy in South Kashmir's Pulwama district, which was orchestrated by a Jaish-e-Mohammad (JeM) suicide bomber, Adil Ahmad Dar, 22, has once again brought nuclear-armed India and Pakistan close to a potential armed confrontation. There are widespread calls to respond to the attack which killed 40 CRPF personnel. The question, however, is how. The general election may complicate the answer to this question. The BJP leadership knows that if it plays its cards well, it might stand a chance to form the next government. If it bungles, that chance would become weak. This makes the situation far more dangerous in terms of payoff structures and associated risks.

Pakistan needs to act

So far, Pakistan's response to the attack has been a blanket and unhelpful denial. Prime Minister Imran Khan has chosen to be quiet about it despite the seething anger in India, even as his Ministers are issuing unconvincing denials. Pakistan needs to stop issuing denials and start acting. Let us be clear: the JeM's leaders are roaming about freely in Pakistan. This is unacceptable. They must be taken to task immediately and there should be a clampdown on other terror organisations as an emergency measure. The Pakistani establishment's usual answers - 'we will come to them eventually' or 'we are also already fighting them' - won't cut ice any more. If Pakistan truly desires peace with India, it needs to play its part honestly. Pakistan should realise that it would be doing a favour to its citizens by cracking down on terror organisations that are thriving on their soil. And why has Pakistan still not invited India's National Investigation Agency to investigate the Pathankot terror attack even though India had allowed the visit of the Pakistani team to Pathankot in 2016? Pakistan needs to take



"How is it that a plan to carry out such a major attack on a national highway in a troubled State went undetected?" Security forces after a gunbattle with militants in Pinglan, Pulwama district, south Kashmir. • PTI

on track. Do the politicians in New

Delhi realise this? I am not sure. Even

as the nation stands behind its go-

vernment, the Central government,

when reflecting on the next steps.

must accept that its politically un-

Then there is intelligence failure.

How is it that a plan to carry out such

a major attack, by a local who was on

the radar of the local police and oth-

er agencies, on a national highway in

a troubled State went undetected?

Why is that 78 buses with CRPF ja-

wans were allowed to travel in one

If New Delhi seeks to respond to Pa-

kistan for the Pulwama attack, what

options does it have? For the BJP go-

vernment, given that the elections

are so close, its retaliation has to be

credible, prompt and visible, there-

flow of waters to Pakistan is neither

practical nor possible. Withdrawing

the Most Favoured Nation status

would hardly hurt Pakistan, given

the low trade volume involved. Iso-

lating Pakistan internationally is ea-

sier said than done - China is closer

to Pakistan today than ever before,

Russia is warming up to it, and given

the impending American drawdown

in Afghanistan, there is a sense of tri-

umphalism in Pakistan. This is espe-

cially so because of the geopolitical

importance of the region – it won't

be long before the U.S. makes a

by limiting its options. Stopping the

convoy?

India's options

imaginative policy was a failure.

Having said that, let's face some facts: Dar was a local Kashmiri boy, the vehicle used in the attack was local, we do not vet know the source of the explosive, and there is a raging insurgency in Kashmir today. Don't these facts tell us that New Delhi's Kashmir policy has been a failure? That it has been unable to calm tempers in Kashmir in the past four and a half years? If so, we must ask the difficult but important question: How did we get to where we are today in Kashmir? Here is some perspective: While in 2013, only six local Kashmiris had joined the ranks of militancy, last year, the figure was close to 200; between 2014 and 2018, ceasefire violations increased five times; between 2015 and 2018, the increase in infiltration attempts more than doubled; and, terrorist-related violence in the Valley has spiked drastically over the past five years.

Despite all this, the government was hardly keen to initiate a serious dialogue process with the Kashmiri dissidents. The BJP-PDP government, which fell last year, ensured that the so-called soft separatist space was given away to militants, and the use of aggressive tactics turned south Kashmir's popular opinion against India. Make no mistake: India finds itself in a bind in Kashmir, and it will take a great deal of political sophistication, backchannel reaching out, and comprehensive action against the terror elements on political vision to get Kashmir back comeback. One possible way out is perhaps to talk to China discreetly to get Pakistan to crack down on the JeM, but that will take patience, persuasion and discretion. A government caught in an election season may have too little of any of it.

What about military options? One

can think of four types of kinetic options. The first could be to carry out surgical strikes, like India did in 2016. However, while the Pakistani side did not respond to it then, the reaction this time could be different. If Pakistan responds, the two sides may soon find themselves in an escalating military crisis with little clarity about the outcome, something an election-bound government might fight shy of. The second option is to use strike aircraft to carry out precision strikes in locations across the Line of Control (LoC). But such air incursions are likely to be detected and intercepted by Pakistani radars and air defence systems. If an aircraft is shot down or pilots are captured, it could become a bigger headache for the government. Pakistani retaliatory strikes cannot be ruled out either. The third option is to go in for standoff strikes without physically crossing the border, using heavy artillery or other precision-guided weapons such as rockets. Stand-off strikes, or fire assaults, across the LoC would be responded to in kind and eventually might not achieve anything. The final option is to carry out covert operations inside Pakistan to take out highvalue human targets such as leaders of terror outfits. This might be the least costly and most optimal strategy. However, this would require a great deal of preparation and might not be domestically useful given the amount of secrecy and lack of optics

surrounding it. In short, the fundamental problem with kinetic options is uncertainty with regard to what those options would lead to if Pakistan decides to respond. India would do better than Pakistan in a conventional war of attrition, but it may or may not remain conventional and there would be attrition on both sides. Would New Delhi be willing to run those risks so close to a crucial election?

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A catalyst for the Congress

It makes sense for the party to give Priyanka Gandhi Vadra a bigger role



In late January, Priyanka Gandhi Vadra was appointed by the Congress as a general secretary in-charge of Uttar Pradesh-East. She will be in charge of around 42 parliamentary seats. This is the region where the constituencies of Prime Minister Narendra Modi and U.P. Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath lie. It is also the region that includes the important constituencies of Allahabad, Phulpur, Amethi and Rae Bareli. How is Ms. Vadra going to influence the general election, given that she's campaigning in the State with 80 Lok Sabha seats, which can determine which party or coalition goes on to form the government at the Centre?

Mobilising party workers First, Ms. Vadra could work as a catalyst for the Congress. She is not new to politics; she has been consulted on important decisions concerning the party several times in the past. Her presence is known to energise Congress workers and give them greater confidence. Reports say that her campaigning will be restricted to U.P., but if she chooses to campaign outside the State, it could enthuse more party workers. Her direct presence in rallies, meetings and road shows may help mobilise scattered old-time Congress voters and sympathisers, who have remained inactive for many years. It will also stop Congress voters from shifting to the BJP, wherever they are not happy with the ruling government in the State. In the Tripura Assembly election, for instance, political analysts found that Congress voters shifted to the BJP where the Congress did not have a strong presence. This could happen in a State like West Bengal where some disgruntled cadres of the Congress, which is practically in a direct fight with the Trinamool Congress, could shift to the BJP, which is emerging as a strong Opposition party in the State. Ms. Vadra's presence could help reduce the shift of voters to the BJP. Even in south and western India, where the Congress is not the main Opposition party, voters could be mobilised so that they don't shift to other parties.

Second, many have pointed out how Ms. Vadra resembles her grandmother, former Prime Minister Indira Gandhi. She evokes memories of Indira Gandhi for those who are above 50 years of age. This could help forge an emotional link with voters who admired

the former Prime Minister. Of course, Indira Gandhi reminds people of the Emergency, but a large section of voters returned to the Congress in the 1980 parliamentary election. In fact, many were Congress voters for a long time and shifted to the BJP only when the Congress became weak in 2014. Ms. Vadra could help bring them into the Congress fold again. Then there is the question of her personality. A young Muslim boy in a village near Allahabad, for instance, said about Ms. Vadra: "She communicates in a very impressive manner with the people."

Attracting new voters

In U.P., Ms. Vadra's presence will affect the performance of not only the BJP but also the Samajwadi Party (SP) and Bahujan Samaj Party (BSP) to some extent. The Congress's growing visibility in U.P. could impress upper caste voters. This may be a loss for the BJP. The Congress also seems to be impressing a section of Muslims and many smaller Dalit communities which are not supporters



of the BSP. Many Scheduled Caste communities voted for the BJP in the 2014 election. They may support the Congress for two reasons: they are disenchanted with both the BSP and the BJP, and the Congress's outreach is stronger now. The Congress seems to be placing emphasis on mobilising Other Backward Classes and Dalit communities for their new politics.

The discourse of the 2019 general election is centred around personalities: Mr. Modi, Congress president Rahul Gandhi, Ms. Vadra, West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee, Andhra Pradesh Chief Minister Chandrababu Naidu, Nationalist Congress Party chief Sharad Pawar, etc. However, some of them have an appeal only in their respective States. The Congress would like to promote Ms. Vadra as a leader rooted in U.P. politics, but it would do well to widen her role.

Badri Narayan is professor, Govind Ballabh Pant Social Science Institute, Allahabad

SINGLE FILE

Pay people for data

Imagining a future in which we can remunerate people for their contributions to the digital economy

ANIL K. ANTONY & ANKUR PRASAD



The raw materials driving today's digital economy are data, leading many, including industrial tycoon Mukesh Ambani, to say that data is the new oil. Nowadays, wealth is increasingly built upon information. Companies that aggregate and analyse information the

fastest accumulate unprecedented power and wealth. For example, social media companies gather and analyse huge amounts of data related to customer behaviour and preferences. They use this to build features to ensure that customers constantly browse, and to show customers advertisements that they are most likely to click on. This information translates into huge revenues and profits.

An overlooked fact is that ordinary people are crucial for companies to create disruptive technologies that earn them billions. Algorithms rely on statistics to make decisions, and it is the people who feed companies the data.

Despite this vast amount of data fuelling massive value and wealth creation, the new digital economy is increasingly shaping up to be like the feudal or robber-baron economies of the past, where wealth was concentrated among a very select few. The general public, who predominantly contribute the raw data, get a negligible portion of the pie.

The digital economy without doubt is creating jobs that were previously inconceivable. Who could have imagined the role of a search engine optimisation expert before Google, or a video streamer before YouTube? These new jobs will likely not be as abundant as the current jobs being eroded due to advancements in artificial intelligence and automation. This means that the jobs to share the massive wealth created in the digital era are steadily decreasing.

At present, seven high-technology firms find themselves among the list of the top eight most valuable companies in the world, with a cumulative market capitalisation of almost \$5 trillion (almost 2.5 times India's GDP). However, they directly employ fewer than 11 lakh people among them.

These days, the primary discourse during any election in the world is on how to create conditions for a more equitable distribution of wealth. For this to happen, we need to conceptualise an approach that can remunerate people for their contributions in this digital economy. As the primary step, we have to educate our population about the value of the data they generate. Secondary measures, including legislative policies, must be taken to ensure that people can extract their justified pay for their digital activities. Technologies such as blockchain can facilitate nano-payments, proportional to the degree of contribution, and value creation to each individual in the digital space. The right redistributive policies can turn this world of technology-driven inequality into one that is truly participatory and egalitarian.

Anil K. Antony is the Convener of INC-Kerala Digital Media Cell and Vice President of Navoothan Foundation; Ankur Prasad is the Head of Product for Amazon Moments and investor in and adviser to early stage blockchain start-ups



NOTEBOOK

Covering a tragedy with empathy

For many 24x7 TV channels, death means a sensational story

MOHIT M. RAO

Accidents, murders, and cases of sexual assault and violence dominate the news cycle. Journalists are confronted with difficult questions when such incidents take place: Whom do we approach for information? When does the quest for details become an intrusion into moments of grief? How do we move beyond basic facts and provide a human face to a tragedy in

a sensitive manner? While many print journalists grapple with this moral quandary, many reporters of 24x7 news channels, especially local channels, have little time to ponder such questions as morbid deaths pique public curiosity. While journalists often hover around a victim's house, waiting for the so-called right moment to ask the kin questions, TV journalists hound

Camerapersons even jostle for a view of the body in the ambulance.

For me, this macabre fascination was most apparent on April 9, 2013, when a gas tanker toppled close to Mangaluru. The expanding gas ball set fire to everything and everyone within 50 meters. Ten people died in the accident, and many more were injured.

ru, where victims were shifted for treatment, the staff forgot to man the entry into the burns ward. Journalists entered in droves and camerapersons attempted to go as close to the victims as they could. Wails and screams of pain cut through the chaos.

In hospitals in Mangalu-

A few journalists stood by the door. The sister of a victim, who was critically injured, skirted the camerapersons and stood beside us. We tucked our notebooks into our pockets,

grief in disparate words uttered amid uncontrollable sobs. The camerapersons saw this. One quickly gave me the mic and instructed me to hold it close to her face (TV reporters were at the accident site and he had to ensure that his channel logo was in the frame). She turned away and covered her face. She clearly did not want her private moment of mourning to be telecast. When he was done with his shot, he went to the other families.

In another hospital nearby, the brother-in-law of a delivery man, who had been riding behind the gas tanker, stepped out of the ICU. He was in shock, but answered questions calmly. But long after the TV cameras moved away, he sat on a chair and wept. Only two reporters remained. We sat beside him in silence. The family, he said, was in debt. It had been onter's wedding. She hadn't been informed of the accident yet. Our end-of-theday deadline allowed us

the time to console him. Later that evening, when I was struggling to file the copy within the allotted word length, he called up to say his brother-in-law had died. He asked if I could request the district administration to expedite formalities. By then, gory images had been repeatedly telecast, and many people had come forward to help the affected families.

Minutes later, a TV reporter called me to say he had visuals of a man in flames running on the road. Could I ask the man whether it was his brotherin-law in the video, he asked. No, I said. Soon after, I switched on the TV. The channel announced his death and played visuals of the man in flames and his brother-in-law cryFROM The Mindu, ARCHIVES

FIFTY YEARS AGO FEBRUARY 19, 1969

Communist MPs demand resignation of Union Govt.

The Lok Sabha, on the second day of its Budget session to-day [February 18, New Delhi], took up for consideration a censure motion against the Union Government primarily intended to highlight, among other things, "its failure to promote a balanced development of all regions in the country" and its "encouragement" to aggressive regional movements. Communist members demanded that the Union Government should resign in view of the "rejection of the Congress" in the mid-term poll. The no-confidence motion, moved by Mr. P. Ramamurti (C.P.I.-M) was supported by the C.P.I, and S.S.P. The debate was inconclusive and will conclude to-morrow, according to a recommendation made by the Business Advisory Committee of the House. The Prime Minister, will reply to the debate on Thursday [February 20].

A HUNDRED YEARS AGO FEBRUARY 19, 1919

The Rice Crop of 1918-19.

The total area under rice in the Madras Presidency in 1918-19 is estimated at 9,71,000 acres, which is less by 19,44,000 acres than the area finally reported for the previous year. In fact the area is the lowest that has been recorded since complete statistics were first tabulated in 1907-08. The reasons for this decrease have already been given in the first and second reports, i.e., the failure of the south-west monsoon in July and August and the delay in the establishment of the north-east monsoon until November. The season has in fact been entirely abnormal and it is only in the tracts protected by the major irrigation works and in the tract along the East Coast which received the full benefit of the north-east monsoon, that anything like a normal is greatest in the Deccan and Central district. Conditions are better in the south, and Ramnad and Tinnevelly actually show some increase in area.

CONCEPTUAL

Smoke detector principle

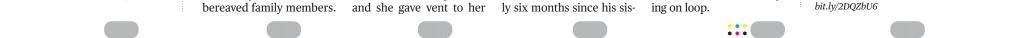
PSYCHOLOGY

This refers to the idea that the human brain is designed by nature to be paranoid as a defence mechanism to protect itself from possible dangers that could be fatal to its chances of survival. While paranoia can lead the brain to commit a lot of false positive errors, it can, however, help human beings avoid a number of false negative errors which could turn out to be extremely costly as well. This is similar to the way a smoke detector is designed by engineers, who want the device to never miss an actual fire even if such a design causes the device to raise a number of false alarms. The term was coined by American physician Randolph M. Nesse in a 2006 paper.

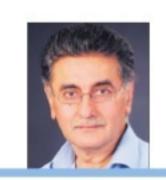
MORE ON THE WEB

How the Egypt experience unfolded as we cruised the Nile

bit.ly/2DQZbU6



Pulwama attack signals shift in Pak strategy



AJAI SAHNI EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, INSTITUTE FOR **CONFLICT MANAGEMENT**

VERY major terrorist attack in India, it seems, unleashes a flood of silliness. The utter foolishness of stock political responses — 'dastardly act', 'cowardly attack', 'munh-tod jawab', boastful threats of vengeance — has, in recent years, been compounded by TV anchors who play at being Generals, 'gaming' retaliatory strikes and threatening Pakistan with unlikely devastation. Within this theatre of the absurd is the constant harping on novelty — the idea that a new tactic or terror modus operandi has suddenly manifested itself in the latest outrage.

vehicle-borne improvised explosive device (VBIED) suicide attack at Pulwama inflicted the highest fatalities on the security forces in a single incident in Jammu and Kashmir since the beginning of insurgency. There has been much commentary on this 'new type of attack', but this is nonsense. VBIEDs have been widely used in theatres of terrorism across the world for decades, and J&K has recorded at least seven such attacks in the past, the first of them dating back to April 19, 2000. However, the last such attack, preceding Pulwama, was in November 2005; the state had been free of such attacks for over 13 years. There was, however, no reason to believe that this tactic

would or could not resurface. Another species of self-serving non-

sense is the assertion that the Pulwama VBIED attack is "an act of desperation". This is far from the truth. While strategic inferences cannot be drawn from a single incident, there is a range of surrounding circumstances that suggest that Pulwama reflects an intentional shift in Pakistan's strategy of terrorism in J&K. The Inter-Services Intelligence (ISI)backed Jaish-e-Mohammad, which operates openly from Pakistani soil, was quick to take responsibility for the attack, indicating that it has the approval and sanction of the ISI to escalate violence in J&K, specifically targeting the security forces. This demonstrates a growing confidence in the military-intelligence complex at Rawalpindi, a likely result of anticipated outcomes in Afghanistan. It is perceived that the Pakistan army's terrorist instrumentalities were able to conclusively defeat one superpower (erstwhile Soviet Union) in Afghanistan, and are now on the threshold of inflicting defeat on the other one, the US (and its coalition allies), in that theatre. As America's negotiated flight from Afghanistan approaches realisation, Pakistan's confidence is likely to grow, as will its sense of complete impunity. If the US and a coalition of Western powers cannot act in concert against Pakistan-backed terrorism that directly affects them, these powers are hardly likely to take any extraordinary initiative or risk to protect India from rising terrorism in J&K.

It needs to be understood that Pakistan's decision to de-escalate terrorism in J&K was a consequence of a combination of factors, most of which are now diluted or no longer in existence. The first was overwhelming US pressure for deployment along the Afghan border, purportedly to prevent terrorism. While the latter



MODUS OPERANDI: The vehicle-borne improvised explosive device has resurfaced in J&K after over a decade.

Jaish-e-Mohammad, which operates openly from

Pakistani soil, was quick to take responsibility for the attack, indicating that it has the approval and sanction of the ISI to escalate violence in Jammu and Kashmir, specifically targeting the security forces. At no stage has Pakistan's strategic intent with regard to its objectives in Kashmir been altered; these goals have merely been deferred.

objective was never served, a significant redeployment of forces from Pakistan's eastern borders with India did occur, necessitating a downward calibration of the terrorist campaigns as well. Pressure on Pakistan's army and security forces was also greatly augmented by a surge in domestic terrorism, which has now been substantially contained. International pressure on Pakistan and an interest in keeping the US aid pipeline flowing also placed limits on any excessive adventurism in Kashmir; but with the US choking aid, a growing dependency on China, and the fragmentation of global will, these pressures have also diminished. Crucially, Afghanistan was the theatre which was given the greatest priority by the Pakistani strategic establishment, and its campaigns through Taliban proxies were thought to be existentially critical for Rawalpindi; these campaigns are

now on the cusp of success.

At no stage has Pakistan's strategic intent with regard to its objectives in Kashmir been altered; its objectives have merely been deferred. As Rawalpindi sees some relief along its Afghan front, and an environment of growing impunity, particularly with the encouragement and support of its 'all-weather friend', China, it will be tempted to redeploy resources, efforts and, crucially, tactics, from the Afghan adventure, back into J&K.

New Delhi's belligerent rhetoric, in this context, is no more than boastful flatulence. While some tactical retaliation by the armed forces is likely and necessary — it will have nothing more than transient impact essentially oriented to optics that will serve the BJP's increasingly uncertain electoral prospects in the General Election. It will leave Pakistan's strategic posture and objectives unchanged.

It must be abundantly clear that no

effective strategic options are immediately available to India. Strategy is a function of capacity, and there has been a sustained erosion of the capacities of the armed forces and the internal security apparatus over the past decades — and the past five years have done nothing to stem the rot. Annual budgets in the defence and internal security sectors have, in real terms, shrunk from year to year, particularly in the 'capital expenditure' category which funds capacitybuilding. In March 2018, a report of the Parliamentary Standing Committee on Defence had observed that 68 per cent of all equipment with the armed forces was in the 'vintage category', and that the forces did not have the ammunition reserves to sustain 10 days of war with Pakistan.

Political leaders, the media and most experts talk of responses and strategies only in the wake of major terrorist outrages, and once the media circus has faded away, things return to what appears to be the national default setting of inertia. While it is right to blame Pakistan and its proxies for the evil they do, it must, equally, be recognised that these attacks and the persistence of terrorism in J&K is substantially the result of our own strategic and policy failures, and is, to that extent, self-inflicted.

Unless strategic issues are approached within a sustained and long-term strategic framework, unless doctrinal issues on the country's major security challenges and security issues are settled, and unless there is a commitment of adequate resources across the entire spectrum of what is required to meet these challenges, we will continue to return cyclically to the directionless hysteria and posturing that we are currently engaged in after each selfinflicted disaster.

Time for UK to say sorry for Jallianwala carnage



BHARAT H DESAI & BALRAJ K SIDHU PROFESSOR, JNU; FACULTY, IIT-KHARAGPUR

As the centenary of the massacre nears, the British government must sincerely tender an apology. It must also provide suitable compensation to be deposited with the Jallianwala Bagh National Memorial Trust. Britain had set a precedent by apologising for the brutal suppression of the Mau Mau nationalist uprising in Kenya.

HE centenary of the Jallianwala Bagh massacre is less than two months away. It was on April 13, 1919, that the British perpetrated one of the bloodiest carnages on Indian soil. It is difficult to imagine the brutality and arrogance of power unleashed on peaceful protesters. The sordid event became a turning point in India's modern history. It also left an indelible scar on Indo-British ties.

In a nation's history, such a long period is a decisive one and a moment of reflection to strive for 'closure'. No Union government seems to have made sincere efforts to prevail upon Britain to accept responsibility for the killings. As the centenary nears, the British government must sincerely tender an apology and issue a postage stamp on the Amritsar massacre. It must also provide suitable compensation to be deposited with the Jallianwala Bagh National Memorial Trust. As nations have continuing responsibilities, it makes sense that the British government respects the sensitivities of the Indian people. An apology will not bring back the dead or erase the deep scar. However, it can help in healing the wounds and putting Indo-British ties on a sound footing.

Britain did relent in the case of the Mau Mau nationalist uprising in Kenya, which was brutally suppressed by the British colonial government in the 1950s. Over 50 years later, then



OPPORTUNITY: An apology will not erase the century-old scar, but it can help in healing the wounds and putting Indo-British ties on a sound footing.

British Foreign Secretary William Hague apologised and agreed to pay compensation of £19.9 million to 5,228 claimants. This set a precedent for other claims against Britain for its actions in its former colonies.

We live in an era where a marked shift can be seen in attitudes of sovereign states to acknowledge past historical wrongs. In recent years, several countries have stepped forward to come to terms with their ugly past. Apologies have been tendered by Japan for 'comfort women', Australia for the 'Stolen Generation' and Germany for the Holocaust. Time and again, nations have joined the chorus through the usage of words such as 'regret', 'shame', 'remorse', 'sorry', etc. for past wrongs. These efforts convey a feeling of remorse, yet fall short of full attribution of the State's responsibility.

The apology tendered by Canadian PM Justin Trudeau in the House of

Commons in May 2016 for the Komagata Maru incident in 1914 received a standing ovation. It happened partly due to political mobilisation by descendents of Sikh immigrants in Canada who now wield economic and political influence.

Another momentous event took place on May 27, 2016, when then US President Barack Obama appeared at the Hiroshima bomb site. His decision, taken in an election year, led to the first such trip by a sitting US President. The Obama visit fell short of an apology. However, his presence at the site of death and destruction, humility of the action as well as carefully chosen words indicated atonement. "We stand here in the middle of this city and force ourselves to imagine the moment the bomb fell... we listen to a silent cry... demonstrated that mankind possessed the means to destroy itself," he said.

An apology can satisfy psychological needs of offended parties/States and trigger a process of forgiveness and the healing touch. But it can open a Pandora's box of selectivity, as regards which historical wrong qualifies for a belated apology.

In general, every internationally wrongful act of a State, which constitutes a breach of its obligations, entails the responsibility of that State as per the International Law Commission's Draft Articles on Responsibility of States for Internationally Wrong-

■ Vikrami Samvat

■ Shaka Samvat

■ Phalgun Parvishte

■ Moon in Cancer sign

■ Magh Shaka

■ Hijari

CALENDAR

FEBRUARY 18, 2019 MONDAY

2075

1940

1440

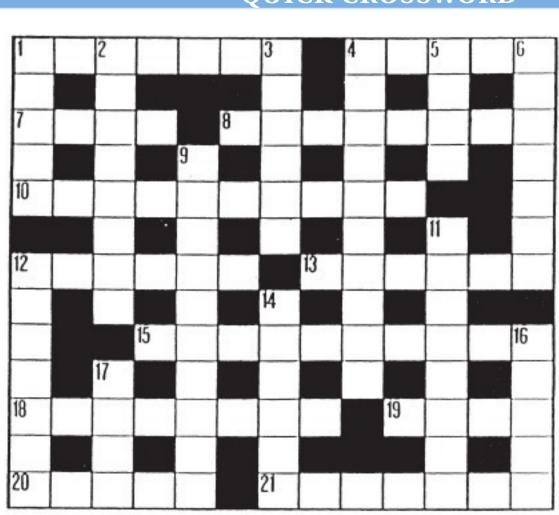
29

ful Acts, 2001. The Articles provide for full reparation for the injury caused by the conduct of a State. Modes of reparation could include restitution, compensation, or satisfaction. An apology "may be given verbally or in writing by an appropriate official or even the head of State" (Article 37). France's apology for blowing up of the Rainbow Warrior (1986) in Auckland harbour and the US apology to Germany in the LaGrand (2001) case for failure to notify the accused of their right to communicate with German consular officials are some instances.

Historical wrongs have no straightforward solution. Ironically, apologies have often been derided as 'tokenism' and in some cases lack genuineness. In the case of the 'comfort women', the compensation and 'most sincere apologies and remorse' by Japan has been revoked by the new government in South Korea.

Has the time come for us to seek an apology from the British government? We need to seize the moment to finally heal wounds inflicted by the Jallianwala Bagh massacre. It will be a huge boost to the wounded Indian pride after an agonising wait of a century. One hopes that the Union government will go all out to make the British government realise that the passage of 100 years is the right occasion to tender a sincere apology. It could finally let the souls of those killed in the massacre rest in peace.

QUICK CROSSWORD



SATURDAY'S SOLUTION

Belittle, 15 Cushion, 17 Garlic, 20 Drown, 21 Boom.

Across: 1 Up against it, 9 Address, 10 Cliff, 11 Dull, 12 Unsettle, 14 Nickel, 16 Cliche, 18 Festival, 19 Odds, 22 Swift, 23 Lookout, 24 Unwelcoming. **Down:** 2 Pedal, 3 Glee, 4 Insane, 5 Secretly, 6 Idiotic, 7 Hard-and-fast, 8 Of necessity, 13

ACROSS

- 1 Ancient form of paper (7)
- 4 Funny (5) 7 Sicilian volcano (4)
- 8 Reject (4,4)
- 10 Lasting only briefly (5-5) 12 To exile (6)
- 13 Straight man (6)
- 15 Brawl (4-3-3)
- 18 Deliberate damage (8) 19 Untamed (4)
- 21 Love story (7)

20 Correspond (5)

DOWN

- 1 Harass (5)
- 2 Locate precisely (8) 3 Artist's workroom (6)
- 4 Social custom (10) 5 Prevailing attitude (4)
- 6 Condemn sternly (7) 9 Without interruption
- (2,1,7)11 A calling (8)
- 12 Flowers on fruit trees (7) 14 Accounts book (6)
- 16 Deep-bowled spoon (5)
- 17 Encourage to do wrong (4)

MEDIUM

6 5 3 8 6 4 6 6 2 6 3 5 6

SU DO KU

- Candmool start 2 02 nm

■ Shukla Paksh Tithi 14, up to 1:12 am

■ Pushya Nakshatra up to 2:02 pm

■ Soubha Yoga up to 4:06 pm

6	1	8	5	3	2	9	4	7
3	5	9	4	1	7	2	8	6
2	7	4	9	8	6	1	3	5
8	4	2	3	9	5	6	7	1
1	9	6	7	4	8	5	2	3
7	3	5	6	2	1	4	9	8
4	2	7	Т	5	3	8	6	9
9	6	1	8	7	4	3	5	2
5	8	3	2	6	9	7	1	4

FORECAST

MONDAY 18:12 HRS 07:00 HRS **TUESDAY** CITY MAX MIN Chandigarh 23 11 10 New Delhi 21 PUNJAB 20 11 **Amritsar** 08 Bathinda 20 20 10 0 Jalandhar 13 0 Ludhiana 22 HARYANA Bhiwani 20 08 0 22 10 Hisar 0 09 Sirsa 20 HIMACHAL PRADESH 04 Dharamsala 14 -02 80 Manali 03 Shimla 12 JAMMU & KA Jammu 17 10 -08 Leh 02 Srinagar 06 01 UTTARAKHAND Dehradun 19 10 Mussoorie 12 02

The Tribune

ESTABLISHED IN 1881

An unequivocal message

Kashmiri students should not be targeted

HERE have been 40 funerals in 16 states. The nation is in a state of mourning. The Home Minister held a rare all-party meeting, which reaffirmed political unity in the face of dire adversity. At a public meeting at Dhule in Maharashtra, the Prime Minister advised "sayyam, samvedansheelta aur shok (restraint, sensitivity and grief)." But his advice seems to be getting lost on some of his supporters among the ultra-nationalists. While some of them are whipping up war hysteria, beating their breasts and tearing their hair on live TV debates, several others are virtually tearing apart the soul of the nation by isolating and attacking students from the Kashmir Valley.

The so-called nationalists seem to have forgotten that the Valley is an integral part of our country. The children of the Valley are the children of the nation as much as those from Kerala, West Bengal or Gujarat. In this hour of grief, instead of mourning the losses, being sensitive to the complexities of the situation and showing restraint against the highest degree of provocation, some miscreants are trying to force Kashmiri students out of their rented apartments. There have been reports from various places in north India about attempts to inject communal venom into the veins of agitated villagers and others. Such localised attacks over sub-regional sentiments can soon spiral out of control into a communal conflagration across the country. Our past experiences should make us sober, responsible and cautious.

The CRPF lost 40 men, yet as an institution it has set the highest moral standards for public discourse on the Pulwama attack by setting up a help desk and putting out an emergency telephone number to help Kashmiri students facing distress and harassment. We are a diverse nation speaking different languages, following different local and religious customs with mutual respect, and that lends us a unique strength as a nation. Masood Azhar will succeed in his mission if the Pulwama attack defeats our national spirit. While hitting hard at Azhar and Pakistan's armybacked political leadership, let us remain united as a society. Also, let our political leaders not mindlessly give the clean chit to the neighbour.

Aravallis endangered

Haryana move to amend PLPA ill-conceived

ROM being the oldest mountain range of the country embracing a rich ecosystem of hills, forests, fauna, natural aquifers and drainage, the Aravallis suffer the ignominy of being the most degraded forest range, as per a study conducted by the Wildlife of India in 2017. Particularly worrisome has been the rapid depletion of the Aravalli hills in Haryana's districts of Gurugram, Faridabad, Mewat, Mahendragarh and Rewari and neighbouring parts of Rajasthan. As massive steel and concrete jungles replaced huge swathes of the verdant area, the ecological balance was upset. Within a few decades, the natural habitat existing and thriving for thousands of years was staring at extinction. A huge price had been paid for the developmental activities. It came in the disastrous form of the disappearance of many indigenous plant and wildlife species, deforestation and drying up of groundwater recharge zones as hillocks vanished from the terrain.

Alarmed, environmentalists and courts intervened. The need to prevent its further desertification was urgently felt. Strict laws mandating the preservation of the green and hilly zone came up. There was no quarrel over putting a halt to quarrying and arbitrary construction in the Aravalli hills. The SC verdict of October 2018, saying that Kant Enclave in Faridabad had come up illegally and that it be demolished so that the original forestland could be revived, came as a huge blow to the land-grabbing builders.

At the core of the judgment was the Punjab Land Preservation Act (PLPA), 1990. It debars construction in areas covered under it. More such illegal colonies facing the axe would have been a natural progression towards the aim of restoring the eco-sustainability of the area. Alas, it seems the influence of the unscrupulous real estate lobby has prevailed. The recent move of the Haryana Government to amend the PLPA to exclude it from the master plan areas is a pointer to builders having a free run over thousands of acres. It would have disastrous consequences. The state must review its plan and notify the Act before it lapses.

THOUGHT FOR THE DAY

Right actions in the future are the best apologies for bad actions in the past. — **Tryon Edwards**

ON THIS DAY...100 YEARS AGO

The Tribune.

LAHORE, TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 18, 1919

Free Education.

AS will have been seen from the correction of its original report by the *Civil and Military Gazette* in a paragraph in its issue, the Punjab Legislative Council took one sensible step in connection with the Primary Education Bill. It eliminated one of the most objectionable features in the Bill by providing that where compulsion is introduced, no fees shall be charged in any of the schools maintained by the local authority. This is a substantial improvement, and we congratulate both the Council and the Government on it. Of course, it is difficult to say what the immediate practical effect of this change will be. In the absence of the acceptance by the Local Government of any statutory financial liability, it is possible that in some cases at least local bodies would think more than twice before proposing to resort to compulsion, for the simple reason that compulsion would have to accompanied by a remission of fees, and the burden of such remission would fall mainly upon themselves.

Sir Narayan's "Ambiguous Role"

THE *Statesman* is angry with Sir Narayan Chandavarkar because he has condemned the Rowlatt Bills. Did he not give a verdict in favour of the Bengal Government in his report on the Bengal instances? Such a man was bound in consistency to support the Government always, and as he has failed to do so, the paper stigmatises his role as ambiguous. We are not concerned to defend Sir Narayan's consistency, but it does occur to us that the position taken up by the *Statesman* ought to be a warning to our countrymen against supporting the bureaucracy in any of its characteristic doings. The moment they support one thing, they raise the expectation that they will blindly support every such thing.

Ad hoc responses won't work

National security strategy is a must to take on any crisis



SHYAM SARAN

FORMER FOREIGN SECRETARY AND SENIOR FELLOW, CENTRE FOR POLICY RESEARCH

HE Pulwama terror attack has again led to a desperate search for options to deal with its aftermath and prevent a repeat of such incidents. There is no existing carefully crafted template which could guide the Indian State's response, drawing upon accumulated experience from the past and factoring in any new situation which may have arisen. In the absence of such a template, the State has to fall back on ad hoc responses whose implications are not fully thought through. For example, withdrawing Pakistan's MFN status is an admission of lack of options to penalise Pakistan rather than a serious and substantive measure. It is unlikely to discomfit Pakistan.

Despite the repeated urgings of strategic thinkers and practitioners, India still does not have a national security strategy which could guide the State in dealing with crisis situations as well as longer-term challenges. Precisely since a crisis is often unexpected, the political leadership and its security establishment need to respond with calm and sobriety and convey to the public a sense of confidence and assurance in handling the crisis. This is possible only if possible scenarios such as a terrorist attack, a plane hijacking or a political assassination are anticipated in all their dimensions and several alternative options for the State's response are considered and evaluated in advance, taking into account likely political and geopolitical environments in which they may occur. This is in the nature of a drill which may be swiftly activated



IMPERATIVE: It is very important to have a communication strategy to handle a crisis situation, such as the fallout of a terrorist attack.

Actions in the best interest of the country are unlikely to be taken in situations when the priority becomes assuaging public sentiment rather than ensuring national security.

as soon as a crisis erupts, with each arm of the government knowing what its role must be. This then, leaves the political leadership to deal with the larger political and strategic issues that may arise.

It is also very important to have a communication strategy to handle a crisis situation, such as the fallout of a terrorist attack. The government should not be pushed into taking decisions under the pressure of public opinion or media hype. It is natural for there to be anger among families of those who have lost their loved ones. There will be calls for stern action and revenge from an emotionally charged public. Governments need to calm such reactions rather than fuel them through aggressive pronouncements. Actions in the best interest of the country are unlikely to be taken in situations when the priority becomes assuaging public sentiment rather than ensuring national security. In the Kandahar hijack case, the then government had to acquiesce to the release of dreaded terrorists under

pressure from family members of the passengers. One of those released was Masood Azhar, the leader of the Jaishe-Mohammad, which claimed responsibility for the Pulwama attack.

A national security strategy would also enable a thorough and careful evaluation of military options that may be available to the government in responding to such a terrorist attack. What may be militarily feasible may not be politically sensible. Issues of war and peace are political decisions and must be taken by the political leadership. They cannot be left to the military to decide, and therefore, it is not wise to declare that the military has been given a 'free hand' to decide on what the response should be to the Pulwama attack. A national security strategy would look at the entire spectrum of deterrence and compellence and go beyond the simple binary of appeasement or war. There would be several options and combination of options that the political leadership could choose from in taking deci-

sions to respond. These cannot just be conjured up in an ad hoc manner after a crisis has already erupted.

With respect to diplomatic options, there should be efforts to mobilise international opinion against Pakistan. However, any careful analysis would have shown that isolating Pakistan on the basis of its terror record would have limited traction because powers like the US and China continue to have important strategic stakes in Pakistan. They would be unlikely to go beyond rhetoric in restraining Pakistan's continuing use of cross-border terrorism as an instrument of the State policy. We have witnessed this before. Expending too much effort in pursuing this diplomatic offensive may not add up to an effective response.

We have looked at crisis management as an aspect of the national security strategy. Even more important is crafting a longer-term strategy which locates the pursuit of national security in the overall national endeavour encompassing domestic, external and military security, economic and ecological security and strategic communications. One needs a concept of comprehensive national power in all its dimensions. For example, while condemning cross-border terrorism should we not look at the failures of governance and porous borders which are exploited by hostile external forces? Are we doing enough to meet the aspirations of restive youth and addressing the economic and social grievances which create social unrest? National security cannot be delinked from our overall strategy for development and our vision of where we want India to be in 10, 20 or 30 years' time. Understanding these deep inter-linkages among different domains, anticipating change and likely disruptions that may occur and have plans to cope with them will be the essence of national security in a rapidly transforming world. India can no longer muddle its way through this complex reality without paying a heavy price.

Give teachers freedom to mould pupils

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

BEANT SINGH

THE recent unsavoury incident relating to the humiliation of a District Education Officer at a school function by a minister, in the presence of her subordinates and students, is food for thought, especially for educationists. There was a time when even a schoolteacher teaching in the countryside commanded respect, not only among pupils, but also the general folk, who would turn to him for advice on mundane affairs. Students left under his care would follow all instructions regarding teaching as well as their conduct and deportment without fuming and fretting. A teacher would give his best and help produce good humans

endowed with academic excellence. This would enhance his reverence in society and his reformatory approach made the profession a noble one. The respect he earned over the years would continue till he breathed his last, as society and his students in particular would remember him.

When Partap Singh Kairon, the progressive and visionary former Chief Minister of Punjab, established Punjab Public School at Nabha in 1960, he gave required space to its founder principal in terms of choosing the faculty and other things to realise his dream of imparting quality education. Creditably, the scheme of things worked well and yielded the desired results, right from the inception of the school.

Things have changed since. In order to streamline the education system, the modern-day set-up tries to ensure that its day-to-day pedagogic commands are complied with and subsequent information through mails are sent before school hours, leaving school heads and staff in a tizzy. As a result, the real classroom teaching is lost sight of.

At times, a team swoops on a school campus, not to give expert academic inputs to revamp the ailing education sector, but to create a sense of terror in the minds of educators. We want our children to imbibe the qualities of empathy, caring and sharing, but how can we expect a child to be empathetic when they see elders are not so towards their immediate subordinates?

E-touch in the classroom is not a substitute for the human touch of a teacher, and unless a teacher is given the freedom to mould his pupils the way he wants, or is allowed to make use of the methods of his choice — except punishment — and if he is not free of undue hierarchical pressure, not much can be expected of him. Let him be free to relate to students and let him be given free academic space to choose how best he would meet the expectations of the academic administrators. Let people at the academic helm, including school heads and DEOs, be given due respect by our elected leaders and bureaucrats, which will percolate down, if they are really desirous of toning up the ailing education sector in our country.

66

Address alienation

Refer to the editorial 'Pulwama terror attack' (Feb 16); besides the justified grief and anger, this is yet again a time for serious introspection. Our security forces are capable of giving a fitting response. Besides acquiring capability to inflict casualties on the enemy, they should also focus on taking every precaution to protect themselves against any surprise attack. Their lives are too precious for the nation to be lost without an actual battle/encounter. Zero complacency is needed, besides a beefed-up intelligence network. Alienation of our youth makes the task of terror organisations easy. The prime focus of our policy-makers should be to bring back to the national mainstream the misguided youth of the state.

HL SHARMA, AMRITSAR

Should use drones

The 78-vehicle convoy must have stretched for 3-4 km. An easy target. It was a complete failure of governance at all levels: civil, military, police, intelligence gathering. To put such an easy target on a public highway during 12 hours of broad daylight defies comprehension. The convoy should have moved in parts under cover of

darkness and on different routes to make the target smaller. If attacked, the loss would have been minimum. If it had to be during daylight, why was there no eye in the sky? This is the age of drones. A dozen or more drones would keep an eye on 100 metres of either side of the road and ahead of the convoy.

H KISHIE SINGH, BY MAIL

Rebuild trust

Loss of mutual faith between people and the Union and the state government is the biggest cause of havor in Jammu and Kashmir. The need is to rebuild trust. Both sides must make efforts, so the youth can return to the mainstream.

JIWAN KUMAR, BY MAIL

Politics even now

Attacks like Pulwama will continue to spell doom for us, unless those who shelter terrorists from across the border and facilitate them to carry out their nefarious designs are identified and punished. Even at this time, the attitude of various political parties is not above board. They are organising protest marches against this barbaric attack under the banner of their respective parties, just to

steal a march on others. It is certainly dirty politics. It will not be good if, as part of election reforms, it is made mandatory that only those whose ward is serving in the defence forces is eligible for contesting elections. Only then will these politicians realise the grief of the aggrieved families.

DEEPAK KAUSHIK, KURUKSHETRA

Anganwaris may not help

Need for pre-primary schools have been felt for long in Haryana. Now anganwaris will fill this gap ('Anganwaris to serve as pre-primary schools'; Feb 16). Anganwaris are administered by the Department of Women and Child Development, whereas pre-primary education is essentially a part of formal schooling. Efforts have been made before to build a bridge between anganwaris and schools but it could not materialise on administrative, social and psychological grounds. The proposed training by master trainers is not going to bear fruit. The best course is to shift children in the three-six year age group to schools with nurserytrained teachers. More nursery teachers' training institutes will also provide job opportunities.

S KUMAR, PANCHKULA

Life after failure too

It is examination time. Although it is common to experience butterflies in the stomach, the run-up to the final board examinations is a traumatic phase for many students. Youngsters, parents and teachers get carried away, focusing too much on the moment and turning it into a do-or-die event. They forget that whatever the result, its consequence to the life of the person will never be too significant or irreversible. Looking back at our academic years, most of us would recall excelling in a few examinations, performing averagely in others and failing on some occasions. Did that stop us from progressing in our life, living a meaningful existence and fulfilling our vision? Never worry about scores because life gives everyone multiple opportunities to realise their dreams. An increasing sense of competitiveness pervades the mind, relationships and society. They grow up with the irrational belief that in order to live a decent life, they must defeat everyone around them. We rarely encourage youngsters to surrender and feel the connection with the Divine. As a result, they often believe that they are all alone in the world without any consistent support. During stressful times, this makes them feel very anxious and vulnerable. **SANJAY CHOPRA, MOHALI**

Letters to the Editor, typed in double space, should not exceed the 200-word limit. These should be cogently written and can be sent by **e-mail to: Letters@tribunemail.com**

FINANCIAL EXPRESS WWW.FINANCIALEXPRESS.COM

TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 19, 2019



STOPPING THE VIOLENCE

Mehbooba Mufti, former CM of Jammu & Kashmir

This bloodshed will only stop when the government of India overhauls its approach. Lets drop the obsession with Pakistan and get our own house in order. The current attitude will only worsen the situation and polarise the nation

And now, Google designs chipsets in India

With others like Qualcomm also doing this, India is slowly emerging as a serious player in the tech industry

HENEVER ELECTRONICS AND IT minister Ravi Shankar Prasad talks of how the number of mobile phone manufacturing units has shot up from just two in 2014 to 123 right now—as a result, the bulk of phones sold in the country will also be made here soon—most point out that these are merely assembly units, and imports from China continue unchecked. While imports of mobile phones fell from \$7.8 billion in 2014 to a likely \$2 billion in 2018, overall imports, including components, shot up by over half, from \$8.8 billion to \$13.3 billion over the same period. Indeed, domestic value addition was just around 10% in 2017 and around 15% in 2018, with the government coming out with a sensible phased-manufacturing programme that increases import duties on a new set of components every year to promote local production.

What can increase domestic value addition quite sharply, of course, is the local designing of chips, even though the fabrication will continue to be done in countries like Taiwan that have fab units. According to a *Reuters* report last week, Google has hired a dozen engineers already to work on designing chips in India, and several more hires are likely. While the chip design at Google is a collaborative effort with the team at its US headquarters, it is a significant step; part of the process at Google to capture more value addition and not be dependent on companies like Qualcomm. How it pans out remains to be seen, but other firms like Qualcomm, Texas Instruments and Intel already have significant India offices with a few thousand engineers working on, amongst others, chip design and R&D. Indeed, Google already has 600-700 engineers working on machine learning and artificial intelligence and has larger plans for its Hyderabad campus which will, eventually, house 13,000 people. At 150,000, IBM's India work force is larger than the one in the US.

And though China beat India in 2018, for two years before that, India was the worldleader when it came to companies setting up Engineering R&D (E-R&D) centres here. According to HFS Research, the total size of the E-R&D business in India—more or less equally split between captives and non-captives—has grown from \$21.8 billion in 2015 to \$26.9 billion in 2017. While China leads in several areas, India continues to lead in aerospace and defence with about a third of all such announcements of centres in 2018 for setting up facilities in India. Indeed, consulting firm Zinnov had projected that, by 2020, India would be home to 1,139 R&D centres with over half a million employees. With firms like SAP and IBM getting 8-10% of their global patents from their centres in India, the Zinnov projections look quite achievable. In the case of a firm like GE, that does a lot of work in India for instance, redesigning its portable ECG machine—in the India centre helped lower costs from \$10,000 to \$500; the MAC 400 was later scaled up and taken to countries like China, Germany and even the US eventually. The successful completion of the Aadhaar project, and then the building of the India Stack applications on top of this, and the rapid and successful rollout of the UPI financial transfers have also helped buttress India's image. Apart from India's engineering talent, the fact that it is seen as a market where there are relatively few issues involving theft of intellectual property, as compared to China, is another attraction. Not bad for a country that, till recently, was not even recognised as a player, even if small, in the global technology space.

EU trumps Big Tech

Copyright rules for Google News et al protects publishers, artists

HE EUROPEAN UNION will now insist on stricter copyright compliance from tech companies like Google, Facebook, etc., over use of copyrighted material such as videos, songs, published material on their platforms, including by users. This will give video/music producers and publishers, among other, greater leverage for getting the tech giants to compensate them. Under the new rules, the social media/search giants will be required to apply for a platform licence, and if the artists/producers/content creators refuse to grant this, firms will have to take down unlicenced content already present on their platforms or attempt to block uploads. Similarly, they will be required to negotiate licences with publishers or get the latter to waive off their rights, else they can't display news snippets underheadlines. With much of advertising revenue that newspapers depended upon shifting to digital media, established newspapers faced unprecedented pressure online with news-aggregation services and social media becoming the new competition. On the other end, smaller publications/websites were only too happy to have the tech firms direct traffic their way, helping them get attention from advertisers.

Free speech activists also joined the fray, saying that the new copyright rules could result $in censor ship, where the \, pretext \, of \, copy righted \, content \, could \, be \, used \, to \, stifle \hbox{\'e}{}^{\'e}in convenient \, could \, be \, used \, to \, stifle \hbox{\'e}{}^{\'e}in convenient \, could \, be \, used \, to \, stifle \hbox{\'e}{}^{\'e}in convenient \, could \, be \, used \, to \, stifle \hbox{\'e}{}^{\'e}in convenient \, could \, be \, used \, to \, stifle \hbox{\'e}{}^{\'e}in convenient \, could \, be \, used \, to \, stifle \hbox{\'e}{}^{\'e}in convenient \, could \, be \, used \, to \, stifle \hbox{\'e}{}^{\'e}in convenient \, could \, be \, used \, to \, stifle \hbox{\'e}{}^{\'e}in convenient \, could \, be \, used \, to \, stifle \hbox{\'e}{}^{\'e}in convenient \, could \, be \, used \, to \, stifle \hbox{\'e}{}^{\'e}in convenient \, could \, be \, used \, to \, stifle \hbox{\'e}{}^{\'e}in convenient \, could \, be \, used \, to \, stifle \, \hbox{\'e}{}^{\'e}in convenient \, could \, be \, used \, to \, stifle \, \hbox{\'e}{}^{\'e}in convenient \, could \, be \, used \, to \, stifle \, \hbox{\'e}{}^{\'e}in convenient \, could \, be \, used \, to \, stifle \, \hbox{\'e}{}^{\'e}in convenient \, could \, be \, used \, to \, stifle \, \hbox{\'e}{}^{\'e}in convenient \, could \, be \, used \, to \, stifle \, \hbox{\'e}{}^{\'e}in convenient \, could \, be \, used \, to \, stifle \, \hbox{\'e}{}^{\'e}in convenient \, could \, be \, used \, to \, stifle \, \hbox{\'e}{}^{\'e}in convenient \, could \, be \, used \, to \, stifle \, \hbox{\'e}{}^{\'e}in convenient \, could \, be \, used \, to \, stifle \, \hbox{\'e}{}^{\'e}in convenient \, could \, be \, used \, to \, stifle \, \hbox{\'e}{}^{\'e}in convenient \, could \, co$ truths". However, the need was to recognise that 'Big Tech' companies have benefited from displaying news articles without investing in journalism. Under the final deal, 'Big Tech' firms can be held to account and will not get a free run in benefiting off original content creators/producers/publishers. The new rules safeguard the interests of users of various platforms by putting the onus of negotiating licence-granting on the platform. They also overcome some of the fault lines within the publishing community—publishers who need the traffic generated through Google News can agree to waive offlicencing requirements. Big Tech is also partially protected with press content of more than two years excluded from the licencing yoke. The rules also allow for unlicenced hyperlinking of individual words or very short extracts, and by doing that, the internet ecosystem that depends on a slightly relaxed copyright regime for flourishing also gets some manner of protection. Also, tech firms won't be automatically held responsible if unlicenced, copyright-protected material appears on their platforms if they make the "best efforts" to prevent the content's availability on their platforms. Platforms with annual turnover of less than 10 million euros, having less than 5 million monthly active users and not more than three years old, are exempt from having to ensure that unlicenced copyright-protected material they have removed doesn't appear online.

To be sure, some critics argue the rules will hinder organic growth of the internet as tech firms get increasingly concerned with content filtering, which itself may not always be perfect and block legal uploads. But, the larger consideration here is that the creative and the publishing industry can't keep losing revenue to a YouTube/Facebook or a Google News.

ParentalControl

Absher's removal will not delete or change the oppressive laws that continue to restrict and bind women

VERTHE PAST week, Apple and Google have been severely criticised for offering a Saudi Arabian government application called Absher on their respective app marketplaces. The application, launched in 2015, facilitates the ease of access to Saudi-government provided services by those within the country and reduces inefficient bureaucracy in day-to-day government functions. However, the application also lets men restrict the movement of women under their guardianship by revoking the woman's right to travel with a few simple touches of their phones. Of course, Absher is not the real problem here—it is the kingdom's repressive male guardianship system. And the only reason why the application is making headlines right now, despite it being launched four years ago, is the increased international scrutiny on Saudi Arabia following the Jamal Khasoggi murder and the Rahaf Mohammed case,, in which a Saudi teenager successfully managed to escape the clutches of the dreaded guardianship system and get asylum in Canada

The increased coverage that the country's repressive gender laws are receiving is indeed good news, but a majority of the reporting concerning Absher also lacks recognition of the other side of the story. The Guardian cited a tweet from a Saudi woman explaining that, while the application facilitates the tracking of women, its also reduces the time needed to file visa papers for women who do get to travel—a reasoning that was used to further restrict women before. That said, even if it does serve an important purpose, a waiver can be presented in many non-digital but verifiable forms—even if this comes at the cost of some more time consumed, it is still preferable to a scenario where the app can be used to track women's movement. The 'dilemma' over Absher's positive fallout isn't really a problem, given the workaround.But attacking an app will be of no help. What is needed is eliminating the unjust practices that continue to marginalise and harm women and social and political reforms that bring an end to the deep-rooted patriarchal understanding of women's position in social hierarchy that Wahhabism promotes.

THE FROWN CURVE

GROWTH WILL LIKELY CONTINUE TO DISAPPOINT IN THE NEAR-TERM AS EFFECTIVENESS OF RECENT POLICY EASING WILL BE PARTIALLY LOST DUE TO TRANSMISSION LAGS AND IMPLEMENTATION HURDLES

Why politics and economics don't always smile

GENERAL **ELECTIONS** scheduled for April and signs of the tide turning against the ruling BJP, the drumroll of populist policies has intensified over the past six months. While strong macro-fundamentals can accommodate these populist excesses in the short-run, they risk creating imbalances in the medium-term, with implicit prioritisation of consumption over investment. In addition, stimulus during times of economic calm often comes at the cost of crucial policy space needed in the future when the downturn becomes entrenched. Consider the following: the BJP -led National Democratic Alliance (NDA)'s rule during 1999-04 was marked by stable macros of low inflation and favourable external sector dynamics.

However, deteriorating rural terms of trade was one factor that resulted in its electoral defeat in the 2004 elections. The first term of the Congress-led UPA government during 2004-09 marked a reversal in rural fortunes and a return of the UPA government in 2009—likely due to the 'just right' mix of prudence and populism. However, as rural reflation and fiscal excesses triggered inflation, real rural incomes declined and, along with corruption scandals, ousted the UPA in 2014. The macro backdrop today seems eerily similar to 2004. Banks had large NPAs during 1999-04, as they have had during 2014till now. The BJP MSP and food inflation low then, as now. Rural income growth was low then, as it is now.

At a national level, the experience of the last two decades suggests an inverted-U (a frown) relationship between the degree of populism (defining this pre-

As economic populish

increases, so does

political popularity

can be unpopular

Prudent

Source: CEIC and Nomura Global Economics

Good

The frown curve of political paradox

Goldilocks point: Stable macro accommodates populist

excesses. Voters happy

SONAL VARMA & AURODEEP NANDI Authors are research analysts with Nomura Holdings

dominantly as rural reflationary policies) and the electoral success. Too much populism as well as too little populism (too much prudence) have both resulted in an electoral defeat. The trick is finding the right balance between prudence and populism. Policies around rural India have played a big role in deciding the electoral outcome, as rural India accounts for ~70% of the total population.

The broad direction of macro policies in India is moving towards more accommodation. The triggers are both political and economic. On the fiscal front, the Central government's fiscal deficit has remained in the 3.4-3.5% of GDP range since FY17 (year ending March). To appease the farm sector, the government announced an income support programme for landholding farmers, which carries the bearings of a perpetual scheme, rather than a one-time cash transfer. This follows the government's poor decision to raise MSP by at least 1.5-times the production cost in 2018. Other social welfare commitments—health care, pension for unorganised sector-currently don't entail large monetary allocation, but will likely incur higher expenses in coming years. In the absence of higher goods and services tax revenues, this suggests an

upside risk to the future fiscal deficit path. On the monetary policy front, changes

Credit-deposit ratio:

aggregate (%)

are more subtle. With average headline inflation below 4% since 2017, this had resulted in higher realised real rates. In his maiden monetary policy statement, the RBI Governor, Shaktikanta Das stated that the surprise rate cut in February (notwithstanding high core inflation) was a result of low headline inflation and that, once the price stability objective had been achieved, RBI would address the objective of growth. It indicates a higher weight being assigned to headline inflation (relative to core) and to growth. This possibly signals lower realised real rates in the coming years. On the regulatory front, RBI has eased risk-weight norms for non-bank finance companies due to the shadow banking crisis. Three public sector banks were taken out of the prompt corrective action (PCA) framework in end-January. It also permitted a one-time restructuring of existing loans to Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs) that have become stressed. Report of the expert committee on economic capital framework is also awaited on whether the RBI holds excess reserves on its balance sheet.

Accommodative macro policies do not necessarily imply imprudence. If growth is weak, then counter-cyclical macro policies are essential. At the same time, we believe it is essential for policymakers to halt when pragmatism starts to morph

Credit-deposit ratio:

Public sector Private sector

by banks (%)

into imprudence. Many small steps could cumulatively create the foundations for future instability. For example, ensuring adequate liquidity for non-bank finance companies is essential to prevent a liquidity crisis from morphing into a solvency crisis; but too much liquidity is also a bedrock of future inflation. Forbearance only kicks the can down the road.

In the short-term, the effectiveness of recent policy easing will be partially lost due to transmission lags and implementation hurdles. The farm package will likely encounter implementation challenges because not all states have computerised land records; those that do, don't necessarily have accurate records; and many states do not have bank accounts linked to these land records. Similarly, the impact of RBI's rate cut will be delayed and uneven. Banks that have the capacity to lend are already garnering market share from shadow banks (after last year's crisis) and hence have elevated CD ratio/tighter liquidity constraints, which will delay any reduction in lending rates. In addition, some sectors, such as the low-tiered shadow banks, are credit-constrained because of the perception of higher 'credit risk' and may not benefit from the rate cuts as much. Retail lending, on the other hand, continues to benefit.

The global backdrop (weak global demand), lagged impact of tighter credit conditions due to the shadow banking crisis and a likely slowdown in investments due to political uncertainty implies that growth will continue to disappoint in the near-term, despite domestic macro policies turning accommodative. Predictions are that GDP growth will slow down from 7.1% y-o-y in Q3 2018 to 6.6% in Q4 and further to between 6.0–6.5% in H1 of 2019.

Low global food prices and domestic balance sheet constraints also imply that there is no imminent inflationary risk. Weak growth and lower cost pressures should moderate core inflation RBI's more optimistic growth projection amid below-4% inflation will support a further rate cut. Pencil in a 25 bps rate cut in Q2 (most likely in April) and attach a 20% chance to one more in Q3. Expect GDP growth to pick-up to slightly above 7% by end-2019 and into 2020.

Edited excerpts from Nomura's Asia Insights India: The 'Frown curve'—why politics and economics don't always smile (February 14)



Macro fundamentals

Macro imbalances lead

to loss of confidence & economic slowdown.

Policy space for stabili-

sation unavailable. Job

and real income loss

rapidly deteriorates

voter sentiment

eventually start to

worsen. Popularity

starts to wane

must either remove the stringent requirement of full KYC compliance or provide for a costeffective method to complete it

& ARCHANA TEWARY

Jan 2019

Authors are partners at J Sagar Associates

AS THE DEADLINE for mandatory requirement of completing KYC compliance for all users of e-wallets approaches, it has left many to ponder if this would be the end of the road for several e-wallet companies in India, and puts the users of e-wallets in a quandary.

KYC can be traced back to October 2017, wherein RBI issued a circular mandating all e-wallet entities to complete full KYC of their wallet users by December 2017. However, several prepaid payment instruments issuers expressed their difficulty in complying with this requirement and RBI accordingly extended the deadline to February 28, 2018. Now, as a final extension, RBI has made it mandatory for all prepaid payment issuers to complete full KYC of all its customers before February 28, 2019, failing which customers' e-wallets would become non-operational. While the deadlines have been extended, little has been done to address the issues raised by e-wallet issuers.

This mandatory requirement poses a threat to e-wallet issuers, especially small players among the e-wallet participants, in terms of continuity of business. After the Supreme Court's judgment on 'Aadhaar' in Justice KS Puttaswamy and Ors. v. Union of India, corporate entities are no longer allowed to use Aadhaar's biometric identification for KYC verification and RBI is yet to provide an alternative method for e-KYC. As a result of this, ewallet issuers are finding it very onerous to complete KYC verification, since the only available method now to complete KYC of customers is by conducting physical verification. Companies with resources to do so are rushing to comply with the deadline by relying on physical verification. However, for the small players in the e-wallet market, pursuing physical verification on such a largescale, would not only be difficult but also very expensive. This could result in these small players exiting the market on account of huge costs.

Further, physical verification of KYC creates several limitations on the collecting entity, some of which include incorrect details being updated into the system and documents being misplaced. Additionally, India is yet to implement stringent measures to tackle issues pertaining to privacy and security breach of data. A full KYC verification would mean collecting customers' personal data and subjecting such data to the risk of being compromised.

vided by such companies which have integrated e-wallets into their application. Suspension of e-wallets could thus have a broader impact on users as well.

ment. In 2016, the National Payment Council of India introduced UPI, a system which enables bank account holders to transfer funds through the Immediate Payment Service (IMPS) using a virtual payment address. UPI does not have to comply with full KYC requirements of customers since banks have already completed the KYC verification of its customers. In this regard, customers are slowly moving towards making digital payments on UPI rails due to ease of transferring funds and non-requirement of additional KYC verification. Considering this change in market preference, e-wallet players will be compelled to integrate UPI as one of their payment systems, in order to remain relevant in the market.

For an economy which is increasingly moving towards digital transactions, it is critical for laws to support and nurture fintech companies since, otherwise, the smaller companies will have no option but to shut shop. An example of this was when several P2P lending platforms in China shut operations as these entities found it difficult to comply with the strict regulations imposed by the government. Therefore, in order to encourage healthy competition and provide options to customers, RBI must either remove the stringent requirement of full KYC compliance or provide for a cost-effective method to complete full KYC. Is the government driving out competition and creating a monopoly by ensuring that the UPI platform is the preferred platform? We believe it is time for the regulators to sit up and act.

Written with inputs from Kavya Katherine Thayil, an associate at J Sagar Associates

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Shadow of death in the valley

There is no guarantee that military action will prove efficacious in curbing militant attacks. The subcontinent cannot be turned into a theatre of war. The intractable territorial dispute is not amenable to a military solution. It is a geopolitical problem involving religious and cultural identities and requires a political solution through dialogue. It must be conceded that militancy is rooted in the political grievances of the disaffected and alienated Kashmiri people. The sad truth in the valley is that the security personnel and militants lose their lives in the fight between them. Violence and counter-violence and killings and counter-killings get us nowhere. Statesmanship and sagacity, as against jingoism and bellicosity, are what is now needed from all sides to bring about a semblance of normality and peace in the Himalayan region — G David Milton, Maruthancode

Details of calls

Mobile phone service providers turn down requests made for details of 'incoming' and 'missed' calls on mobile numbers of the person/s making such a request in the name of 'privacy', while companies are providing details of 'outgoing' calls. Providing details of 'incoming' and 'missed' calls on request is of utmost importance in cases of obscene or threatening or harassing or fraud calls. TRAI should make it mandatory for mobile service providers to provide details of 'incoming' and 'missed' calls in the manner they provide such details of 'outgoing' calls — Madhu Agrawal, Delhi

Write to us at feletters@expressindia.com

In order to encourage healthy competition, RBI **PROBIR ROY CHOWDHURY**

The requirement of completing full

It is also likely that customers will be hesitant to complete their KYC with each e-wallet company separately on account of the process being cumbersome. This may result in existing e-wallet customers to only maintain accounts with a few ewallet companies (preferably with the big players) instead of holding multiple e-wallet accounts, which may cause small players to exit the e-wallet market. Further, several smaller wallets are often ancillary to the services provided by ewallet issuers and offer operational convenience to users of those services. Such users could also benefit from discounts or other operational conveniences pro-

E-wallet players also have the additional worry of customers choosing UPI over e-wallets as a digital form of pay-

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NIVERSAL BASIC INCOME (UBI) in its pure form implies six essential ingredients. It is universal, individual, cash, monthly, unconditional and lastly it is a right that cannot be withdrawn. As a fullfledged social policy, it has not been implemented anywhere in the world yet. In the last decade, suddenly there has been an explosion of interest in the idea—in the universities, mainstream media and policy corridors. Political philosopher Karl Widerquist of Georgetown University calls the current wave of enthusiasm and activism as the *third wave*. The first wave was between 1910 and 1940 and the second one in the 1960s and 1970s, he observes. While the earlier waves had been sporadic, the current one seems to be the longest one. By 'universal', we mean that all resi-

dents of a particular territory of a nation state are entitled to a basic income simply by virtue of being a resident of the territory. Being universal has two important advantages. One is administrative efficiency. Income transfer bypasses all the limitations posed by the errors of targeting. In India particularly, we have not been able to resolve the question of targeting. Most of our welfare programmes suffer from both inclusion and exclusion errors. The second advantage is

called the 'solidarity effect'. By giving everyone, UBI ceases to be a welfare scheme or a subsidy and all the stigma, paternalism and disapproval that are attached to it. Pragmatic questions remain whether we can afford it, but we will come to that later.

By 'individual', we mean that every single individual—adult or child—is entitled to a UBI, as opposed to giving it to the household. This aspect of UBI accords economic citizenship to each and every individual and this is said to have the 'empowerment effect'. Individuals are empowered because entitlement to UBI provides individuals a sense of worth and protects individual freedom. On the contrary, if UBI is given to the household, a woman who is living in a violent marriage would be forced to continue in it just to have basic income security.

By 'cash only', we mean that it should not be in-kind transfers. It should be cash only, and should be delivered efficiently to the individuals and ought to be leak-proof. Today's technology allows this kind of direct transfer.

By 'monthly', we mean that UBI should be given every month so that people have a regular, predictable and reliable income stream. This has strong implications for the rate of *time* preference of the poor. In general, the rate of time preference of the poor households is very high, which means that they tend to focus on the present rather than on the future. In other words, what they earn they are forced to consume in the present rather than have any kind of future orientation in terms of savings or investment in human capital. When they experience a regular income stream, this changes substantially, and they tend to develop a future orientation—which means that they begin to balance their current consumption and investments for the future.

By 'unconditional', we mean that there should be no conditions whatsoever—*ex ante* or *ex post*. That is, neither conditions related to eligibility to receive basic income (age, gender, income level, etc) nor conditions related to demonstrating specific behavioural compliance or an output (school attendance, number of vaccinations taken, repayment of loans, etc). In general, most welfare programmes in India are conditional in nature and their continuation is controlled and regulated by a vigilant welfare bureaucracy. Conditions are paternalistic and humiliating, and they challenge the potential recipients to prove that they

deserve the support. By 'right', we mean that basic income ought to be given to people as a matter of right and not a scheme that



ILLUSTRATION: ROHNIT PHORE



Basic income: The idea and Indian experiments

UBI has the potential to provide a sense of security to individuals and households; to provide all the members of the society safeguards against the vagaries of market forces; and to give individuals the freedom to say 'no' to certain things and, equally, to say 'yes' to certain other things in their lives

can be withdrawn at any time or given as a temporary relief to cope with a

Theoretically, the efficacy of UBI is discussed assuming it is implemented with all the above characteristics. It is in this combination that UBI gains the potential power:

- to provide a sense of security to individuals and households;
- to raise the floor and provide all the members of the society a ground to stand on—and then build their lives on that foundation navigating through the vagaries of market forces;
- to enable individuals to possess the freedom to say 'no' to certain things, and equally to say 'yes' to certain other things in their lives.

Indian experiments

In India, the Self Employed Women's Association (SEWA) with the support of the UNICEF had conducted two experiments in Madhya Pradesh between 2011 and 2013. The first experiment was done in eight regular villages and the second in a tribal village. These experiments strictly adhered to the model described above. The transfers were:

• 'universal' within the village, which means all the residents of the village—

In the SEWA-UNICEF pilot in Madhya Pradesh, it was seen that food sufficiency improved, small and marginal farmers spent more time on their farms, livestock nearly doubled, and women started new enterprises

rich and poor-received the basic income;

- the entitlement was 'individual';
- 'cash' was either transferred to a bank account or, in the case of the tribal village, given directly to individuals;
- it was given to them 'every month'; ■ it was completely 'unconditional'; and finally,
- it was a 'right' since everyone was entitled to the basic income for the entire duration of the experiment, and even when a child was born during the experiment he/she was automatically added to the list of recipients.

In regular villages, each adult was paid ₹200 per month for 12 months, which was increased to ₹300 when the transfers were extended by five more months. In the tribal village, each adult was paid ₹300 for a period of 12 months. Children were paid half of that amount and money was transferred to their mothers' accounts.

The results of the experiment were extremely positive. Food sufficiency improved, small and marginal farmers spent more time on their farms and the result was that more land was brought under cultivation and agricultural production has increased, livestock nearly doubled, women started new enterprises, for smaller borrowings people moved away from the moneylenders to neighbours and relatives, and some people shifted away from more exploitative forms of employment to less exploitative ones. The liquidity that people enjoyed during the experiment empowered them and enabled them to make choices that turned out to be positive and emancipatory.

These positive results, it seems to me, can be primarily attributed to a *gestalt effect* caused by a convergence of different elements of the experiment rather than because of the simple act of injecting cash into the household. The overall effect of a regular basic income was truly transformative. The emancipatory value, it appears, was several times greater than the monetary value of the transfers both because of the convergence of the design elements and also cumulative effect over time.

(This is the first of the two-part series.)

Macroeconomic impact of uncertainty

SINGH

The author is lead economist, Dun and Bradstreet India

During 2012-18, did uncertainty play any role in influencing the movement of the multiple economic variables?

HE PERIOD OF UNCERTAINTY (after an economic shock or the fear of occurrence of the event, rather than the occurrence itself) can have a substantial impact on various economic variables by altering the decision-making behaviour of individuals at the macro or micro level. The economic shock here refers to any economic policy (monetary or fiscal), regulation changes, any decision taken by the central bank, policymakers or the government, or any unexpected economic development.

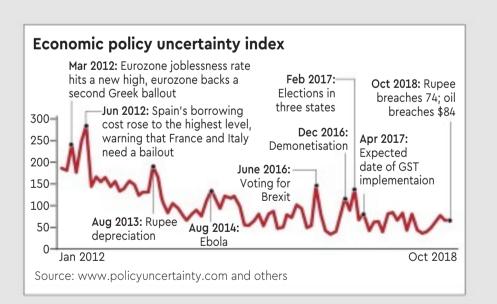
Although there has been significant research on the impact of uncertainty on economic variables, it was not until the recent financial crisis that it began to be widely researched and quantified. Several research papers have provided evidence on how increased uncertainty has made a noticeable impact on real activity in various countries. This is of particular importance to policymakers. For any policy decision to be effective, it becomes relevant that the potential benefits are rightfully understood by the group of individuals for whom the policy is designed for or the nation. Any uncertainty caused by the news of a policy decision might make it difficult to implement effectively and/or negate the positive outcomes to an extent. An example is the recent demonetisation and the implementation of GST, which created huge uncertainty and impacted the Indian economy.

It has been well-documented how uncertainty, regarding financial crises, has impacted the growth path of various countries globally, including India. For example, uncertainty explained part of the collapse in global economic activity in 2008-09 (Stock and Watson 2012) and of the sluggish ensuing economic recovery (IMF 2013).

During 2012-18 (till September 2018), did uncertainty play any role in influencing the movement of the multiple economic variables? We looked at the impact of economic policy uncertainty (EPU) shocks on Indian macroeconomic variables such as index of industrial production (IIP), retail inflation, short-term money market rates, stock market, the rupee, and imports using Impulse Response Function (IRF). As a measure of uncertainty, we have considered the EPU index developed by Baker et al (2013)—a news-based economic policy related uncertainty index for major economies around the world, including India. The accompanying graphic plots the uncertainty index and the various shocks that impacted the economy during this period.

It was found that the duration of the response in industrial production against the uncertainty shock lasted for about eight months before returning to long-term equilibrium level. Uncertainty caused significant changes in the initial few months, and a large impact in the third month. An impulse in uncertainty at time zero had a negligible impact on retail inflation or CPI; it impacted the most between first and second months, but the effects of the shock completely dissipated around the fourth month. It has also been found that uncertainty explained only 0.67% of the variation in CPI in the first month. An impulse in uncertainty on 91-day treasury bills at time zero had a maximum negative impact in the second month and became positive in the fourth, but started to taper off from then onwards.

Interestingly, for the stock market, an impulse in uncertainty at time zero had a maximum positive impact in the second month, which then started to taper off from the fourth month. One standard deviation shock in uncertainty causes a significant change in the rupee for three consecutive periods and it took seven months for the rupee to return to its equilibrium level. Further, one standard deviation shock in uncertainty caused a significant impact on imports during the first month and the impact of the shock lasted for six months before returning to equilibrium.



SINGAPORE VCC

INGAPORE HAS EVOLVED as a prominent global hub for the asset management industry, with its AUM close to \$2.4 trillion. The city state has also emerged as one of the top investing countries into India, with a cumulative FDI exceeding \$73 billion and portfolio investment exceeding \$37 billion.

Despite this, most funds managed by Singapore-based managers are either pooled or domiciled outside of Singapore due to lack of a flexible corporate vehicle. To address this, Singapore is now introducing a new corporate vehicle called the Variable Capital Company (VCC). The VCC framework has been cleared by the Singapore Parliament and is expected to be operational by early 2019.

The corporate framework

The VCC framework is meant only for fund industry since it mandates appointment of a Singapore-regulated fund man-

ager and an independent custodian. On the basics, a VCC is broadly similar to a conventional company as regards share capital with limited liability, a board of directors and many other features. At the same time, to facilitate entry and exit of investors, the VCC framework provides

A game-changer for FDI in India? Singapore's VCC framework is a

significant development for investment fund industry investing not only in India but the whole of Asia-Pacific region



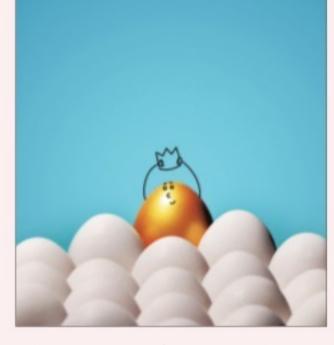
Authors are with Dhruva Advisors LLP

the following additional flexibility: ■ It can make distributions to shareholders out of its capital even if it has no profits or reserves:

- Its shares could be regularly redeemed or bought back without seeking shareholder approval each time;
- The value of its paid-up capital is always deemed equal to its NAV—its shares must be issued, redeemed and repurchased at
- such NAV; and ■ Apart from different classes of shares, VCCs can also issue debentures and bonds, which could be listed on stock exchanges;

VCCs can be set up as a single standalone fund or an umbrella fund. While a standalone fund enjoys all the above features of the VCC framework, an umbrella fund has additional advantage of creating two or more sub-funds whose assets and liabilities are completely segregated, i.e. losses of one sub-fund will not impact NAV of any other sub-fund.

An umbrella fund structure would help a large fund manager attain economies of scale by saving operational and compliance costs associated with setting up multiple corporate vehicles.



The taxation framework

For tax purposes, a VCC will be treated as a single entity, i.e. in case of an umbrella VCC, sub-funds will not need to undertake separate tax compliance. Further, a VCC should be eligible to access Singapore's tax treaty network where it is considered as a Singapore tax resident based its 'control and management'in Singapore.

As regards incentives, a VCC will be eligible to apply for tax exemptions available to other funds managed by a Singaporebased fund manager. Such exempt VCCs will also be eligible for GST remissions reducing the Singapore GST incidence on management fees to a small fraction. Fund managers will be eligible to apply for concessional tax rate of 10% in respect of their fees from VCCs.

Re-domiciliation of existing

overseas funds in Singapore The existing offshore funds with a framework similar to a VCC will be permitted to be re-domiciled in Singapore. Where the overseas fund is not structured similar to a VCC, then restructuring may

be explored prior to re-domiciliation. This feature is expected to give further boost to local domiciliation of investment funds in Singapore.

VCCs in Indian context

While the India-Singapore tax treaty has been revised to do away with the tax exemption of capital gains on sale of shares of an Indian company, the treaty still offers grandfathered exemption for cash equity investments made up to March 31, 2017 (irrespective of when such investments are sold). Further, it continues to exempt gains from other financial instruments (i.e. bonds, debentures, derivatives instruments, etc).

with feeder/pooling vehicles outside Singapore could face challenges on the eligibility of the India-Singapore tax treaty benefits due to introduction of Indian General anti-avoidance rule (GAAR) provisions effective from April 1, 2017, and the proposed introduction of treaty antiabuse provisions under the Multilateral Instrument (MLI).

However, the existing Singapore funds

The VCC framework provides an effective way to deal with the above challenges to investment funds. Once the framework is effective, fund managers will be able to pool funds in Singapore itself. Further, the VCC will have a Singapore-based investment manager, custodian, administrator, etc. This will significantly strengthen the commercial substance for investment funds and strengthen the case for treaty access in this post-BEPS era. One may also explore re-domiciliation of existing offshore pooling vehicles to Singapore with the similar intention for realignment with commercial substance.

The introduction of the VCC framework in Singapore is a significant development for the investment fund industry investing not only in India but the whole of Asia-Pacific region. Specifically from an India point view, clearly the VCC regime could prove to be a game-changer.

THE INDIAN EXPRESS, TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 19, 2019

THE EDITORIAL PAGE

WORDLY WISE

AS SOON AS YOU HAVE MADE A THOUGHT, LAUGH AT IT.

— Lao Tzu

♦ The Indian **EXPRESS**

Sounded By Sounded By Sounded Ramnath Goenka

BECAUSE THE TRUTH INVOLVES US ALL

EASY DOES IT

Low inflation stokes expectations of further monetary easing. But macroeconomic stability concerns remain

N MONDAY, AFTER Finance Minister Arun Jaitley's address to the RBI board on the interim budget, Governor Shaktikanta Das said that the central bank would discuss the issue of transmission of rates with banks this week. It has been over 10 days since the repo rate was cut by 25 basis points. The RBI appears concerned that credit flow has not been broadbased. The move to nudge banks to lower rates comes at a time when the latest data from the Central Statistics Office shows annual consumer price index (CPI) inflation to have touched a 19-month-low of 2.05 per cent, which is half of the RBI target. While the decline is largely on account of food inflation — which has now been negative for four successive months — it has, nevertheless, fueled expectations of the RBI effecting yet another cut in its benchmark repo or overnight lending rate. Most market players and analysts are not ruling out a fresh 0.25 percentage point reduction in April, before the coming Lok Sabha election. The possibility of further monetary easing has been reinforced by the release of the latest industrial production data for December, which shows a year-on-year growth of just 2.4 per cent. The overall trajectory of inflation in India forcing even an otherwise conservative RBI

to reassess demand conditions in the economy comes at a time when global policymakers, too, are reviewing their earlier monetary policy "normalisation" stance in the face of a slowdown in China and Europe. Until late last year, the bets were on the US Federal Reserve raising rates at least a couple of times this year. But the chairman of the world's most powerful central bank, Jerome Powell, has signaled that the Fed will now be "patient" when it comes to raising rates, after looking at headwinds to growth in major economies. Even the IMF, which, just over a year ago, talked of a "synchronised" global growth recovery, has warned of a bumpy road ahead.

Simply put, India may well enter the election season with low inflation (more so, in food) and falling interest rates, apart from a strong rupee and stable global crude prices (which were both worries only four months ago). This should ordinarily be good news for a ruling party. But when low or negative food inflation is also synonymous with agrarian distress and the RBI and, in turn, banks being under pressure to slash interest rates (despite fiscal slippages on the part of the Centre as well as states) a sign of weak growth, investment and job conditions, matters become more complex. In the past, staying the course on macroeconomic stability has always proved beneficial for the Indian economy. There is no reason to assume otherwise in today's uncertain times.

WHO RULES?

Kiran Bedi's face-off with Chief Minister Narayanasamy in Puducherry raises questions about role of Lt Governor in UTs

HE UNSEEMLY CONFRONTATION between Lieutenant Governor Kiran Bedi and Chief Minister V Narayanasamy in Puducherry raises serious questions about the remit of the LG's office in this Union Territory with an elected government. Narayanasamy is sitting on a dharna outside the Raj Bhavan since February 13 demanding that the LG approve his cabinet's proposals concerning social welfare schemes and other governance matters. Bedi, who left Puducherry for Delhi a day after the dharna began, cut short her visit and returned to the state capital on Sunday. Both parties have preferred to engage through open letters, public statements and social media barbs instead of sitting across the table and sorting out their differences. Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal and his deputy, Manish Sisodia, visited Narayanasamy on Monday to express solidarity and to highlight what they see as an attempt by the Centre to usurp the powers of elected governments through the LG's office.

In Delhi, a combative government has taken its disputes with the LG to the Supreme Court. Though the issues in Delhi and Puducherry seem similar, the LG of the National Capital Territory has more executive powers compared to his counterpart in the southern UT. This is understandable since Delhi is also the home of the Union government. The Government of Union Territories Act, 1963 allows the office discretionary powers, but these must be exercised judiciously and only in exceptional circumstances. Puducherry has an elected assembly and the task of law making should be entrusted with it. Similarly, public policy and administration must be left to the elected representatives. Bedi has chosen to ignore this simple principle and is insisting that the elected government function under her direction. For instance, among the proposals Bedi has refused to approve are a government initiative for free rice — the LG has mooted cash transfers, instead — and salaries for teachers in aided institutions. The LG may disagree with these, but should she stall them, especially since some of these proposals were a part of the ruling party's election manifesto and are within the ambit of law?

The UT Act was legislated more than half a century ago. Much has changed in UTs like Delhi and Puducherry, which have legislative assemblies. The office and role of the LG needs to be restructured to recognise the shift in public sentiment towards more democracy. Clearly, there is a need to reimagine the political system in the UTs in favour of the popular government.

SPACE FOR HUMOUR

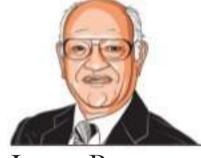
Nasa seeks jokers in the pack to keep cooped-up crews in good humour. It has been imagined before

AVING RECRUITED PILOTS, aerospace engineers, electronics technicians and meteorologists for decades, Nasa is turning the attention of its human resource department on an unexpected profession — natural clowns. As it prepares for the era of long-haul spaceflight, it confronts a problem that has provided the plot for hundreds of science fiction stories: How do humans trapped in the tiny cabin of a spacecraft hang together for months or years, and not attack each other? The ideal solution (seen to best advantage in Arthur C Clarke's 2001: A Space Odyssey) is to put them to sleep. But neither ageing nor waking and sleeping are understood well enough for us to interfere with them. And besides, a cheaper solution is already available

It has been observed that teams work better together if one of the members has a sense of humour. A bit of chaffing cuts through formality, and a joke helps to break the tension when people have serious differences, often by diverting attention from the point at contention. The capacity for humour is innate, and researchers are now helping Nasa to identify the traits that would let it zero in on the joker in the pack. The world's premier space agency has made it clear that a good line of gags won't automatically qualify a candidate for the job. The person must also be able to read the space altimeter, do some extra-vehicular activity, repair the leaking thingamajig, and generally lend a shoulder.

However, it must be pointed out that these pioneering humorists will not be the first clowns in space. In the popular imagination, that honour must go to the cast of the 1988 cult classic, the Chiodo Brothers' *Killer Klowns from Outer Space*. As always, reality is doomed to toss fretfully in the wake of the human imagination.

I grieve for my men



But having led Punjab Police in fight against terrorism, I can say that strong-arm tactics alone will not work

Julio Ribeiro

I GRIEVE FOR my men who lost their lives so suddenly in Pulwama. The entire country is grieving. More so, the man who once commanded the force. After my three years-plus as Mumbai city's police chief, I was asked to head the Central Reserve Police Force (CRPF), which I did for a few weeks in 1985 till the then prime minister felt that the state of Gujarat needed my services.

Earlier, as a middle-ranking officer, I had served the CRPF as the Range DIGP in Hyderabad for three and a half years before doing a staff assignment at its headquarters in Delhi for another two and a half years. Having spent six years in this excellent force, readers will forgive me for shedding more tears than others who do not know the ethos that informs the performance of its brave jawans.

Unlike the army that recruits mainly from the martial races and organises its regiments accordingly, the CRPF casts its net all over the country. Great care is taken to ensure that all states, all communities, all religions, all castes and all languages are represented in each battalion. The men soon learn a common language that is Hindi or Hindustani and they adjust to a common diet and a common ethos. They live away from their families for months together, most often in the most primitive conditions.

In the ranks, the CRPF is slyly referred to as "Chalte Raho Pyare" because of the constant moves a battalion is called upon to undertake when unrest raises its ugly head in some remote corner of the land. Theirs is not to reason why. They are to obey and obey instantly without any waste of time.

The job of the officers and the NCOs is to ensure that discipline is always maintained

Outpourings of grief, specially spontaneous ones by common citizens, are reflections of human feelings and love of the country. But they alone will not usher in an end to the trouble our country faces in Kashmir or in other parts of the land where terrorism and insurgencies threaten normal civilised existence. At the cost of sounding politically incorrect, let me point out that the classical form of terrorism that we face today in Kashmir

requires a classical response.

and that the training of the men to tackle terrorists and violent mobs is imparted in such a manner that the minimum possible force is used on each occasion. Hence, it grieves me to learn of the instant loss in one explosion detonated by a "fidayeen" of 40-odd well-trained and highly motivated men of the force I once called my own.

Was it preventable? Many will argue

that more precautions could have been taken to sanitise the road on which the convoy travelled. That is easy for arm-chair analysts to conclude. They need to be reminded that security forces have to be lucky all the time in operational areas in order to survive. The terrorists need such luck only once in order to succeed. A determined suicide bomber knows that once he has escaped the intelligence networks and security cordons, no power on earth can stop him. If the going is impossible on a dozen occasions, a chink in the security armour may possibly be found on the thirteenth try. And the consequences are disastrous, as we have seen. You have to be alert 24x7 each day in such terrain if you want to die in your own bed at home.

The sacrifices these men have made have been acknowledged by ordinary folks all over the country. In Mumbai, the city in which I live, street corner gatherings of men and women of all ages, castes and creeds, have been spontaneously organised with lamps being lit in memory of the fallen brave.

At a western classical music concert at the NCPA on Saturday evening, the orchestra conductor asked the audience to stand in silence for a couple of minutes to remember the dead. A day earlier, the Turf Club authorities had asked race-goers to do the same at a race meeting. And on Sunday, the priest presiding at mass in church asked worshippers to join a silent procession after the service to voice solidarity with those who died.

Outpourings of grief, specially spontaneous ones by common citizens, are reflections of human feelings and love of the country. But they alone will not usher in an end to the trouble our country faces in Kashmir or in other parts of the land where terrorism and insurgencies threaten normal civilised existence. At the cost of sounding politically incorrect, let me point out that the classical form of terrorism that we face today in Kashmir requires a classical response

Having led the Punjab Police in its fight against terrorism of the nationalist variety and having exchanged views and experiences with the Chief Constable of Northern Ireland on a visit in 1988, I can state with some authority that strong-arm tactics alone will not put an end to such troubles. Of course, the extremist leaders need to be neutralised by determined security operations but if the community to which the terrorist belongs is not won over, the latter will continue to receive "oxygen" from co-religionists and one fallen terrorist will soon be replaced by one or even two or three emotionally-charged men.

It is imperative, therefore, to revise the policy of "muscular response" to one that includes a simultaneous appeal to the good sense of the local inhabitants and treats them not as enemies but as respected citizens of this ancient land.

Ribeiro led the Punjab Police during some of the state's worst years of terrorism

HOPE & DESPAIR OF GULLY BOY

The film frames the wretched reality of urban poverty and the dream of a better life

Satyam Viswanathan

GULLY BOY HAS rapped its way into Hindispeaking India's consciousness with a new clarion call for a country simmering with aspiration. *Apna time ayega* (my time will come) is the conviction that helps Murad, a young Muslim man in Mumbai's inhuman slums, cope with the abyss between his wretched daily reality and the dream of a better, fuller life.

Most of us privileged Indians go about our daily lives acting as if the grotesque poverty all around us is invisible. We're too busy expanding our incomes and advantages to be bothered with the problem of systemic and widespread poverty. In this context, to set a big-budget Bollywood film with A-list stars inside a Mumbai slum, and accurately reflect the lives of its inhabitants — the standard-issue brutality and unbearable stress that defines their daily existence is an act of empathy and acknowledgement that is rare in our country. That the movie seeks to understand the people living in slums on their own terms, without reducing them to stereotypes that serve elite needs — as sources of cheap labour and objects of pity - makes it an even more important work of art.

portant work of art.

Gully Boy is getting relatively affluent Indians who stare unsympathetically (or maybe even with hostility) at slum dwellers every day, to cheer from their plush multiplex seats as an underdog tries to forge a path out of poverty and drudgery. It is worth noting, however, that the movie, in a nod to just how vicious life in Mumbai can be, does not try to give us a rags-to-riches tale. The story does not offer its protagonist anything

'Gully Boy' is getting relatively affluent Indians who stare unsympathetically (or maybe even with hostility) at slum dwellers every day, to cheer from their plush multiplex seats. It is worth noting, however, that the movie, in a nod to just how vicious life in Mumbai can be, does not try to give us

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more substantial than the promise of a Rs 10 lakh prize and a bit of fame. Ten lakhs doesn't go very far in Mumbai. Divine and Naezy, the original gully boys whose life stories inspired the movie, still live in the city's slums.

If foreigners could tell Indians apart based on the colour of our skin we would be ostracised by the global community for practicing a form of apartheid. Mumbai would look very much like Johannesburg or segregation-era America if class and caste distinctions were reflected in the colour of our skin. Though its citizens all live cheekby-jowl, Mumbai has long been ghettoised — formal housing is largely the preserve of

Hindus, while Muslims and Dalits (or Neo-Buddhists) are over-represented in the city's sprawling slums. If this divide was visible through a South African or North American lens, Mumbai's high rises and plusher localities would be almost entirely white, and its slums predominantly black.

We cheer for those who try and rise up against the odds in India but are unconcerned with the structural divides that prevent them from accessing opportunities and advancing (no running water and sanitation, no security that the flimsy roof above your head won't be demolished on a whim, no access to decent education). Human beings reduced to their stomachs, struggling daily with the uncertainty and indignity of not knowing how they will fill and empty their bodies, have their minds completely preoccupied with meeting these basic needs. Political parties benefit when voters are on edge and easily infuri-

ated. Incremental sops that keep the poor mired in an endless cycle of poverty create a fertile ground for identity politics that distract attention from poor governance, widespread corruption and appalling apathy. An optimist would say that *Gully Boy*,

with its big blockbuster credentials, speaks across India's seemingly unbridgeable divide, saying to our society's have-nots that the haves see them, acknowledge their struggle, and want them to succeed. Maybe the cheers for *Gully Boy* in Mumbai's swanky multiplexes are a sign that the elites who typically live in India by disengaging from its reality, are recognising that a society cannot continue to function without a serious churning, unless there is a concerted effort to engage with the vast majority of have-nots, with their stories, dreams and aspirations.

A pessimist would say that *Gully Boy* is a great feel-good story that makes relatively more affluent Indians feel noble about supporting the underdogs who they otherwise exploit and ignore with studied indifference. The cynical view is that it allows us to feel like we are caring and well-intentioned — and to buy this self-image for the price of a movie ticket, before flaunting it on Facebook

Apna time ayega is a clarion call that brims with the hope of a better future, but also contains the seeds of crushing despair. Because talent is distributed evenly, but opportunities are not.

The writer is a consumer researcher and part of the founding team at Junoon Theatre

Vietnamese stall drive of Chinese armoured column Cough MPs is beyond Provided advenCough MPs is be

FEBRUARY 19, 1979, FORTY YEARS AGO

CHINA-VIETNAM RIFT VIETNAMESE FORCES HAVE stalled the drive of a Chinese armoured column reinforced by infantry units five kilometres inside the rugged northwestern mountain province of Hoang Lien Song, the Voice of Vietnam said. The broadcast, monitored in Bangkok, said that a column of 10 Chinese T-62 heavy tanks had ground to a halt and was awaiting reinforcements from China. The column, originally consisting of 18 Chinese tanks, began crossing a floating bridge near Muong Khuong village in northwestern Vietnam, but Vietnamese forces managed to blow up the bridge destroying eight of the tanks, the Vietnamese claim. Thai intelligence sources indicated that the Chinese infantry too had been stalled by

barriers consisting of sharpened bamboo sticks and landmines laid by retreating Vietnamese units.

CONGRESS (I) BOYCOTT CONGRESS (I) MPS will boycott the joint session of the two Houses. President Neelam Sanjiva Reddy is due to address the joint sitting of the Lok Sabha and Rajya Sabha, marking the beginning of the 13-week budget session. The boycott decision was conveyed to the President by C M Stephen, leader of the Congress-I in the Lok Sabha and Kamalapati Tripathi, party leader in the Rajya Sabha. The two Congress-I leaders met the President and submitted a memorandum listing their reasons for ab-

staining from the joint session.

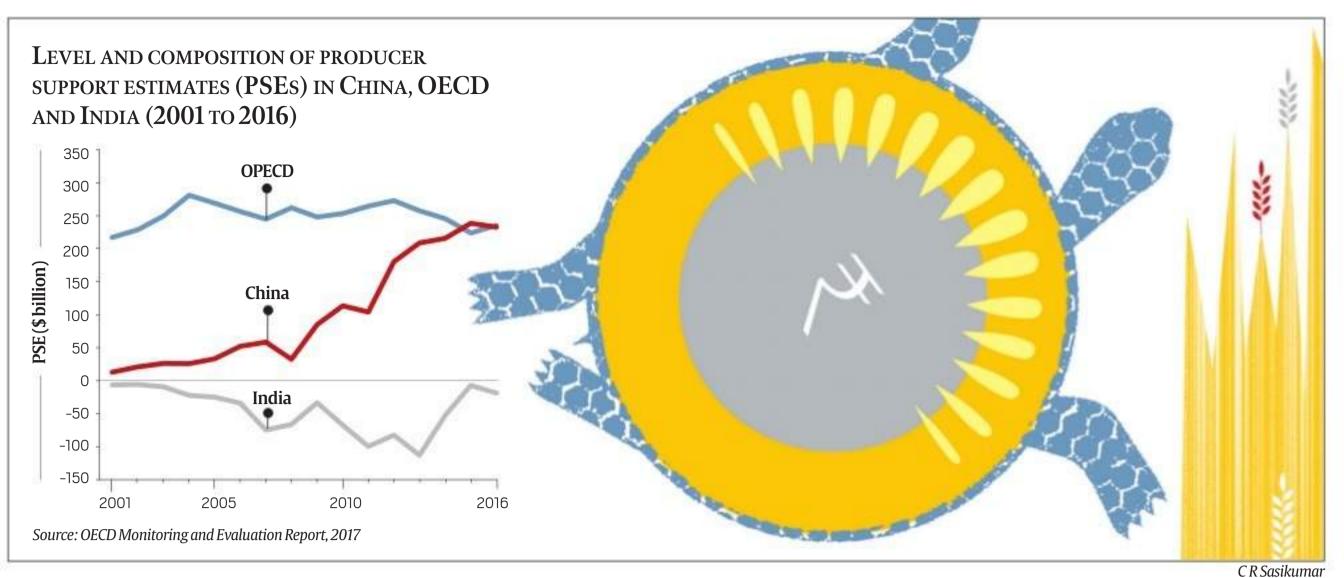
VAJPAYEE'S CHINA VISIT NOT CONCEALING HIS anxiety at the Chinese action against Vietnam, External Affairs Minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee cut short his China visit by a day and returned home to a quiet, low-key farewell. He looked a trifle disappointed as he boarded the Hovercraft to Hong Kong, rather like a well-settled batsman who returns to the dressing room in the last over of the day. Canton was only the last stretch of his oneweek visit to China, which had so far seemed satisfactory. During the three days in Peking, Vajpayee talked to Chairman Hua Guofeng, Vice-Premier Deng Xiaoping and Foreign Minister Huang Hua, reviewing both the international scene and bilateral issues.

5 THE IDEAS PAGE

WHAT THE OTHERS SAY

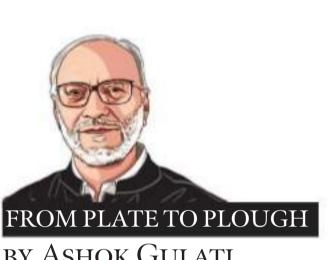
"Islamabad is hoping to attract oodles of investment money as Saudi Arabian Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman arrived in the country on Sunday."

—THE EXPRESS TRIBUNE



A race to atone for neglect of the farmer

But last-minute attempts, ahead of elections, are no substitute for the structural reforms and investments needed in the agriculture sector



BY ASHOK GULATI

WITH ELECTIONS APPROACHING, every party is swearing by farmers and trying to woo them for their votes. The Narendra Modi government has already announced a package of Rs 75,000 crore for about 12.6 crore small and marginal farmers. While in absolute terms, this looks sizeable, once it is divided by the number of farm families to be covered, the amount is very small – just Rs 6,000 per family per year, which is about 6 per cent of their annual income. This level of support, unless augmented further, may not go far in winning the farmers' confidence. Most would agree that farmers have been under stress for quite some time, and have not got justice so far. While the Modi government claims that

its record on overall growth (GDP) is better than the UPA government's (notwithstanding the suspicions many have about the revised GDP series), it is the nature of growth that matters as well. In a country where 47 per cent of the workforce is engaged in agriculture, it is the growth of agri-GDP that is even more critical for the alleviation of poverty and providing nutritious food.

The average annual agri-GDP growth in the first four years of the Modi government, for which data is available, is just 2.5 per cent compared to 5.2 per cent in the last four years of the UPA government. The exports of agriproduce have fallen since the peak of \$42.5 billion, achieved in 2013-14, to a negative growth in agri-exports during the Modi government's tenure. On the other hand, agriimports have consistently risen, reducing the net export surplus (exports minus imports)

from about \$25 billion in 2013-14 to less than \$10 billion in 2017-18. This has led to a glut of agri-produce at home and, consequently, prices have fallen, reducing the profitability ratio across most crops significantly, since 2013-14. And so also is the case with dairy. The government is saddled with massive stocks of grains, far above the buffer stock norms. For example, rice stocks with government agencies touched about 37 MMT on January 1, as against a buffer norm of only 7.6 MMT for that date. This speaks of massive inefficiency in the grain management system.

Needless to say, agriculture has been crying for wholesale structural reforms, especially in agri-marketing, from abolition/pruning of the Essential Commodities Act to reforming APMC, to futures trading, to a negotiable warehouse receipt system, to building commodity-specific value chains on the lines of Amul's milk model, etc. But the time for structural reforms has run out. And now, there is a race to compensate farmers for their losses, an admission of the failure of the agriculture policy followed so far, which has a massive in-built consumer bias.

India wants to compete with China and become a force in the world. It cannot do so unless it supports its farmers in a systematic manner. The Producer Support Estimates (PSEs) of India, China and the OECD clearly show that India has been implicitly taxing its farmers through restrictive trade and marketing policies. On the contrary, China supported its farmers to the tune of \$232 billion and the OECD countries by \$235 billion in 2016-17 alone (see graph). No wonder China produces more than triple of India's agri-output from a lesser cropped area.

Congress President Rahul Gandhi is going around the country and promising loan waivers to farmers, promising even higher MSPs (in Chhattisgarh, the Congress government has raised the MSP for paddy from Rs 1,750/quintal to Rs 2,500/quintal), and now a minimum monthly income for the poor. He has not spelt out yet what would be its size, and who all would be covered under it. Loan waivers and higher MSPs have serious limitations in terms of their reach. They cannot

but will also cost more. My guess is that the package could be anywhere between Rs 2 lakh crore to Rs 3 lakh crore, almost three to four times higher than the package announced by the Modi government. And this can swing farmers' votes. If the fisc has to be kept within reasonable

bounds, money has to be found by rationalising some other programmes. My two-penny unsolicited advice to all political parties is that it is time to revisit the food subsidy and MGN-REGA programmes and rationalise them. Food subsidy for consumers is Rs 1,84,220 crore and the MGNREGA is budgeted at Rs 60,000 crore in the current Union budget. On top of this, there are the pending bills of the Food Corporation of India, which amounted to about Rs 1.35 lakh crore in April 2018, and may not be much less in April 2019. So, in a way, for the so-called "poor", the safety nets cost anywhere between Rs 3.5 to 4 lakh crore.

reach more than 30 per cent of the farmers.

Direct income support has much better reach

The problem is that food subsidy covers 67 per cent of the population, with massive leakages. This needs restructuring and rationalisation. For example, if one restricts food subsidy to the bottom 20-25 per cent of the population, and links issue price to at least half the economic cost of the FCI, gives cash in lieu of grains to farmers, and restricts MGNREGA to drought years and/or merges it with agri-operations, one can easily save more than Rs 1 lakh crore per annum. This can be diverted to farmers. Similarly, put the fertiliser subsidy directly into the accounts of farmers, and let them choose whether they want to do organic farming or use chemicals. DBT through cash in farmers' account with linkage to Aadhaar, their bank accounts, geo-tagging of farms, and updating of land records is a better way to support farmers than loan waivers and unduly high MSPs. It may be noted that this is not a substitute to either the structural reforms or investments that are needed in agriculture. In fact, this is a sort of atonement for not acting on those fronts.

> Gulati is an Infosys Chair professor for Agriculture at ICRIER

Nationalism comes to Saudi Arabia

Prince Salman's downplaying of pan-Islamism offers New Delhi an opportunity to forge a strategic partnership with Riyadh



BY C RAJA MOHAN

WHEN WE THINK of nationalism in the Middle East, we recall "Arab nationalism" that animated Indian engagement with the region over the last several decades. But as Delhi prepares to host the Saudi Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman this week, India must come to terms with an unfamiliar idea — "nationalism in Arabia".

Promoting nationalism and downplaying pan-Arabism and pan-Islamism is at the very heart of Crown Prince Salman's effort to reorient Saudi Arabia's internal and external policies. And he is not the only one. Others, especially the United Arab Emirates, are also trying to construct a national identity to cope with the turbulence in the Middle East.

The kingdoms of the Arabian Peninsula did not have to fight for their "national" independence from colonial rulers. Nor did they inherit a clear and continuous territorial entity on which to found a nation. The Arabian monarchies, naturally, chose to rely on tribal and religious identities for their political legitimacy. The Arabian monarchies were also quite happy to go with the regional flow on supra-national politics. Today, as the Gulf monarchies review the growing threat of transcendental ethnic and religious movements, they are turning to nationalism as an

The rulers of the Arabian peninsula are also acknowledging that the construction of coherent communities out of their societies — overflowing with expatriates of different faiths and denominations — will need more than shared religion, sect, tribe or ethnicity. That is where "nationalism in Arabia" comes in. It is very different from "Arab nationalism", which was supposed to transcend national boundaries. Nationalism in Arabia is about defining the interests of separate sovereign states. In the past, Arab nationalism was seen, especially in India, as a progressive force countering conservative religious impulses. Today "nationalism in Arabia" has risen out of the debris of Arab unity and Islamic solidarity. That the old illusions are irrelevant is reflected in the fact that the Arab League and the Organisation of Islamic Cooperation are both in a shambles.

For newly-independent India, "Arab nationalism" had a special appeal. It resonated with the ideas of anti-imperialism as well as the slogans of state socialism and non-alignment. The issues that dominated the region — the conflict between the Arabs and Israel, the Palestinian struggle for nationhood and the joint initiatives by the Arabs — reinforced India's decision to frame the politics of the region in those terms.

As Arab nationalism went on the backfoot after the stinging defeat suffered by the Arabs in the 1967 war with Israel, the Saudis took the lead in launching the Organisation of Islamic Conference in 1969.

With the emergence of political Islam as the dominant discourse in the Middle East

came the concerns in Delhi at OIC's meddling in India's disputes with Pakistan, including Kashmir. In cultural terms, the Indian foreign policy elite and political classes were more comfortable with the pan-Arab Baathists in suits rather than the Gulf Sheikhs in their white thawbs or the Iranian mullahs in black. Neither India's traditional enthusiasm for Arab solidarity nor Delhi's fears about Islamic unity are of little policy consequence in the region.

That Saudi Arabia is ranged against the political Islam of Turkey and Iran and is confronting groups like the Muslim Brotherhood says something about the unfolding structural shift in the region's politics. The House of Saud, which let religion play an ever larger role in its domestic politics and foreign policy since the late 1970s, woke up to existential threats after 9/11 attacks, the Arab Spring beyond its borders and the challenge, from within, of the extremist groups that championed political Islam.

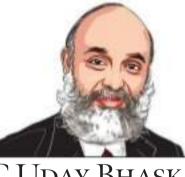
The attempts to strengthen nationalism in Saudi Arabia began under King Abdullah during his long years as the crown prince. The annual Janadriyah festival, that he began, celebrates the Arabian peninsula's heritage and culture. In 2005, he declared the Saudi National Day — September 23 — as a national holiday. This is the only non-religious holiday in the kingdom.

Crown Prince Salman is taking forward this agenda. Being a "Saudi" is slowly, but certainly, becoming as important as being a "Muslim" or an "Arab". The word "traitor" is increasingly being preferred over "infidel" to describe the enemies of the state. Sports, especially football, have begun to forge a new secular bond among the Saudis. "Patriotism" has also become the trope to mobilise popular sentiment behind the Saudi armed forces participating in the civil war in Yemen.

Prince Salman's nationalism is not all about symbols and vocabulary. In a land that has not known freedom of religion for non-Sunni Islamic denominations and non-Muslim faiths, he is taking some tentative steps. There is a conscious effort to strengthen the outreach to the long-sullen Shia minority in the kingdom's eastern part There is mounting speculation that Riyadh might have its first Shia mosque in the not too distant future. The first ever mass of Coptic Christians was held on December 1 last year at a private home in Riyadh and Prince Salman has received delegations of American Christian evangelicals.

These are but small steps in one of the world's most conservative societies. Salman's nationalism is also, without question, a top-down project. It will surely run into many a problem. But that does not take anything away from the fact that the kingdom is experimenting with long overdue change at home. Reorienting foreign policy has been much easier for Salman, who now talks of putting "Saudi Arabia First". As the importance of religion begins to decline in the conduct of Riyadh's foreign policy, India will have much to benefit from a closer strategic partnership between Prince Salman and other votaries of "nationalism in Arabia".

The writer is director, Institute of South Asian Studies, National University of Singapore and contributing editor on international affairs for The Indian Express



Watcher of the Valley

Major General Afsir Karim was prescient about a Pulwama-like attack

C Uday Bhaskar

THE RESPONSIBILITY FOR the Pulwama terror attack, that resulted in the loss of precious lives of CRPF personnel, has been brazenly claimed by the JeM (Jaish-e-Mohammad). The objective of the terror group and their handlers was clearly more than blowing up the convoy of buses. Some of the more corrosive ripples have been felt across India by citizens of Kashmiri origin and, to the credit of the CRPF, the organisation has reached out to those who have been targeted because of the angry post-Pulwama mood currently animating some Indians.

In a commendable outreach that speaks volumes about the professionalism of the CRPF, a tweet reads: "Kashmiri students and general public, presently out of Kashmir can contact @CRPFmadadgaar on 24x7 toll free number 14411 or SMS us at 7082814411 for speedy assistance in case they face any difficulties/harassment."

It is often forgotten that India is dealing with a complex Pakistan-sponsored proxy war in J&K that began in early 1990 with the forced expulsion of the local Hindu community. The Indian state abdicated its responsibility then and, 29 years later, a heavy price is being paid by the soldier. What are the objectives of this proxy war with its Islamic terror contour? Regrettably, the most insightful, informed and analytically incisive professional who had spent years studying this challenge to Indian security — Major General Afsir Karim — is no longer with us.

Afsir sir, as many of us referred to him, passed away on February 12 after a prolonged illness and was buried in Aligarh the following day, with his comrades-in-arms from the Para regiment doing the final farewell. Founder-editor of *Aakrosh* (India's first transnational terrorism journal), Karim, in a prescient editorial (January 2018) cautioned that as part of the Pakistan-supported proxy war, there would be the "advent of fidayeens with the aim of causing maximum casualties among the security forces in highsecurity areas". Pulwama occurred soon after his demise.

Detailing the objectives of the proxy war being waged by Islamic terror groups such as the JeM and the Lashkar-e-Taiba (LeT), Karim had specifically listed 10 of them. One objective is very relevant in relation to Pulwama: "Destroying political and social cohesion between diverse ethnic, caste and religious subgroups that exist in Kashmir" and, by extension, in the rest of the country. The insightful editorial also highlighted the proxy war pattern wherein, "Incidents calculated to increase alienation would be created." Sadly, what is happening in those parts of India where the post-Pulwama outrage has manifested in Kashmiri-owned shops being damaged, are cases in point.

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Essential Commodities Act

negotiable warehouse receipt

chains on the lines of Amul's

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so far, which has a massive

in-built consumer bias

for their losses, an admission

commodity-specific value

General Karim was the Division Commander in Gujarat before he retired in the late 1980s and had dealt with the emerging internal security challenges that would soon get embedded in the Indian political dynamic. His firm handling of certain covert and malevolent local political conspiracies that sought to stoke communal discord ensured that peace and order in his area of responsibility was not disturbed. While this was gratefully appreciated by the affected communities, my conjecture is that his superiors in Delhi were not quite enthused. However, given his deeply ingrained trait of not drawing attention to his many professional accomplishments, General Karim would never divulge more than what I needed to for my study on civil-military relations.

Deeply dismayed by the events of the last few years in J&K and the growing intolerance within India's social fabric, General Karim brought high-calibre lucidity into the understanding of the internal security challenge and its external overlap. The Kashmir imbroglio, in his view, was being exacerbated by: "The absence of any political dialogue, the slump of the local economy, high unemployment rate and excessive militarisation of the public space which helped the Wahhabi movement."

A review of J&K would indicate that the socio-religious transformation in the state has seen an increasing radicalisation that has choked the more tolerant Sufi tradition and introduced a new Wahhabi culture in the Valley. The 20-year-old Adil Ahmed Dar who rammed an explosive-laden car into the CRPF bus is representative of how young Kashmiri youth can be indoctrinated to blindly pursue the path of terrorism.

The abiding concern for many security professionals in recent years is the manner in which Indian politics is evolving and the negative impact this trend is having on the internal security fabric of India. Afsir Karim shared this concern. Thus, it was ironic that on the day of his burial in Aligarh, students of the local university were being booked for sedition and this was ostensibly triggered by fake news.

RIP General Karim. Soldier-scholar of the highest professional integrity.

> The writer is director, Society for Policy Studies, New Delhi

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

PEACE IS FOREMOST

THIS IS WITH reference to the editorial,'What terror feeds on' (IE, February 18). Students from Jammu and Kashmir cannot be held responsible for the actions of terrorists. In fact, the ones inflicting violence on them are playing into the hands of those who want to create a rift in the country.

Sanjay Chawla, Amritsar

YOUTH HOLD THE KEY

THIS REFERS TO the editorial, 'Punishing Jaish' (IE, February 16). While the nation mourns and while we take every diplomatic recourse to demonstrate our anger, we must not be blind to the core issue in Kashmir. Why are the educated, well-off youth of Kashmir getting drawn to terror? Kashmir needs to be nursed back to health with a multi pronged strategy.

Sangeeta Kampani, Delhi

LET BABRI NOT FESTER

This refers to the articles, 'A new temple, a new mosque' (IE, February 6), 'A rotten compromise' (IE, February 14), and Reconciliation with honour (IE, February 16). The suggestions of the authors on the resolution of the Babri Masjid dispute are worth responding to. A mosque is the house of Allah. Do we re-

LETTER OF THE WEEK AWARD

To encourage quality reader

intervention, The Indian **Express offers the Letter of** the Week award. The letter adjudged the best for the week is published every Saturday. Letters may be e-mailed to editpage@expressindia.com or sent to The Indian Express, B-1/B, Sector 10, Noida-UP 201301.

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ally need to reconstruct the Babri Masjid? Recall the trauma Hindus and Muslims have suffered over it. Remember the frightening riots in Mumbai in 1993 and Gujarat in 2002. The brutality in the name of God was cruel and numbing. Allah will be more pleased if we educate our poor, and turn them into worthy citizens.

JS Bandukwala via e-mail

@ieExplained

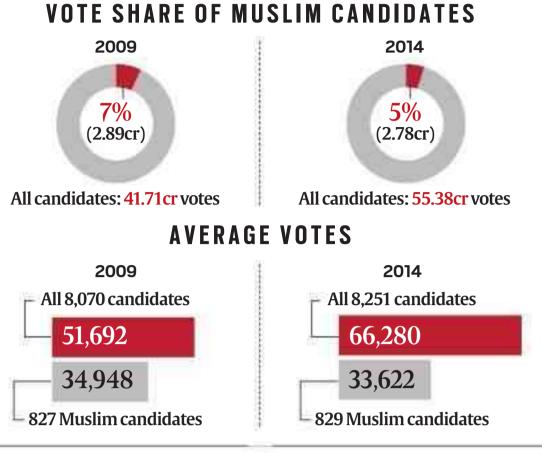
#ExpressExplained

If there are questions of current or contemporary relevance that you would like explained, please write to explained@expressindia.com

DECISION THE QUESTIONS THAT MATTER

What has been the extent of Muslim representation in elections & results?

Electorate larger, Muslim candidates got fewer votes



ZEESHAN SHAIKH

MUMBAI, FEBRUARY 18

DATA FROM the last two parliamentary elections underline a low vote count for Muslim candidates, and a low representation in Lok Sabha. Muslims make up 14.2% of the population; in both elections, just under 10% of the candidates were Muslim. Of the winners in 2014, 22 were Muslim, the lowest ever. The total votes cast rose from 41.71 crore in 2009 to 55.38 crore in 2014, but the votes polled by Muslim candidates fell 3.6%. Muslim candidates of 2009 polled 2.89 crore votes, or 6.9% of the total; those of 2014 polled 2.78 crore, or 5%. Muslim candidates polled an average of 34,948 votes in 2009, compared to an average 51,692 for all candidates; Muslim candidates' average fell in 2014 when the average for all candidates rose.

The states

In Maharashtra in 2009, 114 Muslim candidates had together polled 13.1 lakh votes, or 3.53%; in 2014, 127 nominees polled 6.5 lakh votes, or only 1.34%

In Assam, votes for Muslim candidates fell from 24.4 lakh to 19.6 lakh. Of 40 Muslims contesting 14 seats, two won. Muslims account for 34.2% of Assam's population (2011). In Andhra Pradesh, the number of votes polled by Muslim candidates fell from 22.4 lakh to 15.6 lakh,

and in Gujarat, from 4.3 lakh to 4.1 lakh. In UP, Muslim candidates polled 73 lakh votes (13.2%) in 2009, followed by 1 crore (12.4%) in 2014. Muslims make up 18.5% of UP's population; none of its 80 MPs is a Muslim. In Bihar, Muslim candidates polled 32.44 lakh votes in 2009 (82 candidates, 12.3%) and 43.94 lakh in 2014 (79, 12.2%).

West Bengal, with a 25% Muslim population, elected 8 Muslim MPs. In 2009, 57 candidates polled 58.13 lakh (13.6%); in 2014, 88 polled 89.42 lakh votes (17.3%).

The reasons

A Muslim MP said the political climate of 2014 made it very difficult for Muslim candidates to get votes from outside their community. Some sociologists disagree.

"Data can not truly represent the complexities of constituencies. There are other factors at play... Unlike popular perception, there is a high degree of sociological plurality in the community. This diversity determines their nature of political engagement. In my mind there are many Muslim communities who do not want Muslim candidates to represent them," said Hilal Ahmed, associate professor with the Centre for Study of Developing Societies.

> **NEXT** Why can Shiv Sena #18 Why can Sniv Ser and BJP not stay apart in Maharashtra?

SIMPLY PUT QUESTION & ANSWER

Should we worry of recession?

Economics Nobel winner Paul Krugman warns that the US could possibly be heading for a recession. Amid slowdown in Europe, how strong are the grounds for such fears in the US, and what can it mean for India?

SHAJI VIKRAMAN

CHENNAI, FEBRUARY 18

IN AUGUST-September last year, much of the commentary about a decade of the global financial crisis of 2008 featured the global recovery and the rebound in the United States economy. The bounce-back was strong enough for the US Federal Reserve to signal two rate cuts in 2019 and for global central banks to give notice that a prolonged phase of easy money was coming to an end. Did all of them speak a little too soon? A few days ago, Nobel laureate Paul Krugman sounded a warning in Dubai when he told Bloomberg that the world's biggest economy, the US, could be heading for a recession late in 2019 or in 2020. "I couldn't be definitive, but it seems pretty likely," he said.

What is the ground for such fears?

According to Krugman, the US is in worse shape than it was in 2008. What the economist was apparently referring to is the country's huge public debt which, at a little over \$22 trillion, has been growing over the last few years, and debt-to-GDP ratio — a measure of the ability of a country to repay debt rising to 104% now. He is looking at a recession also because of the slowdown in Europe, where economic powerhouse Germany has been hit because of tariff wars involving the US and China, a recession in Italy, and slowing growth in France.

"Europe is clearly experiencing a slowdown to recessionary levels already and has no recourse. Draghi (chief of the European central bank ECB) can't cut rates because they are negative already. So I think Europe is in a danger spot, potentially as big as China," Krugman told Bloomberg. The worry regarding China is the trade war with the US which, if not settled, could dampen growth or stoke a recession, according to some. The other reason for Krugman to be downbeat is the current US leadership including the US Treasury Secretary — whom he contrasts with the "remarkable" leadership during the 2008 global financial crisis.

The pessimism also stems from Krugman's reading as well as that of another doomsday predictor, economist Nouriel Roubini (who wrote in September 2018 in *Project Syndicate* that in 2020, conditions would be ripe for a financial crisis followed by a global recession). Like Krugman, Roubini also believes that trade disputes, an unsustainable stimulus and a massive public debt will leave little room for a stimulus the next time around. That is because the top central banks of the world may not have the firepower to cushion the impact of a recession, having bought massively into bonds and other assets during the global financial crisis to combat that and to ensure easy money. In short, what the doomsday predictions point to is that the top global central banks may not have the policy tools to provide easy liquidity given the liabilities on their balance sheets.

Are the fears overblown?

US President Donald Trump may still be euphoric about the world's biggest economy (at a growth of 4%) but it is interesting to weigh what Jerome Powell, the chairman of the US Federal Reserve, the world's most powerful central bank, had to say in January,





WORLD ECONOMIC OUTLOOK PROJECTIONS (YEAR-OVER-YEAR PERCENTAGE

CHANGE)

	2019	2020		
World output	3.5	3.6		
United States	2.0	1.7		
China	1.9	1.9		
Japan	1.1	0.5		
Germany	1.3	1.6		
UK	1.5	1.6		
India*	6.7	7.3		
France	1.5	1.6		
Brazil	2.5	2.2		
Italy	0.6	0.9		
Canada	1.9	1.9		

* For India, data and forecasts are presented on a fiscal year basis and GDP from 2011 onward is based on GDP at market prices with FY2011/12 as a base year. Source: IMF

A vegetable stand in Palermo, Italy, in November 2018. Italy's economy has been shrinking and the eurozone's barely growing, raising concern about a global slowdown. Around October last year, predictions of a major economic downturn or recession in 2019 went from being a crank view to conventional wisdom. Gianni Cipriano/The New York Times

(left) Paul Krugman, then a professor at Princeton University, speaks at a press conference on October 13, 2008, soon after he was awarded the Nobel Memorial **Prize in Economic Sciences.** *Jessica Kourkounis/The New York Times*

Economic Association, where he was flanked by two of his predecessors, Janet Yellen and Could the predictions be wrong? Ben Bernanke. The US economy is in strong Roubini, who earned the name "Dr shape but the market was pricing in down-Doom" after famously calling the 2008 housside risks that weren't visible yet, according to Powell. Inflation is still muted and the jobs

at the annual meeting of the American

modative at this point — a far cry from the

time last year when most bets were on them

moving towards raising interest rates. The

normalisation of policy or a return to the pol-

icy before the era of cheap money dating to

2008 appears to be a couple of quarters away.

vinced but Powell said last month that the

US Federal Reserve will be prepared to ad-

just policy quickly and flexibly, and to use all

its policy tools to support the economy,

should that be appropriate, to keep expan-

sion on track, the labour market strong and

inflation close to 2%. What he has indicated is that the central bank will be on course to

change tack as it did in 2016 when, after sig-

nalling the possibility of multiple rate in-

creases, it settled for just one because of the

Krugman and Roubini may not be con-

ing bubble in the US, is seen as being cynical For those worried about the forecasts of a or labour market is still strong, with high-fre-"perfect storm" in 2020, there may be some quency data yet to mirror some of these worcomfort. Krugman himself admits that he ries and with asset prices picking up. The has been wrong in the past. "My track record monetary policy of the European Central is bad," CNBC has quoted him as saying. Bank, or the Bank of England, too is accom-

Where does all that leave India?

underlying economic conditions.

An upside of the current scenario, marked by low interest rates and an accommodative policy of central banks and low inflation, will be that the RBI could have more room for cutting interest rates further. Oil prices, a major threat to macroeconomic stability, have been relatively low. Foreign flows have ebbed for quite a while with domestic investors putting money into stocks and mutual funds. That has also seen a slide, but once the political uncertainty is over after the Lok Sabha polls and there is clarity on policies and the direction of reforms and measures to address agrarian distress, the tide could change. That would also be contingent on getting the fisc back in shape, and any near-term impact in the wake of the terrorist attack in Kashmir.

From schemes to systems: Why the difference matters

From loan waivers to income support for farmers, Ayushman Bharat to Ujjwala, Jan Dhan to Mudra, social welfare is shaping the national conversation as Lok Sabha elections approach. In a series, World Bank experts take stock of social protection in India

IN ELECTION YEAR EXPERTS EXPLAIN PART 1

JUNAID AHMAD

BETWEEN 1997 and 2017, India's per capita national income increased more than fourfold. The pace of poverty reduction accelerated, with a three-to-four-fold increase after 2000. To progress further, India needs a large, productive, and healthy middle class. This requires sustained expansion of good jobs, human capital, and equal opportunities. While India faces an exceptional task due to its size and diversity, it doesn't have to tackle challenges posed by pursuing fast-paced economic transformation in isolation.

International experience holds important insights, particularly on how strong social protection systems can support the growth process. Most G20 countries have increased expenditure on social protection as they grow. Why? Because while growth can lift people out of poverty, it cannot ensure escape from vulnerability to crises. Rich countries invest significantly in protecting their citizens from risks posed by hospitalisation, disasters or old age.

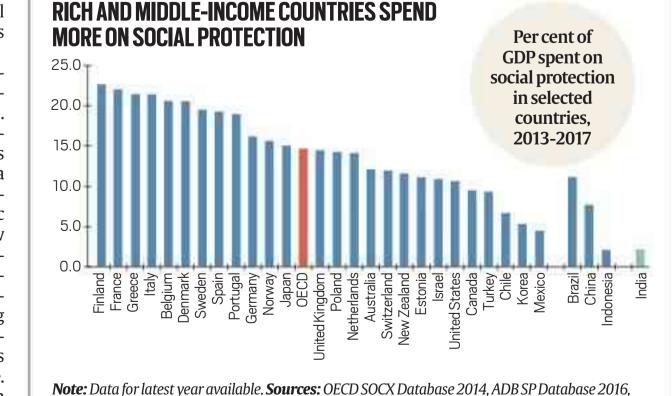
Moving forward, social protection in India is poised for a fundamental transformation from a set of fragmented schemes to an inte-

grated system — a fundamental point missed in the simplistic discussion about Universal Basic Income (UBI) or quasi-UBI measures such as guaranteed income support.

Successive Indian state and central governments have invested in important building blocks of a social protection system. Budgets have been enhanced, a larger number of people are being covered, and a series of new programs have been launched with a focus on rights-based entitlements and technological innovations. The Socio-Economic Census (SEC) in 2011, which collected new data on asset and socio-demographic information, can make the beneficiary identification process more transparent. Governmentto-person payments have received strong impetus through campaigns to open bank accounts and to transition to digital payments through the Direct Benefit Transfer initiative.

The NITI Aayog and the Fourteenth Finance Commission have also enabled a framework for consolidation of schemes and for states to gain greater fiscal autonomy. New insurance schemes for health, life, crop failure and accidents have been announced and given priority. India has signed on to achieve the UN SDG calling for "nationally appropriate social protection floors and systems".

But progress towards outcomes remains ad hoc, often restricted to specific schemes and states. And the jump towards UBI or guaranteed income may fall into a similar trap. Instead, the focus needs to be on tran-



World Bank Brazil Public Expenditure Review 2016, India Union Budget 2018.

sitioning the many innovations that currently operate in silos into a harmonised and scaled-up system of social protection. How should this be done?

At this stage of development, India needs an overarching social protection strategy to guide how various laws, innovations, schemes, staff and budgets will coordinate tactics to consolidate delivery costs, avoid administrative duplication, and respond to

India's diverse and changing risk profile.

A large share of social protection schemes operating in modern India are designed for the past. India, even of the recent past of 1977, was mired in chronic poverty, with a largely agrarian labour force, and barely networked. That India now only exists in pockets — most of the country has seen booming tele-digital and transport connectivity, sharp declines in income poverty, and new neglected

sources of risks related to climate, urbanisation, and migration. This is important policy and cognitive shift requires national and state governments to establish a nodal policy vehicle through which strategic thinking and coordination across schemes and states can be achieved.

As India moves towards defining a social protection strategy for its future, international

experience suggest three important lessons. ■ Global experience highlights that universal and adequate insurance cannot be achieved by hundreds of state and central schemes operating in silos. Emerging economies have focussed on comprehensive coverage through program consolidation and convergence. Countries like Brazil have streamlined schemes and established integrated platforms which combine delivery of cash transfers to poor households with delivery of health, nutrition and education. China and Indonesia implement fewer than

10 national social assistance programs. ■ International experience also emphasises the need to move away from a one-sizefits-all model by allowing sub-national governments greater flexibility as political economy, labour markets, demographic attributes and risk profiles vary by location. The Chinese, Brazilian and Indonesian social protection architecture are heavily decentralised, enabling local governments to design, plan, and deliver a core basket of benefits within a nationally defined policy framework and budget.

■ Most importantly, global experience suggests that no strategy can create an effective social protection architecture without a capable state. Of late, there appears to be a growing political appetite to consider quasi-UBI schemes at the national and state level. However, these programs require a strong tech-enabled delivery chain which can target and administer benefits. Ensuring technology is leveraged effectively without triggering exclusion and privacy violations requires robust regulation. As more flexibility is given to states, their capacity to plan, learn and implement programs must also be strengthened, particularly at the sub-district level. Brazil and Mexico have invested heavily in local administration and social workers to manage dynamic social registries and public

India doesn't need to mimic programs in Brazil or China. It must incorporate international lessons as it evolves and catches up with the changing needs of its people. It's time to think beyond singular schemes. A broader social protection strategy for a more urban, middle-income, mobile, diverse and decentralised India is urgently required.

> Junaid Ahmad is the Country Director for the World Bank in India.

> > **POVERTY TO VULNERABILITY**

CHINESE WHISPERS

When Congress president Rahul Gandhi picked Jyotiraditya Scindia to strengthen

the party in western Uttar Pradesh and

made him in-charge of party affairs in the

relief. They were happy in the thought that

joy has proved short-lived. There are clear

contest from his traditional Guna-Shivpuri

seat, he is also demanding a few more

seats in the Gwalior-Chambal region -

where Congress registered a thumping

victory in the recent Assembly polls – for

region, some Madhya Pradesh Congress

leaders had heaved a collective sigh of

Scindia wouldn't have much time to devote to Madhya Pradesh and would

have no say in the ticket distribution process before the Lok Sabha election. Their

indications that not only will Scindia

Short-lived glee

May the best man win

Marquee local brands passing into foreign hands has stopped evoking desi rancour



ACROSS THE BOARD

SHAILESH DOBHAL

ime was when even fizzy drinks changing ownership from Indian to foreign hands was seen as a national sellout. Remember the hoopla around Ramesh Chauhan selling Parle brands like Thumbs Up and Limca to globe-trotting American

transnational Coca-Cola in the early nineties? Or Kwality ice cream being acquired by the Indian subsidiary of Anglo-Dutch multinational, the then Hindustan Lever Limited. Or HLL again getting hold of Tata's Lakme and Hamam in mid nineties.

The debate then was how Indian firms and brands in the end were incapable of standing up to the might of the deep-pocketed foreign firms, and needed to be ring-fenced and/or protected from marauders from outside our shores. Such was the fear of the foreign firm that it did not matter even if it was owned by a non-resident, like Swraj Paul's famous aborted bid for Escorts and DCM in the early eighties.

Just scanning the headlines of newspapers over the last few months shows how much we have changed. The US-

based Kellogg's is looking at acquiring the century-old sweetmeat-and-savoury brand Haldiram's in an over ₹21,000 crore bid, according to one newspaper. Interestingly, the debate on this potential takeover is not around desi versus videshi but how it's a difficult deal to execute given that the brand and the business rights are spilt geographically among three founder families.

Earlier, the country's biggest ecommerce firm Flipkart moved smoothly to American retailer Walmart without anyone battling a nationalist eyelid. Malaysian healthcare major IHH acquired debt-ridden hospital chain Fortis and American private equity firms Blackstone and TPG Capital are reportedly in the race for another homegrown hospital brand in Medanta.

Eveready, that battery brand of our

childhood, may soon lighten up the stable of American Energizer or Duracell. Canadian investor Brookfield may check into Hotel Leela, one of the troika of oldest local hotel firms, the other two being Taj and Oberoi. And French dairy major, the euro 17 billion Lactalis is gulping down local businesses — like the ₹1,700-crore deal for Prabhat Dairy of late, and Hyderabad-based Tirumala Milk Products sometime back.

Why even in media, often billed as strategic, local entertainment-and-news television biggie Zee may soon count a foreigner, likely American, as a major owner according to chief executive and founder's son Punit Goenka. Though not exactly comparable to the then hostile bid by Swraj Paul, another non-resident owned foreign firm, ArcelorMittal, is close to acquiring a big industrial unit in Essar Steel.

According to a recent report on mergers and acquisitions by CII-PwC India, Value Creation: Laying the Foundation for Mergers and Acquisitions, an average of 600-700 Indian companies were acquired annually over the last decade. The share of

The share of battery in the

on its size should fall from

over 40 per cent now to

This statistic is based on

diamond of batteries"

66 per cent of the global

the disturbed Democratic

and copper from which

a by-product have funded

armed clashes in Congo for

Republic of Congo

decades

evolving battery technology

that is focussed on reducing

the use of cobalt, the "blood

supply of cobalt comes from

Revenues from cobalt, nickel

battery material is obtained as

19 per cent by 2030,

according to Statista

total cost of an EV, depending

inbound M&As to overall foreign direct investments into the country has hovered around a fourth in the last three years or so, pointing to a robust activity involving foreign firms.

Witness the near absence of any voice against the 'foreigner' gobbling away 'our' companies. One may argue that India, and India Inc., had got over its fear of the foreigner sometime back. And it is not that brands and businesses have not been sold to foreigners earlier. All true, but it is only now that the polity is truly shedding the last vestiges of the protected, pre-liberalised era that bred a feeling of inadequacy and inferiority that manifested in protectionism. Almost three decades of living and surviving in a near-open economy has given the confidence of being able to compete with the global best. The earlier rancour associated with "colour of money" — whether equity, investment or loan — is completely absent of late. And when selling out, the focus is to only look at the best buyer, and if it happens to be a foreigner so be it.

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Barbs over dharna

some of his close aides.



Puducherry Lieutenant Governor Kiran Bedi (pictured) was ticked off on social media and by Opposition parties for ridiculing Chief Minister V Narayanasamy, who was on a symbolic dharna to "protest" Bedi's alleged interference in the governance of the state. "A member of the media asked me an interesting question. 'Is dharna also yoga?' I said, 'Yes it is. It depends on the purpose for which you sit... what kind of asanas you perform and the sound you create." Bedi tweeted in the afternoon with a picture of a crow and headlined kauvva asana (crow yoga). Congress leaders and social media users said the post was in poor taste; some users posted photographs of Bedi sitting on a dharna during the Anna Hazare-led anticorruption movement in New Delhi in 2011.

Swadeshi offensive

The Swadeshi Jagran Manch, an affiliate of the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh, has spearheaded a campaign against the use of Chinese goods over the past couple of years. On Monday, the Manch's convener, Ashwani Mahajan, wrote to the Prime Minister, welcoming the government's decision to withdraw the most favoured nation status to Pakistan in the wake of the Pulwama terror attack. Mahajan demanded the government create "similar hurdles for Chinese companies" because China has blocked India's efforts to get the United Nations to list Jaish-e-Mohammed chief Azhar Masood as a global terrorist. The Manch also demanded the government ask people to uninstall Chinese apps, like TikTok and Helo, which have been banned in countries like Indonesia, from their phones. It said the government should curtail the operations of Chinese telecom companies in India.

Cobalt puts the brakes on India's EV plans

Tumultuous Congo dominates global supply, which makes lithium-ion batteries too expensive for mass-market cars

KUNAL BOSE

n the absence of a policy, which is still in the drawing board, it is highly unlikely that the share of electric cars and two-wheelers here will rise to government's targeted 30 per cent of total vehicle sales in 2030 from less than 1 per cent now. As the Indian automobile industry waits for a roadmap for the transition from fossil fuel to electricity based road mobility and building a battery charging infrastructure across the country. China already has an electric vehicles (EV) market that is bigger than the combined sales in the US and Europe. Industry officials here attribute China's success in accounting for well over half the global sale of more than a million units for the first time in 2017 to a combination of generous subsidies and tight regulation of emissions that Beijing laid out.

In contrast, India, the world's fourth largest automaker, is taking an unconscionably long time to secure a foothold in the EV segment in spite of its close to 85 per cent import dependence on oil that impacts the country's balance of payments and has the

transportation accounting for 11 per cent of total carbon emissions. Many other leading automobile making countries enjoying government support are making rapid strides in building EV capacity.

Based on this, consulting group McKinsey says the world will see EV production rising to 4.5 million units in

2020, which will constitute around 5 per cent of the global light vehicle market. More than 3 million batterypowered EV and plug-in hybrid vehi-



cles were on world roads in 2017, a 54 per cent jump on 2016.

Interestingly, New Delhi's procrastinating on announcing an EV policy has not deterred Mahindra & Mahindra and Tata Motors from betting

big on electric mobility. Convinced that the future of automobile is in EV, JSW Steel Chairman Sajjan Jindal has done considerable groundwork to make car making the next diversification for the group after

power and cement. He says cars have always "fascinated" him. He did look at China, which has moved into world leadership position in EV. But since he has come to the conclusion that it will not be easy to "sell" a Chinese car in India, Jindal has now decided to get the technology from either Germany or Austria.

Home-grown groups are going ahead with their EV programmes in full throttle even though India is yet to sound the death knell for internal combustion engine. A member of the Society of Indian Automobile Manufacturers (SIAM) says Indian groups have timed it right since globally EV is past the tipping point and it is no longer seen as a niche product fancied by a few. Their faith in an electric road mobility future ahead of the policy announcement is, therefore, hailed in all quarters. But their actual

business success will largely depend on how quickly the lithium-ion batteries become more efficient, that is packing these with large quantities of juice for cars to run long distances on a single charge.

Equally importantly, a mass demand for EVs in India will have to await their prices dropping to petrol/diesel car levels or close to that. According to McKinsey, prices of lithium-ion packs for EVS have fallen by about 80 per cent since 2010.

Even now, batteries in particular make EVs too expensive for mass markets. The share of battery in the total cost of an EV, depending on its size should fall from over 40 per cent now to 19 per cent by 2030, according to

from the disturbed Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), where the country's constitutional court recently declared Felix Tshisekedi the next president though he polled only 19 per cent of the vote against 59 per cent by

mond of batteries."

Martin Fayulu. Revenues from cobalt and also from nickel and copper from which the precious battery material is obtained as a by-product have funded armed clashes in DRC for decades. Human rights violations in DRC mines have caused such global infuriation that Tesla's Elon Musk declared last

to bring down the average amount

of cobalt used in its EV from

the leading statistics portal Statista.

The optimism ingrained in this statis-

tic is based on evolving battery tech-

nology that is focussed on reducing

the use of cobalt, which besides being

in short supply and too expensive, has

earned the moniker the "blood dia-

of the global supply of cobalt comes

This is because around 66 per cent

year that "we use less than 3 per cent cobalt in our batteries and will use none in next gen." The SIAM member says that in the past six years Tesla has been able

11 kg to 4.5 kg, the best in the industry. In the meantime, Panasonic, the world's largest producer of lithium-ion battery cells and exclusive supplier to Tesla, has announced that it is in the process of developing cobalt-free EV batteries. It will be a few years before this becomes a reality. At the same time, automakers are hopeful that the inventor of lithium-ion battery. Goodenough of the Texas University,

will come up trumps in giving the

world a cobalt free EV battery defying

his advanced age of 96.

ON THE JOB

More townies, please



MAHESH VYAS

inal estimates paint a slightly better picture than the one presented so far. The final unemployment rate in December 2018 turns out to be 7.02 per cent compared to the preliminary estimate of 7.38 per cent released earlier. The final November 2018 estimate turns out to be higher at 6.65 per cent compared to the preliminary estimate of 6.62 per cent. The October 2018 estimate has declined from 6.91 per cent to 6.83 per cent and the September 2018 estimate is revised from 6.61 per cent to 6.47 per cent.

The unemployment rate during the September-December 2018 period was 6.68 per cent. In comparison, the unemployment rate was 4.89 per cent during the same months of 2017. The unemployment rate has been rising steadily since the May-August 2017 Wave when it clocked a mere 3.9 per cent.

Our earlier estimate of 11 million jobs lost during 2018 stands revised to 10.1 million jobs lost. This is a point-topoint estimate between December 2017 and December 2018. A better measure of the job loss in 2018 is 9.5 million. This is based on the full Waves data. It shows that 4.8 million jobs were lost during January-April 2018, 3.5 million jobs were lost during May-August 2018 and another 1.2 million jobs were lost in September-December 2018.

Job losses were mostly concentrated in rural regions and in small towns. The losses were lower in the larger towns but, there are serious problems here and there are lessons to learn. We explore urban India using the unemployment and labour participation rates. We consider four groups of towns -

very large towns, large towns, mediumsized towns, and small towns — by the number of households in these as per the 2011 Census. Very large towns had more than 200,000 households in 2011; large towns had between 60,000 and 200,000 households; medium-sized towns had between 20,000 and 60,000 households and, Small towns had less than 20,000 households.

The unemployment rate is the highest in the large and medium towns, in that order. In comparison, small towns and very large towns faced lower unemployment rates.

The most

worrisome part of

India seems to be

the large towns.

These suffer the

participation rate

unemployment rate

and the highest

lowest labour

Very large towns see the lowest unemployment rates. This is a very good sign because these towns provide the best quality jobs. In the September-December 2018 period, the unemployment rate in very large towns was 6.35 per cent. This was lower than not just all other town-size classes but also rural regions. It is a welcome sign that the lowest unemployment rate is in the region that provides

the best quality jobs. The low unemployment rate of small towns is likely a reflection of the fact that these towns share characteristics that are similar to those of rural India where unemployment is similarly low. The low unemployment in these towns is likely to reflect compulsions of relatively vulnerable sections of society that keep the unemployment rate low. Most small towns are Census towns. These were classified as towns only in 2011. Till then, these were clas-

sified as villages. Like rural India, small towns suffer underemployment, low wages and poor quality jobs. It is important to lift these regions out of the equilibrium they seem to maintain at the low-levels of economic well-being that these characteristics imply.

seems to be the large towns. These suffer the lowest labour participation rate and the highest unemployment rate. During September-December 2018,

The most worrisome part of India

they had a labour participation rate of just-under 41 per cent and an unemployment rate of 8.4 per cent. Medium-sized towns are also quite stressed. These had an unem-

ployment rate of 7.9 per cent. In the preceding three Waves (that is, for an entire year), these towns had witnessed the highest unem-

> ployment rate. If there is a political

> problem with respect to the rising unemployment rate, then it is likely to be concentrated in large and medium towns. These are towns where unemployment is high and it is also rising. If there is a fire there, then it must be doused. But that is not where the solution lies.

The best solutions for India's labour markets begin in very large towns. Raising labour participation and motivating pri-

vate sector to provide jobs in these regions would provide the best results. The best jobs in recent memory were found in Bangalore, Gurugram, Pune, Hyderabad and even in Noida. These were provided by large private sector enterprises. We need many more similar large towns and even more large private enterprises set up by visionaries who can convert India's young workingage population into worthy townies.

The author is managing director and CEO, Centre for Monitoring Indian Economy PLtd

LETTERS

Serves them right!



The government has done well to crack the whip on five top separatist leaders, including Mirwaiz Umar Farooq, by withdrawing the security and vehicles provided to them, for their alleged links to terror outfits and Pakistan's intelligence agency, the ISI. The move comes in the aftermath of the Pulwama terror attack where over 40 CRPF personnel were martyred. It has also been decided to scrap other facilities, if any, provided by the government to these leaders. The measures coming on the back of the cancellation of the most favoured nation status given to Pakistan must help to rein in the separatists, besides saving taxpayers money. **N J Ravi Chander** Bengaluru

Don't act in haste

Your editorial (Responding to Pulwama, 18 February) is an excellent piece of advice to the government — and the people of India — for taking a "determined but cautious" response to the extremely tragic happening at Pulwama. National sentiment, against Pakistan, is right now at a high fever pitch — and rightly so and the ground is ripe for a possible wrong initiative by the government, which the nation might regret later. Ageold wisdom dictates that decisions taken in anger are often wrong and irrational.

All the steps taken so far are correct. The withdrawal of the most favoured nation status, imposing penal import duties on Pakistani products, launching a strong diplomatic offensive to iso-

late the errant neighbour, announcing free hand to security forces, all-party consultation etc are all sound measures to assuage national anger and for getting all political parties on the same side. And yet rational calculation of the benefits of any response — defined in terms of changing the Pakistan military's support for terrorist groups or making them more costly is crucial; it is absolutely necessary before pressing the trigger.

Time is perhaps right to consider the old question of revoking Article 370. This single step has the potential of creating employment opportunities for the mostly idle Kashmiri youth who are vulnerable to the vile designs of terrorist outfits, mostly because they nothing else to do and have been used to an easy idle life for too long. Over-pampering of the people in the valley — by way of highly subsidised food and facilities and preventing industry to set up manufacturing in the state — has actually had damaging effects. It has in stopped Kashmiris integrating with the national mainstream; it has been responsible for not offering them jobs and vocations and left them free to think of mischief. The cliched phrase — an idle mind is the devil's workshop — truly fits the state of affairs. Time to engage them in productive activities.

Want peace, not war

Krishan Kalra Gurugram

Thankfully, the government has acted in

a measured and mature manner in the aftermath of the Pulwama attack.

Despite intense anger and anguish among the people, it has not responded with a show of muscle power to give Pakistan a swift bloody nose.

There is no guarantee that military action will prove effective and not futile in curbing militant attacks. The sub-continent inhabited by a fifth of the world's population cannot be turned into a theatre of war. It is simplistic to see the vexed Kashmir question as a mere law and order problem. The intractable territorial dispute is not amenable to a military solution.

It is essentially a geopolitical problem involving religious and cultural identities and requires a political solution through dialogue. It must be conceded that militancy is rooted in political grievances of the disaffected and alienated Kashmiri people. Such is the environment in the Valley that local youth are easily radicalised and inducted into militant groups. The sad truth in the Valley is that common people lose their lives in the fight between security personnel and militants. Violence and counter-violence and killings and counterkillings get us nowhere. Statesmanship and sagacity, as against jingoism and bellicosity, are what is now needed from all sides to bring about a semblance of normality and peace in the Himalayan region of indescribable scenic beauty.

G David Milton Maruthancode

Letters can be mailed, faxed or e-mailed to: The Editor, Business Standard Nehru House, 4 Bahadur Shah Zafar Marg New Delhi 110 002 Fax: (011) 23720201 · E-mail: letters@bsmail.in All letters must have a postal address and telephone

HAMBONE BY MIKE FLANAGAN YES, THE LAW IS I THINK IF PEOPLE MARRY FAR TOO IT SHOULD BE LENIENT FOR LIFE!

MUMBAI | TUESDAY, 19 FEBRUARY 2019

Winners take all

Indian regulators must deal with network externalities

s India's economy modernises, the tasks facing the country's regulators become ever more complex. More and more sectors are exhibiting a "winners take all" structure. In "normal" competitive markets, regulators have a straightforward set of objectives and tools. They intervene to make sure there is no cartelisation, that anti-competitive practices are not being used, and so on. Generally, the assumption in this case is that left to itself the market will take care of consumer welfare, and the regulator's job is merely to ensure that no participant is seeking to distort the functioning of the market.

However, in the modern economy many sectors demonstrate marked network externalities. In other words, companies become more profitable or efficient when they become large. This leads to the creation of natural monopolies. In the past, sectors such as utility or infrastructure would be subject to the buildup of such natural monopolies and thus had to be regulated differently. However, now network externalities are a feature of several leading sectors of the economy, including those dominated by the private sector. Consider, for example, the online space — dominated as it is by Alphabet, the parent company of Google. It is hard to believe a search engine emerging that could compete with Google. Thus, Alphabet does not have to behave in an obviously anti-competitive manner for competition to vanish in the sector.

In India, there are several such sectors which require attention. Telecommunications is one such. The arrival of Reliance Jio, with the deep pockets of Reliance Industries behind it, means that many of the other participants in the sector are eyeing the door. If an incumbent indulges in predatory pricing, regulators understand what they can do. But if it is an entrant that is offering lower prices and a better deal? At what point can and should regulators intervene? Nor is the problem limited to telecom. Consider also the civil aviation sector. An airline that is filling its flights can afford to sell its final seats cheaper since their marginal cost is near-zero. This means that there is a built-in advantage for the airline already doing well. In India, this means that IndiGo, for example, manages to dominate the market.

Other sectors may soon see the emergence of network effects. E-retail, for example, can become more effective when the user base it has to draw on is larger. Also, a network of offline retailers, or a logistics network that is already in place, can help give one company an efficiency edge that others will struggle to make up. How can regulators manage a sector in which some companies will genuinely be more efficient because of network externalities? Setting prices and quantities, such as economic theory might recommend for natural monopolies, does not appeal as a solution especially in the Indian context. There needs to be a more robust discussion in India about when it is appropriate for a regulator to intervene to prevent the building up of a monopoly in a winners-take-all sector. Waiting till a monopoly is established may be too late. It may be necessary to intervene early to prevent the exit of other competitors. A longer-term view of consumer welfare is required.

A self-goal

Persecuting Kashmiris plays into the hands of terrorists

n the immediate aftermath of the terror attack on a Central Reserve Police Force (CRPF) convoy in Pulwama, sporadic incidents of violence and alleged harassment of Kashmiri students have been reported in many parts of the country. The first reports came from Jammu, where dozens of vehicles were burnt, and the city was brought under curfew after mobs attacked Kashmiris in the area and destroyed their property. An enraged crowd demanded revenge for the death of the CRPF men and threw stones on the state secretariat building, despite police protection. The curfew is there even four days since the attack, and more than 120 people have been reportedly arrested for breaching the law. In many parts of the state, the authorities had to suspend mobile and internet facilities for multiple days.

But such incidents were not restricted to areas near the Valley. At least 40 Kashmiri shop-owners in Patna were threatened by a mob and asked to leave Bihar — a state they have been staying in for over 30 years. In another state capital, Dehradun in Uttarakhand, hundreds of Kashmiri students were forced to hide after an angry mob took to the streets, asking for "India's traitors" to be "shot". In fact, two educational institutes in Dehradun announced that no Kashmiri will get admission even as open threats were made to Kashmiri students to leave. A mob tried to occupy a Kashmiri girl students' hostel in Dehradun. Social media platforms such as Twitter have been carrying several other reports of intimidation and harassment of the Kashmiris in other parts of the country. The matter has taken a serious turn, prompting the Union home ministry to issue an advisory to all states to ensure safety and security of the students and people from Jammu and Kashmir living in their areas. Aligarh Muslim University had to issue an advisory to Kashmiri students, asking them "not to move out of campus" in the wake of protests.

It goes without saying that these incidents are utterly shameful and reflect poorly on India's credentials as an open, secular and democratic society. Also, persecuting Kashmiris because the Pulwama attack was carried out by a local youth plays into the hands of organisations such as the Jaish-e-Mohammad that intend to trigger civil strife in India by polarising society along communal lines. While the Kashmiri students should also desist from issuing provocative statements on social media, treating the entire population of a state with suspicion and targeting the whole community for the faults of a few will only deepen the sense of alienation. That will be a terrible self-goal, as this is exactly what a terrorist organisation would be hoping to achieve. It's true that the state has seen a dangerous drift that is not only fuelling the popular rage, but has also called into question the government's claims about dwindling support for militancy. The best way to fight this is to show solidarity not just with the armed forces but also with the majority of Kashmiris in whose name such dastardly acts are perpetrated. The government should also play its role by having a comprehensive programme for addressing youth radicalisation in Kashmir. That will be a more productive and sustainable strategy.



Economic choices before metro rails

There are learnings from London and New York metro rails for Indian cities

INFRATALK

VINAYAK CHATTERJEE

ust a few weeks ago, the London Underground celebrated 156 years of operation. As one of the world's earliest urban rail systems, it has influenced the design of dozens of urban transport networks, right down to its iconic map. Even the Delhi Metro, with "mind the gap" announcements of its own (and a similar map design), reflects that influence, despite being several generations younger -

just 16 years old, in fact. But in the world of infrastructure, younger also often means better as later projects learn from the successes and the mistakes of those who debuted earlier From larger and airier stations, more modern rail tracks and rolling stock, the Delhi Metro is technologically streets ahead of just the London Underground, but many other earlier generations of metro systems such as the New York metro. It is also catching up rapidly.

The infrastructural statistics reflect this — the total track length of the Delhi Metro is now around 327 km, which compares very well with London's 402 km. London has 270 stations to Delhi's 236. Delhi is close to achieving, in less than 20 years, what it has taken London to do in

Yet in other ways, the Delhi Metro still has a long way to go, compared with its older counterparts.

The London Underground's ridership is 5 million per day, compared with 2.5 million for Delhi, despite the fact that London's population is just about half that of Delhi. The Delhi Metro's ridership, in fact, fell in 2017-18, compared with a year earlier.

That decline in ridership was attributed by many to two successive fare hikes. A subsequent report by the Centre for Science and Environment argued

> that Delhi was the second most expensive metro system in the world after Hanoi, Vietnam, in terms of the share of monthly income spent by a middleincome commuter on metro fares. This was hotly rebutted by the Delhi Metro itself, pointing out that fares had been increased after many years, even as average wages in the capital had increased, making the new fares

But ridership levels of the Delhi Metro are also just a third of that of Mumbai's suburban rail (in its own way, as iconic as the

London Underground, which it predates by three years). As the Delhi network expands its reach, that gap will narrow, but it begs the question: What is the way to assess how "well" the Delhi Metro is doing? And what are the lessons to be learnt by the other new generation metro projects mushrooming across the country, many of them modelled along

The world over, the key decision that urban metro systems have had to grapple with has been how to manage the trade-off between affordability and enabling access to all sections of the population, while managing to stay financially viable. In most European countries and in the United States, the farebox recovery ratio, or the fraction of operating costs met from passenger fares is well below one, necessitating subsidies or other measures to raise revenues. For the Delhi Metro, this measure rose sharply, as expected, after the fare hikes, making it less reliant on subsidies from the Delhi or the central government, its two major shareholders, to support its operations. It is close to 89 per cent, up from 60 per cent a year earlier.

Again, it is instructive to look at the case of New York and London. London's ability to recover costs from passengers is far superior to that of New York — it actually manages to make enough money from passengers to cover operating costs and some more. New York, by contrast, has a farebox ratio of less than 50.

This is due to the difference in fare structures. Metro systems like London and Delhi follow a distance- or a zone-based model, whereby the further a commuter travels, the higher the fare he/she pays. In cities like New York, commuters pay a flat fee. irrespective of distance. Poorer commuters, who cannot afford to live close to their place of work, are far better off under such a system.

It all comes down to the trade-off above. New York's metro system is far more affordable than that of London. However, that affordability comes at a cost. Lower fares, in the absence of subsidies that cover expenses, mean an inevitable decline in service standards over time. The quality and maintenance of rolling stock and tracks, and upgrade take a hit as well. And while non-core income like real estate development will partly make up the losses, this is not an option that many metro systems across the country will have.

Ultimately, governments will have to put their money where their mouth is, and subsidise the metro systems they so eagerly sought in the first place. Or, keep fares at a level that could well exclude poorer passengers, thus hurting that section of the population which benefits the most from a fast and efficient mode of public transport, as well as decongesting city roads of vehicular traffic.

The right choices will have to be made.

The writer is chairman, Feedback Infra

RBI's rate cut won't mean lower lending rates

ne Reserve Bank of India (RBI) surprised analysts earlier this month by opting for a 25 basis points cut in the policy rate. Three points about the policy change are worth noting. First, the RBI's action is in line with the stances of central banks elsewhere. Global growth prospects are perceived to have weakened. As a result, central banks in the US, the UK and Australia have signalled a willingness to ease monetary policy. Indeed, governments in the US and Europe have moved towards a combination of fiscal as well as monetary loosening. In his statement, the RBI governor indicated that

slowing global growth was an important consideration underlying the decision to cut the policy rate. True, the RBI does not see growth in India slowing down, unlike in advanced economies and in some emerging economies. It expects India's growth rate to rise from 7.2 per cent in 2018-19 to 7.4 per cent in 2019-20. The case for a rate cut rests on the gap with respect to output potential being wider than projected earlier.

Second, it's becoming clear that the perception of upside

risks to inflation in the RBI's earlier policy statements has turned out to be misplaced. Some of the reluctance to cut rates arose from the fact that core inflation — that is, headline inflation minus food and fuel price inflation — was above 5 per cent, Inflation data for January 2019 suggests a trending down of core inflation. There is every likelihood now that core inflation will stay below 5 per cent and headline inflation below 4 per cent in the coming year.

TT RAM MOHAN

Third, the votes cast in the Monetary Policy Committee (MPC). When the MPC was constituted, it was assumed that the two internal members of the RBI would not go against the RBI governor. If the three outsiders were to differ from the three RBI members, there would be a tie. Hence, the RBI governor was given the casting vote. It is striking that the RBI deputy governor on the MPC has cast one of the two dissenting votes at the latest meeting (the other dissenter being an outsider). This is indeed a healthy development. One hopes that it will become part of the culture of the MPC in the years to come.

The RRI's rate cut will not translate into an

immediate fall in borrowing costs. For two reasons. One, growth in deposits has lagged growth in credit in the system the figures for the past year are 9.2 per cent and 11.1 per cent, respectively. Banks have been struggling to raise deposits and had to increase their deposit rates in order to do so. This has implications for monetary trans-

Transmission in the period FINGER ON THE PULSE January 2015 to March 2018 was near-perfect: A drop in the policv rate of 200 bps translated into a drop in the weighted average

lending rate for fresh loans of 205 bps. But this happened in a period when growth in credit was sluggish. It cannot be replicated in a period when credit growth has moved into double digits.

The big disappointment for the banking sector post-demonetisation is that, contrary to expectations, the share of deposits in disposable income fell by 1.7 percentage points between 2016 and 2018. This is almost matched by an increase in the share of the currency of 1.4 percentage points. How cuts in policy rates can be transmitted in a situation in which banks find it difficult to raise deposits is any body's guess.

The other reason that lending rates, in general, will not come down is that risk premia have gone up consequent to the IL&FS debacle. A meltdown in the NBFC sector has been averted. However, banks apprehend that problems in non-banking financial companies (NBFCs) and the real estate sector are not over yet. They are braced for shocks arising from these (and other) sectors. Banks will not think it prudent to cut lending rates across the board and reduce their margins for now

The one sector that can expect a reduction in lending rates is the NBFC sector. This follows from the announcement that risk-weights for NBFCs will be in accordance with their ratings. Banks will have to provide less capital for the better-rated NBFCs and hence can cut their lending rates to these. The announcement also frees capital at banks and will improve the capital adequacy ratio at banks. A fall in yields on government bonds will mean capital gains, which will boost capital at banks.

But the problem of recapitalising public sector banks does not go away. The expected increase in bank capital of around ₹50,000 crore promised for 2018-19 did not materialise in the recent budget. Nor has there been any allocation for 2019-20. No doubt, the government expects to be able to tap the RBI's excess reserves for the purpose.

On a broader note, tensions between the government and the RBI have eased. The RBI governor has provided a rate cut. He has indicated that he is open to paying an interim dividend to the government. Three banks are out of the Prompt Corrective Action framework. Small wonder that talk of governance reform at RBI seems to have receded into the back-

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Tech giants are watching you



AJIT BALAKRISHNAN

he internet and the World Wide Web, and its key players are sliding into an era in which governments and policy wonks everywhere view them not with the adulation they received in the 2000-2010 period but with suspicion. Internet players are no longer seen as those wunderkinder who made it possible for me to e-mail or chat with my friends worldwide for free and to discover books and such stuff at far lower prices than in stores. The internet is presented now as a dark jungle inhabited with heartless for- paying subscriptions and why the internet hire geeks out to embezzle money from companies of the Google era came to rely

frenzy or misuse personal information that trusting users gave them. Shoshana Zuboff, a professor emeritus at the Harvard Business School, raises all these frightful issues in *The Age of Surveillance* Capitalism, analyses how this state of affairs came about and emphasises why we have to deal with these issues with a sense of urgency.

Perhaps the core of the issue is that internet industry players — search engines, social networking sites, online shopping sites or plain news sites — rely on advertising revenues for profits. The paradox of this has not been studied enough. For example, in the earlier era tech companies, such as Microsoft, wanted you to pay a monthly subscription and, therefore, had no need for advertising. The story of how the software companies of the Microsoft era relied on customers

financial institutions, stoke communal on advertising revenue has not been fully told or understood. Shoshanna Zuboff devotes 100 or more pages of her nearly 700-page book to decode this advertising dependence but she attributes this to more insidious issues.

She believes that internet companies (she explicitly names the US tech giants) find it much more profitable to sell data and their predictions about their customers' behaviour to willing buyers (i.e. advertisers) than to provide some useful services. She says the "means of production" for these tech giants are things like artificial intelligence and machine learning techniques. She calls the profits made from this kind of activity "surveillance profits", i.e. money made out of surveillance of users who visit their sites. She says there is a huge international market that trades in such information and predictions about users' behaviour, which she calls the "behavioral futures market".

All this sent me into a deep reverie.

When your business is critically dependant on advertising revenues, you do best by matching your offers to customer needs, which in turn means that you try to get as much data as you can about your prospective customer. This practice and all the mathematics about how to do this better than others was the stuff business schools have taught from the 1950s onward as "database marketing". But in Ms Zuboff's view, this amounts to 'Surveillance Capitalism".

At one level, it is only the basic techniques of direct marketing of the 1960s that are being used by internet companies. What frightens many people is that the extent of customer data is both wider and deeper and, worse, is gathered without the user being aware of the data collection because the web servers maintain a log of every action a user takes on a website. Europe has been at the forefront of legislation to ensure that non-European tech giants do not take data about Euro-zone citizens and store it outside Europe. India has also passed a series of government directives to preserve data about Indian citizens in the country.

All this talk about surveillance capitalism brings to mind George Orwell's novel 1984 in which a character, Big Brother, is the ruler of Oceania, a totalitarian state where every citizen is under continuous surveillance: "Big Brother is watching you" has since become a metaphor for abuse of government power, particularly in respect to civil liberties. This anxiety in an era where the tech industry players loudly boast of the power of artificial intelligence, driverless cars and so on is understandable. But Ms Zuboff has a more frightening analysis

She says citizens in western democracies are in a state of despondency and feel that "my children will not see the life I have lived". She quotes the results of a 38nation study in 2017 where 49 per cent say "rule by experts is good" (as opposed to by democratically elected leaders), 26 per cent endorse "rule by a strong leader" and 24 per cent prefer "rule by the military". She also believes that the intellectual proselytisation of Friedrich Hayek (Nobel winner 1974) and Milton Friedman (Nobel winner 1976) has made "shareholder value maximisation" the supreme societal economic goal, and this gives Silicon Valley the licence to do what it wants with citizens' rights so long as their market capitalisation continues to soar.

She believes that the time has come for all common people to stand up to the surveillance capitalism of internet companies and say "No More!"

Every technological era has had its signature book. Charles Dickens' 1854 novel Hard Times drew attention to awful working conditions, particularly for child labour during the Industrial Revolution in England: Rachel Carson's Silent Spring drew our attention to the harm to the natural environment from synthetic chemical products such as pesticides. Is Ms Zuboff's book attempting to do this for the information age, the era we are living through?

THE AGE OF SURVEILLANCE CAPITALISM

The Fight for the Future at the New Frontier of Power Shoshanna Zuboff **PublicAffairs** 704 pages, ₹799

हमले और सवाल

लवामा आतंकी हमले के बाद इस जिले में सुरक्षा बलों और आतंकियों 🕇 की मुठभेड़ों का अभी भी जारी रहना इस बात का प्रमाण है कि यहां आतंकियों की जड़ें खत्म नहीं हुई हैं और वे पूरी ताकत के साथ सेना से भिड़ रहे हैं। इसी जिले में सोमवार को एक और मुठभेड़ हुई, जिसमें सेना के एक मेजर सहित चार जवान शहीद हो गए। इससे पहले शनिवार को भी बारूदी सुरंग हटाते वक्त एक मेजर की जान चली गई थी। आतंकियों से लोहा लेने में सेना और सुरक्षाबलों के जवानों के हताहत होने की संख्या जिस तेजी से बढ़ रही है, वह चिंताजनक है। ऐसा लग रहा है कि आतंकी ज्यादा ताकतवर होकर सामने आ रहे हैं और सुरक्षा बलों के लिए कड़ी चुनौती बन रहे हैं। जनवरी के आखिरी हफ्ते में खबर आई थी कि हिज्बुल का गढ़ बारामुला अब पूरी तरह आतंकियों से मुक्त हो चुका है। तब उम्मीद जगी थी कि दक्षिण कश्मीर के पुलवामा, शोपियां, कुलगाम और अनंतनाग जैसे जिलों से भी आतंकियों का जल्द सफाया होगा। लेकिन हकीकत कुछ और ही बयां कर रही है। सरकार दावा करती रही है कि आतंकियों के हौसले पस्त हो चुके हैं और वे हताशा में हमलों को अंजाम दे रहे हैं। लेकिन यह आसानी से गले नहीं उतरता। अगर आतंकियों के हौसले टूट चुके होते तो पुलवामा जैसा हमला नहीं होता। जाहिर है, आतंकियों का नेटवर्क और उनकी ताकत हमारे अनुमान से कहीं ज्यादा है, जिसका खिमयाजा हमें जवानों की जान के रूप में चुकाना पड़ रहा है।

जम्म्-कश्मीर में पिछले पांच साल में शहीद होने वाले जवानों की संख्या का ग्राफ जिस तेजी से बढ़ा है, वह कई गंभीर सवाल खड़े करता है। आतंकियों से लोहा लेने में हमारे जवानों को कम से कम नुकसान पहुंचे, इस प्रयास में हमारे रणनीतिकार विफल साबित हो रहे हैं। ऐसे ही सवाल खुफिया तंत्र की नाकामी को लेकर भी उठ रहे हैं। पांच फरवरी को गृह राज्यमंत्री ने लोकसभा में जो आंकड़े पेश किए, वे चौंकाने वाले हैं। जम्मू-कश्मीर में 2014 से 2018 के बीच शहीद जवानों की संख्या चौरानवे फीसद तक बढ़ गई और आतंकी हमलों में तो एक सौ सतहत्तर फीसद का इजाफा हुआ। 2014 में दो सौ बाईस आतंकी घटनाएं और हमले दर्ज हुए थे और सैंतालीस जवान शहीद हुए थे। 2018 में आतंकी हमलों की संख्या छह सौ चौदह और शहीद जवानों की इक्यानवे तक पहुंच गई। साफ है कि पिछले चार साल में जम्मू-कश्मीर में आतंकवाद तेजी से बढ़ा है और प्रदेश व केंद्र सरकार की नीतियां समस्या से निपट पाने में बेअसर साबित हुई हैं।

राष्ट्रीय सुरक्षा गार्ड की एक रिपोर्ट में भी साफ कहा गया है कि जम्मू-कश्मीर में पिछले पांच साल में देशी बम और अन्य विस्फोटों की घटनाएं बढ़ी हैं। पिछले साल तो इनमें सत्तावन फीसद का इजाफा देखा गया और आतंकवादियों ने देशी बमों का अधिक इस्तेमाल किया। दक्षिण कश्मीर के ग्रामीण इलाकों में आतंकी संगठनों का नेटवर्क अब भी मजबूत लगता है और वहीं देशी बम बनाए जाने और हमलों की साजिश रचे जाने की खबरें आती रही हैं। जवान आतंकियों के सामने तभी मात खाते हैं जब उनके पास पुख्ता सूचनाएं और खुफिया जानकारियां नहीं होती हैं। ऐसे में सुरक्षाबलों को आतंकियों की योजना के बारे में पता नहीं चल पाता और वे हमलों का शिकार हो जाते हैं। जवानों के हताहत होने की घटनाओं से सुरक्षा बलों का मनोबल भी टूटता है और व्यवस्था के प्रति आक्रोश भी बढ़ता है। खुफिया तंत्र अगर मजबूत हो, कारगर रणनीति हो तो जवानों की जान काफी हद तक बचाई जा सकती है।

हार के मुजफ्फरपुर में एक बालिका गृह में चौंतीस बच्चियों के यौन शोषण और उत्पीड़न का मामला उजागर होने के बाद एक अहम सवाल यह उठा था कि राज्य सरकार आखिर किन वजहों से वहां होने वाली गतिविधियों को नजरअंदाज करती रही। जिस आश्रय गृह में बेहद अमानवीय आपराधिक गतिविधियां चल रही थीं, उसके संचालन के लिए सरकार बाकायदा भारी धनराशि दे रही थी। सवाल है कि अगर सरकार किसी संस्थान को अनुदान देती है तो क्या वह उसके इस्तेमाल पर निगरानी नहीं रखती है ? विडंबना है कि यह सब कुछ तब भी चलता रहा जब वहां की गतिविधियों को लेकर आशंका जाहिर की जाने लगी थी। साफ है कि यह सब बिना उच्चस्तरीय मिलीभगत के संभव नहीं था। इसी मामले में गिरफ्तार एक आरोपी अश्विनी कुमार ने विशेष पॉक्सो अदालत से आश्रय गृह के संचालन और पैसे देने को लेकर मुख्यमंत्री, समाज कल्याण विभाग के प्रधान सचिव और मुजफ्फरपुर के तत्कालीन जिला मजिस्ट्रेट की भूमिका की जांच की मांग की थी। इसे अदालत ने सीबीआइ के पास अग्रसारित कर दिया है।

यह किसी से छिपा नहीं है कि मुजफ्फरपुर में संदिग्ध गतिविधियों को लेकर आरोप सामने आने लगे थे, तभी से सरकार की ओर से इसकी अनदेखी को लेकर सवाल उठे थे। यही नहीं, शक के मजबूत आधार होने के बावजूद सरकार ने उस आश्रय गृह के लिए भारी धनराशि जारी करने में पूरी उदारता बरती। जबिक ऐसे आश्रय गृहों की नियमित जांच और गड़बड़ी पाए जाने पर उसके संचालकों के खिलाफ सख्ती करना सरकार की जिम्मेदारी होनी चाहिए थी। मगर सरकार को यह जरूरी नहीं लगा। दबाव बढ़ने के बाद टाटा इंस्टीट्यूट ऑफ सोशल साइंसेज की जांच के बाद जो तथ्य सामने आए, वे किसी भी संवेदनशील व्यक्ति को दहला देने वाले थे। बालिका गृह में रखी गई बच्चियों को प्रताड़ना और यौन हिंसा के विकृत रूप से गुजरना पड़ा था। उसके मुख्य आरोपियों में स्थानीय स्तर पर एक कदावर व्यक्ति ब्रजेश ठाकुर से लेकर बिहार सरकार में एक मंत्री तक का नाम शामिल था। इसके अलावा, उसमें कई ऊंचे कद वालों के शामिल होने के आरोप थे। सवाल है कि आखिर वे कौन-सी वजहें रहीं कि मुजफ्फरपुर के बालिका आश्रय गृह में रखी गई बिच्चयों के साथ भयावह और अमानवीय अपराध होते रहे और जब मामला सामने आया तब भी उस पर पर्दा डालने की अधिकतम कोशिशें की गईं?

अंदाजा इससे लगाया जा सकता है कि पिछले साल नवंबर में सुप्रीम कोर्ट ने एफआइआर में काफी देरी और उसमें कमजोर धाराओं के तहत मुकदमा दर्ज करने के लिए राज्य सरकार को कड़ी फटकार लगाई और उसके रवैये को बेहद अमानवीय और शर्मनाक बताया था। हालत यह है कि मामले की जांच सीबीआइ के पास जाने के बाद उसके संबंधित अधिकारी का स्थानांतरण करने पर भी हाल में सुप्रीम कोर्ट के कठघरे में सीबीआइ प्रमुख को सजा से गुजरना पड़ा। समूचे मसले की जांच और आरोपियों को सजा दिलाने के प्रति सरकार के इस रवैये का क्या कारण है ? मुजफ्फरपुर के उस बालिका गृह में किसी तरह पहुंच पाने वाली बच्चियां बेहद कमजोर सामाजिक-आर्थिक पृष्ठभूमि से हैं और साफ है कि अपने लिए कोई ठौर नहीं होने के बाद ही उन्होंने वहां शरण ली होगी। लेकिन वहां भी उन्हें यौन हिंसा और अमानवीय अत्याचार से गुजरना पड़ा। इस मसले पर सुप्रीम कोर्ट ने वाजिब सवाल उठाया था कि सरकार की नजर में क्या वे देश के बच्चे नहीं हैं! अगर बिहार सरकार खुद को इस मामले में पाक-साफ और ईमानदार मानती है तो उसे इसमें संलिप्त सभी आरोपियों को सख्त सजा दिलाने के लिए अपनी ओर से संजीदगी दिखानी चाहिए।

कल्पमधा

जिसने स्वयं गिर कर अपने को कीड़े के समान बना लिया हो उसे यह अधिकार नहीं कि कुचले जाने पर मुख से शिकायत का बोल भी निकाले।

-कांट

उच्च अदालतें और हिंदी

प्रमोद भार्गव

देश की सभी निचली अदालतों में संपूर्ण कामकाज हिंदी व अन्य भारतीय भाषाओं में होता है, किंतु उच्च न्यायालयों और उच्चतम न्यायालय में यही काम केवल अंग्रेजी में होता है। यहां तक कि जो न्यायाधीश हिंदी व अन्य भारतीय भाषाएं जानते हैं, वे भी अपीलीय मामलों की सुनवाई में दस्तावेजों का अंग्रेजी अनुवाद कराते हैं।

आप्तिन के लिए न्याय की भाषा कौन-सी हो, इसका सबक भारत और भारतीय न्यायालयों को अबु धाबी से लेने की जरूरत है। संयुक्त अरब अमीरात की राजधानी अबू धाबी ने ऐतिहासिक फैसला लेते हुए अरबी और अंग्रेजी के बाद हिंदी को अपनी अदालतों में तीसरी आधिकारिक भाषा के रूप में शामिल कर लिया है। अरबी और अंग्रेजी नहीं जानने वालों तक न्याय की पहुंच बनाने की दृष्टि से यह फैसला काफी अहम है। अब यहां की अदालतों में वादी एवं प्रतिवादी अपने दावे और बयान हिंदी में दे सकेंगे। इसका उद्देश्य हिंदी भाषी लोगों को मुकदमे की प्रक्रिया में उनके अधिकारों और कर्तव्यों के बारे में पारदर्शी ढंग से सहायता करना है। इसके उलट हमारे उच्च न्यायालयों, उच्चतम न्यायालय और शीर्ष नौकरशाही का आलम यह है कि सब के सब अंग्रेजी न्याय व्यवस्था को कायम रखते हुए सत्तर साल से लकीर के फकीर बने हुए हैं। हिंदी समेत अन्य भारतीय भाषाओं में न्यायिक प्रक्रिया की सभी अपीलें व दलीलें अदालत की दहलीज पर

पहुंचते ही ठिठक जाती हैं। भाषाई परिप्रेक्ष्य में राष्ट्रिपता महात्मा गांधी की भावना और जनतंत्र की कसौटी भी यही मानती है कि सभी तरह के राज-काज आम लोगों की भाषा में क्रियान्वित हों। किंत् हमारे यहां इस पुनीत भावना जितना निरादर हुआ, उतना अन्य किसी क्षेत्र में शायद ही हुआ हो!

इस्लाम धर्मावलंबी इस देश की आधिकारिक रूप से कुल आबादी करीब एक करोड़ है। इसमें भी दो तिहाई विदेशी नागरिक हैं। यहां भारतीय नागरिकों की आबादी लगभग छब्बीस लाख है। इनमें से अधिकांश हिंदी और तमिल भाषी हैं। तमिल भी हिंदी जानते हैं। भारत को विदेशी मुद्रा उपलब्ध कराने में भी ये कामगार दूसरे स्थान पर हैं। यूएई के औद्योगिक-प्रौद्योगिक विकास में भी इन भारतीयों का महत्त्वपूर्ण योगदान रहा है। ऐसी स्थिति में इन्हें श्रम न्यायालयों में कोई मामला दाखिल करते समय अंग्रेजी व अरबी नहीं जानने के कारण दस्तावेजों की असलियत समझने में संकट का सामना करना पड़ता था। क्योंकि अंग्रेजी या अरबी में ही अभिलेख तैयार करने की 🖝

अनिवार्य बाध्यता थी, लिहाजा वादी व प्रतिवादी दोनों ही परेशानी का अनुभव करते थे। वैसे भी इस देश में जो भारत, पाकिस्तान, बांग्लादेश और श्रीलंका के लोग हैं, वे पढे-लिखे कम हैं और ज्यादातर भवन व सड़क निर्माण कार्यों से जुड़े हैं। महिलाएं घरेलू कार्य करती हैं। ये अनुबंधित श्रमिक की श्रेणी में आते हैं। इस नाते अबू धाबी की सरकार ने न्याय-प्रक्रिया में हिंदी को आधिकारिक भाषा का दर्जा देकर इन लोगों के प्रति संवेदनशीलता का परिचय दिया है। न्याय की भाषा हिंदी बन जाने से अब भारतीयों को

कानूनी प्रक्रिया, उनके अधिकार और सेवा संबंधी शर्तें जानने-समझने में दस्तावेजों की अंग्रेजी व अरबी में अनुवाद कराने की बाध्यता खत्म हो जाएगी। इस उपाय से अमीरात को विश्व का सबसे बड़ा पर्यटन-स्थल बनने में भी मदद मिलेगी। वे न्याय प्रक्रिया से गुजरते हुए पारदर्शिता का अनुभव करेंगे।

इस तरह का फैसला भारत में लिया गया होता तो हिंदी सहित भारतीय भाषाओं को थोपने का जुमला गढ़ कर अंग्रेजी वर्चस्ववादी अभिजात वर्ग ने हल्ला मचा दिया होता। जबिक अंग्रेजी की कथित रूप से बना दी गई अनिवार्यता के चलते देशी प्रतिभाएं पूर्ण रूप से खिलने से पहले ही कुंठित हो रही हैं। शिक्षा में आरक्षण का लाभ लेकर वंचित समुदायों के जो विद्यार्थी आइआइटी जैसे शिक्षण संस्थाओं में प्रवेश पा रहे हैं. उन्हें अंग्रेजी माहौल के चलते आत्मघाती

कदम उठाने तक को विवश होना पड रहा है। साफ है, यह प्रभुत्व व्यापक रूप लेकर हिंदी व भाषाई माध्यमों से पढ़ कर आने वाले युवाओं में न केवल घातक हीनता का बोध पैदा कर रहा है, बल्कि अंग्रेजी बोलना और जानना एक विभाजन रेखा बन गया है। इसलिए अब समय आ गया है कि अंग्रेजी बनाम हिंदी की बहस को भारतीय भाषाओं की निरीहता के रूप में अवलोकित किया जाए। यदि ऐसा कालांतर में होता है तो इसके न्यायिक, सामाजिक, सांस्कृतिक, आर्थिक व शैक्षिक पहलुओं पर गंभीरता से विचार कर भाषाई समस्या का तार्किक व व्यावहारिक सामाधान निकालना संभव होगा।

इसमें कोई दो राय नहीं कि वर्तमान भूमंडलीकृत उदारवादी व आधुनिक तकनीक आधारित वैश्विक फलक पर अंग्रेजी का अपना महत्त्व है। लेकिन इससे यह आवश्यक नहीं हो जाता कि न्याय, शासन-प्रशासन और उद्योग व व्यापार के रोजमर्रा के काम उस भाषा में हों, जिसे देश की अनठानवे फीसद



जनसंख्या जानती ही नहीं। जिस भाषा में आम आदमी सरकार और व्यवस्था से बातचीत ही नहीं कर सके, वहां लोकहितकारी शासन कैसे कहलाएगा? जिस बहस एवं फैसले को वादी-प्रतिवादी समझ ही नहीं सकें, उसे न्याय कहें या अन्याय! मुट्टीभर लोग जिस न्याय प्रक्रिया और उसके परिणाम से निकले निष्कर्ष को समझते हों, यह लोकतंत्र की भावना के विरुद्ध सीधे-सीधे साजिश है। इसका एक उदाहरण याद आता है, जब महाराष्ट्र के जैतपुर में स्थानीय लोग परमाणु विद्युत परियोजना का विरोध कर रहे थे, तो केंद्र सरकार ने परियोजना की पारदर्शिता के लिए अंग्रेजी में बारह सौ पृष्ठों की जानकारी उपलब्ध कराई, जबकि आंदोलनकारी मराठी, कोंकणी और हिंदी ही जानते थे। अब इसे साजिश नहीं तो क्या कहा जाना चाहिए?

देश की सभी निचली अदालतों में संपूर्ण कामकाज हिंदी व अन्य भारतीय भाषाओं में होता है, किंत उच्च न्यायालयों और उच्चतम न्यायालय में यहीं काम केवल अंग्रेजी में होता है। यहां तक कि जो न्यायाधीश हिंदी व अन्य भारतीय भाषाएं जानते हैं, वे भी अपीलीय मामलों की सुनवाई में दस्तावेजों का अंग्रेजी अनुवाद कराते हैं। यह देश और संविधान की विडंबना ही है कि अनुच्छेद-19, 343, 346, 347, 350 और 351 में कहीं भी अंग्रेजी की बाध्यता का जिक्र नहीं है। अनुच्छेद-19 में भारत के सभी नागरिकों को 'अभिव्यक्ति की स्वतंत्रता' अपनी भाषा में व्यक्त करने का मुल अधिकार दिया गया है। यह अभिव्यक्ति संविधान की आठवीं अनुसूचि में शामिल किसी भी भारतीय भाषा में हो सकती है। अलबत्ता संविधान द्वारा प्राप्त यह बुनियादी अधिकार उच्च और सर्वोच्च न्यायालय की देहरी पर जाकर ठिठक जाता है। यहां अपीलें और यचिकाएं अंग्रेजी में ही विचार के लिए स्वीकार की जाती हैं। किसी

भी मुकदमे के दो बिंदु अहम होते हैं। एक, प्रथम सूचना प्रतिवेदन और दूसरा याची, अभियुक्त एवं साक्षी के बयान। प्राथमिकी स्थानीय भाषा में लिखी जाती है और फरियादी, आरोपी व गवाह भी अपने बयान अपनी-अपनी भाषा में देते हैं। कभी-कभी इनके बयानों के अनुवाद अर्थ का अनर्थ भी कर देते हैं। ऐसे में संविधान का प्रजातांत्रिक न्यायवादी आग्रह उच्च न्यायालयों की देहरी पर ही खारिज कर दिया जाता है।

दुनिया में जितने भी देश महाशक्ति के दर्जे में आते हैं, उनकी अदालतों में मातृभाषा चलती है। युरोपीय देशों में जैसे-जैसे शिक्षा व

संपन्नता बढी. वैसे-वैसे राष्टीय स्वाभिमान प्रखर होता चला गया। फ्रांस ने 1539 में लैटिन को अपनी अदालतों से बेदखल किया। जर्मनी ने अठारहवीं सदी में लैटिन से पिंड छुड़ा लिया। इंग्लैंड की अदालतों में एक समय जर्मनी और फ्रांसीसी भाषाओं का ही बोलबाला था। यहां अंग्रेजी बोलने पर हजारों पाउंड का जुर्माना भी लगा दिया जाता था, लेकिन 1362 में जर्मन एवं फ्रांसीसी को खत्म कर अंग्रेजी को इंग्लैंड की अदालतों में आधिकारिक भाषा बना दिया गया। रूस, चीन, जापान, वियतनाम और क्यूबा में भी मातभाषाओं का प्रयोग होता है। लेकिन भारत और भारतीय अदालतें कोई सबक या प्रेरणा लिए बिना अंग्रेजी को स्वंतत्रता के सत्तर साल बाद भी ढोती चली आ रही हैं। अदालतों को अब इस भाषायी रंगभेद की दासता से मुक्त होने की जरूरत है।

दायित्व का दामन

मोनिका अग्रवाल

जन्म से मृत्यु तक प्रयोगधर्मा और संघर्षशील जिंदगी! समय के झंझावातों में आगे, उतार-चढ़ाव के लहरों पर झुमती, किसी बाज की तरह पंख फैलाए... आकाश की ऊंचाइयों को छती-सी, मंजिल की तलाश में जूझती जिंदगी! और इसको निर्वहन करते हुए मनुष्य हर पड़ाव पर उत्तरदायित्व निभाता चला है! इसी से मानव सभ्यता आगे बढ़ी है। एक ही व्यक्ति अपने जीवन में अनेक प्रकार के उत्तरदायित्व को निभाता चलता है। कभी पत्र या पत्री, पिता या माता, पित या पत्नी, भ्राता और भागिनी, नागरिक या फिर कभी कर्मचारी आदि। उत्तरदायित्व थोपा नहीं जा सकता। जो व्यक्ति उत्तरदायित्व को स्वीकार कर लेता है, वह सिक्रय होकर होकर खुद ही निर्धारित लक्ष्य की ओर बढ जाता है। फिर कठिनाइयां भी आएं तो वह घबराता नहीं। ऐसा जब हो जाए तब हम कह सकते हैं कि यही ध्येय की पराकाष्ठा है। ऐसे ही लोगों के लिए राष्ट्रकवि दिनकर ने लिखा है-'जहां कहीं है शांति जगत में, जहां कहीं उजाला/ वहां खड़ा है, कोई अंतिम मोल चुकाने वाला'। हमारे आसपास, हर पल, हर जगह, ऐसी घटनाएं

होती रहती हैं जो हमसे कुछ विशिष्ट भूमिका की मांग करती हैं। ऐसे लोग, जिनमें अंतर्चेतना की धारा अनवरत प्रवाहित होती है, वे निराशापूर्ण बातों पर ध्यान नहीं देते हैं। उन्हें तो बस आगे बढ़ कर कुछ नया करना होता है। कुछ नए उत्तरदायित्व के साथ एक नई दिशा तय करनी होती है। कल किसने क्या कहा, कल क्या हुआ, इस पर सोचने का समय कहां होता है उनके पास? कहा जाता है कि 'जिम्मेदारी

किसकी? जो समझे उसकी!' दुनिया मेरे आगे और 'जो बोले सो कुंडी खोले'! छोटी-सी लगने वाली बातें बड़ी महत्त्वपूर्ण होती हैं। अनेक छोटी-छोटी बातों को नजरअंदाज करने का नतीजा कभी-कभी अनेक अन्य प्रकार के अपराध में और कभी–कभी तो जीवन और सभ्यता के अंत के रूप में भी होता है। 'सब चलता है... मुझे क्या फर्क पड़ता है...!' या 'मेरे पहले भी संस्था चल रही थी. मेरे बाद में भी संस्था चलती रहेगी...', 'मैंने सबका ठेका ले रखा है क्या?', 'अरे चल यार... कोई न कोई तो देख ही

ऐसे कई जुमले हैं जो हमें प्रतिदिन अपने आसपास सुनाई पड़ जाते हैं। ये जुमले अनायास ही कही गई बातें नहीं. बल्कि किसी व्यक्ति के

लेगा ' या फिर 'अब उनको क्या करना.. ' आदि।

संपूर्ण व्यक्तित्व का आईना भी होती हैं। फिर दफ्तरों में तो मजाक के तौर पर 'बने रहो पगला... काम करे अगला', 'मत लो टेंशन, नहीं तो फैमिली पाएगी पेंशन', 'काम से डरो नहीं, काम को कभी करो नहीं 'या 'काम करो या न करो, काम की फिक्र जरूर करो' जैसी बातें आपस की हल्की बातचीत में सुनने को मिल जाती हैं।

दरअसल, ऐसे जुमलों ने सत्यानाश कर दिया उत्तरदायित्व की भावना का और हम कई सालों में भी वह नहीं कर पाए जो आबादी,

क्षेत्रफल और संसाधन के मामले में हमसे सौ गुना कम में भी नहीं टिकने वाले कई देशों ने कुछ ही वर्षों में कर दिया। हम ऐसी तमाम बातों की ओर ध्यान नहीं देते जो हमारे दैनिक जीवन में समस्याएं पैदा करती हैं। बिजली की कमी, शुद्ध पेयजल की समस्या, गंदगी के कारण बीमारियों के खतरे. बेतरतीब ट्रैफिक के कारण आवागमन में कठिनाई आदि। हमारा यह अनुभव है कि बिजली, पानी, सफाई, अनुशासन जैसी बुनियादी सुविधाओं के मामले में भी हमारे व्यवहार आमतौर पर उत्तरदायित्व से भरे हुए नहीं होते। कहीं नल खुला है तो हम आगे बढ़ कर उसे बंद करने की जहमत नहीं उठाते। कहीं निरर्थक बल्ब और पंखे चालू हैं, हम उन्हें बंद करने की पहलकदमी नहीं करते। कहीं न कहीं किसी फिजूलखर्ची की कीमत हमारे घरों में हमारे अपने ही भोगने के लिए बाध्य होते हैं।

उत्तरदायित्व की अनुभूति हमें स्वतः स्फूर्त चेतना से प्रेरित करती है। कितना अच्छा हो अगर हम अपनी सीट से हटते वक्त अपने कंप्यूटर के मॉनिटर को ऑफ या बंद कर दें, अपनी सीट के ऊपर का पंखा बंद कर दें, कहीं कोई नल बेकार चलता दिखाई दे तो हाथ बढ़ा कर उसे बंद कर दें, अगर वाश बेसिन में कोई व्यक्ति पान-सुपारी मुंह से उगलता दिखाई दे तो उसे टोक दें और रोकें, हम सड़कों पर अपनी गाड़ी को जहां-तहां खड़ी नहीं करें। ये सब सोचने की बातें हैं और इस तरह से सोचना भी उत्तरदायित्व की भावना से ही विकसित होता है। उत्तरदायित्व अगर दूसरों के प्रति नहीं तो अपने परिवार, समाज, संस्थान, देश, मानवता, प्रकृति के अंश के रूप में अपने प्रति। हम चाहें तो अपने भीतर आसपास के लोगों को इस तरह के उत्तरदायित्वों के प्रति जागरूक कर सकते हैं। अन्यथा यथास्थितिवाद का शिकार होकर मवाद भरे घाव की तरह बजबजाते हुए भविष्य के रास्ते पर सुप्त चेतना, निश्चेष्ट, निस्तेज, संज्ञाशुन्य व्यक्ति की तरह बढ़ना पड़ता है। सोचना हमें है कि हम कौन-सा विकल्प चनें!

आतंक पर नकेल

श-ए-मोहम्मद ने पुलवामा में जिस कायराना आत्मघाती हमले को अंजाम दिया, वह घोर अमानवीय और निंदनीय है। इस आतंकी हमले के बाद समूचे देश में पाकिस्तान के खिलाफ गुस्से की आग भड़क उठी है। शहर से सुदूर गांव और स्कूल-कॉलेज तथा विश्वविद्यालय तक पाकिस्तान के खिलाफ विरोध प्रदर्शन और नारेबाजी का दौर जारी है। पाकिस्तान की इस कायराना हरकत के बाद भारत सरकार ने विश्व बिरादरी के सामने उसे आतंकी देश घोषित करने की मुहिम तेज कर दी। भारत सरकार ने पाकिस्तान के खिलाफ कार्रवाई करते हुए उसस सर्वाधिक तरजीही राष्ट्र का दर्जा छीन लिया। इसके साथ ही पाकिस्तान से आयातित वस्तुओं पर सीमा शुल्क 200 फीसद तक बढ़ा दिया है।

पाकिस्तान की आतंकी हरकतों से भारत ही नहीं बल्कि उसके पड़ोसी अफगानिस्तान और ईरान भी परेशान हैं। पुलवामा में फिदायीन हमले से ठीक एक दिन पहले 13 फरवरी को ईरान की सेना पर हुए आतंकी हमले में उसके 27 कमांडो शहीद हो गए थे। ईरान ने इस हमले का जिम्मेदार पाकिस्तान को माना है। ईरान के मेजर जनरल मोहम्मद जाफरी ने जिहादी समृह जैश अल अदल को इस घटना के लिए जिम्मेदार ठहराया है। यह बात दुनिया को पता है कि जैश-अल-अदल को पाकिस्तानी सेना और सरकार का संरक्षण प्राप्त है। यही नहीं, ईरान ने पाकिस्तान को चेताते हुए सीधे शब्दों में कहा है कि वह आतंकियों के खिलाफ कार्रवाई करे वरना ईरान की सेना उनके खिलाफ खुद सैन्य कदम उठाने को तत्पर एवं सक्षम है।

जैश-ए-मोहम्मद के सरगना मसूद अजहर को वैश्विक आतंकी घोषित करने के भारत के प्रयास को

चीन हमेशा निष्फल बना देता है। चीन 'शत्रु का शत्रु मित्र' वाली कूटनीति पर काम कर रहा है लेकिन उसे समझना चाहिए कि आतंकी का कोई सगा नहीं होता है। जिस पाकिस्तान ने आतंकवाद को आश्रय दे रखा है वह खुद पेशावर में स्कूली बच्चों पर हुए आतंकी हमले के बाद खून के आंसू रोया था। चीन अगर इस भ्रम में है कि आतंकवाद उसका कुछ नहीं बिगाड़ पाएगा तो यह उसके लिए खतरनाक है। पुलवामा आतंकी हमला और ईरान की सेना पर हुए आतंकी हमले के बाद दुनिया के सभी देशों को आतंकवाद और आतंकवाद को आश्रय देने वाले देशों के

जवानों के बलिदान की कीमत अलग-अलग नहीं हो सकती। इस मामले में पुराने नियमों को समाप्त कर नए प्रावधान किए जाने चाहिए।

मंगलेश सोनी, मनावर, धार, मध्यप्रदेश

इस पर ध्यान

पुलवामा में शहीद हुए सैनिकों के परिवार के लिए केंद्र और राज्य सरकारों ने सहायता राशि की घोषणा की है। निश्चित ही इससे इन परिवारों को आर्थिक संबल मिलेगा। लेकिन इस ओर भी ध्यान दिया जाना चाहिए कि उनके परिवार वालों को सहायता राशि या

मुआवजे की रकम लेने के लिए

किसी भी मुद्दे या लेख पर अपनी राय हमें भेजें। हमारा पता है: ए-८, सेक्टर-7, नोएडा २०१३०१, जिला : गौतमबुद्धनगर, उत्तर प्रदेश

आप चाहें तो अपनी बात ईमेल के जरिए भी हम तक पहुंचा सकते हैं। आइडी है : chaupal.jansatta@expressindia.com

खिलाफ एकजुट होकर लडने की आवश्यकता है। • कुंदन कुमार, बीएचयू, वाराणसी

शहीद का दर्जा

सीआरपीएफ, बीएसएफ या फिर दूसरे अर्धसैनिक बल का कोई जवान अगर किसी आतंकी हमले में वीरगति को प्राप्त होता है तो उसे सेना के जवान की तरह शहीद का दर्जा नहीं दिया जाता। इतना ही नहीं, सेना के शहीद जवान के परिवार वालों को मिलने वाली सुविधाएं और मुआवजे जैसे लाभ भी अर्धसैनिक बलों के जवान ों के परिवार वालों को नहीं मिलते। सरकार को इस मामले में ध्यान देना चाहिए क्योंकि जवानों की शहादत की तुलना नहीं की जा सकती। सेना और अर्ध सैनिक बलों के

ज्यादा भटकना न पड़े। पूर्व में ऐसे परिजनों के इस मामले में कटु अनुभव सामने आए हैं और हम सब अपने यहां

के प्रशासनिक तंत्र की गति को जानते ही हैं। • अंकुर, चंडीगढ़ मौतों के दोषी

दिल्ली के सत्रह लोगों की जान लेने वाले करोलबाग अग्निकांड से साफ है कि हम फिर उसी मोड़ पर खड़े हैं जिस पर उपहार सिनेमा अग्निकांड के समय थे। इतने वर्षों बाद तारीखें तो बदलीं लेकिन व्यवस्था वही है। इतनी बड़ी लापरवाही कैसे बरती जा सकती है; इन मौतों का जिम्मेदार कौन है? क्या निगम आंख मूंदकर बैठा हुआ था? क्या पुलिस के पास इसकी सूचना नहीं थी कि यह छह मंजिला तरफ भ्रष्टाचार का जाल फैला हुआ है। किसी ने पैसे दिए नहीं कि उससे पहले अवैध कार्य शुरू हो जाते हैं। अब भी मौका है, जितने भी अवैध होटल, कारखाने चल रहे हैं उन्हें बंद किया जाए। हमें इस दर्दनाक घटना से सीख लेनी चाहिए। निगम और प्रशासन को अब नींद से उठ जाना चाहिए। निर्दोष लोगों को न्याय जरूर मिलना चाहिए।

• आशीष, राम लाल आनंद कॉलेज, दिल्ली मयोदा के साथ

सोलहवीं लोकसभा की अंतिम बैठक हाल ही में संपन्न हुई। वैसे इस कालखंड में देशहित में कई शानदार कार्य हुए हैं पर संसदीय सत्रों में बहस व चर्चा का जो स्तर सामने आया है, वह बहुत निराश करने वाला है। संसद वार्ताओं का मंदिर है, लेकिन वहां धीरे-धीरे चर्चाएं कम, शोरशराबा और नारेबाजी ज्यादा होने लगी हैं। लोकतंत्र में प्रतिद्वंद्विता अवश्य होती है मगर राजनीति की जो शैली पिछले दिनों विकसित हुई है उससे अवसाद, नफरत, घृणा व वैमनस्य की बू आने लगी है। संसद में मर्यादा का, शब्दों का, रिश्तों का, नैतिकता का जो पालन होना चाहिए था, उसका निरंतर ह्रास हो रहा है। इसके लिए सत्ता पक्ष और विपक्ष दोनों ही जिम्मेदार हैं। जनता तो अपने प्रतिनिधियों को स्वस्थ चर्चा करते हुए देखना चाहती है।

कम से कम संसद में अच्छी व सार्थक बहसें हों, जो भी कमियां इस बार रह गई हैं. उन्हें सत्रहवीं लोकसभा के कार्यकाल में दूर किया जाना चाहिए। लोकतंत्र में बहुमत का शासन और अल्पमत का सम्मान होना चाहिए लेकिन हमारे यहां विपक्ष की भूमिका को ही समाप्त करने की विचारधारा सक्रिय है। संसद में जो जीवंतता होनी चाहिए, उसे हर हाल में अक्षण्ण रखना होगा। वास्तव में यही हमारे लोकतंत्र की खूबसूरती और विशेषता है।

• सत्यप्रकाश आर्य, हमीरपुर, उत्तर प्रदेश

होटल अवैध रूप से चल रहा था? दरअसल, हर

रांची, मंगलवार, 19.02.2019

एमबीएस का दौरा

ऊदी अरब के शहजादे मोहम्मद बिन सलमान (एमबीएस) का भारत, पाकिस्तान और चीन का दौरा ऐसे समय में हो रहा है, जब पाकिस्तान-समर्थित गिरोह लगातार आतंकी हमलों को अंजाम दे रहे हैं. बुधवार को ईरानी सुरक्षाबलों और गुरुवार को भारतीय सुरक्षाबलों के काफिले पर आत्मघाती हमले के जिम्मेदार गिरोह और उनके सरगना बरसों से पाकिस्तान में पनाह लिये हुए हैं. इन हमलों पर हमेशा की तरह पाकिस्तान का रवैया टालमटोल का है. अफगानिस्तान ने भी संयुक्त राष्ट्र में शिकायत की है कि उसकी संप्रभुता की अवहेलना करते हुए इमरान खान सरकार तालिबानियों से बातचीत कर रही है. सऊदी अरब और पाकिस्तान के गहरे संबंध हैं. भयानक आर्थिक संकट से पाकिस्तान को निकालने में सऊदी अरब बड़ी मदद भी कर रहा है. हालांकि, भारत के साथ भी सऊदी अरब समेत सभी अरब देशों के रिश्ते मजबूत हैं, पर 2006 में बादशाह अब्दुल्लाह की भारत यात्रा के बाद बेहतरी का नया दौर शुरू हुआ. किसी सऊदी शासक का पांच दशकों बाद भारत आगमन हुआ था. वर्ष 2010

भारत की तरफ से यह कूटनीतिक कोशिश की जानी चाहिए कि सऊदी शहजादा चीनी नेतृत्व के सामने भारत की चिंताओं को रखें.

में तत्कालीन प्रधानमंत्री डॉ मनमोहन सिंह और 2016 में प्रधानमंत्री नरेंद्र मोदी सऊदी अरब जा चुके हैं. मध्य-पूर्व में शांति, पेट्रोलियम कारोबार और सांस्कृतिक आदान-प्रदान बढ़ाने के साथ आतंकवाद पर दोनों देशों की राय एक-जैसी है. लेकिन, सऊदी अरब को पाकिस्तान पर दबाव बनाने में कामयाबी नहीं मिली कि वह भारत के खिलाफ आतंक की अपनी आधिकारिक नीति का त्याग कर दे. शहजादा सलमान के दौरे में भारत को मजबूती से यह मुद्दा उठाना चाहिए.

भारत से उन्हें चीन जाना है. चीन ने सुरक्षा परिषद् में आतंकी सरगना मसूद अजहर पर पाबंदी लगाने के प्रस्तावों को दो बार अपने विशेषाधिकार से रोका है. भारत की तरफ से यह कूटनीतिक कोशिश की जानी चाहिए कि सऊदी शहजादा चीनी नेतृत्व के सामने भारत की चिंताओं को रखें. चाहे वह चाबहार और ग्वादर बंदरगाहों से अंतरराष्ट्रीय वाणिज्य को विस्तार देने का एजेंडा हो या अफगानिस्तान और कश्मीर में शांति और स्थिरता स्थापित करने के प्रयास हों, ये काम बिना पाकिस्तान-समर्थित आतंकवाद पर लगाम लगाये संभव नहीं हैं. भारत ने अपने कुटनीतिक और वाणिज्यिक संतुलन से सऊदी अरब के साथ उसके परंपरागत प्रतिद्वंद्वी ईरान से भी द्विपक्षीय संबंध बेहतर किये हैं. पाकिस्तान और आतंकवाद पर चीन के नकारात्मक रुख के बावजूद उसके साथ सहयोग की नीति हमने अपनायी है, चाहे वह आपसी व्यापार का मसला हो या फिर अफगानिस्तान के पुननिर्माण के वैश्विक प्रयासों में भागीदारी हो. अब सवाल है कि अपने पडोसी देशों- भारत, ईरान और अफगानिस्तान- को नुकसान पहुंचाने के पाकिस्तानी रवैये में बदलाव क्यों नहीं आता, और उसे मदद देनेवाले सऊदी अरब और चीन जैसे प्रभावशाली देश समुचित पहल क्यों नहीं कर रहे हैं? दक्षिण एशिया में अमन-चैन के ि बिना न तो इस इलाके का विकास मुमिकन है, न ही एशिया का.



सदाचार

नुष्य की वास्तविक पूंजी धन नहीं, विचार हैं. प्रज्ञा-युग के चार आधार होंगे- समझदारी, ईमानदारी, जिम्मेदारी और बहादुरी. मनःस्थिति बदले, तब परिस्थिति बदले. रचनात्मक कार्यों से देश समर्थ बनेगा. संसार का सबसे बड़ा दिवालिया वह है, जिसने उत्साह खो दिया. समाज के हित में अपना हित है. सुख में गर्व न करें, दुख में धैर्य न छोड़ें. उसी धर्म का अब उत्थान, जिसका सहयोगी विज्ञान. संसार में प्यार करने लायक दो वस्तुएं हैं- एक दुख और दूसरा श्रम. दुख के बिना हृदय निर्मल नहीं होता और श्रम के बिना मनुष्यत्व का विकास नहीं होता. संपदा को जोड़-जोड़कर रखनेवाले को भला क्या पता कि दान में कितनी मिठास है. जीवन में दो ही व्यक्ति असफल होते हैं- एक वे जो सोचते हैं पर करते नहीं, दूसरे जो करते हैं पर सोचते नहीं. मानसिक बीमारियों से बचने का ्एक ही उपाय है कि हृदय को घृणा से और मन को भय व चिंता से मुक्त रखा जाये. मनुष्य कुछ और नहीं, भटका हुआ देवता है. असफलता यह बताती है कि सफलता का प्रयत्न पूरे मन से नहीं किया गया. शारीरिक गुलामी से बौद्धिक गुलामी अधिक भयंकर है. ग्रंथ, पंथ हो अथवा व्यक्ति, नहीं किसी की अंधी भक्ति. जैसी जनता वैसा राजा, प्रजातंत्र का यही तकाजा. केवल वे ही असंभव कार्य को कर सकते हैं, जो अदृष्य को भी देख लेते हैं. नहीं संगठित सज्जन लोग, रहे इसी से संकट भोग. बड़प्पन अमीरी में नहीं, ईमानदारी और सज्जनता में सन्निहित है. जो बच्चों को सिखाते हैं, उन पर बड़े ख़ुद अमल करें, तो यह संसार स्वर्ग बन जाये. विनय अपयश का नाश करता है. पराक्रम अनर्थ को दुर करता है. जब तक व्यक्ति असत्य को ही सत्य समझता रहता है, तब तक उसके मन में सत्य को जानने की जिज्ञासा उत्पन्न नहीं होती है. अवसर तो सभी को जिंदगी में मिलते हैं, किंतु उनका सही वक्त पर सही तरीके से इस्तेमाल कुछ ही लोग कर पाते हैं. क्षमा सदा ही क्रोध का नाश करती है और सदाचार कुलक्षण का अंत करता है. पंडित श्रीराम शर्मा आचार्य

पिछले दिनों देश के प्रतिष्ठित 'दिल्ली

स्कूल ऑफ इकॉनामिक्स' में

समाजशास्त्र के प्रोफेसर रहे रबिंद्र रे

(1948-2019) के गुजरने की खबर

आयी. विश्व पुस्तक मेले में मैं मैथिली

की सुपरिचित कथाकार लिली रे के

निहलानी ने फिल्म भी बनायी.

उपन्यास 'पटाक्षेप' का मैथिली संस्करण ढूंढ़ रहा था. मेरी

जानकारी में नक्सलबाड़ी आंदोलन को केंद्र में रखकर मैथिली

में शायद ही कोई और उपन्यास लिखा गया है. बांग्ला की चर्चित

रचनाकार महाश्वेता देवी ने भी 'हजार चौरासी की मां' उपन्यास

लिखा, बाद में इसको आधार बनाकर इसी नाम से गोविंद

उपन्यास 'पटाक्षेप' में बिहार के पूर्णिया इलाके में दिलीप,

अनिल, सुजीत जैसे पात्रों की मौजूदगी, संघर्ष और सशस्त्र

क्रांति के लिए किसानों-मजदूरों को तैयार करने की कार्रवाई

पढ़ने पर यह समझना मुश्किल नहीं होता कि यह रबिंद्र रे और

उनके साथियों की कहानी है. पात्र सुजीत कहता है- 'हमारी

पार्टी का लक्ष्य है- शोषण का अंत. श्रमिक वर्ग को उसका

हक दिलाना.' उल्लेखनीय है कि साहित्य अकादमी पुरस्कार

से सम्मानित लिली रे रबिंद्र रे की मां हैं, पर मानवीय मूल्यों को

चित्रित करनेवाला यह उपन्यास आत्मपरक नहीं है.

कुछ अलग

उतरे करने को उद्धि-पार

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शे-मोहम्मद मतलब मोहम्मद की सेना. यह आश्चर्यजनक है, क्योंकि इस्लाम के पैगम्बर की जीत की कोई आकांक्षा नहीं थी. अरब का विस्तार मोहम्मद की मृत्यु के बाद खलीफाओं, विशेषकर

उमर के दौर में शुरू हुआ. जैश एक पाकिस्तानी संगठन है और यह ज्यादातर पाकिस्तान के ग्रामीण पंजाबियों की भर्ती करता है. यह लश्करे-तैयबा से बहुत छोटा है और इसकी विचारधारा भी अलग है. इस्लाम की एक विशेष विचारधारा सलाफी, जिसमें आत्महत्या एक बड़ा गुनाह माना गया है, के कारण लश्कर आत्मघाती हमले को पसंद नहीं करता है. इसकी बजाय लश्कर अपने आतंकी कृत्य को फिदायीन हमला कहता है, जिसमें हमलावर तब तक लड़ाई जारी रखता है, जब तक वह मारा नहीं जाता. उरी और मुंबई में हुए आतंकी हमले संभवतः लश्कर द्वारा अंजाम दिये गये थे, हालांकि इसने हमलों की जिम्मेदारी लेने से इनकार कर दिया था.

जैश एक देवबंदी संगठन है. इसका अर्थ यह नहीं कि उत्तर प्रदेश के देवबंद के दारुल उलूम मदरसे से इसका कोई संबंध है. लेकिन, वे उसी मूलभूत शिक्षाओं को मानते हैं, जो आठवीं शताब्दी के विद्वान अबू हनीफा के सिद्धांतों पर आधारित हैं. यह संगठन सूफीवाद और मकबरों पर पूजा को गलत मानता है, जबकि इस उपमहाद्वीप के अधिकतर मुसलमान इनके प्रति श्रद्धा

जैश सिपहे-सहाबा पाकिस्तान और लश्करे-झांगवी से जुड़ा हुआ है, जो पंजाबी संगठन हैं और इन्होंने पाकिस्तानी शियाओं की हत्या की है. जैश चाहता है कि पाकिस्तान को पूरी तरह से शरिया कानून के तहत संचालित किया जाये. वह यह भी चाहता है कि अमेरिका अफगानिस्तान से हट जाये. जैश का गठन 2000 में हुआ था और हरकत-उल मुजाहिदीन समूह के ज्यादातर अनुयायी इसमें शामिल हो गये थे. इसके सरगना मसूद

अजहर को भारत में पकड़ा गया था, लेकिन वाजपेयी सरकार द्वारा इसे रिहा कर दिया गया था. वह जेल में बंद उन तीन आतंकवादियों में से एक था, जिसे तत्कालीन केंद्रीय मंत्री जसवंत सिंह कंधार लेकर गये थे. वहां एयर इंडिया का एक विमान अपहृत कर ले जाया गया था.

दिसंबर, 2001 में हमारी संसद पर चार आतंकवादियों द्वारा फिदायीन हमले के लिए भारत ने जैश व लश्कर को दोषी ठहराया था. इसके बाद तत्कालीन पाकिस्तानी राष्ट्रपति मुशर्रफ ने इन दोनों संगठनों को प्रतिबंधित कर दिया था. पर, लश्कर ने अपना नाम बदलकर अपनी गतिविधियां जारी रखी. इसका बड़ा मुख्यालय पाकिस्तानी पंजाब प्रांत के मुरीदके में है और इससे कई संगठन और धार्मिक संस्थाएं जुड़ी हुई हैं. कुछ पाकिस्तानी विश्लेषकों का मानना है कि लश्कर की तुलना में पाकिस्तानी सेना और आइएसआइ का जैश पर ज्यादा नियंत्रण था. पाबंदी से पहले ही उसने अपने खातों से सारा पैसा निकालकर अपने निचले कैडर में बांट दिया था. साल 2003 में जैश ने मुशर्रफ के काफिले पर दो बार आत्मघाती हमला कर उन्हें मारने की कोशिश की थी.

कश्मीर में पहला आत्मघाती हमला 19 अप्रैल. 2000 को तब हुआ था, जब जैश के आतंकी ने



पुलवामा आतंकी हमले के मायने

आकार पटेल

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संसद हमले के बाद तत्कालीन प्रधानमंत्री वाजपेयी के दबाव में मुशर्रफ द्वारा जैश पर पाबंदी लगायी गयी थी उस समय उस हमले से देश क्रोधित था और सरकार ने राजस्थान सीमा पर सेना तैनात कर दी थी.

> इसका मतलब है कि आत्मघाती हमलावर के अलावा कई और लोग भी हैं. जो इस हमले में शामिल थे. वे अब

भारतीय सेना के बादामी बाग स्थित मुख्यालय को निशाना बनाया था. अक्तूबर, 2001 में जैश ने जम्मू-कश्मीर विधानसभा पर बम दागे थे, जिसमें 38 लोग मारे गये थे. वर्ष 2013 से जैश कम सक्रिय रहा है. हालांकि, पाकिस्तान को लगता है कि मसूद अजहर उसके लिए कीमती है. हमें यह इसलिए पता है, क्योंकि वह संयुक्त राष्ट्र सुरक्षा परिषद् द्वारा अजहर को वैश्विक आतंकवादी घोषित करने से रोकने में (चीन के वीटो के जरिये) सफल रहा है.

सीआरपीएफ पर हुआ आतंकी हमला दुखद है और यह भविष्य की कई आशंकाओं का संकेत हो सकता है. आत्मघाती बम की योजना बनाने के लिए व्यापक समर्थन और उच्च स्तरीय समन्वय की आवश्यकता होती है. विस्फोटकों की तस्करी करने या खरीदने या यातायात के जरिये इसे लाने और उपकरणों को बनाने की तैयारी तथा तकनीकी जानकारी के साथ सुरक्षाबलों की टुकड़ी की आवाजाही की खुफिया जानकारी और जरूरी सहायता (जैसे कार की व्यवस्था) के लिए स्थानीय मदद की आवश्यकता होती है. प्रशिक्षण और भंडारण के लिए भी ऐसी सहायता

की दरकार होती है. जैश यह हमला करने लायक बना,

भी हमें नुकसान पहुंचाना चाहते हैं. एक ग्रामीण कश्मीरी लड़के को सफलतापूर्वक तैयार किया गया और खुद को व दूसरों को मारने के लिए उसकी सोच को पूरी तरह से बदल दिया गया. इसका अर्थ यह है कि वहां एक सक्रिय संगठन मौजूद है, जो ऐसे लड़कों की भर्ती करता है. अभी ऐसे ही कई संभावित आतंकी वहां छुपे हो सकते हैं.

दुखद है कि कि मजहबी समुदायों के संबंधों में आयी दरार के कारण हमारे लिए मुखबिर मिलना मुश्किल है. कश्मीर के सामाजिक नेटवर्क को भेदने की क्षमता हमारे पास बहुत कम है. खुफिया ब्यूरो में बहुत-थोड़े मुस्लिम हैं. भारत के कई वरिष्ठ खुफिया अधिकारी उर्दू तक नहीं पढ़ सकते. सितंबर, 2002 में जब अहमदाबाद के अक्षरधाम मंदिर में दो फिदायिनों ने हमला किया था, तब उनके नोट को एक स्थानीय गुजराती इमाम के माध्यम से पुलिस पढ़ सकी थी. साल 1993 दंगों और बम धमाकों के बाद मुंबई पुलिस के सामने भी ऐसी ही समस्या आयी थी. लंबे समय से उसके पास खबरियों के अच्छे स्थानीय नेटवर्क का अभाव है. संसद हमले के बाद तत्कालीन प्रधानमंत्री वाजपेयी के दबाव में मुशर्रफ द्वारा जैश पर पाबंदी लगायी गयी थी. उस समय उस हमले से देश क्रोधित था और सरकार ने राजस्थान सीमा पर सेना

अगर मोदी सरकार के बयानों पर ध्यान दें, तो कुछ ऐसी ही योजना बनायी जा रही है. इसे अंजाम देने पर सोच-विचार करना होगा, क्योंकि पाकिस्तान से निपटने के मामले में भारत दुनिया का दखल नहीं चाहता. लेकिन जब दो परमाणु शक्ति-संपन्न देश युद्ध के कगार पर खड़े हों, तो दुनिया स्वाभाविक रूप से हस्तक्षेप करना चाहेगी. पुलवामा की घटना कश्मीरियों की जिंदगी को और मुश्किल बना देगी. वे अब भी केंद्रीय शासन के तहत हैं तथा सरकार के कठोर रवैये से उनकी नागरिक स्वतंत्रता में और अधिक कटौती होगी.

आइये, अपना आरक्षण ले जाइये



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आज आरक्षण वह सस्ता झुनझुना है, जिससे सभी खेलना चाहते हैं. लेकिन, इस व्यवस्था की चालाकी देखिये कि वह सबको एक ही झुनझुने से निबटा रही है, ताकि किसी को यह याद ही न रहे कि व्यवस्था का काम झुनझुने थमाना नहीं है.

लिए प्रेरित करने के लिए अपनी पढ़ाई-

लिखाई छोड़ दी और गांव-देहातों में

रहने लगे. उन्होंने समतामूलक समाज

का सपना देखा. इनमें से कुछ खेत

रहे और कुछ मुख्यधारा में लौट

आये. हालांकि, बाद में रबिंद्र रे इस

विचारधारा से न सिर्फ दुरी बना ली, बल्कि अपनी किताब 'द

नक्सलाइट एंड देयर ऑडियोलॉजी' में लिखा- 'नक्सलाइट

की अस्तित्ववादी विचारधारा मूल रूप से नाइलिस्ट है- जो

नक्सलबाड़ी आंदोलन के दौर में भूमिगत रहनेवाले प्रोफेसर

दिलीप सिमियन ने रबिंद्र रे को याद करते हुए लिखा है कि

'भूमिगत रहने के दौरान में एक बार मैं साल 1971 में पूर्णिया

में उससे मिला था. सफेद गंजी, नीले रंग की लुंगी और घनी,

लटकती मुंछ में पूर्णिया बस स्टैंड पर लल्लू (रबिंद्र रे का

्युवा हमेशा स्वप्नदर्शी होता है और विद्रोही भी. लेकिन,

रबिंद्र की पीढ़ी के सपने हमारी पीढ़ी से अलग थे. उस दौर में

दुनियाभर में सत्ता-व्यवस्था के खिलाफ युवा-छात्रों का गुस्सा

चरम पर था. फ्रांस, ब्रिटेन, अमेरिका आदि देशों में सत्ता के

पुकारू नाम) उत्तरी बिहार का किसान लग रहा था.'

सेंट स्टीफेंस कॉलेज के दिनों के उनके मित्र और

आश्वस्त रहता है कि वह सब कुछ है और कुछ भी नहीं है.'

जस्थान में गुर्जरों ने आरक्षण की मांग का अपना पांचवां आंदोलन इस भाव के साथ वापस ले लिया है कि उनकी जीत हो गयी है. राजस्थान के मुख्यमंत्री अशोक गहलोत के तीसरी बार मुख्यमंत्री बनने पर गुर्जर समुदाय ने ही उनका सबसे मुखर स्वागत किया. उन्होंने राजस्थान ही बंद कर दिया. सडकें बंद, रेलपटरियां बंद और आगजनी! हमारे आरक्षण-आंदोलन का यह सफलता-सिद्ध नक्शा है- अपनी जातिवालों को इकट्ठा करना, स्वार्थ की उत्तेजक बातों-नारों से उनका खंडहर, भूखा मन तर्क-शून्य कर

का नंगा नाच करना ! सभी ऐसा ही करते हैं, गुर्जरों ने भी किया गुर्जरों समेत पांच अन्य जातियों को पांच प्रतिशत आरक्षण देने की घोषणा राजस्थान सरकार ने की. आरक्षण के बारे में 50 प्रतिशत की सुप्रीम कोर्ट की लक्ष्मण-रेखा पार करने के कारण अदालत में ऐसे सारे आरक्षण गिर जाते हैं. ऐसा पहले हुआ भी है. केंद्र सरकार ने सवर्ण जातियों के लिए 10 प्रतिशत चुनावी-आरक्षण की जो घोषणा की है, वह भी 50 प्रतिशत की रेखा को पार करती है. कुछ राज्यों ने भी इस मर्यादा से बाहर जाकर

आरक्षण दे रखा है. इन सबके बारे में सुप्रीम कोर्ट की संविधान पीठ को

कोई संयुक्त फैसला लेना है.

देना, किसी भी हद तक जा सकनेवाली असहिष्णुता का बवंडर उठाना,

सरकार को कैसी भी धमकियां देकर ललकारना और अधिकाधिक हिंसा

जिन-जिन को आरक्षण चाहिए, आइये अपना आरक्षण ले जाइये. आखिर तो रोटी एक ही है और उसका आकार भी वैसा ही है. इसके जितने टुकड़े कर सकें, कर लीजिये. मैं तो कहता हूं, सुप्रीम कोर्ट 50 प्रतिशत की अपनी लक्ष्मण-रेखा भी मिटा दे. फिर तो सब कुछ सबके लिए आरक्षित हो जाये ! फिर आप पायेंगे कि आरक्षण के जादुई चिराग को रगड़ने से भी हाथ में कुछ नहीं आया- न जीवन, न जीविका !

रोटी तो एक ही है, लेकिन कोई नहीं चाहता कि रोटियां कई हों और उनका आकार भी बड़ा होता रहे, ताकि आरक्षण की जरूरत ही न हो. सब चाहते यही हैं कि जो है, उसमें से 'हमारा' हिस्सा आरक्षित हो जाये. यह भी कोई पूछना नहीं चाहता, न कोई बताना चाहता है कि यह 'हमारा' कौन है ? जिनका आरक्षण संविधान-प्रदत्त है, उनके समाज में 'हमारा' कौन है ? पिछले 70 सालों में वह 'हमारा' कहां से चला था और कहां पहुंचा? पिछड़े समाज का पिछड़ा हिस्सा आरक्षण का कितना लाभ ले पा रहा है ? हर समाज का एक 'क्रीमी लेयर' है, जो हर लाभ या राहत को कहीं और जाने से रोकता भी है और छान भी लेता है. यह बात हम चारों बगल देख रहे हैं. पिछडी जाति का नकली प्रमाण-पत्र बनवानेवाले सवर्णों की कमी नहीं है और हर तरह की धोखाधड़ी कर सारे लाभ अपने

ही परिजनों में बांट लेनेवाले पिछडों की भी कमी नहीं है.

आरक्षण की व्यवस्था पहले एक विफल समाज के पश्चाताप का प्रतीक थी. आज यह सरकारों की विफलता की घोषणा करती है. हर तरफ से उठ रही आरक्षण की मांग बताती है कि तमाम सरकारें सामान्य संवैधानिक मर्यादाओं में बंधकर देश नहीं चला पा रही हैं. हम चूके कहां? समाज के पिछड़े तबकों को आरक्षण की विशेष सुविधा देकर सरकारों और समाज को सो नहीं जाना था, बल्कि ज्यादा सजगता से और ज्यादा प्रतिबद्धता से ऐसा राजनीतिक-सामाजिक-शैक्षणिक चक्र चलाना था कि पिछड़ा वर्ग जैसा कोई तबका बचे ही नहीं. लेकिन ऐसा किसी ने किया नहीं. अगर शिक्षा में या नौकरियों में आरक्षण वाली जगहें भरती नहीं हैं, तो सरकार को जवाबदेह होना चाहिए. उसे संसद व विधानसभाओं में इसकी सफाई देनी चाहिए कि ऐसा क्यों हुआ और आगे ऐसा नहीं हो, इसकी वह क्या योजना बना रही है.

आरक्षण का चलते रहना इस बात का प्रमाण है कि समाज के हर तबके को सामाजिक-आर्थिक-राजनीतिक अवसर का लाभ पहुंचाना इस व्यवस्था के लिए संभव नहीं है. लागू आरक्षण को जारी रखने के लिए आंखें तरेरते लोग और नये आरक्षण की मांग करते हिंसक आंदोलनकारी, दोनों मिलकर कह तो यही रहे हैं न कि लोगों को खैरात बांटने और स्वार्थों की होड़ के अलावा दूसरा कुछ है ही नहीं. आरक्षण की यह भूख बताती है कि आजादी के बाद से आज तक जिस दिशा में सरकारें चली हैं, वह समाज के हित की दिशा नहीं है. संविधान में राज्यों के लिए नीति-निर्देशक तत्वों को देखें और अपने समाज को देखें, तो यह समझना आसान हो जायेगा कि हमारा शासन कितना दिशाहीन, लक्ष्यहीन तथा संकल्पहीन रहा है. न सबके लिए शिक्षा, न सबके लिए स्वास्थ्य, न पूर्ण साक्षरता, न हिंदी को राष्ट्रभाषा का दर्जा, न संपूर्ण नशाबंदी, न जाति-धर्म की दीवारों को गिराने की कोई कोशिश, न समाज की बुनियादी इकाई के रूप में गांवों की हैसियत को संविधान व प्रशासन में मान्यता- कुछ भी तो हमने नहीं किया. रोजगारविहीन विकास को हमने प्रचार की चकाचौंध में छिपाने की कोशिश की, लेकिन भुख छिपाने से छिपती है क्या ? इसलिए सारी जातियों के गरीब आरक्षण की लाइन में खड़े हैं. और संसद व विधानसभाओं में वह लाइन बड़ी होती जा रही है, जिसमें गरीबों के करोड़पति प्रतिनिधि खड़े होते हैं.

आज आरक्षण वह सस्ता झुनझुना है, जिससे सभी खेलना चाहते हैं. लेकिन, इस व्यवस्था की चालाकी देखिये कि वह सबको एक ही झुनझुने से निबटा रही है, ताकि किसी को यह याद ही न रहे कि व्यवस्था का काम झुनझुने थमाना नहीं है.



कनाडा की मानवीयता

कनाडा ने अपने दरवाजे दुनिया के आप्रवासियों के लिए खोल दिये हैं. सालों पहले उसने सीरिया बेसहारा, गृह विहीन और गरीब लोगों को अपने यहां शरण दी थी. अमेरिका और युरोप के कई देशों से ठीक उलट वहां के निवासी आप्रवासियों से न अमानवीय व्यवहार करते हैं, न उनको रोकने के लिए अपनी सीमा पर कंटीला बाड़ लगाते हैं. वह मानता है कि आप्रवासियों के आने से रोजगार के अवसर छिनते नहीं, बढते हैं. कनाडा दुनिया का सबसे बड़ा विभिन्न जातियों, नस्लों और आप्रवासियों से समृद्ध देश बन चुका है. दुनिया के अन्य बहुलतावादी तनावग्रस्त और दंगे-फसादों से ग्रस्त देशों को कनाडा से इस मामले में प्रेरणा और सीख लेनी चाहिए. हालांकि कहा यह भी जाता है कि कनाडा अब बुजुर्गों का देश हो चला है. वहां प्रजनन दर बहुत कम है. लोग शहरों में बस गये हैं. ग्रामीण क्षेत्र लगभग निर्जन हो गये हैं. इसलिए कनाडा चाहता है कि युवा आप्रवासी गांवों में बस कर वहां के उपजाऊ खेतों और चरागाहों में पशुपालन और कृषि व्यवसाय को समृद्ध कर देश की अर्थव्यवस्था को ऊंचाई देंगे.

निर्मल कुमार शर्मा ,गाजियाबाद

आबादी को लेकर चिंताएं

बढ़ती आबादी कई देशों के लिए अभिशाप है. वहीं घटती आबादी ने भी कई राष्ट्रों को चिंता में डाल दिया है. पिछले दिनों पूर्वी यूरोपीय देश हंगरी के राष्ट्रपति विक्टर ओरबन को ये कहते सुना कि वह उन जोड़ों एवं माताओं को व्यापक प्रोत्साहन राशि देना चाहते हैं, जो तीन या उससे अधिक बच्चों को जन्म देंगे, जिन महिलाओं के चार बच्चे होंगे, उन्हें आजीवन आयकर नहीं देना पड़ेगा. नये विवाहित जोड़ों को एक करोड़ हंगेरियन रुपये के बराबर ब्याज रहित ऋण मिलेगा. जब उनके तीन बच्चे हो जायेंगे, तो वह लोन माफ कर दिया जायेगा. यूरोप के कई देशों की आबादी दर घटती जा रही है. विडंबना देखिए, भारत, चीन, बांग्लादेश आदि बढती आबादी से परेशान हैं. चीन को छोड़ कर कहीं भी यह रुकने का नाम नहीं ले रही है, उन्नत और पढ़े-लिखे देशों में जन्मदर कम हो रही है और गरीब देशों की आबादी बढ़ती जा रही है ?

जंग बहादुर सिंह, गोलपहाड़ी, जमशेदपुर

कश्मीर समस्या का हल

पुलवामा आतंकी हमले से पूरा देश सदमे और गुस्से में है. आतंक की इतनी बड़ी घटना को बिना पाकिस्तानी मदद के अंजाम कर्तई नहीं दिया जा सकता था. भारत आतंकवादिओं के लिए सॉफ्ट टारगेट की छवि तोड़े. मुंहतोड़ जवाब दे. समस्या की तह तक भी जाए, ताकि भविष्य में इसकी पुनरावृत्ति न हो. कश्मीर में बिना ज्यादा मेहनत किये लोगों को वस्तुएं मिल जाती हैं. रोजगार के अभाव में युवा खाली बैठे हैं और खाली दिमाग शैतान का घर होता ही है. बच्चें और युवा ऊर्जा से भरपूर होते हैं. अगर इस ऊर्जा का सृजनात्मक उपयोग न किया जाए, तो यह विध्वंसक रूप ले लेती है. आतंकवादी इसी का फायदा उठा रहे है. जरूरत है युवाओं को सचेत करने की.

सीमा साही, बोकारो

आईएनएफ संधि में चीन हो सकता है शामिल!

जर्मन चांसलर एंजेला मैर्केल ने उम्मीद जतायी है कि चीन को अंतरराष्ट्रीय निरस्त्रीकरण प्रयासों में शामिल होना चाहिए. म्यूनिख सुरक्षा सम्मेलन के 55वें आयोजन में मैकेंल ने कहा, 'अगर इस संदर्भ में होनेवाली बातचीत केवल अमेरिका, यूरोप और रूस के बीच न होकर चीन के साथ भी हो, तो हमें खशी होगी. इस टिप्पणी को अमेरिका और रूस के इंटरमीडिएट-रेंज न्यूक्लियर फोर्सेस (आईएनएफ) संधि से अलग होने के फैसले के खिलाफ माना

यूरोप और जर्मनी के हितों की रक्षा करती है. दरअसल. आईएनएफ छोड़ने के क्रम की शुरुआत अमेरिका गिरावट दिख रही है. इससे जर्मनी चिंतित है, लेकिन जा रही है. इससे पहले, अमेरिका ने आरोप लगाया द्वारा संधि का अनुपालन नहीं करना है, और चीन भी संधि से बाध्य नहीं था. फिलहाल, जर्मनी इस नीति पर चल रहा है कि आईएनएफ में जितने अधिक देश

देश दुनिया से

जा रहा है. आईएनएफ संधि

ने की थी. जिसके बाद हथियार नियंत्रण प्रणाली में चीन को शामिल करना मैर्केल की जल्दबाजी मानी था कि आईएनएफ संधि की विफलता के पीछे रूस समझ नहीं पा रहे हैं.

कार्ट्रन कोना



साभार : बीबीसी

खिलाफ प्रदर्शन हो रहे थे और भारत में नक्सलबाड़ी आंदोलन शामिल होंगे. उतना ही बेहतर होगा. हालांकि. कई नयी पीढ़ी के लिए शायद यह कल्पना करना मुश्किल हो कि पिछली सदी के 60 के दशक के आखिरी और 70 के दशक में युवा-छात्रों ने भागेदारी की थी. नागार्जुन ने लिखा है- जो यूरोपीय देश राष्ट्रीय सुरक्षा को अन्य क्षेत्रों में मजबूत **पोस्ट करें** : प्रभात खबर, १५ पी, इंडस्ट्रियल एरिया, कोकर, रांची ८३४००१, **फैक्स करें** : **०६५१–२५४४००**६, करने के सुरक्षा जोखिमों और तात्कालिकता को के आरंभिक वर्षों में शहरी, संभ्रांत कॉलेज के युवा-छात्रों ने छोटी-सी नैया लेकर/ उतरे करने को उदधि-पार/ मन की मन मेल करें: eletter@prabhatkhabar.in पर ई-मेल संक्षिप्त व हिंदी में हो. लिपि रोमन भी हो सकती है में ही रही, स्वयं/ हो गये उसी में निराकार !/ उनको प्रणाम ! किसानों-आदिवासियों के हक की लड़ाई लड़ने, उन्हें संघर्ष के

प्रवाह



अमेरिकी लेखक और राजनीतिक कार्यकर्ता



विकसित देशों से पीछे रह गई भारतीय रेल के पास सुधार के लिए ज्यादा वक्त नहीं है, फिर भी उम्मीद करनी चाहिए कि इस नई ट्रेन के जरिये वह अपेक्षित सुधार होगा और ट्रेनों की रफ्तार बढ़ने के साथ-साथ दूसरी सुविधाएं भी बढ़ेंगी।

वंदे भारत की रफ्तार

की पहली सेमी हाई स्पीड ट्रेन वंदे भारत एक्सप्रेस का शुरुआती सफर बेशक उम्मीदों के अनुरूप न रहा हो, इसके बावजूद इसके प्रति लोगों में अदुभूत उत्साह दिखाई पड़ा है, जिसका सबसे बड़ा सुबूत यही है कि इस टेन की इस महीने की तकरीबन सारी

टिकटें बिक चुकी हैं। दिल्ली से वाराणसी के बीच की दूरी आठ घंटे में पुरी करने का दावा करने वाली यह ट्रेन हालांकि पहले कॉमर्शियल रन में करीब डेढ़ घंटे लेट हो गई, पर भूलना नहीं चाहिए कि ट्रायल के दौरान इसकी सर्वोच्च गति 180 किलोमीटर प्रति घंटे तक थी। बगैर इंजन वाली यह ट्रेन न केवल पूरी तरह स्वदेश में निर्मित है, बल्कि आयातित ट्रेनों की तुलना में इसकी लागत लगभग आधी आई है। भारतीय रेल इस

ट्रेन को गेम चेंजर मान रही है, तो इसकी वजह है। उसकी योजना धीरे-धीरे शताब्दी की जगह इन ट्रेनों को चलाने की है, जो रफ्तार के मामले में ही नहीं, तकनीक और आधुनिकतम सहूलियतों के लिहाज से भी सबसे आगे है। दरअसल विकसित देशों ने अपनी रेल प्रणाली को जिस तरह आधुनिकतम किया है, हम उससे बहुत पीछे रह गए। हमारे यहां इस बीच हवाई यात्रा के क्षेत्र में तो काफी तरक्की हुई है, पर रेल यातायात में वैसी अपेक्षित प्रगति नहीं हो पाई। आज भी ट्रेनें धीमी रफ्तार से और लेट चलती हैं। ट्रेनों की संख्या तो काफी बढ़ी, लेकिन उनकी गति नहीं बढी। तिस पर रेल यात्रा उतनी ही असुरक्षित और सुविधाओं से रहित भी है। इसी कमी को दूर करने के लिए ट्रेनों की रफ्तार बढ़ाने की योजना पर काम चल रहा है। मुंबई-

अहमदाबाद के बीच बुलेट ट्रेन चलाने की तैयारियां हैं, तो राष्ट्रीय राजधानी क्षेत्र में रैपिड रेल पर भी तेजी से काम चल रहा है। वंदे भारत की शुरुआत को इसी परिप्रेक्ष्य में देखा जाना चाहिए। अलबत्ता इसकी शुरुआती तकनीकी खराबी को सबक की तरह लेना होगा। रेल यात्रा में बदलाव का अर्थ सिर्फ टेन की गति बढ़ाना नहीं है। वह रफ्तार तो तब पकड़ेगी, जब पटरी और सिग्नल उसका साथ देंगे तथा कोहरे और पटरियों पर जानवरों के आ जाने की समस्या भी दूर की जाएगी। हमारी रेल व्यवस्था जिन किमयों से जुझ रही है, उनमें सुधार के लिए ज्यादा समय नहीं है। अलबत्ता उम्मीद करनी चाहिए कि इस ट्रेन के जरिये ही सही, रेल यातायात में सुधार होगा, और ट्रेन की रफ्तार बढ़ने के साथ-साथ दूसरी सुविधाएं भी बढ़ेंगी।

नफरत से निपटने की परीक्षा



श्मीर के पुलवामा जिले में जम्मू-श्रीनगर हाइवे पर सीआरपीएफ के दस्ते पर मानव बम से हमले या पाकिस्तान की ओर से संचालित अन्य आतंकी

कार्रवाइयों के बारे में यह भ्रम कभी नहीं होना चाहिए कि 'कश्मीर मसले के राजनीतिक हल के लिए पाकिस्तान अथवा उसके स्थानीय एजेंटों से बातचीत शुरू कर दें, तो यह सब रुक जाएगा। बातचीत तो कई बार विभिन्न स्तरों पर हो चुकी है। पाकिस्तान को सख्त सबक सिखाने से पहले सोचना होगा कि 1971 से बड़ा सबक और क्या हो सकता है। कारगिल का सबक तो उसके आगे बहुत मामूली था। भारत की इन कार्रवाइयों से पाकिस्तान ने कुछ नहीं सीखा, तो 'सर्जिकल स्ट्राइक' या ऐसी ही अन्य स्ट्राइकों से नहीं सुधर सकता।

मसूद अजहर को यकीन है कि एक दिन न सिर्फ कश्मीर, बल्कि उसके बहुत आगे तक जेहादियों का परचम फहराएगा। जैश और इस जैसी अन्य जेहादी जमातों की संरक्षक पाकिस्तानी फौज है। बात सिर्फ इतनी नहीं है कि अपने भारत-विरोधी सामरिक हितों की पूर्ति में फौज इन संगठनों का इस्तेमाल करती है। इससे भी ज्यादा अहम है वैचारिक साम्य। सैंडहर्स्ट में प्रशिक्षित, ब्रिटिश परंपरा में ढले, जनरल अयूब खान ने 1965 में कश्मीर छीनने के मकसद से हमला करने से पहले यकीन जताया, 'आम तौर से हिंदू मनोबल एक-दो सख्त चोटों के बाद

अयूब को अपने रणकौशल पर इतना भरोसा था कि सेनाध्यक्ष और विदेश मंत्री जुल्फिकार अली भुट्टो को लिखित निर्देश दिया, 'ऐसी कार्रवाई करें कि कश्मीर का मुद्दा ज्वलंत हो



नफरत से भरपूर पड़ोसी से परंपरागत तरीकों से नहीं निपटा जा सकता। खासकर तब, जब वह एटमी हथियारों से लैस है। भारत को भी पाकिस्तान की तरह दीर्घकालीन योजना पर काम करना पड़ेगा।

प्रदीप कुमार, वरिष्ठ पत्रकार

उठे. भारत का संकल्प कमजोर हो जाए और युद्ध भड़के बगैर वह बातचीत की मेज पर आ जाए।' यह थे बड़े मियां। छोटे मियां भुट्टो सुभान अल्लाह! 'सोशलिस्ट' भुट्टो ने हजार जु साल की जंग का एलान कर डाला।

यह वही जहरीली जहनियत थी, जो ढाका में घुटने टेकने से पहले पाकिस्तानी जनरलों को कोलकाता पर कब्जा करने का ख्वाब दिखा रही थी। पाकिस्तान की सैनिक मामलों की मशहूर

लेखिका नसीम जेहरा ने हाल में प्रकाशित अपनी किताब फ्रॉम कारगिल टु द कू : इवेंट्स दैट शुक पाकिस्तान में लिखा है, कारगिल के नियोजकों को विश्वास था कि नियंत्रण रेखा के पार विस्तारित ऑपरेशन से बड़े स्तर पर सामरिक ऊंचाइयां पाकिस्तान के हाथ आ जाएंगी। जितनी अधिक भूमि पर कब्जा होगा, भारत से वार्ता के दौरान उतना ही कूटनीतिक और राजनीतिक

लाभ हासिल किया जा सकेगा। हिसाब बडा

सरल था-भारत पाकिस्तानी सैनिकों को सामरिक ऊंचाइयों से बेदखल नहीं कर पाएगा। पाकिस्तानी अफसरों को यकीन था कि भारत रक्षात्मक युद्ध भी नहीं लड़ पाएगा। मेजर जनरल जावेद हसन ने कहा था, 'डरपोक हिंदुस्तानी जंग

नफरत और हिकारत ने पाक फौजी अफसरों को किस तरह दिमागी लकवे से ग्रस्त कर रखा है, इसकी मिसाल पेश करती हुई नसीम जेहरा लिखती हैं, कारगिल के नियोजक मानकर चल रहे थे कि जब हिंदुस्तानियों को पता चलेगा कि पाकिस्तानी सैनिक नियंत्रण रेखा के इस पार आ चुके हैं और लेह में भारतीय सेना की जीवनरेखा को नियंत्रित कर रहे हैं, तो भारत आत्मसमर्पण का मन बना लेगा और पाकिस्तान की शर्तों पर समझौते के अलावा उसके सामने और कोई

रास्ता नहीं होगा। तत्कालीन सेनाध्यक्ष जनरल परवेज मुशर्रफ ने कहा, 'हम हिंदुस्तानियों को समझते हैं। ज्यादा से ज्यादा दबाव में ही वे गंभीर बातचीत के लिए तैयार होंगे।' चीफ ऑफ जनरल स्टाफ ले.ज. अजीज खान ने प्रधानमंत्री नवाज शरीफ से कहा, 'जनाब, कायदे आजम और मुस्लिम लीग ने पाकिस्तान को कायम किया। अब अल्लाह ने आपको मौका दिया है कि फतह-ए-कश्मीर के लिए आप का नाम सुनहरे हरूफ में लिखा जाए।' अटल बिहारी वाजपेयी से दोस्ती की पींग बढ़ाने वाले नवाज ने भी इस पर यकीन कर लिया। जिन्ना और अयूब से लेकर आज तक पाकिस्तान के सैनिक-असैनिक कर्णधारों के चिंतन में एक निरंतरता है। पाकिस्तानी फौज के ब्रिगेडियर एसके मलिक ने अपनी नीति-निर्देशक पुस्तक *द कुरानिक कंसेप्ट ऑफ वार* में जो भी लिखा, वह पाक अफसरों के लिए अंतिम सत्य है, हालांकि यह मौलिक चिंतन नहीं है। करीब

2,300 साल पहले चीन के युद्ध विचारक सुन ने लिखा था कि दुश्मन के दिल को इतना आतंकित कर दो कि वह जंग लड़े बिना हथियार डाल दे। पाकिस्तानी सेना का वैचारिक योगदान यह है कि दुश्मन को कमतर साबित करने के लिए अपनी हर शिकस्त पर मोटा पर्दा डालकर झुठ बोलते रहो। जैसे, 1965 में फतह पाकिस्तान की हुई, 1971 में भारत ने पूर्वी पाकिस्तान में अवामी लीग की मदद से मौके का फायदा उठाया और जनरल नियाजी हिम्मत हार बैठे, वर्ना पाकिस्तान हारता नहीं और कारगिल में नवाज शरीफ की 'गदुदारी' से पाकिस्तान जीती हुई बाजी हार बैठा।

ऐसे अडियल और नफरत से भरपर पडोसी से परंपरागत तरीकों से नहीं निपटा जो सकता। खासतौर से जब वह एटमी हथियारों से लैस हो। भारत सरकार ने तात्कालिक प्रतिक्रिया सशस्त्र सेनाओं पर छोड दी है। यह प्रतिक्रिया जो भी होगी. पाकिस्तान को मस्तकिल सीख के लिए पर्याप्त नहीं होगी। निर्णायक सीख के रास्ते में पाकिस्तान के एटमी हथियार कब तक अवरोधक बने रहेंगे? अंतर महाद्वीपीय एटमी मिसाइलों से लैस रेजीमेंटें सोवियत संघ के विघटन को नहीं रोक पाईं। पाकिस्तान किस खेत की मूली है! उसने दीर्घकालीन योजना के तहत जैश-ए-मोहम्मद जैसी स्ट्राइक कोरों का गठन कर रखा है। भारत को भी दीर्घकालीन योजना पर काम करना पड़ेगा। वैसे भी फैसलाकुन जंग नियंत्रण रेखा पर नहीं, उस पार अंदरूनी इलाकों में करनी होगी।

यह भारत की समस्त राज्यसत्ता पर निर्भर है कि वह अपनी समग्र राष्ट्रीय शक्ति का इस्तेमाल कितने कौशल और केंद्रित तरीके से कर पाती है। नहीं कर पाएगी, तो हजार जख्मों से भारत का खून रिसाने का दुश्चक्र चलता रहेगा।



कला हमें आनंद देती है और हमारा

उन्नयन भी करती है

कहते हैं कि जो सुंदर है वह शिवेतर हो ही नहीं सकता। इसे हम मानते हैं, किंतु यह ध्यान रखना होगा कि इससे यह ध्वनि होती है कि दोनों पर्यायवाची हैं। ऐसा दावा करना कठिन है। जो यह मानते हैं कि जो सुंदर है वह शिव भी होता ही है, वे भी कदाचित अलग से ऐसा दावा करने में संकोच करेंगे। नैतिक मूल्य यानी शिवत्व के मूल्य, और सौंदर्य के मूल्य अलग-अलग हैं और अलग विचार मांगते हैं। विशुद्ध तर्क के क्षेत्र में यह भी मान लेना होगा कि ऐसा हो सकता है कि कोई कलाकृति सुंदर हो और अशिव हो, या कम से कम शिव



न हो। यह मान कर भी पहली बात कैसे मानी जा सकती है? स्पष्ट ही यहाँ विरोधाभास है। वास्तव में उच्च कोटि का नैतिक बोध और उच्च कोटि का सौंदर्य-

बोध, कम से कम कृतिकार में प्रायः साथ-साथ चलते हैं। क्यों? क्योंकि दोनों बोध मूलतः बुद्धि के व्यापार हैं, मानव का विवेक ही दोनों के मुल्यों का स्रोत है और दोनों के प्रतिमानों या मानदंडों का आधार। विवेकशील मानव की-विशेषकर उस विवेकशील मानव की. जिसमें सृजनात्मक शक्ति या प्रतिभा भी है-ग्राहकता दोनों को ही पहचानती है। बुद्धि, और जिस पर बुद्धि आधारित है वह अनुभव-निरंतर विकासशील और संस्कारशील है। निरंतर सूक्ष्मतर होती हुई संवेदना एकांगी भी हो सकती हैं, पर जहां सर्जनात्मक शक्ति है वहां एकांगिता की संभावना कम है और पुष्ट सौंदर्य-बोध के साथ पुष्ट नैतिक बोध भी होता ही है। जिस प्रकार कृतिकार सुंदर का स्रष्टा होकर असुंदर के सायास परित्याग के द्वारा सुंदर की उपलब्धि नहीं करता, उसी प्रकार वह नैतिक द्रष्टा होकर सायास अनैतिक के विरोध द्वारा नैतिक को नहीं पाता; उसकी परिपुष्ट संवेदना सहज भाव से दोनों को पाती है-और देती है। इसीलिए कला हमें आनंद भी देती है, हमारा उन्नयन भी करती है। आज का समालोचक इस बात को नाना वादों के आवरण में छिपा चाहे सकता है, इसे अमान्य नहीं कर सकता।



भूख के उस एहसास ने हजारों का पेट भर दिया

मुझे उस दिन बहुत तेज भूख लगी थी, मगर मेरे आसपास खाने की कोई चीज नहीं मिल रही थी। पहली बार मुझे एहसास हुआ कि धन-दौलत, अच्छा काम और सब कुछ होने के बावजूद भूख लगने के वक्त अगर खाने को कुछ न मिले, तो सब कुछ बेकार लगता है। मुझे उन लोगों की पीड़ा का भी अंदाजा होने लगा, जिनके पास न रहने को घर है और न ही खाने का कोई इंतजाम। ऐसे लोग हमें सड़कों पर कहीं भी घूमते मिल जाएंगे। मेरे दिमाग में रह-रहकर यह सवाल बार-बार कौंधने लगा कि ऐसे लोग अपनी भूख से कैसे लड़ते होंगे। गरीब भूखों के लिए कुछ करने के लिए मेरी इतनी बेचैनी काफी थी।

मैं बंगलूरू में रहने वाली एक उद्यमी हूं। पिछले कई वर्षों से मैं यहां शहर में बच्चों से जुड़ा एक खास किस्म का प्रकल्प चला रही हूं। इससे पहले मैं कई बड़ी कंपनियों में कॉरपोरेट नौकरियां कर चुकी हूं। समाज के लिए

मेरे सपने को साकार करने में उन लोगों का योगदान ज्यादा है, जिन्होंने मुझ पर भरोसा किया।

कुछ करने की सोच पैदा होने के बाद मैंने काफी चिंतन करने के बाद तय किया कि आखिर मुझे करना क्या है। चूंकि इस नेक काम की शुरुआत मेरी खुद की भूख से जुड़ी थी, इसलिए मैंने जरूरतमंदों की भूख मिटाने का फैसला किया। लेकिन मेरा तरीका थोड़ा अनोखा था। मैंने अपने अभियान को नाम दिया- फीड योन नेबर यानी अपने पडोसी को खाना

> खिलाइए। मेरी सोच थी कि मैं अकेले कोई काम अंजाम दूं, इससे बेहतर है कि दूसरे सक्षम लोगों को भी अपने साथ लिया जाए। मैंने सोशल मीडिया को इस्तेमाल करके लोगों तक अपनी बात पहुंचाई, जिसमें मैंने आग्रह किया कि वे रोज अपने घर में थोड़ा-सा अतिरिक्त खाना पकाएं, ताकि उनके घरों के पास रहने वाले गरीबों का पेट भरा जा सके। मुझे लोगों को इस मुहिम से जोड़ने में बहुत

अधिक मुश्किल नहीं आई। पहले तो मैंने लोगों से अपील करके ऐसा करने को कहा था, लेकिन बाद में कई लोग खुद ब खुद इस कार्यक्रम से जुड़ने लगे। हां, उम्मीद से ज्यादा खाना इकट्ठा होने के कारण उसे सही लोगों तक पहुंचाने में हमे थोड़ी दिक्कत जरूर आई। दिक्कत होती भी आखिर क्यों नहीं, पहले ही दिन हमने करीब साढ़े चार हजार लोगों को पेट भरने का इंतजाम कर लिया था। और यह मात्रा हर बीतते दिन बढ़ती गई।

मेरे लिए यह सफलता किसी सपने के पूरे होने से कम नहीं था। लेकिन मुझे पता है कि इस सपने को साकार करने में उन लोगों का योगदान ज्यादा है, जिन्होंने मेरी एक अपील पर मुझ पर भरोसा किया। मैंने इस मृहिम के लिए किसी दूसरी संस्था से मदद नहीं मांगी थी, लेकिन हमारे उद्देश्य से प्रभावित होकर कई संस्थाओं ने भी हमें मजबूत किया। जिस घटना के बाद मैंने इस कार्यक्रम की शुरुआत की थी, वह बहुत ही सामान्य है और न जाने कितने अमीर लोग रोज ऐसी स्थिति से दो-चार होते होंगे। लेकिन मेरी एक छोटी-सी पहल हजारों लोगों की भूख मिटाने का जरिया बन गई। इसलिए मेरा मानना है कि यदि हम अपनी दिनचर्या में घटने वाली छोटी-छोटी बातों पर गौर करने लगें और सामाजिक सरोकारों को ध्यान में रखें, तो कई ऐसी युक्तियां हैं, जिनके सहारे बदलाव लाया जा सकता है। हमें बस शुरू करने की देर होती है, इस दुनिया में लाखों-करोड़ों नेक दिल इंसान हैं, जो हमारे पीछे चलने को तैयार मिलेंगे।

-विभिन्न साक्षात्कारों पर आधारित।

तेजी से कम हो रही गरीबी

ऐसी रिपोर्टें आईं, जिनसे हर भारतवासी प्रसन्न होगा। वर्ल्ड

डाटा लैब ने अपनी रिपोर्ट में कहा है कि 2030 तक भारत में केवल 30 लाख लोग ही ऐसे होंगे, जिन्हें अति गरीब कह सकते हैं। वर्ल्ड डाटा लैब उन्नत सांख्यिकी मॉडल के जरिये वैश्विक गरीबी को मॉनिटर करती है। विश्व भर में गरीबी का

इसका आकलन मान्य है। ऐसे ही ब्रुकिंग्स के फ्यूचर प्रकाशित अध्ययन के मुताबिक, हर मिनट पर 44 भारतीय अत्यंत गरीबी की श्रेणी से बाहर निकल रहे हैं। इसके अनुसार, भारत का अत्यंत गरीब आबादी वाला स्थान मई, 2018 से नाइजीरिया ने हासिल कर लिया है। वैश्विक मानक के अनुसार, अत्यंत गरीबी के दायरे में वे लोग आते हैं, जिनके पास जीवन यापन के लिए रोजाना 1.90 डॉलर यानी 134 रुपये

भी नहीं होते। भारत सरकार के आंकड़ों के अनुसार, 2012 में ग्रामीण क्षेत्र में गरीबी दर 25.7 प्रतिशत और शहरों में 13.7 प्रतिशत थी। वर्ल्ड डाटा लैब ने कहा है कि 2018 में भारत में ग्रामीण क्षेत्र में केवल 4.3 प्रतिशत तथा शहरी क्षेत्र में 3.8 प्रतिशत आबादी को ही गरीब माना जाएगा। भारत सरकार ऐसा आंकड़ा दे, तो हंगामा मच जाए। ब्रुक्रिंग्स का अध्ययन कहता है कि 2022 तक भारत में अत्यंत गरीब जनसंख्या केवल तीन प्रतिशत रहेगी। इसका भी मानना है कि 2030 तक भारत से अत्यंत गरीबी की परिधि में आने वाली आबादी पुरी तरह खत्म हो जाएगी। इसी अध्ययन रिपोर्ट के मुताबिक, मई 2018 में भारत में

हाल ही ही में भारत से जुड़ी दो ऐसी रिपोर्टें आई हैं, जो देश में गरीबों की संख्या में आई तेज गिरावट के बारे में बताती हैं। ब्रुकिंग्स का एक अध्ययन यह बताता है कि हर मिनट पर 44 भारतीय अत्यंत गरीबी की श्रेणी से बाहर निकल रहे हैं।



अवधेश कुमार

सात करोड़ 30 लाख लोग गरीबी रेखा से नीचे जीवन यापन कर रहे थे। इनकी संख्या नाइजीरिया में आठ करोड़ 70 लाख है। वर्ल्ड डाटा लैब के मुताबिक, अब भी भारत में करीब पांच करोड़ लोग ऐसे हो सकते हैं, जो 1.90 डॉलर प्रतिदिन पर

गजारा करते हैं। संयुक्त राष्ट्र का उद्देश्य 2030 तक दुनिया से गरीबी हटाना है। उसका मानना है कि तब तक गरीबी पूरी तरह समाप्त करने के लिए भारत को सात से आठ फीसदी की दर से विकास करना होगा। इस समय हमारी विकास दर इसी के आसपास है। सहस्राब्दी विकास लक्ष्य रिपोर्ट, 2014 में कहा गया था कि दुनिया के समस्त निर्धनतम लोगों का 32.9

प्रतिशत हिस्सा भारत में रहता है। विश्व बैंक ने आठ वर्ष पहले कहा था कि विश्व की संपूर्ण गरीब आबादी का तीसरा हिस्सा भारत में है। आज के आकडा स तलना कर. ता पता चलता ह कि दश म गरीबी तेजी से कम हो रही है। डाइरेक्ट बेनिफिट ट्रांसफर, मनरेगा, प्रधानमंत्री ग्राम सड़क योजना, स्वच्छता कार्यक्रम, जनवितरण प्रणाली, बच्चों व माताओं के लिए पोषण पर आधारित योजनाओं का बेहतर क्रियान्वयन, पीने का साफ पानी, शौचालय की सुविधा और स्वास्थ्य सेवाओं तक आसान पहुंच

आदि से चीजें बदल रही हैं। तेजी से बनती सड़कें, बंदरगाह, हवाई अड़डे आदि विकास की गति तीव्र करने के साथ रोजगार के साधन तो हैं ही। किसानों को फोकस करके जो योजनाएं बनी हैं, उनका एक सीमा तक लाभ अवश्य मिला है। ये ठीक तरीके से आगे बढें, तो जैसा कि नीति आयोग ने माना है, साल 2022 तक हम गरीबी मुक्त भारत का लक्ष्य अवश्य हासिल कर

यह तो नहीं कहा जा सकता कि देश के निचले तबके के जीवन की दुश्वारियां मिट गई है। वहां तक पहुंचने तथा मानक जीवन स्तर पर पूरी आबादी को लाने के लिए काफी कुछ करना शेष है। पर जितना

हुआ है, उसे स्वीकारने की जरूरत है।



सबसे बड़ी विधायिका

जनसंख्या के मामले में चीन के बाद भारत का स्थान भले ही दूसरा हो, पर संघीय विधायिका के सदस्यों के हिसाब से भारत दुनिया में पांचवें स्थान पर आता है।



जीवन बहुमूल्य है

एक मनुष्य किसी महात्मा के पास जाकर कहने लगा, जीवन इतना छोटा क्यों है। इस थोड़े से समय में क्या-क्या करें? बाल्यकाल में ज्ञान नहीं रहता। बुढ़ापा उससे भी बुरा होता है। युवावस्था में कुटुंब का भरण-पोषण किए बिना नहीं चलता। तब भला लोक सेवा कब की जाए? इस जिंदगी में तो समय मिलता नहीं दिखता। इतना कहकर वह खिन्न होकर रोने लगा। उसे रोते देख महात्मा भी रोने



लगे। उस आदमी ने पूछा, आप क्यों रो रहे हैं? महात्मा ने कहा, क्या करूं बच्चा! खाने के लिए अन्न चाहिए। पर अन्न उपजाने के लिए मेरे पास जमीन नहीं है। मैं भूख से मर रहा हूं। परमात्मा के एक अंश में माया है। माया के एक अंश में तीन गुण है। गुणों के एक अंश में आकाश है। आकाश में थोड़ी-सी वायु है और वायु में बहुत आग है। आग के एक भाग में पानी है। पानी का शतांश पृथ्वी है। पृथ्वी के आधे हिस्से पर पर्वतों का कब्जा है। नदियों और जंगलों को जहां

देखो, वहां अलग बिखरे पड़े है। मेरे लिए भगवान ने जमीन का एक नन्हा-सा टुकड़ा भी नहीं छोड़ा। तब बताओ, मैं भूख से नहीं मरूंगा? उस मनुष्य ने कहा, यह सब होते हुए भी आप जिंदा तो हैं, फिर रोते क्यों हैं? महात्मा बोल उठे, तुम्हें भी तो बहुमूल्य जीवन मिला है, फिर 'समय नहीं मिलता, जीवन समाप्त हो रहा है' की रट लगाकर क्यों हाय-हाय करते हो। जो कुछ भी है, उसका तो उपयोग करो।

हरियाली और रास्ता

युवराज, राज्य और साधु

एक युवराज की कथा, जिसे एक साध् ने गुड़ियों के माध्यम से शासन संचालन के मंत्र दिए।



एक राजा ने बेटे को अपना उत्तराधिकारी घोषित किया लेकिन राज्य के ज्यादातर लोगों को एक चिंता सता रही थी। युवराज अभी अट्ठारह साल के भी नहीं हुए थे, वह कैसे राज्य को नियंत्रित करेंगे? एक साधु बाबा जब युवराज को बधाई देने पहुंचे, तो उन्होंने पहले तो युवराज को ढेरों आशीर्वाद दिए, फिर अपनी पोटली में से तीन गुड़िया निकाली और युवराज को भेंट कर दी। युवराज साधु बाबा पर भड़क गए और बोले, क्या मैं आपको बच्चा दिखाई देता हूं। साधु बाबा मुस्कराकर बोले, युवराज, हर कोई चिंतित है कि आप राज्य का संचालन ठीक से कर पाएंगे या नहीं। इन गुड़ियों के माध्यम से मैं सिर्फ आपकी मदद करना चाहता हूं। साधु बोले, इन तीनों गुड़ियों के कानों में एक छेद दिख रहा होगा आपको। इस छेद में रस्सी डालकर देखिए तो जरा, क्या होता है। युवराज ने पहली गुड़िया के कान में रस्सी डाली, तो वह दूसरे कान से निकल आई। साधु बाबा बोले, यह उन लोगों की तरह है, जिनके अंदर कोई भी बात नहीं टिकती। फिर युवराज ने दूसरी गुड़िया के कान में रस्सी डाली और वह उसके मुंह से निकल आई। साधु बोले, यह उन लोगों की तरह है, जो कुछ भी सुनते ही तुरंत बोल देते हैं, बिना सोचे कि वह सही भी है या नहीं। युवराज ने तीसरी गुड़िया के कान में रस्सी डाली, तो वह अंदर तो गई, लेकिन कहीं से नहीं निकली। साधु बोले, यह उन लोगों की तरह है, जो सुनते-समझते तो सब कुछ हैं, पर शांत रहते हैं। युवराज बोले, लेकिन इससे मुझे क्या करना? साधु बोले, एक अच्छा संचालक, एक अच्छा राजा वही होता है, जो यह बात समझ सके कि उसे कब, क्या बोलना है, कब कुछ नहीं बोलना है, और कब सिर्फ सुनना है। युवराज ने साधु बाबा से आशीर्वाद लिया और उन्हें आश्वस्त किया कि वह ऐसा ही करेंगे।

जो अपनी जुबान पर संयम पा ले, वह सफलता से नेतृत्व कर सकता है।

बिज़नेस स्टैंडर्ड

समुचित हस्तक्षेप की अवस्था!

जैसे-जैसे देश की अर्थव्यवस्था का आधुनिकीकरण हो रहा है, देश के नियामकों के समक्ष मौजूद चुनौतियां और अधिक जटिल होती जा रही हैं। ज्यादातर क्षेत्रों में ऐसा ढांचा देखने को मिल रहा है जहां विजेता को सबकुछ हासिल होता है। 'सामान्य' प्रतिस्पर्धी बाजारों में नियामकों के समक्ष तयशुदा लक्ष्य होते हैं

होते हैं। वे यह सुनिश्चित करने के लिए हस्तक्षेप करते हैं कि व्यावसायिक समृहन न हो, गैर प्रतिस्पर्धी तौर तरीकों का इस्तेमाल न किया जाए। इस मामले में आम धारणा यह है कि अगर बाजार को अपने स्तर पर काम करने दिया जाए तो वह स्वयं उपभोक्ताओं के हित का ध्यान रख सकता है और नियामक का काम और उन्हें हासिल करने के उपाय भी चुनिंदा केवल यह सुनिश्चित करना है कि कोई बाजार प्रतिभागी के कामकाज में विसंगति पैदा करने का प्रयास न करे।

बहरहाल, आधुनिक अर्थव्यवस्था में कई क्षेत्र नेटवर्क प्रभाव प्रदर्शित करते हैं। दूसरे शब्दों में, कंपनियां जितनी बड़ी होती हैं, उतनी ही अधिक मनाफा कमाने वाली या किफायती होती जाती हैं। इससे नैसर्गिक एकाधिकार उत्पन्न होता है। अतीत में उपयोगिता वाले क्षेत्र या बुनियादी ढांचा जैसे क्षेत्र ऐसे नैसर्गिक एकाधिकार के शिकार हो चुके हैं, इसलिए उनका अलग तरह से नियमन करने की आवश्यकता पडी। बहरहाल, अब नेटवर्क प्रभाव अर्थव्यवस्था के कई प्रमुख क्षेत्रों का अहम कारक है। इनमें वे क्षेत्र भी शामिल हैं जिनमें निजी क्षेत्र का दबदबा रहा है। बहरहाल. ऑनलाइन क्षेत्र का उदाहरण लेते हैं। यहां

गुगल की नियंत्रक कंपनी अल्फाबेट का दबदबा है। यह कल्पना करना भी मुश्किल है कि कोई ऐसा सर्च इंजन सामने आएगा जो गूगल का मुकाबला कर सके। ऐसे में अल्फाबेट को गैर प्रतिस्पर्धी ढंग से व्यवहार करने की आवश्यकता नहीं है।

हमारे देश में कई ऐसे क्षेत्र हैं जिन पर ध्यान दिए जाने की आवश्यकता है। दुरसंचार भी ऐसा ही एक क्षेत्र है। रिलायंस जियो के आगमन का अर्थ यह था कि इस क्षेत्र के अन्य कई बाजार प्रतिभागियों की विदाई होगी क्योंकि उनके पास रिलायंस इंडस्ट्रीज के समान धन-संसाधन नहीं थे। अगर कोई पुरानी कंपनी आक्रामक कीमतों की पेशकश करती तो नियामक को यह पता होता कि उसे क्या करना है लेकिन अगर कोई नवागत कंपनी

कम कीमत पर बेहतर उत्पाद दे रही है तो? ऐसे में नियामक को कब और कहां हस्तक्षेप करना चाहिए? यह समस्या केवल दूरसंचार क्षेत्र तक सीमित हो ऐसा भी नहीं है। जरा नागरिक उड्डयन क्षेत्र पर विचार कीजिए। कोई विमानन कंपनी जो अपनी उडानें भर रही है, वह अपनी आखिरी की सीटें सस्ती बेच सकती है क्योंकि उनकी सीमांत लागत तकरीबन शून्य होती है। इसका अर्थ यह हुआ कि पहले से अच्छा प्रदर्शन कर रही विमानन कंपनी के लिए लाभ ही लाभ है। उदाहरण के लिए भारत में इसका अर्थ यह है कि बाजार में इंडिगो का दबदबा बरकरार है।

अन्य क्षेत्रों में भी जल्दी नेटवर्क प्रभाव नजर आ सकता है। उदाहरण के लिए ई-रिटेल उपभोक्ता आधार में विस्तार के साथ

अधिक प्रभावी हो सकता है। ऑफलाइन खुदरा कारोबारियों या लॉजिस्टिक्स का पहले से मौजूद नेटवर्क किसी कंपनी को वह किफायत दे सकता है जिसके लिए अन्य कंपनियों को संघर्ष करना होगा। नियामक ऐसे क्षेत्र का प्रबंधन कैसे करेंगे जहां कछ कंपनियां बाहरी कारकों के कारण ज्यादा बेहतर हों। कीमतों और मात्रा के निर्धारण की बात करें तो भारतीय संदर्भ में यह कोई हल सुझाता नहीं नजर आता। देश में विजेता को सब कुछ मिलने की स्थिति को बदलने के लिए नियामकीय हस्तक्षेप को लेकर अधिक सशक्त बहस की आवश्यकता है। एकाधिकार स्थापित होने तक प्रतीक्षा करने पर बहुत देर हो जाएगी। इस मामले में उपभोक्ता कल्याण को लेकर दुरगामी दृष्टि की



प्रबंधकीय कौशल में निजी क्षेत्र बनाम सरकार

सरकारी कार्यप्रणाली के उलट एक निजी फर्म का प्रबंधन काफी हद तक निरंकुश ही होता है। ऐसी स्थिति में उसके प्रबंधन कौशल का सरकार में इस्तेमाल काफी मुश्किल है। बता रहे हैं **अजय शाह**

भरत में किसी फर्म के संचालन के बारे में हम काफी कुछ जानते हैं। लेकिन कंपनियों के प्रबंधन से अर्जित ज्ञान को सरकार के प्रबंधन तक स्थानांतरित कर पाना बहुत कम ही हो पाता है। सरकारों को अशक्त फीडबैक लूप का सामना करना पडता है। किसी भी सरकार का सार कही जाने वाली बाध्यकारी शक्ति का कंपनियों में अभाव होता है। सरकार का आकार और जटिलता निजी क्षेत्र की सबसे बड़ी एवं सर्वाधिक जटिल कंपनियों से काफी बड़ी होती है। सरकार के प्रमुख अवयव-नीति एवं वार्तालाप, निजी क्षेत्र में नहीं दिखाई देते हैं। नीति एवं लोक प्रशासन की दुनिया कंपनियों में व्याप्त मुनाफे की दुनिया से बुनियादी तौर पर अलग है।

वर्ष 1991 के पहले भारत में अधिकांश कंपनियों का प्रबंधन खराब ढंग से होता था। लेकिन अब भारत में हमारे पास बेहद कुशलता से संचालित कंपनियों की बड़ी तादाद है। इन कंपनियों में अहम पदों पर कार्यरत लोग बडे एवं जटिल संगठन चलाने की अपनी काबिलियत को लेकर काफी गर्व महसूस करते हैं। इसके साथ ही हम भारतीय राज्य को अव्यवस्थित रूप में भी देखते हैं जहां बुनियादी चीजें भी सही ढंग से नहीं हो पाती हैं। ऐसे में सवाल उठता है कि क्या भारतीय निजी क्षेत्र के प्रबंधन कौशल एवं तकनीकों को सरकार के भीतर तक लाया

इस दिशा में पहली समस्या तो फीडबैक लूप में ही निहित है। सभी बड़ी निजी कंपनियां शेयर बाजार में कारोबार के लिए सूचीबद्ध हैं और वे शेयर मूल्य में वृद्धि का में अटकलों की बड़ी मशीनरी सक्रिय होने से उस कंपनी के प्रदर्शन का वास्तविक पैमाना सामने आ जाता है। आंतरिक स्तर पर निजी फर्मों में परिचालन से संबंधित प्रबंधन सचना प्रणाली (एमआईसी) दैनिक आधार पर दर्ज होती है। राजस्व एवं लाभ किसी भी फर्म के कामकाज को परखने के सहज उपकरण हैं। लेकिन जब मामला देश का आता है तो ये तमाम तरीके नदारद हो जाते हैं। विनिमय दर किसी भी देश की सफलता या नाकामी का सूचक नहीं है और शेयर बाजार सूचकांक भी एक कमजोर मानक ही है। निर्णय के स्तर और उसके प्रदर्शन को आंकने को लेकर कोई दैनिक

मानक एवं फीडबैक लूप भी नहीं है। उन्नत अर्थव्यवस्थाओं की तुलना में भारत में यह समस्या और गंभीर है क्योंकि हम सकल घरेलु उत्पाद (जीडीपी) का भी आकलन सटीकता से नहीं करते हैं। सभी कंपनियों के समग्र प्रदर्शन, निवेश परियोजनाओं और परिवारों की स्थिति को दर्ज कर अब अर्थव्यवस्था के कामकाज के बारे में काफी हद तक उपयोगी रिपोर्ट कार्ड बनाया जा सकता है। लेकिन इसके बावजूद कमजोर फीडबैक लूप नीति के संचालन को बाधित करेगा।

विभेद का दूसरा बड़ा क्षेत्र सरकार की शक्तियों में निहित है। एक फर्म में प्रबंधन टीम उत्पाद, उत्पादन प्रक्रिया और आंतरिक संगठन को साधने वाले तरीके आजमाती है। लेकिन सरकार में आंतरिक संगठन के बारे में निर्णय-निर्माण की शक्ति होती है। हालांकि बाध्य करने की एकाधिकारिक शक्ति सरकार

लक्ष्य लेकर काम करती हैं। वित्तीय बाजारों को निजी क्षेत्र से अलग करने वाला अहम

सरकार को हिंसा संबंधी मामलों में एकाधिकार होता है। वह निजी व्यक्तियों को कर देने या अपने व्यवहार में बदलाव के लिए बाध्य करने की क्षमता रखती है। सरकार की एजेंसियों का आम तौर पर एकाधिकार होता है। मसलन, ड्राइविंग लाइसेंस एक सरकारी कार्यालय से ही हासिल किया जा सकता है, उपभोक्ता के पास कोई और विकल्प नहीं होता है।

निजी फर्म अपनी आंतरिक गतिविधियों को ही नियंत्रित करती हैं और अपनी कंपनी के बाहर के लोगों को बाध्य नहीं कर सकती हैं। वे बाहर की तरफ व्यग्रता से देखती हैं और उपभोक्ताओं की अपने उत्पादों के प्रति प्रतिक्रिया को लेकर फिक्रमंद रहती हैं। किसी कंपनी के मेहनत से तैयार उत्पाद को खारिज करने की पूरी शक्ति उपभोक्ताओं के पास रहती है। इसके विपरीत, सरकारी एजेंसियां अपने क्षेत्र की आंतरिक गतिविधियों को नियंत्रित करती हैं और उसके बाहर के लोगों को बाध्य करती हैं। मनीष सभरवाल की व्याख्या के मुताबिक एक ठेठ सरकारी एजेंसी के उपभोक्ता नहीं बल्कि बंधक होते हैं। सरकारी संगठनों के बारे में एक बुनियादी अहंकार होता है जबकि निजी संगठन उससे बचे रहते हैं। लोक नीति की पहेली छापा मारने और जेल में डालने की शक्ति रखने वाले कर्मचारियों में निहित होती है।

निजी एवं सार्वजनिक प्रबंधन के बीच असमानता का तीसरा आयाम आकार और जटिलता है। भारत में किसी बड़ी कंपनी के भी कर्मचारियों की संख्या 25,000 होती

है। इसकी तुलना में किसी भी सरकारी निकाय का आकार काफी बड़ा होता है। भारतीय रेलवे में ही करीब 13 लाख कर्मचारी हैं। अगर रेलवे के सक्षम कर्मचारियों की संख्या इसकी आधी है तो भी यह निजी क्षेत्र की तुलना में एक विशाल एवं जटिल संगठन बन जाता है।

लोक नीति की प्रक्रिया न केवल कर्मचारियों बल्कि सभी लोगों के जरिये संचालित होती है। यह निर्णय निर्माण की जटिलता बढा देता है। नीतिगत निर्णयों के दौरान विशाल जटिल सरकारी संगठनों के आंतरिक व्यवहार और फिर एक अरब से अधिक की संख्या वाली जनता की प्रतिक्रिया को भी ध्यान में रखना होता है। किसी भी निजी फर्म में इस तरह की जटिलता नहीं देखी जाती है।

आखिर में, लोक नीति के सार-नीतिगत चिंतन और वार्तालाप पर गौर करते हैं। सरकार के भीतर एक नीति को सही बनाने की प्रवृत्ति देखी जाती है और फिर उस नीति को विवेकाधीन के दायरे से परे एवं गैर-नियोजित ढंग से संचालित किया जाता है। बडी संख्या में लोग उस नीति का हिस्सा बनेंगे और अपनी पसंद चुनेंगे और कोई भी संवेदनशील सरकार एक नियोजित ढंग से बरताव नहीं करेगी।

सरकार सामान्य ढांचे से भरा वह दायरा होता है जो बड़े स्तर पर काफी अच्छे नतीजे देते हैं। इसके उलट एक निजी फर्म विविध बिंदुओं वाले अनुबंधों का बड़ा जोड़ होता है। निजी कंपनी में समान बरताव वाला कोई प्रावधान नहीं होता है।

एक निजी फर्म का प्रबंधन काफी हद तक निरंकश मिजाज वाला होता है, क्योंकि उसके नियंत्रण में उसका स्टाफ ही होता है। इसके उलट, लोक नीति में शक्ति के बिखराव की जरूरत होती है। सफल सरकारों में बातचीत और समझौते की अंतहीन प्रक्रिया चलती है क्योंकि सरकार के बाहर के लोगों को बाध्य करना ही सरकार का सार है। लोक नीति की दुनिया में नेतृत्व के पास दुसरे की बात सुनने, उसकी राय का सम्मान करने और मध्यम मार्ग अपनाने का गुण होना चाहिए। यह सांगठनिक संस्कृति अधिकांश निजी फर्मों से काफी अलग है।

यह देखना दिलचस्प है कि कुछ बेहद बड़ी एवं जटिल फर्मों का सांगठनिक डीएनए सरकार की रणनीतियों की तरफ मुड़ा है। बडी एवं जटिल फर्मों ने मुख्य कार्याधिकारियों (सीईओ) की शक्तियां कम कर दी हैं. निर्णय-निर्माण ढांचे को विभक्त किया है और विवेकाधीन निर्णयों के बजाय नियमों पर अधिक जोर देना शुरू किया है। इस सांगठनिक विकास को सौ या हजार गुना स्तर पर ले जाना लोक प्रशासन की चुनौती है। भारत में हम सफलता एवं समृद्धि को सम्मान की नजर से देखते हैं और कारोबारी तबके के प्रति भी काफी इज्जत है। हम यह मान लेते हैं कि टीसीएस में अपनाई जाने वाली पुख्ता मानव संसाधन नीतियां सरकार में भी अच्छी तरह काम करेंगी। लेकिन हमें इस विशेषज्ञता को लोक नीति की दुनिया में स्थानांतरित करने को लेकर सावधानी बरतनी चाहिए। एक देश कोई कंपनी नहीं होता है।

(लेखक नैशनल इंस्टीट्यूट ऑफ पब्लिक फाइनैंस ऐंड पॉलिसी, नई दिल्ली में प्रोफेसर हैं)

लोकतांत्रिक गणराज्य में संस्थाओं का संयम रखना जरूरी

यह गणराज्य राजनीतिक एवं संवैधानिक टकराव के अभूतपूर्व दृश्य देख रहा है। हालांकि आम चुनावों के तेजी से नजदीक आने से ऐसा होना अप्रत्याशित भी नहीं है। अगर तमाम संवैधानिक संस्थानों में एक खास प्रवृत्ति ही फैली हुई है तो पता चलता है कि संवैधानिक संस्थान किस तरह संयम बरतने से दूर हैं।

एजेंसियों और विविध संवैधानिक भिमकाओं के लिए निर्धारित संस्थानों में टकराव होना पूरी तरह बुरा भी नहीं है। असल में, ऐसे संघर्ष उस राजनीतिक नियंत्रण एवं संतुलन को प्रोत्साहित करते हैं जिसकी परिकल्पना संविधान में की गई है। यही वजह है कि संस्थानों के मिलकर काम करने और आपसी संघर्ष से परहेज करने की वकालत करने वाले लोग इस संघर्ष में निहित मूल्य को समझ नहीं पाते हैं। जब एक राज्य सरकार केंद्र की जांच एजेंसियों के खिलाफ खडी होती है तो इसका बुरा होना कोई जरूरी नहीं है। जब केंद्रीय जांच एजेंसी इस मामले में के लिए का दरवाजा खटखटाती है तो यह एक अच्छी बात होती है। आखिर उच्चतम न्यायालय पक्षपात-रहित हस्तक्षेप का सही मंच है।

फिर भी यह याद रखना अहम है कि संघर्ष की अनवरत स्थिति का होना अच्छी बात नहीं है। जब कोई संस्था अपने लिए निर्धारित कार्य का निर्वहन करती है और उसका अन्य संस्थाओं से टकराव होता है तो वह एक अच्छी बात है लेकिन अपनी भिमका का गलत इस्तेमाल करने से पैदा होने वाला टकराव अच्छा नहीं है। ऐसी स्थिति में अक्सर यह सवाल खड़ा हो जाता है कि क्या वास्तव में संस्था ने अपनी भूमिका का उल्लंघन किया है ? उस समय न्यायालयों को ही विवाद के समाधान के लिए आगे आना पड़ता है।

राजकाज में दक्ष व्यक्ति की तरह परिपक्व तरीके से किसी संघर्ष के समाधान का अहम पहलू यह है कि संस्थान और उनकी बागडोर संभालने वाले लोग संयम बरतें। अपने चारों तरफ नजर दौडाने पर आपको दिख जाएगा कि संघर्ष की



बाअदब

सोमशेखर सुंदरेशन

स्थिति में संयम लगभग नदारद ही रहता है। कई उदाहरणों से संयम की यह कमी देखी जा सकती है।

जब संविधान के निर्माताओं ने यह प्रावधान रखा कि लोकसभा का अध्यक्ष ही किसी प्रस्तावित विधेयक के 'धन विधेयक ' होने के बारे में अंतिम रूप से फैसला कर सकता है तो उसके पीछे यही सोच थी कि इस उच्च पद पर बैठा व्यक्ति यह तय करने का जरूरी संयम रखेगा कि उस विधेयक पर राज्यसभा को चर्चा करने की जरूरत नहीं है। लेकिन इतिहास बताता है कि हमारे संविधान निर्माताओं का यह भरोसा गलत साबित हुआ है।

जब भारतीय गणराज्य का गठन एक सच्चे लोकतंत्र के तौर पर होने के बावजुद सशस्त्र बलों के लिए आंतरिक लोकतंत्र को निलंबित रखा गया तो इस ढांचे के पीछे यही भरोसा था कि सशस्त्र बलों का नेतृत्व संयम की एक अंतर्निहित व्यवस्था बनाएगा कि इस संरक्षण का किस तरह इस्तेमाल किया जाए। फिर भी, सशस्त्र बलों में अर्दली (अब उन्हें सहायक कहा जाता है) की दासता की हद तक जाने वा व्यवस्था बदस्तूर जारी है।

जब सेना को लोकतांत्रिक रूप से चुनी गई सरकार के अधीन बनाया गया था तो उम्मीद यही थी कि नेतृत्व संयम का परिचय देगा और तय नियमों से चलेगा। असल में, सैन्य नेतृत्व हर दूसरे दिन खबरों में रहता है। लेकिन इसकी वजह यह है कि वे सामाजिक मुद्दों से लेकर दूसरे देशों के साथ संबंधों तक के मसले पर खुलकर अपनी राय रखते हैं।

जब राज्यपालों को एक राजनीतिक दल या एक गठबंधन को सरकार बनाने के

में कानून व्यवस्था की हालत खराब होने के बारे में रिपोर्ट देकर लोकतांत्रिक ढंग से चुनी गई सरकार को हटाकर वहां राष्ट्रपति शासन की सिफारिश करने की शक्ति दी गई थी तो उसके पीछे यही सोच थी कि इस उच्च पद पर आसीन व्यक्ति संयम का परिचय देते हुए फैसले करेगा। हालांकि इतिहास इस धारणा को गलत साबित करता है। संवैधानिक अदालतों न्यायिक समीक्षा की शक्ति दी गई थी तो उसके पीछे यही धारणा थी कि न्यायाधीश संयम बरतेंगे और समाज एवं इसके सदस्यों की किस्मत तय करने वाले कार्यकारी फैसले वाले आईएएस अधिकारी नहीं बनना चाहेंगे। जब संविधान के अनुच्छेद 142 ने उच्चतम न्यायालय को न्याय देने के लिए कोई भी आदेश जारी करने की शक्ति प्रदान की थी तो कभी भी यह नहीं सोचा गया था कि यह प्रावधान कानून बनाने और उसके अनुपालन का अनूठा न्याय-क्षेत्र बना देगा। यह स्थिति पृथक शक्तियों के बीच घालमेल कर देती है।

लिए आमंत्रित करने या राज्य

जब संसद ने नियामकीय एजेंसियों को विधायी कार्यकारी एवं अर्द्ध-न्यायिक भमिकाएं निभाने के लिए अधिकार प्रदान किए थे तो उसके पीछे यही सोच थी कि इन संस्थानों के प्रमुख अलग-अलग क्षेत्रों में अपनी भूमिका निभाने के दौरान संयम का परिचय देंगे और वे आंतरिक अनशासन का मामला मानते हए इन प्रकार्यों को अलग रखेंगे। लेकिन यह अपेक्षा पूरी तरह गलत साबित हुई है।

गणतंत्र के अस्तित्व में आने के 70वें साल में हम आम चुनाव की तरफ बढ़ रहे हैं। ऐसे में इस बात पर गौर करने का वक्त आ गया है कि क्या महज चुनाव कराना ही लोकतंत्र है या फिर हमारे लोकतांत्रिक गणराज्य को मिलजलकर आकार देने वाली विभिन्न संस्थाओं की कार्यप्रणाली में व्यापक संरचनात्मक एवं ढांचागत सुधार की बड़ी जरूरत खडी हो गई है।

स्वतंत्र परामर्शदाता हैं)

(लेखक अधिवक्ता एवं

कानाफूसी

आम चुनाव पूर्व हवा का रुख

जब भी आम चुनाव आता है, राजनीतिक दलों में मची उथल-पुथल से यह अनुमान लगाया जा सकता है कि हवाएं किस दिशा में बह रही हैं। कुछ ऐसे नेता भी हैं जिनकी दलबदल की प्रवृत्ति इस बारे में काफी कुछ कह देती है। उत्तर प्रदेश के मुजफ्फरनगर के मीरापुर से भाजपा विधायक अवतार सिंह भडाना भी ऐसा ही एक नाम हैं। भडाना 2014 के संसदीय चुनाव के पहले कांग्रेस छोड़कर भाजपा में आए थे और अब उन्होंने दोबारा अपने पुराने दल का रुख कर लिया है। स्वयंभू गुज्जर इमाम कहे जाने वाले भंडाना फरीदाबाद और मेरठ से कांग्रेस के सांसद रह चुके हैं। उन्हें हरियाणा के नेता बंसीलाल राजनीति में लाए थे। भडाना अलग-अलग समय पर जनता दल, इंडियन नैशनल लोकदल और समाजवादी पार्टी में भी रह चुके हैं।

कैबिनेट से संदेश

कमलनाथ के नेतृत्व वाली मध्य प्रदेश की कांग्रेस सरकार ने पिछले दिनों अपनी कैबिनेट बैठक राजधानी भोपाल के स्थान पर जबलपुर शहर में आयोजित की। सन 1956 में मध्य प्रदेश के गठन के बाद यह पहला अवसर था जब कैबिनेट की बैठक किसी अन्य शहर में आयोजित की गई। जबलपुर में कैबिनेट की बैठक आयोजित करने की पहली मांग कांग्रेस के राज्य सभा सदस्य विवेक तन्खा ने उठाई थी। गौरतलब है कि जबलपुर महाकौशल क्षेत्र का केंद्र है और इस क्षेत्र में 36 से अधिक





आपका पक्ष

सुदृढ़ अर्थव्यवस्था की रूपरेखा जरूरी

देश में कर प्रणाली से जुड़े सुधारों ने अप्रत्यक्ष कर राजस्व को बढ़ाया है। आयकर ब्योरा जमा करने वाले लोगों की तादाद भी बढी है। बैंकिंग व्यवस्था के समावेशीकरण तथा डिजिटल लेनदेन ने आबादी के बहुत बड़े हिस्से को औपचारिक रूप से आर्थिक तंत्र से जोड़ा है। लेकिन सरकार के सामने कई समस्याएं अब भी बरकरार है। अन्य उभरती और विकसित अर्थव्यवस्था वाले देशों की तुलना में भारत में आयकर देने वालों का अनुपात कम है और आय की सीमा बढ़ने से प्रत्यक्ष कर राजस्व में कमी आएगी। लेकिन इससे कम आय वर्ग के बचत में बढ़ोतरी होगी। यह बचत निवेश और उपभोग में योगदान कर अर्थव्यवस्था को आगे ले जाने में मददगार साबित हो सकती है। घरेलू और विदेशी बाजारों में हालिया उथल-पुथल से परेशान उद्योग जगत को भी सरकार से कई आस है। वहीं ग्रामीण भारत के संकट से किसान परेशान हैं और उनकी



आमदनी कम होने से बाजार में मांग भी घटी है। इसका असर उत्पादन और उपभोग पर पड़ना स्वाभाविक है। अतः सरकार को देश की अर्थव्यवस्था को दुरुस्त करने की जरूरत है। एक फरवरी को पेश अंतरिम बजट में सरकार ने कई वर्गों को राहत प्रदान की है। सरकार ने न्यूनतम आय, बेरोजगारी भत्ता देने की भी घोषणा की है। किसानों

सरकार की कर्जमाफी योजना से राजस्व घाटा बढ़ेगा जिसका असर अर्थव्यवस्था पर पड़ेगा

का कर्ज माफ करने की भी घोषणा की है। लेकिन सरकार की घोषणाओं का अर्थव्यवस्था पर कहीं प्रतिकुल प्रभाव न पड़े।

पाठक अपनी राय हमें इस पते पर भेज सकते हैं : संपादक, बिजनेस स्टैंडर्ड लिमिटेड, 4, बहादुर

शाह जफर मार्ग, नई दिल्ली - 110002. आप हमें ईमेल भी कर सकते हैं : lettershindi@bsmail.in

उस जगह का उल्लेख अवश्य करें, जहां से आप ईमेल कर रहे हैं।

शैलेंद्र कुमार पांडेय, पटना ं अत: सरकार इस प्रकार की माफी

कर्जमाफी एक गलत प्रयास

वोट की राजनीति के अंतर्गत अब नेता कर्जमाफी का शगूफा छोड़ने लगे हैं और सत्ता पाने के बाद ही कर्जमाफी की घोषणा भी करने लगे हैं। सरकार किसानों के दो लाख रुपये तक के कर्ज को माफ कर रही है। भले ही सरकार का घाटे का बजट हो उससे उन्हें कोई लेना देना नहीं है। इस गलत परंपरा से अब व्यापारी-विद्यार्थी भी मांग उठाने लगे हैं कि किसानों की तरह उनके कर्ज भी माफ किए जाएं। इससे देश की वित्तीय और आर्थिक स्थिति भयावह बन जाए तो कोई आश्चर्य नहीं होगा। ऐसे में कर्जमाफी करना अत्यंत आत्मघाती साबित होगा तथा यह लोगों में विपरीत भाव पैदा करेगा जो मुफ्त में खाने की प्रवृत्ति को बढ़ावा देगा।

परिश्रम करें और अपने उद्योग धंधों को बढ़ाए। घेवरचंद गोदीका, जयपुर

पर पाबंदी लगाए ताकि लोग

बेरोजगारी दूर करने की पहल

देश में बढ़ती बेरोजगारी की समस्या के समाधान के लिए सर्वप्रथम जनसंख्या वृद्धि पर नियंत्रण करना जरूरी है। वहीं छोटे-बड़े उद्योग में जनता की भागीदारी बढ़ाने की जरूरत है। बेहतर शिक्षा बेरोजगारी दुर कर सकता है इसके लिए गांवों में स्कूल, कॉलेज अधिक खोलने की जरूरत है। इससे शिक्षकों की मांग बढ़ेगी तथा शिक्षकों के पदों का सृजन होगा। गांवों में मकानों की कमी है तथा मकान बनाने के कार्य से भी रोजगार के अवसर मिल सकते हैं।वहीं हर गांव में पक्की सड़क बनने से वह शहरों से जुड़ सकेगा तथा बेहतर परिवहन होने से ग्रामीण लोगों को शहर में रोजगार के अवसर प्राप्त हो सकेंगे। राकेश जैन, सतना



ज्ञान का घमंड सबसे बड़ा अज्ञान है

एक और आघात

यह एक और बड़ा आघात ही है कि पुलवामा में भीषण आतंकी हमले में शहीद सीआरपीएफ जवानों की चिता की आग बझने भी न पाई थी कि आतंकियों से लोहा लेते हुए पांच और जवानों के बलिदान होने की खबर आ गई। इनमें एक मेजर भी हैं। पुलवामा हमले की साजिश रचने वाले आतंकियों को पुलवामा में ही मार गिराने के अभियान में ब्रिगेडियर, लेफ्टिनेंट कर्नल, मेजर, कैप्टन और डीआइजी समेत सात जवान घायल भी हुए हैं। इस अभियान में हताहत अधिकारियों और जवानों की यह संख्या यही बताती है कि कश्मीर में खतरा किस तरह बढ़ता जा रहा है। निःसंदेह यह सेना, सुरक्षा बलों और जम्मू-कश्मीर पुलिस के अदम्य साहस और संकल्प का प्रमाण है कि उन्होंने मिलकर पुलवामा हमले की साजिश रचने वाले आतंकियों को सौ घंटे के अंदर खोजकर मौत के मुंह में धकेल दिया. लेकिन उनका दमन करने के क्रम में उन्हें जो क्षति उठानी पड़ी वह चिंता का विषय है। यह सही है कि घिनौनी नफरत से भरे और मरने-मारने पर आमादा आतंकियों के सफाए के हर अभियान में जोखिम होता है, लेकिन आखिर कश्मीर में ऐसा कब तक चलता रहेगा? जनता के मन में यह सवाल उठ रहा है कि कश्मीर में हमारे जवान कब तक इसी तरह बलिदान देते रहेंगे ? यह सवाल इसलिए गंभीर हो गया है, क्योंकि कश्मीर में आतंकियों की विष बेल खत्म होने का नाम नहीं ले रही है। कश्मीर में देश भर के जवान तैनात हैं। जब वे वीरगति को प्राप्त होते हैं तो पूरे देश का वातावरण प्रभावित होता है। जवानों के परिजन कश्मीर में तैनात अपने लोगों की कशल-क्षेम के लिए सदैव चिंतित बने रहें, यह कोई अच्छी स्थिति नहीं। यह स्थिति आम जनता के मनोबल पर असर डालती है।

देश की जनता इसके प्रति तो सनिश्चित है कि सेना और सरक्षा बलों के आगे कश्मीर में सिर उठाने वाले आतंकियों की खैर नहीं. लेकिन वह यह जानने के लिए अधीर हो रही है कि आखिर देश के इस हिस्से में कब अमन-चैन कायम होगा? इस सवाल का जवाब देश के समस्त राजनीतिक नेतृत्व को देना होगा। यह अच्छा नहीं कि कश्मीर को शांत करने की कोई पहल होती नहीं दिख रही है। घाटी में एक ओर जहां अलगाव और आतंक के समर्थकों का सख्ती से दमन करने की जरूरत है वहीं देशभक्त कश्मीरियों को साथ लेने की भी। आखिर इस दिशा में कोई ठोस पहल कब होगी? क्या यह सही समय नहीं जब कश्मीर में अलगाव की मानसिकता का पोषण करने वाली धारा 370 खत्म की जाए और वहां के लोगों को मुख्यधारा में लाने के लिए हर संभव उपाय किए जाएं? वास्तव में जितनी जरूरत अमन-चैन पसंद लोगों को हर तरह से आश्वस्त करने की है उतनी ही इसकी भी कि आतंकियों के बचाव में पत्थरबाजी करने वालों को ऐसा सबक सिखाया जाए कि वे फिर कभी पत्थर उठाने की जुर्रत न कर सकें। सहने की एक सीमा होती है। देश का राजनीतिक नेतृत्व यह समझे तो बेहतर कि कश्मीर के हालात से देश व्यथित है और उसकी व्यथा दूर करने के लिए ठोस कदम उठाना उसकी जिम्मेदारी है।

स्वास्थ्य की चिंता

केंद्र ने झारखंड को तीन नए मेडिकल कॉलेज की सौगात दी है। लगभग 48 साल बाद एक साथ हजारीबाग, दुमका और पलामू में मेडिकल कॉलेज का उदघाटन स्वास्थ्य के क्षेत्र में झारखंड के बढ़ते कदम की एक और बानगी है। इतना ही नहीं प्रधानमंत्री नरेंद्र मोदी लगभग 885 करोड़ की लागत वाले इन अस्पतालों के उद्घाटन के साथ-साथ तीनों शहरों के अलावा जमशेदपुर में 500-500 बेड के अस्पताल की भी आधारशिला रखी है। केंद्र की इस पहल के साथ ही राज्य के सभी प्रमंडलों में मेडिकल कॉलेज की स्थापना का झारखंड का सपना साकार हो गया है। सरकार ने इससे पहले सामाजिक-आर्थिक जनगणना में सूचीबद्ध राज्य के लाखों परिवारों को आयुष्पान योजना से जोड़कर सरकार ने उनके बेहतर स्वास्थ्य की गारंटी देने का काम किया है। राज्य को बेहतर स्वास्थ्य सेवाएं महैया कराए जाने की दिशा में सरकार की इस कोशिश की सराहना की जानी चाहिए। इससे इतर देखना यह भी होगा कि झारखंड स्वास्थ्य के राष्टीय बेंचमार्क पर विकसित राज्यों की तुलना में अभी भी काफी पीछे है। राज्य के अस्पताल चिकित्सकों और पारा मेडिकल कर्मियों की घोर किल्लत झेल रहे हैं। विशेषज्ञ चिकित्सकों की बात करें तो सृजित पदों की तुलना में चौथाई चिकित्सक भी उपलब्ध नहीं हैं। सामान्य चिकित्सकों के भी लगभग यही हालात हैं। जरूरत है इस गैप को पाटने की। ऐसे में मेडिकल कॉलेजों, अस्पतालों और अन्य चिकित्सकीय इकाइयों की स्थापना के साथ-साथ चिकित्सकों की किल्लत दूर करने की दिशा में भी ठोस प्रयास किए जाने की जरूरत है। मौजूदा परिदृश्य की बात करें तो झारखंड के मौजुदा मेडिकल कॉलेजों से पढ़ाई करने के बाद लगभग 60 फीसद से अधिक डॉक्टर झारखंड छोड़कर बाहर के प्रदेशों में अपनी सेवा देने चले जाते हैं। आवश्यकता है ऐसे छात्रों को रोकने की दिशा में ठोस कदम उठाने की। बहरहाल झारखंड में मेडिकल सीटों की कुल संख्या 350 है। नए कॉलेजों के खुलने से यह संख्या बढ़कर 650 हो जाएगी। सरकार की तैयारी मार्च अंत तक एक तथा आगामी वित्तीय वर्ष में दो और नर्सिंग कॉलेज खोलने की है। सरकार के इन प्रयासों से आने वाले दिनों में चिकित्सकों और नर्सों की कमी बहुत हद तक दूर हो जाएगी।

विषाक्त मानसिकता से बिगड़े हालात

आदिल जैसे जिहादियों का दर्शन अन्य

धर्मावंलबियों को 'काफिर-कुफ्र' घोषित करता

है। इस विध्वंसक मानसिकता को भारत सदियों

से झेल रहा है। चाहे वह आठवीं शताब्दी से

विदेशी आक्रांताओं द्वारा लूटपाट, मंदिरों को

ध्वस्त, मतांतरण और गैर-मुस्लिमों की हत्या हो

या फिर 19वीं शताब्दी में भारतीय उपमहाद्वीप में

मुस्लिम अलगाववाद का बीजारोपण हो या फिर

1946 में बंगाल में 'सीधी कार्रवाई' और 1947

में भारत का रक्तरंजित विभाजन हो, 1980-90

के दशक में घाटी से कश्मीरी पंडितों का पलायन

हो या फिर कालांतर में जैश-ए-मोहम्मद,

अल कायदा, लश्कर-ए-तैयबा और इंडियन

सभ्य समाज दशकों से इस विषैले चिंतन पर

ईमानदार चर्चा करने से बच रहा है, यह उसका

ही परिणाम है कि उस विषबेल ने आज पूरे विश्व

को जकड़ लिया है। पुलवामा में जिस प्रकार

विस्फोटक से लदे वाहन से आतंकवादी हमला

इसी तरह की बर्बरता हम कुछ वर्ष पहले-फ्रांस,

बर्लिन और लंदन जैसे यूरोपीय शहरों में देख

मुजाहिदीन जैसे आतंकी संगठनों का जन्म।



कश्मीर में हमारी लड़ाई उस खतरनाक मानसिकता से है जिसमें घाटी के तमाम बाशिंदे 'काफिर-कुफ्र' के विषाक्त मकडजाल में उलझे हए हैं

म्मू-कश्मीर का पुलवामा हाल में भीषण आतंकवादी हमले का शिकार बना। यक्ष प्रश्न यह है कि 1947 से लेकर अब तक स्वतंत्र भारत की अलग-अलग सरकारों के विभिन्न प्रयासों के बाद भी कश्मीर में हिंसक घटनाएं रुकने का नाम क्यों नहीं ले रही हैं? क्यों बीते सात दशकों से घाटी की स्थिति जम्मू और लद्दाख की तुलना में अशांत है? इन प्रश्नों का स्पष्ट उत्तर उस वीडियो में है जिसे फिदायीन आदिल अहमद डार ने आत्मघाती हमला करने से पहले रिकॉर्ड किया था और जो सोशल मीडिया में वायरल हुआ। 14 फरवरी को पुलवामा के अवंतीपुरा में हुए भीषण आतंकवादी हमले में केंद्रीय रिजर्व पुलिस बल (सीआरपीएफ) के 40 जवान शहींद हो गए। इस घटना से देश के आम नागरिकों में जिस प्रकार का आक्रोश और शोक देखा जा रहा है उसका प्रतिबिंब 15 फरवरी को प्रधानमंत्री नरेंद्र मोदी के वक्तव्य में भी दिखा। उन्होंने कहा, 'देश के लोगों का खून खौल रहा है। आप सभी की भावनाओं को मैं भली-भांति समझ पा रहा हूं। सुरक्षाबलों को आगे की कार्रवाई के लिए, समय क्या हो, स्थान क्या हो और स्वरूप कैसा हो, यह तय करने की पूरी छूट दे दी गई है। देश के 130 करोड़ लोग मिलकर मुंहतोड़ जवाब देंगे।'

ऐसा नहीं है कि कश्मीर में पहली बार कोई आतंकवादी हमला हुआ है। बीते कई दशकों से घाटी इस प्रकार की घटनाओं को झेल रही है, जिस पर समाज स्वाभाविक रूप में आक्रोशित भी होता है। भारी मात्रा में विस्फोटक से भरे वाहन को 2,500 से अधिक सीआरपीएफ जवानों के काफिले से टकरा देने वाला फिदायीन कौन था? आखिर वह अपनी जान देकर उन लोगों की जान क्यों लेना चाहता था. जिन्हें वह जानता तक नहीं था? इस मानसिकता को किस विचारधारा ने जन्म दिया? 1999 में जन्मा आदिल अहमद डार पुलवामा के ही काकपोरा का निवासी था और 12वीं कक्षा में पढ़ रहा था। आतंकी बनने से पहले वह एक स्थानीय आरा मशीन पर काम करके लकड़ी की पेटियां बनाता था और मार्च 2018 में उसने आतंकवाद की राह पकड़ ली। प्रारंभ में वह जिहादी जाकिर मूसा के साथ रहा, फिर जैश-ए-मोहम्मद का हिस्सा बन गया, जहां पाकिस्तान स्थित जैश-ए-मोहम्मद आतंकी कामरान गाजी ने उसे प्रशिक्षण दिया। यही गाजी गत दिवस सेना के हाथों मारा गया।

आखिर आदिल मरने-मारने को क्यों तैयार हो गया? पुलवामा हमले से पहले उसके द्वारा बनाए वीडियो संदेश से ही काफी हद तक उसका खुलासा हो जाता है। वह कहता है, 'अभी मैंने अपने हिस्से का कर्ज और फर्ज अदा किया है। अपनी जान का नजराना पेश करके उम्मत (इस्लामी जगत) का सिर फिर से बुलंद किया है। मुझ जैसे हजारों लोग तुम्हारी (भारत की) तबाही का सामान लिए अपनी मंजिल को पाने के लिए बेताब बैठे है। हमारा जिहाद गजवा-ए-हिंद की मुबारक कड़ी है, जिसे तोड़ना तुम गाय का पेशाब पीने वालों के बस की बात नहीं है। हम हर दिन पहले से अधिक ताकतवर हो रहे हैं। हमारी शहादत इस्लाम के लिए कुर्बानी है।'



चुके है, जिसमें वाहन के माध्यम से ही दर्जनों निरपराधों को कुचलकर मार डाला गया। स्पष्ट है कि कैंसर रूपी यह दर्शन भयावह रूप ले चुका है। इस रुग्ण मानसिकता का एक बड़ा कारण मजहबी शिक्षा पद्धति भी है, जिसका सबसे बडा दोष यह है कि उनमें सामाजिक, वैचारिक और साहित्यिक समरसता का नितांत अभाव रहता है। प्रारंभिक परवरिश में बाहरी दुनिया से कटाव छात्रों को अन्य समुदाय, विशेषकर विविधताओं से भरे समाज में-आचार-विचार, जीवन दर्शन, शैली और संस्कृति से अपरिचित रखता है। यदि बाल्यकाल से ही इन बच्चों को एक विशेष प्रकार का वातावरण मिले तो स्वाभाविक तौर पर उनका दृष्टिकोण, वेशभूषा, भाषा और इतिहास की समझ और आकांक्षाएं- शेष समाज से भिन्न हो जाएंगी। इसी पृष्ठभूमि में जब उनके तौर-तरीकों में समय के अनुसार परिवर्तन करने का प्रयास किया जाता है तो उसे मजहब पर हमला करार दिया जाता है। कटु सत्य तो यह है कि मजहबी किया गया, वैसा कश्मीर में पहली बार हुआ है। शिक्षण व्यवस्था को प्रोत्साहन और जिहादी कट्टरता-आतंकवाद को जड से खत्म करने का अभियान, एक दूसरे का सबसे बड़ा विरोधाभास

है। शिनजियांग, गांसू सहित कुछ अन्य चीनी प्रांतों में जिहादी कट्टरता, अलगाववाद और आतंकवाद से निपटने के लिए चीन की वामपंथी सरकार ने उग्र अभियान छेडा है। वहां मदरसा शिक्षा प्रणाली प्रतिबंधित है। 16 वर्ष से कम आयु वर्ष के बच्चों के मजहबी कार्यक्रमों में भाग लेने पर रोक है। सार्वजनिक स्थानों पर मुस्लिम पुरुषो को दाढ़ी रखने तो महिलाओं को बुर्का पहनने पर

एक अमेरिकी रिपोर्ट के अनुसार, इस्लाम के चीनीकरण हेतु अप्रैल 2017 से चीनी सरकार ने मुस्लिम समुदायों के 10-20 लाख लोगों को शिविरों में अनिश्चितकाल के लिए बंद किया हुआ है। सरकारी निर्देश नहीं मानने वालों को घंटों भूखा रखा जाता है और एकांत कोठरियों में दिन-रात खड़े रहने की सजा दी जाती है। मुस्लिम बहुल क्षेत्रों में सरकारी अधिकारियों के नियमित दौरें से वहां इस्लामी मान्यताओं का अनुपालन लगभग वर्जित हो गया है। निर्विवाद रूप से भारत, अमेरिका सहित कोई भी पंथनिरपेक्ष बहुलतावादी और लोकतांत्रिक देश-आतंकवाद और हिंसक अलगाववाद से निपटने के लिए चीनी नीतियों का अनुसरण कभी नहीं करेगा इसके बावजूद इस्लामी जगत दुनिया भर की शिकायत करता है, लेकिन चीन को लेकर मौन साधे रहता है। क्या कश्मीर समस्या का अंत संभव है? सबसे पहले हमें समझना होगा कि घाटी के अशांत होने का मुख्य कारण बेरोजगारी भ्रष्टाचार, शिक्षा, विकास, आर्थिक असमानता और क्षेत्रीय असंतुलन में नहीं है। कश्मीर में हमारी लडाई उस विषाक्त मानसिकता से है जिसमें घाटी के तमाम बाशिंदे 'उम्मत बनाम काफिर-कुफ्र' के विषाक्त मकड़जाल में उलझे हए हैं। जिस दिन कश्मीर इस मकड़जाल से मुक्त हो जाएगा उस समय से ही वह भी शेष भारत की भांति सामान्य क्षेत्र हो जाएगा।

> (लेखक राज्यसभा के पूर्व सदस्य एवं वरिष्ठ स्तंभकार हैं) response@jagran.com

राष्ट्रभाव फिर से जगाने की जरूरत

कश्मीर के पुलवामा में सुरक्षाबलों के काफिले पर हुए जघन्य हमले ने एक बार फिर विश्व समुदाय को आतंकवाद के प्रति गंभीरतापूर्वक सोचने के लिए विवश कर दिया है। बढ़ते वैश्वीकरण के बावजूद अपने-अपने राष्ट्र को सर्वोपरि मानने की जो प्रवृत्ति पिछले कुछ बरसों में बलवती हुई है उसकी जड़ में भी यही अंतरराष्ट्रीय आतंकवाद है। इसी का परिणाम है कि आज धीरे-धीरे ही सही अच्छे और बुरे आतंकवाद के बीच का भेद भी मिटने लगा है। खेमों में बंटे देशों में अपनी राष्ट्रीयता के प्रति अपेक्षाकृत अधिक लगाव ने भी जोर पकड़ा है। पिछले कुछ बरसों में अमेरिका, इंग्लैंड, जर्मनी, इटली, रूस और चीन जैसे विकसित देशों द्वारा राष्ट्र सर्वोपरि के लिए मुखरता से दी जाने वाली दलीलों को इसी दृष्टि से देखा जा सकता है। इन देशों की जनता ने देश और राष्ट्रीयता की बात पुरजोर तरीके से करने वाले राजनीतिक नेतत्व को पसंद भी किया है। अब अपने राष्ट्रीय हितों की खुले तौर पर पैरवी करने में किसी को कोई झिझक भी नहीं है और तो और कुछ देश अंतरराष्ट्रीय संस्थाओं या संयुक्त राष्ट जैसे संगठनों की आलोचना की परवाह भी नहीं कर रहे हैं। संयुक्त राष्ट्र मानवाधिकार परिषद से पिछले दिनों दिए गए अमेरिका के इस्तीफे और यूरोपीय संघ से बाहर निकलने के ब्रिटेन के निर्णयों की पृष्ठभूमि में राष्ट्र सर्वोपरि की इस भावना को देखा जा सकता है।

राष्ट्रीयता के प्रति इस अंतरराष्ट्रीय झुकाव से अलग हमार देश में माजरा कुछ और ही नजर आ रहा है। यहां राष्ट्रीयता की आवाज के तेजी पकड़ते ही कुछ लोगों को कई तरह की आशंकाएं होने लगती हैं और राष्ट्रीयता के पक्ष में उठने वाली आवाजों के पीछे लोकतांत्रिक विचारों को दबाने की कोशिश तलाशने के प्रयास होने लगते हैं। चूंकि राष्ट्रीयता की आवाज बुलंद करने संबंधी प्रयासों को सरकार का समर्थन स्वाभाविक होता है तो सरकार का विरोध कर रही ताकतें भी सक्रिय होने लगती हैं। इसमें कई बार तो ऐसा भी होता है कि सरकार विरोधी ताकतों को यह पता ही नहीं चल पाता कि सरकार का विरोध करते-करते वे कब राष्ट्रीयता की भावना का भी विरोध करने की स्थिति में पहुंच जाती हैं। इस स्थिति का सर्वाधिक फायदा राष्ट्र विरोधी गतिविधियों में लिप्त तत्व उठा लेते हैं और सुरक्षा बलों द्वारा नेस्तनाबुद किए गए संगठन भी ऑक्सीजन पा जाते हैं। ऐसी स्थिति राष्ट्र के लिए बेहद खतरनाक है। सरकार का विरोध और खासकर अंध विरोध करने वालों को सावधानी से सोचने की जरूरत है. क्योंकि इसका सीधा संबंध सुरक्षा बलों के मनोबल से भी है। सामान्य माहौल में तो सरकार और व्यवस्था की आलोचना और विरोध जायज है, लेकिन संकट के समय ऐसा आचरण



करते समय राष्ट्र को होने वाले नुकसान के बारे में भी सजग रहने की जरूरत है। कहीं आलोचना के अति उत्साह में राष्ट्र, समाज और नागरिकों के प्रति जिम्मेदारी ही विस्मृत न हो जाए। इसे विडंबना ही कहेंगे कि यह सब देश में मौजूद लोकतांत्रिक माहौल और उसके तहत नागरिकों को मिली अभिव्यक्ति की आजादी के तहत होता है। यह आजादी कुछ जिम्मेदारी की भी मांग करती है। संविधान प्रदत्त अभिव्यक्ति की आजादी को कुछ लोग अपने पक्ष में इस कदर परिभाषित कर लेते हैं कि उन्हें उस संविधान की मर्यादा तक का खयाल नहीं रहता जिसने बिना किसी भेद-भाव के यह आजादी

आतंकी और विध्वंसक गतिविधियों की तह में जाकर देखने की आवश्यकता है। इन गतिविधियों को संचालित करने वाले तत्व अपनी लडाई को विचारधारा की लडाई के आवरण में लपेटकर जनता को परोसने की कोशिश करते हैं। जनता उनकी इस चालाकी को समझ नहीं पाती। जैसे आदिवासी क्षेत्रों के सीधे-सादे लोगों की आर्थिक तंगी और पिछड़ेपन का पूरा फायदा उठाया गया है और उन्हें तरह-तरह के सब्जबाग दिखाकर अपने ही राष्ट्र से लड़ने में लगाकर

रखा गया है वैसा ही कुछ कश्मीर में किया गया है। कश्मीर तब अशांत और अलगाव से ग्रस्त है जब वह आर्थिक रूप से देश के कई हिस्सों से कहीं अधिक बेहतर स्थिति में है। कश्मीर में तमाम तत्व ऐसे हैं जो शत्रु देश से तमाम तरह का सहयोग और समर्थन खुलेआम ले रहे हैं। इन परिस्थितियों के मद्देनजर हमें एक राष्ट्र के रूप में बहुत ही गंभीरता से विचार करने और राष्ट्रीयता की भावना को और अच्छे से सींचने की जरूरत है। राष्ट्रीयता की भावना ही वह जज्बा पैदा करने की ताकत रखती है जिससे लोग व्यक्तिगत हित छोड़कर देश के प्रति समर्पण की भावना से ओतप्रोत होते हैं।

इस भावना को केवल देश की सीमा की रक्षा तक ही सीमित नहीं रहना चाहिए, बल्कि इसकी जरूरत देश के अंदर सिर उठाने वाली हर राष्ट्र विरोधी गतिविधियों से लडने के लिए भी है। ऐसे में जरूरत है स्वाधीनता संग्राम के दौरान उमड़ी राष्ट्रभक्ति को फिर से जगाने की, जिसने लोगों को राष्ट्रहित में आइसीएस जैसे सर्वोच्च पदों से भी त्यागपत्र देने के लिए प्रेरित किया था। अब समय आ गया है आम लोग राष्ट्र के प्रति अपना कर्तव्य समझें और अपनी मिट्टी के लिए मर मिटने-कुछ कर गुजरने का जज्बा पैदा करें। यही वह भावना है जो हमारे सैनिकों को देश की सीमा पर विकट से विकट परिस्थितियों में और अन्य सुरक्षाबलों को देश के आंतरिक हिस्सों में साहस के साथ विध्वंसक तत्वों से लड़ने का अदम्य साहस और हौसला प्रदान करती है। राष्ट्र निर्माण के इस पुनीत यज्ञ में हर नागरिक के योगदान की अपेक्षा है। लोगों को ही यह परवाह करनी होगी कि हर कोई इसमें योगदान दे। इस अपेक्षा में ईमानदारी से टैक्स देना भी आता है और सामान्य नियम-कानुनों का स्वतः पालन करना भी।ऐसे तमाम कार्य हैं जिनमें देश के बहुत सारे संसाधनों का इसलिए बेवजह इस्तेमाल होता है, क्योंकि कुछ लोग अपना काम जिम्मेदार नागरिक के तौर पर नहीं करते। कुछ लोग राष्ट्रीयता की भावना के अत्यधिक बलवती होने को अंतरराष्ट्रीयता में बाधक मानते हैं, लेकिन मौजूदा अंतरराष्ट्रीय परिवेश में हमारे यहां राष्ट्रीयता की भावना को पूरे वेग के साथ परवान चढाने की दरकार है। राष्ट्रीय अस्मिता को मिल रही चुनौतियों से निपटने के लिए उच्चकोटि की राष्ट्रभक्ति आवश्यक है। जाति, भाषा, रंग-रूप, संस्कृति संबंधी विविधता होते हुए भी राष्ट्रीयता ही वह भावना है जो सभी को एकसूत्र में बांधे रख सकती है। देशवासियों में राष्ट्र के प्रति अपने कर्तव्यों का बोध कराने और उनमें अनुशासन की भावना विकसित करने के लिए भी यह आवश्यक है।

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शब्दबीज

वाणी-विभूषित शब्द दैव-सृष्टि से मानव को मिले अनुपम उपहार हैं। वाणी परम पावन भागीरथी-गंगा सदुश है। जीवन के आहार-व्यवहार में तप-तप कर जिस प्रकार गोमुख से निकली जलधारा असंख्य मीलों की यात्रा कर गंगाजल होने के अमरत्व एवं महत्व को प्राप्त करती है, उसी प्रकार शब्द भी उच्चारण से आचरण तक की निष्ठा एवं पवित्रता की भट्ठी में तप-तप कर मंत्र सृष्टि की शाश्वतता को प्राप्त होने का अपना सफर तय करने में सफल होते हैं। मंत्र जीवन-साधनारूपी यज्ञशाला की कल्याणकारी अग्नि में आचरण एवं पवित्रता से पगे, तपे सुचिंतित और सोद्देश्य शब्दों का ही परिष्कृत रूप है। शब्दे के सदुपयोग की सकारात्मकता का मार्ग शाश्वत सृजन एव मंत्र-सृष्टि के पावन धाम की ओर ले जाता है जो इसके प्रयोक्ताओं को आनंद, उत्साह, लक्ष्य, शांति और सफलता के चिरंतन सुखों अथवा सुफलों से लाभान्वित करता रहता है, लेकिन शब्दों का दुरुपयोग मानव को नकारात्मकता के मार्ग पर चलकर निराशा, विध्वंस, पीड़ा, पश्चाताप के अंधकारमय गड्ढों में धकेल कर यह दुर्लभ जीवन नष्ट करने के लिए प्रेरित करता रहता है।

शब्द की उर्वरता एवं सोच की सकारात्मकता मानव के लघु जीवन-खंड को ऐतिहासिक एवं स्मरणीय बनाकर विश्व में चर्चित कर देती है। शब्द के प्रति उदासीनता एवं सोच की नकारात्मकता, दुर्लभ जीवन को ईर्ष्या, द्वेष और कुविचारों के घुनों से खिलवाकर इसे दानवी कृत्यों का स्वामी बनाकर युग-युगों तक के लिए कलंकित कर देती है। एक मंत्ररूपी शब्द हमारी अज्ञानतारूपी अंगुली थाम हमें सदुद्देश्य की ओर प्रेरित कर जीवन का कल्याण कर सकता है, जबकि एक दुष्प्रेरक शब्द हमें हमारे सद्मार्ग से भटकाकर किन्हीं गलत उद्देश्यों की ओर प्रेरित कर हमारे इस दुर्लभ जीवन को सदा-सदा के लिए बर्बाद कर मानवता को कलंकित कर सकता है।

र्इश्वर ने विवेकरूपी मस्तिष्क मानव को इसी सद्प्रयोजन के लिए उपहार में प्रस्तुत किया है ताकि वह इसका प्रयोग सही दिशा में कर पशुता में परिवर्तित होते अपने जीवन को नष्ट होने से बचा ले। आइए प्रभु से उपहार में मिले इस शब्दबीज का सद्पयोग कर मानवता के कल्याण और ज्ञान के अनंत क्षितिज को नव आयाम दें। डॉ. दिनेश चमोला 'शैलेश'

घरेलू महिलाओं की समस्या

डॉ. ऋतु सारस्वत

फरवरी के प्रथम सप्ताह में ब्रिटिश मेडिकल जर्नल में प्रकाशित एक शोध के मुताबिक 2016 में अपनी जान लेने वालों में 44.2 प्रतिशत से अधिक लोग भारत और चीन के थे, परंतु यह रिपोर्ट इस तथ्य से चौंकाती है कि भारत में किसानों की तुलना में चार गुना अधिक घरेलू महिलाओं ने आत्महत्या की। किसानों की आत्महत्या राष्ट्रीय चर्चा एवं चुनावी मुद्दों का विषय रहा है, परंतु घरेलू महिलाओं की 'आत्महत्याएं' समाज के किसी भी वर्ग में चर्चा का विषय नहीं। इसका स्पष्ट कारण यह है कि पित्तृसत्तात्मक समाज में उनका महत्व नगण्य है। शोधों में मुलतः बाल विवाह और घरेलू हिंसा को इसके लिए जिम्मेदार बताया जाता है और ये कारण हैं भी, इससे कतई इन्कार नहीं।

आमतौर पर 'आत्महत्या' एक निजी मामल माना जाता है, परंतु इससे इतर यह एक सामाजिक कृत्य है, क्योंकि समाज ही ऐसी परिस्थितियों का निर्माण करता है कि व्यक्ति आत्महत्या जैसे कदम उठाने के लिए विवश हो जाता है। 'बाल विवाह' इसका जीवंत उदाहरण है। जहां अल्पायु में बच्चियों के ऊपर पारिवारिक दायित्वों को लाद

घरेलू महिला के त्याग, समर्पण और प्रेम की अवहेलना समाज को एक घातक दिशा की ओर ले जा रही है

दिया जाता है, जिसके चलते वे अवसादग्रस्त हो जाती हैं और कई बार इसकी परिणति आत्महत्या होती है। अध्ययन यह भी बताते हैं कि घरेलू हिंसा महिलाओं के आत्मसम्मान को इस कदर चोट पहुंचाती है कि वे अवसाद का शिकार हो जाती हैं। आत्महत्या पर किए गए कई अध्ययनों में पाया गया है कि लगभग 80 प्रतिशत मामलों में पीड़ित महिलाएं अवसाद से ग्रसित थीं, परंतु इन सबसे इतर भारतीय परिवारों के भीतर बीते दशकों में जो कुछ भी घटित हो रहा है वह समाज के एक ऐसे नकारात्मक बदलाव की ओर संकेत कर रहा है, जिसे समय रहते यदि सुधारा नहीं गया तो आने वाले समय में स्थितियां घातक हो जाएंगी।

प्रथम दृष्टि में घरेलू महिलाओं का जीवन मानसिक तनाव से दूर घर की सुरक्षित दीवारों के बीच सुकून भरा दिखता है। चूंकि घरेलू महिलाओं का घर की आर्थिक आवश्यकताओं

में प्रत्यक्ष रूप से सहयोग नहीं होता इसलिए उन्हें उपेक्षा का शिकार होना पड़ता है। घर के महत्वपूर्ण निर्णय में सहभागिता तो दूर अपनी निजी आवश्यकताओं के लिए परिवार के अन्य सदस्यों पर निर्भरता, उनके भीतर हीनभावना को जन्म देती है। 'अवसाद' का एक बहुत बड़ा कारण दो व्यक्तियों के मध्य 'तुलना' भी होता है। जब उनकी तुलना उन्हीं के समकक्ष शिक्षित, परंतु कामकाजी महिला से की जाती है और उन्हें कमतर सिद्ध करने की चेष्टा की जाती है।

'घर पर निठल्ले बैठे रहने' का उलाहना भारत की हर घरेलू महिला को समय बे-समय झेलना पड़ता है और यह उनके मानसिक संत्रास का एक बड़ा कारण है। निरंतर मिलने वाली उपेक्षाएं और अकेलापन उन्हें यह सोचने पर कई बार विवश कर देते हैं कि उनके परिवार को उनकी आवश्कता नहीं है। यही भावना आत्महत्या का कारण बनती है। घरेलु महिला के त्याग, समर्पण और प्रेम की यूं अवहेलना समाज को एक घातक दिशा की ओर ले जा रही है इसलिए अब यह सोचना उचित है कि जो संपूर्ण परिवार की केंद्र है क्या वह उस सम्मान की हकदार नहीं जो परिवार के मुखिया को मिलता है?

(लेखिका ऐसोसिएट प्रोफेसर हैं)

चरमपंथ से वैचारिक युद्ध की जरूरत

शंकर शरण द्वारा लिखित 'हथियार से नहीं विचार से लड़ने की जरूरत' लेख में धर्म आधारित जिस इस्लामिक चरमपंथी विचार की चर्चा की गई है, वह अलगाववाद और जिहादी आतंकवाद को ऑक्सीजन देने वाला एक घातक विचार है। धर्मोन्मादी जिहादी इस चरमपंथी विचार को उत्प्रेरक बनाकर इस्लाम के नाम पर मरने-मारने के लिए आतुर आत्मघाती आतंकवादियों को उनका ब्रेन-वॉश कर तैयार करते हैं। आजादी का सूरज निकलने से पहले ही देश-विभाजन की कालिमा फैलाने वाला यही चरमपंथी विचार था। भारत-विभाजन का कारक बनने वाले इस चरमपंथी विचार को यदि उसी समय पूरी ताकत के साथ कुचल दिया जाता तो आज अलगाववाद को हवा देने वाले इस्लामिक चरमपंथ को हिंदू बहुल भारत में पैर पसारने का अवसर नहीं मिलता। अपने जन्म-काल से भारत को आघात दर आघात देने वाले पाकिस्तान को ताकत देने वाला यही चरमपंथी विचार है। पाकिस्तान की गोद में बैठे आतंकी सरगना अजहर मसूद और हाफिज सईद जैसे धर्मीन्मादी अपनी इसी चरमपंथी वैचारिकता से मुस्लिम बहुल कश्मीर घाटी में आतंक की फसल बोने में कामयाब होते रहे हैं। इनके इस भारत विरोधी विचार को खाद-पानी देने के लिए हुर्रियत जैसे अलगाववादी संगठनों ने कश्मीर की आजादी का राग अलाप कर जिहादी आतंकवाद को क्रांति का वैचारिक चोला पहनाने की हर संभव कोशिश की है। कुछ छात्र और बुद्धिजीवी भी इसमें अग्रणी भूमिका निभाते नजर आते रहे हैं। ऐसे में हथियारों से लड़ी जाने वाली लड़ाई के साथ-साथ अब वैचारिक स्तर पर इस चरमपंथी विचार से

भी समानांतर युद्ध की जरूरत है।

मेलबाक्स

स्वदेशी ताकत का परिचायक

रमेश कुमार दुबे ने अपने आलेख 'कायापलट की राह पर रेलवे' के माध्यम से रेलवे के क्षेत्र में हुए विकास को उजागर किया है। भारत वैश्विक पटल पर ताकतवर देश के रूप में अपनी अलग पहचान बनाने में कामयाब हो रहा है। इसका मुख्य कारण यह है कि सभी क्षेत्रों में स्वदेशी निर्माण पर ज्यादा जोर दिया जा रहा है। जब कोई भी वस्तु अपने ही देश में निर्मित होगी तो उसके निर्माण में लगाया हुआ धन अपने ही देश में रहेगा। इससे रोजगार के विकल्प बढ़ेंगे और हमारे देश के नागरिकों खासतौर पर युवाओं को रोजगार के अवसर प्राप्त हो सकेंगे। गौरतलब है कि जब हमारा देश प्रौद्योगिकी के क्षेत्र में अन्य देशों से आगे बढ़ेगा तो स्वदेशी निर्मित वस्तुओं की मांग विदेशों में भी बढ़ेगी, जिसके निर्यात से प्राप्त धन का प्रयोग अपने देश के विकास में लगाया जा सकेगा। वंदे एक्सप्रेस ट्रेन का निर्माण एक स्वदेशी कंपनी ने किया है। यह बेहद गर्व की बात है। इस ट्रेन की खास बात है इसकी बनावट, जो देशवासियों के साथ-साथ विदेशियों के लिए भी आकर्षण का केंद्र बन गई है। इसके अतिरिक्त यह सभी सुविधाओं से लैस है तथा इससे सफर करने से यात्रियों के समय की भी बचत होगी। स्वदेशी निर्मित वस्तुएं स्वदेशी ताकत का परिचायक हैं। केंद्र तथा राज्य सरकारों से हर क्षेत्र में स्वदेशी निर्माण के सार्थक प्रयास अपेक्षित हैं।

शंकर शरण का आलेख 'हथियार से नहीं विचार से लड़ने

सौरभ पाठक, ग्रेटर नोएडा

एक अस्थाई विकृति

की जरूरत' पढ़ते हुए मुझे महान दार्शनिक योगीराज अरविंद के पाकिस्तान संबंधी शब्द स्मरण हो आए। उन्होंने कहा था, 'पाकिस्तान एक अस्थाई विकृति है, जिसने एक सनातन सत्य भारत को ढंक लिया है। सच्चा भारत तो अखंड भारत ही है, जो तमाम बाह्य राजनीतिक परिस्थितियों, जो निरंतर बदलती रहती हैं, के बावजूद एक कालातीत सत्य है विभाजन दूर होना ही चाहिए और वह दूर होगा भी-इसमें संशय करने का हमें अधिकार नहीं। वह भारत की नियति है।' जो लोग पाकिस्तानियों को 'इस्लाम खतरे में है' कहकर भारत के विरुद्ध भड़काते रहते हैं, उन्हें वहां के एक मशहूर शायर का जवाब पढ़ने योग्य है, 'खतरे में इस्लाम नहीं, खतर है जरदारों को। गिरती हुईं दीवारों को, सदियों के बीमारो को।' हमें इस विचार को आज प्रोत्साहन देने की जरूरत है लेकिन साथ ही मेरा मानना है कि पाकिस्तान में इस विचार को शक्तिशाली करने के लिए एक बार विभाजनकारी मनोवृत्ति का पूर्ण सैनिक पराभव भी जरूरी है। इसलिए युद्ध का विकल्प भी अपनाना पड़ेगा, तभी विभाजनकारी दीवारें गिराने में सहायता मिलेगी।

अजय मित्तल, मेरठ

इस स्तंभ में किसी भी विषय पर राय व्यक्त करने अथवा दैनिक जागरण के राष्ट्रीय संस्करण पर प्रतिक्रिया व्यक्त करने के लिए पाठकगण सादर आमंत्रित हैं। आप हमें पत्र भेजने के साथ ई-मेल भी कर सकते हैं।

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