Boeing's 737 MAX crisis

After the two accidents involving Boeing's 737 MAX series, aviation safety standards will likely change



TECH-ENABLED

DEVANGSHU DATTA

he grounding of the Boeing 737 MAX series may remind aviation historians of the De Havilland Comet. The Comet was the first commercial jetliner. It was designed by Sir Geoffrey de Havilland, who designed the legendary World War II Mosquito, and the popular Moth range.

Inducted into service in 1952, the

Comet had several crashes. One of the worst was at Dum-Dum airport, Kolkata in 1953. The wings came off at take-off and the plane turned into a fireball, killing all 43 people on board.

After the Comet was grounded, several design flaws were discovered. The wing profile could cause problems with lift in some circumstances. Stresses on the fuselage during flight were more dangerous than had been realised and metal fatigue was studied in detail. Better aero design resulted as aircraft manufacturers absorbed those lessons. A redesigned military variant of the Comet, the Nimrod, remained in service with the Royal Air Force until the

Boeing's 737 Max series has been grounded worldwide, following two crashes, with 346 fatalities. The first crash was a Lion Air flight in Indonesia on October 29, 2018 and the second, was an Ethiopian Air crash in Ethiopia on March 10. Investigators say there are "clear similarities" in the incidents caused by problems with the MCAS, or Manoeuvring Characteristics Augmentation System, which is used in the 737 Max. While the 737 family has been in use since 1967, with over 10,000 variants delivered by Boeing, the Max series underwent major redesign.

This was to comply with modern standards of fuel-efficiency, and make it competitive with the Airbus A320Neo. The 737 is a twin-engine, narrow-body (single aisle) aircraft. The Max series has variants, seating between 140-230 passengers, with ranges of 6,000-7,000 km. The first delivery was in May 2017 and by January 2019, Boeing had 5,011 orders and it had delivered 350.

The new Leap-1B engines claimed to reduce fuel consumption by 14 per cent in the Max, compared to previous 737s. The Max was touted as 4 per cent more fuel-efficient than the Airbus Neo. The new engines are located further forward, and placed higher on the wings. This changes the aerodynamic characteristics, compared to the previous 737-NG series. The new configuration can result in the nose of the aircraft rising, especially at slow speeds. An aircraft depends on lift caused by airflow under the wings to keep it flying.

The wings are always at some angle to flight direction. This is called the "angle of attack" (AoA). Lift depends on the AoA. The maximum lift is attained at the "critical angle of attack". If the AoA is higher than the critical angle, lift decreases, leading to stalls.

As the nose rises, AoA increases, and as mentioned above, the 737 Max has a tendency for the nose to rise. The response to exceeding critical AoA is to pull the nose down, until AoA comes back to the safe zone. The MCAS is a sensor-based software system, which is supposed to do this automatically. It calculates air-speed and angle of attack and moves stabilisers in the tail to push the nose down (by pushing the tail up).

Unfortunately, there seem to be problems with the MCAS. One is that the sensors were apparently misbehaving, during the Lion Air crash, at least. The MCAS repeatedly diagnosed a stall and pulled the nose down, when the AoA was actually alright. The pilots could do nothing about this and may not even have realised there was a problem until it was too late.

The MCAS can be disconnected if the pilots realise there's a problem but two optional safety features were missing on both planes. One is an AoA indicator, which displays the sensors' readings; the other is a light that activates if the sensor readings disagree with each other. The "disagree" light costs \$80,000 - not much, given that the plane costs over \$120 million.

Pilots also say that they have not received enough training on a plane that has changed flight characteristics, and uses a new software system, which may misbehave. Capt. Dennis Tajer of American Airlines, who is the spokesman for the Allied Pilots' Association, says pilots received just 56 minutes training on an iPad when shifting from the 737NG, to the 737 Max.

Boeing now faces class-action lawsuits and it has of course, seen spate of cancelled orders. Aviation industry regulations and safety standards may well change as a result of these two incidents. If that happens, at least the deaths will

(there are quite a few in south India) a la Capital First or applying for a fresh

licence. The RBI has put universal

banking licence on tap but there has not been any serious contender as yet.

However, unless the regulator changes

its approach to what defines a "fit and

proper" candidate for a bank, it will be difficult for all of them. Many had

applied for a licence in 2013 but did

not get and quite a few are owned by

corporations that cannot get a banking

■Those that are primarily in the high-

margin retail space will continue to do

well for their better understanding of

customer behaviour, technology, col-

lection and cost structure compared

with banks. They can continue to cre-

ate new credit markets. But those that

have been competing with banks on

the home loan turf at a wafer-thin mar-

gin and giving LAP and wholesale

loans to developers to compensate for

■Finally, using their wide network

some of the large NBFCs can go big

time for securitisation. They can orig-

that, need course correction.

licence till the norms are changed.

CHINESE WHISPERS

EC vs Thirumangalam formula The Thirumangalam formula – the

art of influencing voters with cash promises perfected by the Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam during the 2009 Thirumangalam byelection in Madurai district - is in full flow in Tamil Nadu as political parties gear up for the coming Lok Sabha election and the bypolls for 18 Assembly seats in the state. To curb the illegal cash flow, the Election Commission (EC) had directed banks to inform the authorities about any suspicious cash movement or large deposits made in particular accounts. On Friday, the commission's flying squad confiscated 6 kg of gold from a vehicle in Chennai and another ₹68 lakh worth of gold from Ariyalur, about 260 km from Chennai. The EC revealed its flying squad and surveillance teams had recovered about ₹14 crore in cash till last weekend.

Will it be Pragya?



Will Pragya Singh Thakur (pictured) get her wish? The self-styled godwoman and Malegaon blast accused has been doing the rounds of the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) offices, demanding that she be fielded against former chief minister Digviiava Singh from Bhopal in the coming Lok Sabha election. After MP Chief Minister Kamal Nath announced that Singh would contest from the city, Pragya expressed her desire to contest, saying, "I want to fight against Digvijaya in this contest of justice and injustice." Bhopal is a seat the Congress has not won in the last three decades.

VIP status

The grand alliance of political parties in Bihar has given VIP entry to a little-known outfit. The Rashtriya Janata Dal (RJD) gave three Lok Sabha seats to the Vikassheel Insan Party (VIP), formed barely a year ago. The "VIP" hasn't fought a single election but has tremendous influence among the Nishad community members. In total, the RJD has conceded 11 seats to the backward and mahadalit parties in the alliance. This alliance is an umbrella social coalition for 40 Lok Sabha seats in the state stitched up to restrict the National Democratic Alliance's efforts to woo floating voters among the intermediate castes.

Three choices before wobbly NBFCs

The fate of NBFCs with large exposures to the developers is intertwined with the real estate sector



BANKER'S TRUST

TAMAL BANDYOPADHYAY

n March 15, bad debt-laden private sector lender Lakshmi Vilas Bank raised ₹459.59 crore equity. The money will raise its capital base, said a stock market notice which also scotched the speculations about three non-banking finance companies (NBFCs) — Indiabulls Housing Finance, Edelweiss Financial Services and Srei Infrastructure — exploring possibilities of a merger with the bank.

One of the three even planned to hold a board meeting to discuss the merger but didn't go ahead. Apparently, the idea has not been dropped; it's shelved for the time being.

India's large NBFCs have realised that the dream run of the last three years cannot last. If they want to grow, they need to reinvent themselves as niche players in high-margin businesses and create new markets where most banks fear to tread. The other choice is converting themselves into banks.

The merger of Capital First with IDFC Bank is the beacon before them. Incidentally, all three that have reportedly looked into the southern bank had applied for a universal banking hen India's hanking regulator

opened the window in 2013 but none of them got it.

Will the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) allow any one of them to be merged with a bank? Or, give its nod if they seek licence to become a bank? For the record, Indiabulls Housing had picked up a 39.8 per cent stake in OakNorth Bank in the UK in November 2015. It could not have been done with RBI's approval!

Meanwhile, the NBFC sector is still busy putting its house in order, selling portfolios and even group companies to generate liquidity and restraining from creation of new assets. Of course, there are a few exceptions, just a few vards away from the business-as-usual days but many, including a few big ones, are licking their wounds after the liquidity crisis, beginning end-

The compounded annual growth rate (CAGR) of NBFCs in the past five years has been 17 per cent versus 9.4 per cent growth of the banking system; the housing finance companies (HFCs) grew even faster, at 20 per cent. Clearly, it was a disaster waiting to happen.

Indeed, different ways are being explored to get back to health but the central theme of the industry is cutting down growth. When one grows too fast, the quality of assets becomes a casualty. One large NBFC has raised interest rates for its existing customers by a hefty margin -3 per cent for home loans. 5 per cent for LAP or loans against property and, hold your breath, 8 per cent for developers! The idea is to drive the borrowers out to knock at others' doors for money.

In some sense, the fate of the NBFCs, particularly those that have large exposures to the developers. is intertwined with India's real estate

sector. A February report of Liases Foras, a real estate research firm, says the developers' sales in the past decade, between 2009 and 2018, have grown 1.28 times in units and 1.56 times in value but the inventory during the decade has grown 3.33 times

in units and 4.72 times in value. The

total debt of the industry has risen

from ₹1.2 trillion to ₹4 trillion. Analysing the business of the top 90 developers, including the listed ones, the study says they have a disposable income of ₹57,000 crore to meet the annual debt repayment obligation of ₹1.29 trillion. The industry is at an inflexion point and the developers are "an elephant in a well" which cannot come out on its own. It will not be a nasty surprise if a few of them drown and pull down some of the NBFCs deep into the well in the process.

The combined market share of NBFCs and HFCs in the Indian financial sector has grown from 13 per cent to 21 per cent since 2008 and the 10-ACP of some of the NRECs has been as much as 35-40 per cent against a sensible 18 per cent of the Housing Development Finance Corp. It's no secret that many of them financed this growth by taking short-term low-cost liabilities and rolling them over. Once the cost of borrowing rose, that window was nearly shut and the growth engine started grunting.

What's the future looks like for them? After selling portfolios and driving many borrowers out, the quality of asset is bound to suffer. This is not a good story as not all NBFCs have impeccable assets. Even if the RBI does not conduct an industry-wide asset quality review or AQR — which it had done for banks in 2015 some of the NBFCs will definitely be under the regulator's scanner. Simply put, they cannot get away without exposing there warts and providing for bad assets.

Under these circumstances, there are three options before the industry: ■The most preferred path is becoming

a bank — either merging with one

inate loans and convert them into debt instruments and sell to banks. Securitisation is the practice of pooling various types of debt — home loans. commercial mortgages, auto loans etc – and selling their related cash flows to investors as securities in the form of bonds. The banks will be too happy to buy such securities if they are convinced about their quality.

In sum, life for most NBFCs will never be the same again. My guess is it will be lights, camera, action after general election.

The columnist, a consulting editor with Business Standard, is an author and senior adviser to Jana Small Finance Bank Ltd Twitter: @TamalRandva

INSIGHT

The overriding power of IBC



SUKRIT R KAPOOR

7ith the proximity of the 2019 elections to the onset of another scorching summer, the divergent opinions on the overall success of the Insolvency and Bankruptcy Code, 2016 (IBC) are expected to heat the debates. Be that as it may, one aspect that remains undebated is the primacy garnered to the IBC on the judicial side. Contextually, a key decision passed last month has strengthened the position of resolution professionals and has in turn brought much relief to creditors under the insolvency and bankruptcy regime.

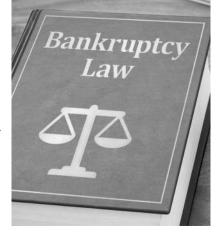
The decision came in the matter of Srei Infrastructure Finance versus Sterling SEZ and Infrastructure, where the Mumbai bench of the NCLT (National Company Law Tribunal) upheld the supremacy of the provisions of the IBC over those of the Prevention of Money Laundering Act, 2002 (PMLA) - a stand that was hotly argued against by the Directorate of Enforcement.

The crux of the debate in the SREI Infrastructure matter pertained to whether a moratorium as announced under Section 14 of the IBC would hit the attachment proceedings under the ambit of PMLA? The wider debate concerned whether the IBC provisions ought to be given primacy over other special

legislations, contextually the PMLA? The decision answered both the questions in affirmative and in doing so the tribunal relied upon the trite

position in law that in the event of conflicting provisions of two special statutes those of the later enacted one shall persist. This rule of interpretation was con-

firmed by the Supreme Court in the 2001 Solidaire India versus Fairgrowth Financial Services case, wherein it effectively noted that had the legislature intended to subject the overriding powers of the later special statute to those of the earlier, it would have specifically provided so. But an unconditioned non-obstante clause in the lat-



er enacted statute indicates otherwise. From the standpoint of conflict of laws, the above debate falls within the broad confines of the doctrines of "lex specialis derogat legi generali" (that a special law will prevail over a general statute) and "lex posterior derogat priori" (that in case of two conflicting laws the later statute will prevail). These two

principles have been extensively propounded in various contexts to determine not only the applicability of conflicting statutes, but also to precisely determine the degree and extent of application of the statutes aiming at defining the relevant legal framework.

Importantly, as per "lex specialis", when a special law stops short or remains silent on certain aspects, the gaps so created can be filled by the provisions of the generally applicable statutes; at times even expressly noted under the special code/statute, for instance, that the provisions as prescribed under the codes of civil or criminal procedure shall be applicable.

"Lex posterior" as applied in the said decision noted that between the Section 71 of the PMLA and Section 238 of the IBC — both granting overriding effect to the provisions of the respective statutes - the latter will prevail, thereby ensuring that the resolution professional will proceed to take control and custody of all the assets of the corporate debtor including those subject to attachment under the PMLA.

This finding was cemented in view of the 2018 ruling of the PMLA Appellate Tribunal in Bank of India versus Deputy Directorate Enforcement, Mumbai, which ruled that the proceedings before the adjudicating authority under the PLMA in respect of attached properties is a civil proceeding, and in view of the moratorium as effected under Section 14 of the IBC the adjudicating authority under the PMLA does not have jurisdiction to attach properties of the corporate debtor undergoing the corporate insolvency resolution process.

The consequence of the aforementioned decision has confirmed the vesting of the NCLT and the NCLAT with the power to raise the attachment of properties under PMLA and to direct

the Enforcement Directorate to hand over the possession of such properties of the corporate debtor to the resolution professional — an advantage that had been extended to the liquidator under the IBC as seen last year in Surender Kumar Joshi versus REI Agro, where the NCLT (Kolkata Bench) had directed the Enforcement Directorate to hand over the possession of the attached properties of the corporate debtor to the liquidator.

The NCLT Mumbai bench in the above decision has given due consideration to the object and purpose of both IBC and PMLA. Although the resolution professional could have approached the adjudicating authority under the PMLA to seek raising of the attachment, the NCLT noted that it was "advisable to take a route where assets can be utilised in a speedy manner rather [than] waiting and lose the value of assets over a period of time."

Upon perusing the stance taken by the NCLT, the principle of maximum efficacy originally propounded as "règle d'efficacité maximale" — often followed in interpreting conflicting provisions in enforcement of international arbitration awards — comes to mind. In 1996. the apex court of Spain had noted in Actival Internacional S.A. versus Conservas El Pilar S.A. that: "According to the [rule of maximum effectiveness] in case of discrepancies between provisions in international conventions regarding the recognition and enforcement of arbitral awards, preference will be given to the provision allowing or making such recognition and enforcement easier, either because of more liberal substantive conditions or because of a simpler procedure."

The decision, which in all probability will go through appellate rounds, gives resolution professionals and creditors. a reason to cheer about.

The author is senior associate, Hammurabi & Solomon Partners. Views are personal

LETTERS

Judicial reforms vital

This refers to "Missing in the

manifestos" by M J Antony (March 20) which brought out a simmering problem where litigant distress does not feature in any party's election promises. Judicial reforms are the need of the hour. Clearance of long-pending cases and making jails less crowded isn't within the radar of any political party as there are no immediate electoral gains. There are more than 33 million cases pending in courts. Official statistics show 140 cases pending in courts for over 60 years. About 66,000 cases are pending for more than 30 years. The states with the maximum pending cases are Uttar Pradesh, Maharashtra. West Bengal, Bihar and Gujarat,

It is strange we do not have any limit on the number of years a case can drag on. If a definite time frame is embedded in the system, we can speed up cases. Gaming the system for petty gains at the cost of the litigant is also a ruse that needs to be nipped in the bud. Massive amounts of money are locked up in litigation. Once pending cases are cleared, a lot of money could be released into the system. One reason for the increase in pending cases is the acute shortage of judges.

In a couple of months, a new government will be sworn in. Let us hope the new government will have judicial reforms on its agenda to provide succour to long-suffering litigants.

K V Premraj Mumbai

Keeping Jet flying

This refers to "Banks to take control of Jet Airways cockpit" (March 21). The move of a consortium of lenders led by the State Bank of India to infuse funds and keep the airline functioning is a highly risky decision and yet, this radical step will support the aviation sector as well as all employees. The present credit exposure of the consortium of lenders to Jet Airways is a potential bad asset, and despite that, any further infusion of bank funds into the company to rescue it from closure depends on the successful execution of the risk mitigation and management measures of the lenders

V S K Pillai Kottayam

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



Relief for start-ups

DVR norms have minimised scope of misuse

romoters of unlisted companies have reasons to cheer after the Securities and Exchange Board of India (Sebi) released a consultation paper on the issuance of shares with differential voting rights (DVRs). The issuance of shares with higher voting rights was banned in 2009. The latest move shows Sebi is seized of the problem that many unlisted start-up promoters face — the constant need for funds to fuel growth without losing control over their firms. The regulator has also proposed listing such companies, provided the shares with superior voting rights are held by promoters for more than one year before filing the draft prospectus. Last year, both the Hong Kong and Singapore stock exchanges allowed the listing of companies with dual-class shares.

To aid the listing process, Sebi has proposed to relax regulations such as the requirement of consistent profits for three years before issuing DVRs, allowing promoters to hold "superior" shares post listing and changes in the takeover code. However, these shares cannot be issued after listing, traded or pledged. Globally, promoters of some of the leading listed companies Alphabet (promoter of Google), Facebook and Alibaba have used this route to retain control over their firms. In its consultation paper, Sebi has followed the structure followed in these companies in terms of the number of votes allowed per share. That is, in the case of superior voting rights, one share can have a maximum of 10 votes, and for the fractional voting rights, 10 shares can have one vote.

Facebook is a good test case. On the one hand, it has taken a lot of flak because Zuckerberg and other promoters have voting rights of almost 70 per cent. At the same time, Zuckerberg's decision to buy Instagram for \$1 billion in 2012 by using his significantly higher voting rights has paid rich dividends as Instagram's value grew to \$100 billion in 2018 — a good example of the founder's vision leading to value enhancement for all shareholders.

Sebi's move comes at a time when there is a raging debate regarding the one-share, one-vote versus "superior" shares globally. Leading fund managers and corporate governance experts have issued warnings that dual-class shares would reduce the oversight of the public, thereby reducing the management's accountability to these shareholders. Also, such structures hinder the ability of the board of directors to exercise their duties. Critics argue that such decoupling of voting rights from economic ownership is detrimental to shareholders, especially in the long run, because it allows companies to avoid the threat of the market mechanism, which has historically kept managements in check. Other arguments against such structures include abuse by family-owned businesses by giving themselves considerably higher compensation packages, little influence of shareholders if things go wrong, and perpetual voting rights that can be transferred.

But Sebi has been prudent by taking a conservative approach in this regard. For example, the proposal is to have a sunset clause of five years after listing, and if the majority of the shareholders agree, it can be extended by another five years. There are several other restrictions: Post-IPO, superior shares will be treated as ordinary shares in the case of appointment/removal of independent directors or auditor; change in control of the company; voluntary winding up of the company; and others. This would result in adequate checks and balances so that chances of abusing the system are minimised.

Squeezing PSUs

Demanding second interim dividend is bad optics

tate-owned oil major Indian Oil Corporation (IOC) has declared it would pay a second interim dividend of over ₹1,400 crore. The government owns just under 54 per cent in IOC, and will thus get over half that amount. The government has reportedly also demanded a second interim dividend from ONGC, which was initially unwilling to pay but has announced a board meeting in the next few days to pay what the government demands. ONGC had quite reasonably complained that it had just handed out an interim dividend, and therefore it was not as if it was swimming in cash; further, it argued it would need approval from the markets regulator — the Securities and Exchange Board of India (Sebi) — to pay a second interim dividend so soon. Both IOC and ONGC had accompanied their interim dividend payouts with share buybacks, which put money in the government's pocket. Coal India Ltd has declared an interim dividend as well, which will give the government ₹2,600 crore.

It is clear the government is pulling out all the stops in order to achieve its fiscal deficit target, which has been revised upwards to 3.4 per cent of gross domestic product in the ongoing financial year. But there is a big hole in the government's collections of taxes, caused by the underperformance of revenue from the goods and services tax, or GST. The revised estimate for revenue from GST is ₹1 trillion less than what was in the original Union Budget for this financial year. That is 16 per cent of the budgeted fiscal deficit and would, if not plugged, take the fiscal deficit up to nearer 4 per cent of GDP. Some of that is being sought to be made up by higher than expected direct tax collections. But the performance on that front is also not that encouraging, going by the latest advance tax numbers.

The government is clearly still short of expected revenue and is resorting to squeezing public sector companies over and over. Indeed, asking for a second interim dividend so soon after the first reflects poorly on the government. Aside from anything else, it looks like it did not even have a plan on how to make up for the revenue shortfall, which is not a good reflection on its fiscal management. Even if it is not to be blamed for its problematic estimate of GST revenue, given that the new indirect tax regime is still settling down and is unpredictable, what appears to be floundering for a few thousands of crores of rupees gives the impression of the absence of a plan. The finance ministry should be more open about its fiscal mathematics.

It is important to remember that listed public sector companies are not the government's piggy bank. Listing them was supposed to impose greater market discipline on the government, which should respect the rights of minority shareholders and ensure independence for the company managements. That does not appear to be happening in this case. The oil majors, in particular, might well want to invest their cash rather than hand it over to the government to spend. That should be their decision. Forcing PSUs to pay more is counter-productive because it will reduce their efficiency and their value in the long run.

ILLUSTRATION: ALAY MOHANTY



Making sense of airline troubles

Interfering with firm entry or exit, price fluctuations, or products and processes: These are the pathways to stagnation

few supply shocks have come together in airlines. What happens in a market when supply is suddenly restricted? The price moves until the gap between supply and demand is cleared. We conjecture that with economy class airline tickets,

there is ample demand flexibility, and relatively modest changes in the price will restore equilibrium. In the meantime, surviving airlines will get a surge in profitability. They will lease additional planes, thus replacing the gap in supply. Price fluctuations, and firm death, are the beating heart of the market economy.



events have coincidentally come together as a supply shock in airlines. Will the price of plane tickets go up dramatically? How will the market process

The key idea of the price system is that prices move until supply and demand are equalised. As an example, suppose there is drought and the supply of wheat goes down. Now there is a gap between supply and demand on the market. The price must move until some buyers are rationed out, and then the supply suffices to meet the demand. The trouble is, most people are quite insensitive to the price of wheat. Modest changes in the price of wheat will not induce a significant change in demand. Therefore, the price of wheat has to move by a lot in order to solve the problem of the supply shock.

Contrast this with airlines. In the last 20 years,

we have got a great surge of middle class buying of economy class tickets. These are price-sensitive buyers! When the price of plane tickets goes up, there are many people who will travel by train or road (these effects will be strongest for short flights, e.g.

Delhi to Jaipur). There are many people who will make do with video calls.

This high demand elasticity means that a relatively modest increase in the price will suffice to choke off demand to the reduced supply. These responses will be stronger as the days go by, as many seats on current flights had been sold earlier and there is reduced room for demand responses

At first, the surviving airlines will enjoy higher profits.

This is a normal and fair market process. The market system requires going through difficult times, at low profit rates, in order to enjoy high profit rates at times like this. The restoration of health in Indian firms requires a great deal of exit by weak firms. The more efficient airlines will survive. They will look to expand capacity when they see the outlook has become better. They will lease new aircraft.

It is useful to focus on the plane. Ultimately, what is required in the economy is that a plane has to fly from Bombay to Nagpur. Earlier, that plane was leased or owned by Jet Airways. An efficient financial system is one where leasing companies shift leased planes from Jet Airways to other airlines, and the bankruptcy process sells off the owned planes As long as the plane flies, it does not matter what logo is painted on its tail.

Some people are unhappy at the temporary surge in prices. In our socialist instinct, we feel that prices should not change. But price flexibility is the essence of the market process. Supply has declined: We need higher prices to deter some buyers (who will shift to trains, buses or video calls) and allocate the seats to other buyers. A sophisticated market is one where prices change continuously, and rapidly

Some people are unhappy at the surge in the profitability of surviving airlines. This is of the essence to get to healthy firms and to get back to high investment in the country. Many industries in India are stalled owing to the lingering survival of inefficient players, who continue to sell at low prices and damage the profitability of the entire industry. The exit of the "zombie firms", the inefficient players, restores profitability and sets the stage for investment.

A good market economy is one with a steady pace of "creative destruction": Some firms should die every year, and some new players should enter every year. As an example, we do this in every mall in India: The cast of shops that occupies the mall changes every few months. This level of dynamism

is required in all parts of the economy. What should the government do? The first thing that the government needs to do is let the price system work. If a firm is in trouble, there should be no rescue.

The role for the state lies in bankruptcy reform: We need to build the Insolvency and Bankruptcy Code (IBC) up to the level of capability where firms rapidly finish the IBC process. The IBC process should be fully neutral about whether a Jet Airways gets liquidated or resolved: This is a question for private players to sort out. All that is required from the government is the establishment of law and institutional capacity so that when firms begin on the IBC journey, they finish within the timelines defined in the law.

The role for the state is to undertake the financial reforms that yield sophisticated financing arrangements. A nice feature is the role of leased and not owned planes. This simplifies the reallocation of planes. All that is required is some painting and refurbishing, and a plane can switch from one airline to another. There is work in store, in tax policy and financial regulation, to make leasing work properly. Such financial arrangements should be taking place on a greater scale, so as to achieve a greater separation between the productive assets vs the firm that coordinates production using the assets.

Firm exit and price fluctuations are seen as trouble. We in India need to internalise the intuition of a genuine market economy. Interfering with firm entry or exit, interfering with price fluctuations. interfering with products and processes: These are the pathways to stagnation.

 $The \, writer \, is \, a \, professor \, at \, National \, Institute \, of \, Public$

Measuring change through the young

reta Thunberg is a 16-year-old Swedish school girl who is rocking the world with her protest against inaction on climate change. In August 2018, as Sweden was gearing up for its national elections, she decided not to go to school but to sit outside to raise the flag on the need to do more, much more, to combat deadly climate change. At first, it is said, she was alone but as she persisted and persisted, her voice got louder and louder. Now she sits in protest every Friday outside her school urging the world to act. And with her, at the last burden, including death. We make this our way to

count, on a Friday of mid-March some 1,650 strikes were on in over 100 countries.

What Greta and her fellow youth are asking is simple and straight: "If climate change happens, as predicted and now more or less certain, then what is our future?" This is a fact. The inheritors are asking: What are you leaving for us? What are you doing?

I don't know how far Greta's organic movement will go will it get exhausted, irrelevant or just disappear as the young-

sters get older and the reality of livelihood takes over. But I hope it will not go away. I hope it will continue to rage and rant and spread across our world. I hope it will capture the imagination of the young, gather their desperation, and all this will make its way into their parents' company boardrooms and ministerial offices. I hope it will not shush down. I hope it will not become like the old — like us.

Because there is one more chance for us to make this work. The fact is if we reconfigure our measurement of progress so that it is built on measuring the wellbeing of our children, then the planet may just survive. We know today that children are not just the inheritors of the future warmer world. We know also that environmental destruction and toxification have the worst impact on their lives. So, make them the centre of the universe of development. Measure growth through their wellbeing.

We know that the lack of access to safe sanitation impinges on children's life, not just wellbeing — it ads to malnutrition stunting and a high disease

> understand if sanitation is improving or not, not just counting toilets. Then we know that the availability of the toilet is not enough, human excreta has to be taken back and made safe for reuse. If not, it will pollute water and spread diseases including vector-borne. So, let's start measuring pollution through data on the growth of

malaria or diarrhoea. Similarly, the lack of clean energy in homes is another wicked problem: women cooking on biomass fuel suffer

from killer respiratory disorders. Lower respiratory tract infections remain the top diseases of children and adolescents in the world. Even as the world needs to re-invent its energy system to mitigate greenhouse gas emissions, which cause climate change, it also needs to do much more to provide energy to the poorest in the world. Then there is the challenge of toxification because of air in cities, which is showing up in the increased disease burden, particularly of children. So, let's measure progress to clean energy or clean air through the health of our children.

But this is not all. The young are the ones who have the highest obesity levels — they are the ones who are targeted through advertisements for junk food. It is also a fact that industrialised and chemicalised food is at the root of the current broken agricultural system. It is providing hunger to many and too much food to the rest. Let's measure the change we need in agriculture, through the food that children eat and their wellbeing — not being under nourished or over-nourished.

There is also no doubt that education — ideally good and meaningful - changes lives. There is also enough evidence that educating the girl child is the beginning of the change in the fertility and population trajectory of a country. Their empowerment is real power as an educated young woman is the first to take charge of her mind and her body. It's also clear that education will build more informed consumers — the inheritors cannot take on the same lifestyle and expect to save the planet.

It is also clear that livelihoods are critical — the insecurity of the young comes from their lack of jobs in this increasingly automated world. What will they do? What are the skills that will build the new world, which will not add to the crisis of climate change? Have we built jobs that are in the green economy? This is the question that will work, not just to build futures, but also correct the present.

In this way we will measure the heath of the planet through the health and wellbeing of our young. We will build hope that we are working towards a new future — the one Greta Thunberg and her millions are calling us to do. Today, not tomorrow.

The writer is at the Centre for Science and Environment Twitter: @sunitanar

The prosecutor doesn't rest



JENNIFER SENIOR

m I the only woman in America who considers Preet Bharara her podcast husband?

I am guessing not. His show, "Stay Tuned With Preet," is a salve, an indulgence, a lifeline: It coasts along not just on the vitality of Mr Bharara's intelligence (uncommonly useful, given that he once was the United States attorney for the Southern District of New York, and so many urgent questions these days are legal ones), and not just on his ability to do a good interview (one wonders if years of quizzing witnesses and summarising cases made him understand the rhythms of a good story), but on his warmth, humour, reasonableness

Donald J Trump may be laying dynamite beneath the floorboards of our most beloved institutions, democracies here and elsewhere may have blown a flat, but Preet's still there, calmly issuing dispatches from Planet Rational, reminding us each week that humane people with fine minds and old-fashioned concerns (integrity! character! truth, justice, the commonweal!) are still very much a part

Plus, his children think he's a dork. United States attorneys: They're just

Given how busy his tenure was — his office prosecuted everyone from the Times Square Bomber to the two top legislators in Albany — and given how rare a varietal he is of charm and conscientiousness and intellect, Mr Bharara seems the ideal candidate to write a fine memoir. But Doing Justice: A Prosecutor's Thoughts on Crime, Punishment, and the Rule of Law isn't a memoir, exactly; had it been an uncomplicated reminiscence, I would have enjoyed it much more.

What is it instead? In his preface, Mr Bharara explains that for years, he's wanted to write a guide for young prosecutors, one that draws "not from legal texts and treatises but from the real-life human dilemmas that would perplex them every day." But as Mr Bharara was developing his themes, he adds, he realised that this book "might in fact be a guide to justice generally, not only for practitioners, but for real people who strive and struggle in their homes and offices to be fair and just.

Which is all fine in theory — but only sometimes works in practice. Mr Bharara seems to be addressing would-be prosecutors on some pages and a wider audience on others and he doesn't seem to settle into a common register until the second half of the book.

DOWN TO EARTH

SUNITA NARAIN

More vexing still: In pouring his memoir into the mould of an advice book, Mr Bharara winds up speaking in aphorisms and bromides. Of all the counsellors in literature to channel, why on earth would he choose Polonius?

I half wonder whether *Doing Justice* works better as an audiobook, which Mr Bharara personally reads aloud. I suspect he's had to read much of what he's written aloud, for speeches, closing arguments or his podcast. What can seem profound in your earbuds can seem facile on the page.

Is all of this book filled with Polonius gunk? No. Most chapters delight or provoke in some way, if you mentally redact the fortune-cookie sentences. Mr Bharara divides *Doing Justice* into four parts — Inquiry, Accusation, Judgment and Punishment — thereby following the rhythms of a criminal case, and almost every chapter returns, either directly or via roundabout, to Mr Bharara's basic contention, pithily summarised on Page 58: "In the end, the law doesn't do justice. People do."

Mr Bharara, who enjoyed a high profile and (mostly) favourable press attention during his tenure from 2009 to 2017, does not show a lot of leg in this book, nor does he settle many scores. Yes, he tweaks The Wall Street Journal for highlighting the fact that he went after Raj Rajaratnam, a fellow immigrant from the same region of the world. "My goodness, there's a South Asian defendant, and there's a South Asian prosecutor!" he writes. "You know where this happens every day? India." But he says virtually nothing about SAC Capital's Steven A. Cohen, whose wolfish appetite for insider information Mr Bharara's office could never quite prove, and his words about Mr Trump, the man who fired him, are few.

And why is this, exactly? Considering Mr Bharara's emphasis on old-fashioned values — duty, discretion, decency — and their application to the law, it seems strange that he wouldn't offer some words about what happened to the United States on November 8, 2016, when the worstfaith actor imaginable was suddenly elected president.

What Mr Bharara does offer, however,

is an inspired and slightly perverse idea about how to salvage public discourse in 2019: We should take our cues from American criminal trials, in which both parties are obliged to consider flaws in their own arguments and understand the mind-set of the other side. Assertions must be evidence-based; research must be rigorous; decorum is paramount. "You can't call your adversary a 'low-IQ person," he notes. "You can't argue the prosecution is political; and you can't make sweeping biased statements.

The first thing we do, let's revive all the lawyers. Mr Bharara, as usual, makes a very strong case.

©2019 The New York TimesNews Service

DOING JUSTICE A Prosecutor's Thoughts on Crime, Punishment, and the Rule of Law Preet Bharara Bloomsbury; ₹499; 368 pages

MONDAY, MARCH 25, 2019

LOCALISED POLITICS

K Kavitha, TRS Lok Sabha member

Today people are becoming more and more local. Local parties having a global vision are what people are looking for. And that can be provided by only regional parties, not national parties

RationalExpectations



Lots of scope to cut oil and gas imports

The government ups estimate of oil & gas 'resources' by 50%, and BP India head estimates output can double with the right policy

ESPITE PRIME MINISTER Narendra Modi's plan to cut import dependence in the oil and gas sector by 10 percentage points by 2022, a series of major policy missteps (goo.gl/6wGgkT) ensured that import-dependence rose, from 83% in FY13 to 86% in FY18 in the case of oil and from 30% to 45% in the case of gas. Indeed, going by the latest BP Energy Outlook, for 2019, this is going to continue to rise further, to around 95% for oil by 2040 and around 60% in the case of gas. Fortunately, as we will see, that number is not carved in stone and can be reduced if India follows good policies, some part of which we saw when the Cabinet cleared a new gas policy last month.

Interestingly, the BP Energy Outlook shows that while China was the biggest contributor to the increase in global use of primary energy in the last 22 years, it will be India in the next 22 years; China, of course, will continue to be the world's largest user of energy, and its share in the global pie is projected to fall from 23% in 2017 to just 22% in 2040. In the last 22 years, between 1995 and 2017, global energy usage rose by 4,946 million tonnes of oil equivalent (mtoe), and 45% of this came from China whose consumption rose from 891 mtoe to 3,132. With India's consumption rising from 252 mtoe to 754 mtoe, it contributed just around a tenth of the total increase.

Over the next 22 years, from 2017 to 2040, while China's consumption will rise by just 885 mtoe, India's will rise 1,174 mtoe; this means that, while China's contribution to the increase in global energy usage will fall to 20%, India's will rise to 26%.

Augmenting the flow

...of the 41.9 mmtoe, only 28%

...of the 12.1 mmtoe, only 15%

million tonnes or

4.5 bn barrels

has been firmly established

New survey raised 'resources' by 50%...

28.1

1995-96

Of India's 26

sedimentary

basins, production

takes place in

only 7

billion cubic

1.339.5 metres or

41.9

2017

(of India's oil and gas reserves)

(figures of 'prognosti

million metric tonnes of oil equivalent, mmtoe)

has been explored...

12.1

Undiscovered fields

Discovered fields

cated resources' in

Not all the increase, fortunately for the world which is heating so fast, will come from traditional fuels, and the share of renewable will rise from 4% in 2017 to 15% in 2040, and from 11% to 22% if you include hydroelectricity. In terms of the change in energy usage, while renewables accounted for 17% of the increased demand between 1995 and 2017, they will account for 57% of the change in the next 20 years. In a 'rapid transition's cenario, the share of renewables and hydro rises to 38% by 2040, though the investments required for this are probably so gargantuan that achieving it will take a very big effort.

Despite India's fairly aggressive commitments at Paris, coal will still continue to satisfy the bulk of its energy needs, down from around 54% right now to around 47% by 2040; oil will come down from around 29% to around 23%, and renewables (plus hydro) will rise to around 23-24%. If, despite this fall in the usage of oil, India's import-intensity is projected to rise significantly-to around 95% for oil by 2040 and around 60% in the case of gas—it is because India's production of both oil and gas continues to be poor; since 2000, oil production rose just around 19% while gas rose by an even lower 12%.

The good news, however, is that this is not carved in stone and, with the right policies to stimulate exploration—and hence production—India could lower imports significantly, especially in the case of natural gas, an area where Modi's policies were especially negligent till recently since, unlike oil, producers were not allowed to charge market prices even though the agreements the government had signed with them promised this.

Some broad numbers will put the possibilities in perspective. Till a few years ago, the government's estimate was that India had around 28 million tonnes of oil equivalent (mtoe) of fresources'; this is based on a very broad analysis using 2D and 3D seismic surveys, not actual drilling and exploration. In 2017, with more seismic data, the government raised this by 50%, to 41.9 mtoe of 'resources'. Just around 28% of this—or 12.1 mtoe—was in areas where some level of exploration has taken place. So, with more exploration, there will be more discoveries and this 12.1 mtoe figure could increase further.

With more drilling and exploration, around 15% of this—that is, around 1.9 mtoe—of oil and gas has been firmly established, that is, oilcos will be able to take this out. Once again, with more drilling and exploration, this 1.9 mtoe figure can be increased. To put this in perspective, for decades after ONGC found Bombay High, no one thought India had another big field, then Cairn Energy found Mangala in Rajasthan; and when everyone thought that was it, Reliance discovered large resources of gas in the Krishna Godavari basin and started producing from there.

This 1.9 mtoe, in turn, comprises 594 metric tonnes of oil (or 4.6 billion barrels) and 1.3 trillion cubic meters (tcm) of gas (or 48.9 trillion cubic feet, tcf). In 1980, the reserves were 2.8 billion barrels of oil and 0.3 tcm of gas. This rose to 5.8 billion barrels of oil by 2010 and 1.1 tcm of gas. In other words, as there is more exploration, both oil and gas reserves rise, and this is despite the amount that is taken out every year; if there has been a dip in recoverable reserves of oil since then, this is because there has been no major discovery since Mangala.

At a recent Petrotech session, however, BP's India head Sashi Mukundan said BP's analysis of data suggested India could produce 100 tcf of gas (that's nearly double the present estimate, see graphic). More important, he said that if Indian oilcos used better recovery techniques—IOR (Improved Oil Recovery) and EOR (Enhanced Oil Recovery)—to increase the amount of oil that came out from the fields they produced from, this alone would give another 4 billion barrels of oil (that is roughly what the current estimate of oil is). At this level, India's 2040 importintensity for gas will fall to around 50% and for oil by 3-4 percentage points. Since that represents a significant amount of forex, hopefully the next few governments will ensure the flipflops of the last five years are not repeated, and that India's policy—and government levies—become as good as those in other countries with comparable geology.

Digitally Analogous

Google's attempt at recreating an online gaming console can change the whole gaming industry

HILE GAMING HAD moved beyond bad graphics and unrealistic versions, unfortunately, gaming boxes are still reminiscent of the clunky equipment of the early 2000s. The evolution of Sony's PlayStation, Nintendo's Wii and Microsoft's Xbox has been limited to adding more graphics, and functionality, packed into chunky housing. Google is set to change all this. On Thursday, the company announced that it would soon be rolling out its online gaming system called Stadia, which would turn potentially any device—laptop, mobile, desktop—into a gaming system, without the need of having higher computing or graphics processing power. Instead of a console, Google would carry out all the processing online, with the devices requiring only a fast internet connection. What Google is doing may be nothing new—mobile games like PUBG and Fortnite, have already changed the gaming landscape, with a combined user base of over 300 million—it will undoubtedly make gaming more accessible to the general population. As everybody cannot purchase a \$300 (₹25,000) machine, it would allow more people to access high quality gaming.

With gaming already becoming an Asian Games sport, it is not surprising that attention is turning towards online gaming. More so, when internet speeds and cheap availability is making smartphones a necessity rather than a luxury. As Google forays into gaming, it shall also establish its domain in another area of technology, while also challenging Microsoft's and Sony's monopoly over the field.

THE BIG PUZZLE

WHAT EXPLAINS GDP ACCELERATION SINCE FY14 WHEN MONEY SUPPLY IS BEING TIGHTENED AND REAL INTEREST RATES ARE RISING SO FAST AND WHEN THERE IS FISCAL CONSOLIDATION?

Five years of macro-confusion

N MAY 2014, the NDA government inherited a difficult economy with slowing growth, high inflation and rising NPAs in the banking system. It had barely managed to wriggle out of a difficult balance-of-payments situation triggered by the "taper tantrum" in May 2013. Prime minister Modi had a historical mandate and an economic backdrop to seize the opportunity for recreating another "1991 moment" or bring in "Thatcherian reforms" to lift the economy on a higher growth path. Instead, the new government chose to focus upon faster decisionmaking by wiring in bureaucrats in the line ministries to the prime minister's office (PMO) as an antidote to the 'policy paralysis' reflected in multiple ministerial committees of the previous UPA gov-

But the emphasis upon speed and transparency met with little success in reviving private investment. That could go down in history as the regime's biggest failure. Two of its important reforms, i.e, insolvency and bankruptcy code (IBC) and goods and services tax (GST) were rolled out only in the second half of its tenure; the benefits will accrue only in the years ahead. Yet, the claims to economic success in terms of GDP growth and job creation are extraordinary and possibly unparalleled in India's economic history. These have been equally contested by critics such counter-claims have recently degenerated into accusations the government has either manipulated data or suppressed it to buttress its own claims.

This, therefore, is an attempt to recapitulate the claims and counter-claims about the important macroeconomic parameters and flag concerns that could cloud future policy space. At the heart of the controversy are the CSO's new national accounts estimates that show the economy grew a healthy average 7.6% during the 5 years of the NDA government—the fastest growing major economy in the world. But the robustness of these estimates was questioned from different aspects of inconsistency, such as: -

■ What explains the acceleration in GDP growth since 2013-14 (last year of UPA-2 government) in a macroeconomic setting of increased monetary tightening, rising real interest rates and fiscal consolidation across governments? And if we were to add a mere 1.4% average



annual export growth for these five years, the macro puzzle deepens further.

■ If one did a health check of these three critical indicators to assess the stage of the business cycle the economy was operating at—the credit cycle, size and direction of non-performing assets in banks and capacity utilisation of indus-

try-an unambiguous conclusion should be that of a decelerating economy.

■ Finally, in the Phillip's curve analogy, falling inflation, subdued wage rate growth and rising unemployment should have confirmed the economy was in deep trouble and operating way below its potential.

The question is how has the CSO managed to produce such astounding GDP estimates against this overwhelming macroeconomic evidence? The immediate needle of suspicion was pointed at the new MCA-21 database used for the rebased national accounts series (2011-12) published since January 31, 2015.

This large database with information about nearly 5.58 lakh active and registered private corporations is disturbingly becoming a black-box with each passing year as it shows higher value addition with each revision round—first, second and third—as more returns are filed for the respective years. If the process of uploading returns by companies is random, it is a mystery why growth estimates should exhibit a directional bias? In other words, why should a GVA estimate based upon a sample size of one lakh firms be so significantly different than a sample size of, say, two lakhs from the same population of 9.87 lakh firms! If it is, there is a problem.

From a macroeconomic standpoint, such estimates have raised a more pertinent question: Why is the periphery (i.e, the majority of 5.25 lakh unlisted, smaller companies) consistently outper-

forming the core (the 2,000-odd listed firms tracked by RBI which was the primary database until the new series) in terms of growth rates since 2013-14? It defies logic that in the last six years, smaller firms have become so much more efficient relative to larger ones and possibly grown in size at a time when cheap Chinese imports are

flooding Indian markets! As the MCA-21 data-The credit cycle, the base is not readily avail-NPAs and capacity

able to researchers, no one utilisation point to a has been able to offer any decelerating conclusive commentary. The professor Goldar-led economy subcommittee report that recommended using the MCA-21 data had found only marginal errors in its validation

exercise of 500 companies out of a total of 31,636 filing returns in the extensible business reporting language (XBRL). The report was careful to record, "however, for unlisted companies, no alternative information is available in the public domain. Hence, any kind of validation exercise is not feasible there" (page 14).

The report strongly recommended that the ministry of corporate affairs should evolve a validation system to ensure the accuracy of online data reporting through MCA-21, but we simply do not know if MCA has a robust data validation mechanism, especially for the large number of unlisted smaller companies, and what their share in total value addition is. Further, if such estimates are being used to blow up data for the remaining 4.29 lakh odd companies that don't file their returns, it is not certain that such a large sample of unvalidated data is necessarily a robust source for a prudent statistical exercise and inferences about GDP!

What about ASI data that also showed a sharp acceleration in manufacturing GVA growth? Critics have underlined the

fact that CSO uses a single deflator for estimating GVA in manufacturing activities which created an upward bias in a context of significant divergence in input-output prices from 2014-15. Similarly, it is possibly using inappropriate sectoral deflators for several service activities, which created an unintended upward bias in the real GVA estimates for years in which divergence between CPI and WPI inflation rates widened. The CSO has never acknowledged this, nor explained why it is not using double-deflation in estimating manufacturing GVA.

What is undeniable though is that both WPI/CPI are inappropriate price deflators. It is a sad commentary that both the industry ministry and CSO have been unable to compile sectoral producer price indices (PPIs) for manufacturing and services; in theory, PPIs are the most appropriate price deflators used internationally. The Report of the Working Group on Producer Price Index, August 2017, led by professor Goldar, stated that PPI is regarded as being conceptually more consistent with the System of National Accounts (SNA) as a deflator; it recommended the government compile PPIs with base year of 2011-12. This would certainly remove such anomalies in real GVA estimates. It is hoped the government is making utmost, urgent efforts to compute these PPIs!

In the last couple of years, doubts have also been raised about the estimation of employment and unemployment statistics. The only but significant difference is that the 'doubter' in this case is the government itself! It claims that if growth is accelerating then jobs must have been created, offering in support an additive version of 'job counting' that appears the least scientific. The critics counter by saying that if employment has declined then growth is being overestimated!

Between these claims and counter-

claims, very few have cared about potential policy errors. If growth is not as robust as new GDP estimates show, then we are missing out on appropriate monetaryfiscal policy responses. In the same breath, if unemployment is not as stark as the (not yet published) NSSO survey hints, then the government could end up being burdened with unsustainable social expenditures. Hope the new government will invest in an objective assessment of the ground reality!

Google and FB powerful editors in India?

In a polarised political environment characterised by general scepticism of many established institutions, news found via search can acquire an attractive veneer of technological objectivity, and news accessed via social media an appealing aura of authenticity

RASMUS KLEIS NIELSEN

Director of the Reuters Institute for the study of journalism and professor of political communication at the University of Oxford. Follow him on Twitter @rasmus_kleis

GIVENTHATAN estimated quarter billion Indians have gone online since the last general election, they just might be. Whereas the news that people get via television, radio, and print is selected by human editors, on the internet, people increasingly rely on search engines and social media that rely on algorithmic curation.

In a new survey of English-language Indian internet users, we find that a third name search engines as their main source of online news, and a quarter social media—in each case, overwhelmingly Google and Facebook respectively. Only 18% named going direct to the websites or apps of news publishers as their main source of online news.

Strikingly, our respondents not only rely on search and social for news. They also say they trust the news that they get there at least as much as news more broadly. For example, 45% say they trust news in search, and 34% for news in social media, compared to just over a third who say they trust news overall.

This is strikingly different from what we have seen in other countries, where people often trust news media more than they trust news found via search engines or social media. In a polarised political environment characterised by general scepticism of many established institutions, news found via search can acquire an attractive veneer of technological objectivity, and news accessed via social media an appealing aura of authenticity.

Worryingly, many Indians do not seem to understand how the platforms they increasingly rely on for news actually operate. When asked how most of the individual decisions about what news stories to show on Facebook are made, only 26% of our respondents correctly identify algorithms, the automated systems that rank what people see on social media and make decisions about what to display. Many believe human editors and journalists determine what news they see in their news feed.

In a sense, of course, they are right. Even If a company aims to though both Google and Facebook rely on algorithmic curation to serve news every day to milwill have to deal with lions of Indians, the stothe fact that people ries themselves are often sometimes actively written by professional journalists and thus ultimately under the editormisleading content ial responsibility of top people at major news organisations with sig-

nificant reach online. Prime minister Modi and a few other major politicians have built significant social media followings that help them circumvent news media and set the agenda, but news media are still crucial for how most people navigate politics.

In this sense, Jaideep Bose, Ravish Kumar, and their colleagues and competitors at other major news media are still the most powerful editors in India, and Google and Facebook have not so much supplanted them as supplemented them.

As people increasingly rely on search engines and social media for

news, the information that reaches them has passed through two sets of gatekeepers: firstly, editors, who decide what to publish, then the algorithms that increasingly shape what we see online.

This is an important change from the single set of gatekeepers that characterise offline media, and means that Google and Facebook play an increasingly important and often challenging

help people as

Facebook does, it

share false and

role in the Indian media environment.

If a company sets out, as Google does, "to organise the world's information and make it universally accessible and useful", it will confront the fact that the line between information and misinformation can be hard to draw, and that people sometimes actively seek out disinformation. If a company aims

to help people "stay connected with friends and family, to discover what's going on in the world, and to share and express what matters to them", as Facebook does, it will have to deal with the fact that not all expression is equally benign, and that people sometimes actively share false and misleading content.

Owning, operating, and profiting from the algorithms that more and more Indians rely on to find news gives Google and Facebook great power and great responsibilities—like the human editors who came before them. The 2019 elections will be a decisive test of whether they are ready for it.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Election scenes in TN How Tamil Nadu votes in the

general election can be crucial for the formation of the next government. If the DMK-Congress alliance wins a fair chunk of the 39 seats up for grabs in the state, it will boost the numbers of today's Opposition to stake their claim for forming the government. If the AIADMK-BJP succeeds in exceeding the single digit, it will partly make up for the losses BJP is bound to suffer in the states where it reached the saturation point in 2014. Perhaps it would be truer to say that the outcome of the Lok Sabha polls nationally, as against the outcome of 18 or 19 byelections to the state Assembly, will decide the fate of the EPS government. The soon-to-be-held election, post-Jayalalithaa and post-Karunanidhi, will be a reliable barometer of the dynamics of political change and the legitimacy of the incumbent state government — G David Milton, Maruthancode

BJP's list of candidates

The BJP ushered in the festival of

colours by dropping a bombshell and showing old warhorse LK Advani the door from Gandhinagar. However, all other party heavyweights of the saffron party, including prime minister Narendra Modi, home minister Rajnath Singh and highways minister Nitin Gadkari will fight from the same seats they did in 2014. Smriti Irani has once again been pitted against Congress president Rahul Gandhi from Amethi and it remains to be seen whether she will be able to turn the tables on her arch rival — Ravi Chander, Bengaluru

Write to us at feletters@expressindia.com

FINANCIAL EXPRESS





Commodities in investment portfolios: The index way

Investing in index-based products eliminates issues around delivery, lot size, etc, associated with physical commodities, while providing the benefits of price movements of the underlying commodities

HE HISTORY OF indices dates back to the early 18th century, when the Anglican bishop William Fleetwood wanted to examine if the £5 net worth cap for a candidate to remain in a college should be kept at that level (fixed during the 15th century) or does it need to be updated, using a set of commodities of daily consumption. Notably, more than his findings, which had indicated that the same should be increased to £30, commodity prices in an index format were considered to decide on a financial policy. The index, as a statistical tool to monitor the impact of economic events, was not only devised at first using commodities that tended to dominate consumption and trading, but was also applied to assist in decision-making. A century later, the popular journal 'The Economist' had devised and started publishing com-

modity-price index in 1864.
As the economy got financialised and

investment in stocks took off later in the 19th century, the index as a tool to measure the overall health of the stock markets took off, with Charles H Dow and his companion Edward Jones unveiling the first stock index in 1884—the Dow Jones Average, through which the selected 12 top stocks traded. Later, when it got published on a daily basis during 1896, it became an index of 32 stocks and is now a 30-stock index—a simple yet a widely watched indicator of the health of the US stock markets till date. This was followed by the calculation of the S&P 500 and within themselves these two indices also caught fire as portfolio management tools for managing investor funds in a more transparent manner as they are calculated and published on a real-time basis and hence their performance is easily measurable. Within themselves, these two indices today are used to manage a portfolio of \$13.7 trillion in assets and are used as a benchmark for investment

assets of \$8.8 trillion—the S&P Global

2018 Investor Fact Book. Although commodity-based indices have been used for the last three centuries or so in tracking the economic health and to assist in policy decisionmaking, investing in commodity indexes has been a recent phenomenon, dating back to 1991, following the introduction of the Goldman Sachs Commodity Index (now S&P GSCI) and the Dow Jones AIG Commodity Index (now the Bloomberg Commodity Index, or BCOM) in 1998. While these indices, in themselves, track the prices of the respective underlying commodity futures contracts, they also have futures contracts traded to be settled on these indices with an annual turnover of \$30 billion (2018). Comprising of liquidly-traded commodities from global benchmark exchanges, these commodity indices also con-

tinue to dominate as benchmarks in index-based investments in the commodities world, with about \$90 billion assets under management (AUM) tracking the portfolio of the index basket. Investing in commodities picked up momentum in the 2000s, particularly through indexbased products providing exposure to financial contracts in commodities from various exchanges through one index in a transparent manner without the risks associated with physicals. Barclays (2019) indicated

that the global AUM in commodities stood at \$282 billion by the end of 2018, and a substantial part being managed

through commodity indices.

The introduction of trading in indexbased derivatives had also played a significant role in the development of international commodity derivative markets, bringing more liquidity and efficiency through providing widespread access to commodities for diversified investors as demonstrated by the international as well as Indian stock markets. The introduction of index-based derivative products in equities in 2001 on domestic exchanges has led to remarkable growth in both the cash and derivative segments, thereby contributing to the overall development of the market during the past two decades. The total turnover of equity markets stands at more than 10 times the country's GDP (in 2017-18), with a phenomenal growth of index-based derivative segment from about Rs 103 crore in 2001-02 to Rs 5.68 lakh crore in terms of average daily turnover.

Drawing lessons from global experiences, investing in commodity indexbased products would provide potential portfolio diversification opportunities for domestic investors due to a very low or negative association with traditional assets, as is evident from the negative correlation of iCOMDEX with NIFTY 50 (-0.78) and Treasury securities (-0.81 with 91DTB) market during January 2012 to February 2019. Commodity derivatives will continue to be a part of the portfolio of players who know and understand the fundamentals of commodities that they take exposure to. Further, index based ETFs would help other institutional participants to a basket of commodities setting off the physical commodity risks. With trading in commodity indices being allowed post SEBI approval, and institutions and current participants effectively arbitraging the underlying and the index, commodity index derivatives will become an efficient tool in portfolio management for all institutional participants.

Investing through indices consisting of a basket of commodities representing a common theme also provides an opportunity for investors to track those themes. A clear case in point is the TR-MCX iCOMDEX Base Metals Index, which largely represents the global economic growth and is also known to move along the lines of the Chinese economic indicators. For example, China growth expectations and the base metals index show a correlation of 76%, indicating the strength of relationship. Further, investing in index-based products eliminates issues around delivery, lot size, etc, associated with physical commodities, while providing the benefits of price movements of the underlying commodities. In addition, segment-wise commodity indices including precious metals, base metals, energy and agricultural commodities, etc, are similar to sectoral indices in equity markets, where investors can choose to invest in portfolios tracking specific segment of commodities such as bullion index, energy index, etc, apart from the iCOMDEX composite index. These segment-wise commodity indexes, being least corre-

lated with other assets and with each other, are proven to deliver diversification benefits for portfolio investors, in addition to their inherent advantage as inflation-hedge.

Commodity index-based investment vehicles include exchange-traded derivatives such as index futures, swaps and options or various index-linked funds including exchange-traded funds or notes (ETFs or ETNs), index funds and mutual funds. ETFs, ETNs and index funds remain passive investments, while mutual funds use active

investment strategies. Among indexbased investment products, ETFs are the most popular instruments among global investors, particularly institutional investors and fund managers.

Commodity-based mutual funds also typically use commodity index-based derivative instruments to build the exposure to commodities along with other traditional assets and provide investment opportunity for a varied set of investors reaching out to even small investors that are constrained to do commodity-based investments—not only due to their limited financial resources, but also due to lack of required knowledge and technical know-how. PIMCO CommoditiesPLUS Strategy Fund is one of the major commodity index-based mutual funds with investment strategy tracking the Credit Suisse Commodity Benchmark having assets of \$3.1 billion

as on March 13, 2019.

CRUMBLING

Bridge collapses are common in Mumbai

Bureaucrats, safety inspectors and contractors all blame one another

have received a modest overhaul in recent years.
Coaches have been redesigned to offer betterventilation; hard, angular seats have been replaced with more comfortable ones; and a plan to aircondition the heaving carriages is under way. But as soon as the 8-million-odd passengers who ride the trains every day arrive at their destination, they face infrastructure that is as neglected as ever, in the form of the pedestrian bridges by which they cross tracks or busy roads near the stations.

On March 14, a big part of one such overpass collapsed outside Shivaji Terminus, one of the city's busiest stations, killing six people and injuring 31. The toll could have been worse: the plunging debris did not harm any passengers in vehicles below as a red light happened to be holding traffic back at the fateful moment.

"It was terrible," says a taxi driver who witnessed the tragedy. Yet there have been many accidents like it. In 2017, 22 commuters were crushed to death in a stampede on another railway footbridge. It was barely six feet wide, yet carried over 100,000 people every rush hour. More than 30 lives have been lost in other accidents involving overpasses over the past two years.

Last year, an audit found that 18 of the 296 bridges in the city were dangerous. That is probably an underestimate. The bridge that failed on March 14 had been judged safe by inspectors, who thought it

needed only "minor repairs." The BJP, which is part of the coalition that runs the municipal government, disingenuously called the tragedy "a natural calamity." The city's administrators gave an inkling of their attitude when they first claimed that the railway was responsible for maintaining the bridge, before conceding that they were in charge. They then pointed the finger at the inspector, from an external audit firm. He, in turn, claimed that wet paint and newly-laid tiles had prevented him from inspecting the bridge properly. He has been arrested. The con-

Last year, an audit found 18 of the 296 bridges in the city were dangerous. That is probably an underestimate. The bridge that failed on March 14 had been judged safe by inspectors, who thought it needed only 'minor repairs'

struction firm behind the refurbishment in question has also been accused of "substandard repairwork." The city government had blacklisted it in 2017, accusing it of inflating bills and using adulterated material to build roads. Yet it was inexplicably still left in charge of maintaining the overpass.

"There is no inter-agency coordination and the entire system is designed for kickbacks," gripes Sayli Udas-Mankikar of Observer Research Foundation, a local think tank. Vital information about the materials used to build older bridges is often missing. Contracts are awarded to the lowest bidder, regardless of the quality of their work. "The process is flawed. If you pay peanuts, you will get monkeys. And our lives are at stake," says Rajiv Mishra, an urban planner, who used to cross the defunct bridge four times a day.

The city is conducting fresh inspections of some 150 bridges. On March 22, a local court started hearing a petition demanding that the city government do more to strengthen the rickety ones. Opposition leaders have called for more radical action. They want the city and state governments to ditch a multi-billion-dollar bullet train project until they can get the basics right.

THE ECONOMIST



HOFSTEDE'S CULTURAL DIMENSIONS

Commodity index-

based investment

vehicles include

exchange-traded

derivatives such as

index futures,

swaps and options

or various index-

linked funds

including ETFs or

ETNs, index funds

and mutual funds

in the minds of people differently for its culture, for its standard of living and for some unique quality of people. Some countries are known for good things, some for bad, and others are perceived with a mixed reaction. Culture is a strong element of people's lives. It controls their views, their values, their humour, their hopes, their loyalties, and their worries and doubts. So when you are working with people and building relationships with them, it helps to have some perspective and understanding of their cultures.

In large organisations, cultural differences can act as a barrier to communication, and they can affect team building. Employees need to build understanding of other cultures to work effectively with people from different cultures. Psychologist Geert Hofstede—a Dutch social psychologist and an employee of IBM—published his cultural dimensions model at the end of the 1970s, based on a decade of research that he conducted at IBM from 1965 to 1971. Since then, it's become an internationally-recognised standard for understanding cultural differences.

understanding cultural differences.

Hofstede studied people who worked for IBM in more than 50 countries. Initially, he identified four dimensions that could distinguish one culture from another. Later, he added fifth and sixth dimensions, in collaboration with Michael H Bond and Michael Minkov. Hofstede, Bond and Minkov scored each country on a scale of 0-100 for each dimension. The

Understanding cultures and people

These dimensions have become a global standard for understanding cultural differences



six dimensions are as follows: **Power Distance Index (PDI):** Hofstede's

PDI measures the extent to which inequal-

PDI measures the extent to which inequality and power are tolerated. High PDI indicates a culture accepts inequity and power differences, and encourages bureaucracy. It also shows high respect for rank and authority. Low PDI indicates that a culture encourages organisational structures that are flat and appreciates decentralised decision-making responsibility, encourages participative style of management, and places emphasis on power distribution. For example, Germany scored 35 on the cultural scale of Hofstede's analysis, compared to Arab countries where the power distance is very high (80) and Austria where it is very low with a score of 11.

■ Individualism versus Collectivism (IDV): This dimension considers individualistic versus collective approach of a society. A person's self-image is defined as 'I'in a loosely-knit social framework. Each individual in a family is expected to take care of only himself/herself. As opposed to this, in collectivism, families are tightlyknit in society in which individuals expect their relatives or members of a particular group to look after them in exchange for unquestioning loyalty. A society's position on this dimension is reflected in whether people's self-image is defined in terms of 'I' or 'we'. The Japanese are known as a collectivistic society (scoring 46), whereas the US can clearly been seen as an individualistic society (scoring 91).



■ Masculinity versus Femininity (MAS): This dimension is also referred to as 'tough versus tender', and considers the preference of society for achievement, attitude towards sexual equality, behaviour, etc. The masculine side of this dimension represents a preference in a society for achievement, heroism, assertiveness and material rewards for success; such a society, at large, is more competitive. As opposite to this trait, in a feministic trait, preference is given to cooperation, modesty, caring for the weak and quality of life. Such a society, at large, is more nurturing. In the business context, MAS is sometimes also related to as 'tough versus tender' cultures. Japan is considered to be a very masculine

country, whereas the Scandinavian coun-

tries such as Norway and Sweden are considered highly feminine.

■ Uncertainty Avoidance Index (UAI): This index considers the extent to which uncertainty and ambiguity are tolerated. This dimension considers how unknown situations and unexpected events are dealt with in a country. High UAI indicates lower tolerance for uncertainty, ambiguity and risk-taking. The unknown is minimised through strict rules and regulations. Greece, Portugal, Italy, Spain, Belgium, Poland, Japan, France, Argentina, Chile, Turkey and South Korea score high on this dimension. Low UAI indicates higher tolerance for uncertainty, ambiguity and risk-taking. The unknown is more openly accepted. Singapore, Denmark, Sweden, China, the UK, India, Malaysia and the US score low on the uncertainty dimension. ■Long-Term Orientation versus Short-**Term Orientation (LTO):** Different cul tures have different expectations or assign different meanings to what time is. Some cultures perceive time to be scarce, while others believe time to be infinite. Some view time management as a skill, while others find it unimportant. Every society maintains a link with its own past while dealing with the challenges of the present and preparing for the future. Long-term orientated countries focus on the future. China and Japan are known for their longterm orientation. Short-term oriented countries focus on present and past more than the future. Morocco, for example, is a short-term oriented country.

■Indulgence versus Restraint (IND): It's a relatively new dimension of the model. This dimension is defined as the extent to which people try to control their desires and impulses, based on the way they were raised. Relatively weak control is called 'indulgence' and relatively strong control is called 'restraint'. Cultures can, therefore, be described as 'indulgent' or 'restrained' Indulgence stands for a society that allows relatively free gratification of basic and natural human drives related to enjoying life and having fun. The best example is the US. Restraint stands for a society that suppresses gratification of needs and regulates them by means of strict social norms. The examples are Russia, and Eastern European countries such as Belarus, Bulgaria, Czech Republic and Hungary.

WORDLY WISE

AIRLINES ARE INTERESTING. THEY NOT ONLY FAVOUR CELEBRITIES, THEY COURT THEM.

— PHIL DONAHUE

The Indian EXPRESS

∽ FOUNDED BY ∽ RAMNATH GOENKA

BECAUSE THE TRUTH INVOLVES US ALL

FLYING LOW

Troubles in aviation sector send sobering signal, call for greater opening up by government

NDIA HAS BEEN the fastest growing aviation market over the last four years. Along with telecom, the aviation sector has symbolised the successes of liberalisation with a visible impact in terms of the entry of a number of players and opening up of access to flying, besides ensuring a pan-India telecom coverage. But the recent turbulence in the domestic airline industry — manifest in the troubles of the full service carrier, Jet Airways, which has been forced to ground several of its aircraft due to its inability to pay rentals, and a shortage of pilots in the case of market leader, Indigo — threatens to derail that growth. But unlike the telecom sector, where there has been a consolidation with the merger of Idea with Vodafone, it is disturbing to see the near collapse of a marquee brand like Jet which had introduced service standards alongside Kingfisher, which folded up a few years ago. This is especially so when fuel prices on an average have been relatively low in an industry where, even globally, many big carriers have struggled to remain successful consistently.

It can be argued that, more than the policy environment, the airline has been weighed down by management issues and the seeming reluctance of its promoter, Naresh Goyal, to exit in order to enable either its partner, Etihad, or a potential investor to gain control based on a resolution plan finalised by the SBI-led lenders. It is easy to push a listed airline company such as Jet on to the bankruptcy route — but clearly, a different set of rules applies to this and the telecom sector. For the national carrier, Air India, with a debt burden of Rs 55,000 crore, the government has provided interim support, a sovereign guarantee and loaned funds from the National Small Savings Fund, helping it to keep flying while keeping alive another state-owned entity, BSNL, in the telecom sector. Now, what the government should do is to further open up the sector, considering the huge potential boost to infrastructure and the impact on tourism and the services sector, and its promise as an employment multiplier.

At a time when the biggest challenge is creating jobs, it is bad optics specially in an election season, to let another firm go under in this manner. It is worth reminding the country's mainstream parties that India's most competitive sectors are the ones which have delivered the most to customers and helped fuel growth.

A SOUR TASTE

Unpaid sugarcane dues have to do with government interventions that restrict both farmers and mills

HERE HAVE BEEN widespread protests, and threats by the sugar commissioner of stern action against defaulting mills, and yet cane farmers in Maharashtra are still awaiting full payments for their produce this season. As of March 15, sugar mills in the state have paid only Rs 14,881.01 crore out of the Rs 20,653.02 crore that they owe to farmers against cane purchases from them. The problem of arrears is even worse in Uttar Pradesh, where the unpaid cane dues of mills have crossed Rs 10,000 crore. The intervention of Maharashtra's sugar commissioner's office, which had threatened not just to attach and auction properties of defaulting mills but also register criminal cases against their chairmen and directors, is proof of the pressure from the government to ensure payment. That, and the fact that many mill owners in Maharashtra are politicians themselves, is reason enough to believe that the sugar industry is in no position to pay farmers even with the best of intentions.

The inability to pay has to do with the economics of the industry. If a mill in UP were to buy cane at the state government's "advised" price of Rs 325 per quintal, the bare production cost of sugar at that rate, without factoring in interest outgo and depreciation, will be roughly Rs 34 per kg. As against this, the ex-factory price of sugar is now Rs 31 per kg; many factories are actually selling below even this "minimum" price fixed by the Centre. If the industry is going to lose a minimum of Rs 3 on every kilo of sugar sold, the total loss on 31 million tonnes — the country's likely production in 2018-19 — will be over Rs 9,300 crore. That's clearly not sustainable for mills. Nor is it in the farmers' interest to have factories going belly-up. Governments, both at the Centre and in the states, have only made things worse, whether by fixing cane prices out of sync with sugar realisations or setting monthly sale quotas. For March, mills have been given a target to sell 24.5 lakh tonnes (lt) of sugar, which is way above the 21.09 lt and 19.52 lt of actual sales undertaken in the same month in 2018 and 2017, respectively. The underlying objective behind forcing mills to sell more sugar — which the market cannot absorb — has been to generate more liquidity to enable them to make cane payments. But that has only ended up depressing

The solution is simple: Cane prices have to be linked to average realisations of mills, both from sugar and primary by-products (molasses and baggase). Let farmers have the freedom to sell to any mill that may want to pay more. If the government wants cane farmers to be paid more, it should credit that amount directly to their bank accounts and not force losses on the industry.

Freeze Frame

EPUNNY



UP's new normal



An everyday communalism has settled down. Law is misused to target minorities

CHRISTOPHE JAFFRELOT AND SYED H A RIZVI

PATTERNS OF communal violence are changing in Uttar Pradesh. As Sudha Pai and Sajjan Kumar had shown in Everyday Communalism: Riots in Contemporary Uttar Pradesh (OUP, 2018) after the 2004 BJP defeat. which former prime minister, Atal Bihari Vajpayee, partly attributed to the 2002 Gujarat riots, the Hindutva forces have opted for a new modus operandi. Rather than instigating major and violent statewide riots as in the past, the BJP-RSS have attempted to create and sustain constant, low-key communal tension together with frequent, small, low-intensity incidents out of petty everyday issues that institutionalise communalism at the grass roots, to keep the pot boiling. Vigilante groups such as the Bajrang Dal and the Hindu Yuva Vahini (HYV) of Yogi Adityanath have been instrumental in implementing this technique of polarisation.

Things changed again when the BJP gained office in 2017. While Muslims have remained the main target of Hindu vigilantes, as evident from the series of lynchings, their situation deteriorated also because policemen and vigilantes began to work together. The typical scenario involved provoking communal clashes, something the HYV excelled at, with the aim of destroying Muslim homes and small businesses. When the police intervened, it was more to apprehend the victims than the instigators of the violence.

And when the police arrested them, it often resorted to booking them under laws such as the Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act and the National Security Act, which are intended for criminals posing a threat to state security and under which individuals can be held without charge for up to 12 months. In 2017, 160 Muslims were arrested under the NSA. A former police officer, S R Darapuri, noted: "For the first time in Indian history, this law is being misused so much. This is part of the BJP policy to rule through terror. They are using the police as their power arm to overawe the Dalits and minorities."

Parallel to that, Yogi Adityanath launched Operation Clean, in the framework of which the police was encouraged

The sense of impunity was reinforced by Yogi Adityanath's decision to withdraw all the complaints that the state had filed against him and his associates since the 1990s. Cases involving Hindu nationalists implicated in the Muzaffarnagar riots (including 13 charges — out of a total of 131 — for murder) were withdrawn. At the request of human rights organisations, the SC, in 2018, asked Yogi Adityanath to explain the rise in the number of victims in police shootouts. The Court also refused to dismiss the 2007 hate-speech case against the chief minister, for which he

had been imprisoned briefly.

to open fire on those suspected of a crime. In June 2017, the chief minister announced on television: "Agar apradh karenge, toh thok diye jayenge (If anyone engages in crime, they will be shot)". Soon after, he informed the state assembly that 40 criminals had been killed in police shootouts. There were reportedly over 1,100 shootings of this kind between February 2017 and February 2018, a record. While the targets were supposed to be

hardcore criminals, victims of the shootouts were mainly Muslims, some of whom, according to their families, were killed in cold blood. Prashant Bhushan, after investigating the subject with support from the NGO, Citizens Against Hate, concluded that, "people are being murdered in an organised manner..." with complicity of high-level officials. The National Human Rights Commission launched an inquiry in 17 cases and found that "the police personnel in the state of Uttar Pradesh appears to be feeling free, misusing their powers in the light of an undeclared endorsement given by the higher-ups." The NHRC said: "It further appears that they are using their privileges/legal authority to settle scores with the people which in a civilised society, where rule of law is fundamental... cannot be accepted. The police force is to protect the people and these kind of alleged encounter killings would send a wrong message to the society by creating an atmosphere of fear which is not the correct way to deal with the crime or law and order as the case may be." The NHRC issued a separate notice to the UP government about the killing of a 20-year old Muslim of Muzaffarnagar in November 2018. The Supreme Court also issued a notice to the UP government on a PIL alleging that several fake encounters had taken place in the state.

The sense of impunity was reinforced by Yogi Adityanath's decision to withdraw all the complaints that the state had filed against him and his associates since the 1990s. Cases involving Hindu nationalists implicated in the Muzaffarnagar riots (including 13 charges, out of a total of 131, for murder) were withdrawn. But at the request of human rights organisations, the SC, in 2018, asked Yogi Adityanath to explain the rise in the number of victims in police shootouts. The Court also refused to dismiss the 2007 hate-speech case against the chief minister, for which he had been imprisoned briefly. Meanwhile, the United Nations Human Rights Council (UNHRC) special rapporteur on contemporary forms of racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance, E Tendayi Achiume, reported that "Hindu nationalist Bharatiya Janata Party has been linked to incidents of violence against members of Dalit, Muslim, tribal and Christian communities".

After a multi-national company executive, Vivek Tiwari, was shot by a UP constable in Lucknow, the number of encounters diminished, but those arrested under the UAPA, NSA or some other law continue to be in jail, pending trial. Last month, special designated Terrorist and Disruptive Activities (Prevention) Act court judge S C Khatti, found that 11 Muslim men who had spent 20 years in jail in a terrorist case were innocent. In 2016, the Bombay High Court acquitted nine Muslims who had been accused of the 2006 Malegaon blast. The judge concluded that the ATS had fabricated evidence against the accused to allow the real culprits escape. In 2014, the Supreme Court acquitted eight Muslims who had been convicted by a POTA court in the 2002 Akshardham case (three of them had been awarded the death penalty). In Delhi, the Jamia Teachers Solidarity Association prepared a list of 24 persons mostly from Kashmir — who had been arrested by the Delhi Police Special Cell but the association claimed they were innocent. Two of them, from Srinagar, were released in 2017 after 12 years in jail. In UP, human rights activists, including an NGO, Rihai Manch, are fighting the case of 11 young Muslims who are in jail.

Jaffrelot is senior research fellow at CERI-Sciences Po/CNRS, Paris, professor of Indian Politics and Sociology at King's India Institute, London, and non-resident scholar at the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace. Rizvi is a former UP state information commissioner

ALGORITHM AS EDITOR

Google and Facebook have great power, great responsibility

RASMUS KLEIS NIELSEN

ARE GOOGLE AND Facebook the most powerful editors in India? Given that an estimated quarter billion Indians have gone online since the last general election, they just might be.

Whereas the news that people get via television, radio, and print is selected by human editors, on the internet, people increasingly rely on search engines and social media that rely on algorithmic curation.

In a new survey of English-language Indian internet users, we find that a third name search engines as their main source of online news, and a quarter name social media – in each case, overwhelmingly, Google and Facebook respectively. Only 18 per cent claimed going directly to the websites or apps of news publishers as their main source of online news.

Strikingly, not only do our respondents rely on search and social media for news, they also say they trust the news that they get there at least as much as news more broadly. For example, 45 per cent say they trust news in search, and 34 per cent news in social media, compared to just over a third who say they trust news overall.

This is strikingly different from what we have seen in other countries, where people often trust news media more than they trust news found via search engines or social media. In a polarised political environment characterised by general skepticism of many established institutions, news found via search can acquire an attractive veneer of technological objectivity, news accessed via social

Many Indian do not understand how the platforms they rely on for news operate. When asked how most of the individual decisions about what news stories to show on Facebook were made, only 26 per cent of our respondents correctly identify algorithms: The automated systems that rank what people see on social media and make decisions about what to display. Many believe human editors and journalists determine what news they see in their newsfeed.

media an appealing aura of authenticity. Worryingly, many Indians do not seem

to understand how the platforms they increasingly rely on for news actually operate. When asked how most of the individual decisions about what news stories to show on Facebook were made, only 26 per cent of our respondents correctly identify the algorithms: The automated systems that rank what people see on social media and make decisions about what to display. Many believe human editors and journalists determine what news they see in their newsfeed.

In a sense, of course, they are right. Even though both Google and Facebook rely on algorithmic curation as they serve news every day to millions of Indians, the stories themselves are often written by professional journalists and, thus, ultimately under the editorial responsibility of the top people at the major news organisations with significant reach online.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi and a few other major politicians have built significant social media followings that help them circumvent news media and set the agenda, but news media still remains crucial for how most people navigate politics.

In this sense, news editors at other major news media are still the most powerful editors in India, and Google and Facebook have not so much supplanted them as supplemented them. As people increasingly rely on search engines and social media for news, the information that reaches them has passed through two sets of gatekeepers: First editors, who decide what to publish then the algorithms that increasingly shape what we see online.

This is an important change from the single set of gatekeepers that characterise offline media, and means Google and Facebook play an increasingly important and often challenging role in the Indian media environment.

If a company sets out, as Google does, "to organise the world's information and make it universally accessible and useful", it will confront the fact that the line between information and misinformation can be hard to draw, and that people sometimes actively seek out disinformation. If a company aims to help people "stay connected with friends and family, to discover what's going on in the world, and to share and express what matters to them", as Facebook does, it will have to deal with the fact that not all expression is equally benign, and that people sometimes actively share false and misleading content.

Owning, operating, and profiting from the algorithms that more and more Indians rely on to find news, gives Google and Facebook great power and great responsibilities — like the human editors who came before them. The 2019 elections will be a decisive test of whether they are ready for it.

The writer is director of Reuters Institute for the Study of Journalism and professor of political communication, University of

March 25, 1979, Forty Years Ago



BHUTTO SENTENCE THE DEATH SENTENCE on former prime minister Zulfikar Ali Bhutto was re-confirmed when the Pakistan Supreme Court unanimously rejected his petition for a review of the sentence in a murder-conspiracy case. In a 4-3 verdict on February 6, a sevenmember bench of the court had confirmed the original sentence passed by the Lahore High Court on March 18 last year. Bhutto then filed a review petition. Radio Pakistan reporting the rejection of the petition, quoted Chief Justice Anwarul Haq as saying "all of us have unanimously decided to reject the petition". However, the judges included a paragraph

recommending clemency. Seizing on this

paragraph, Bhutto's lawyer, Yahya Bakhtiar, said: "The death sentence is out. I feel relieved. But I am disappointed in the rest of the judgment. Bhutto should not be hanged after this."

MERCY PETITION

PAKISTAN PRESIDENT GEN Zia-ul-Haq may not be in a hurry to hang Bhutto. The procedure itself spreads over many days. The Supreme Court will inform the Lahore High Court, which will issue the execution orders to the Rawalpindi jail where Bhutto is detained. Bhutto will be formally informed about the confirmation of the death sentence. Then he, any of his relatives or any citizen of Pakistan, can file a petition of mercy within seven days. This petition, will be sent to the province concerned, Punjab, where the murder of Ahmed Raza Kasuri took place. The provincial government will forward its recommendation to the Ministry of Interior at Islamabad. Later, the law ministry will scrutinise it and then it will reach Zia's desk

IP's HEALTH

JAYAPRAKASH NARAYAN GAVE some anxious moments during the dialysis at Bombay's Jaslok Hospital. But he maintained a slight improvement towards night. The hospital bulletin said: "The condition of IP continues to be the same. His drowsiness is less."

THE IDEAS PAGE

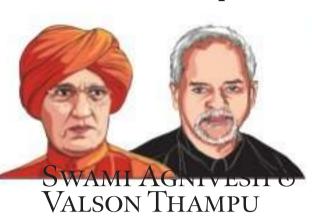
WHAT THE OTHERS SAY

Theresa May's political capital is all spent. She has no allies at home or abroad

- THE GUARDIAN

Otherness to togetherness

Mediators in Ayodhya must stand steadfast on spiritual foundation in a charged atmosphere, where religion has been superseded by politics and the dynamic of mediation overshadowed by triumphalism



SO LONG AS man is in a mere state of nature, his god is a mere nature-God — a personification of some natural force. Where man inhabits houses, he also encloses his Gods in temples The temple is only a manifestation of the value which man attaches to beautiful building Temples in honour of religion are in truth tem ples in honour of architecture.

 Ludwig Feuerbach in The Essence of Christianity

We begin with a simple truth: We live in a post-religious age. Religion has departed only the appearance of religion remains. Ir the spiritual phase of religion, human bein are suffused with the consciousness of divine, as in the insight that God and human beings are one. In such a state, the external accessories of religion — symbols, rituals, temples, sects, etc. — are superfluous.

Our seers and savants did not preside over religious structures and establishments. They sought oneness with the divine. They would have been ill-at-home amidst brick and mortar structures, cacophony of crowds, tinkling of coins and cackling of sermons. They dwelt in the abode of silence. In the serenity of their soul, they encountered the Eternal, and peered through the veil of may

The modern man prefers the sign to the thing signified, the copy to the original, the appearance to the essence and the fanfare of religiosity to the fidelity of being in com munion with God. The temple is a sign of man's longing for the divine. If so, no temple is complete simply because the architect says it is. The paradox of a place of wor ship is that it is forever being built. After the physical structure is erected, the spiritual task begins, and continues. No temple is a place of worship, if it does not serve continually as a sign and site for man's on-going never-ending search for God. If and when this inward reality changes, a temple be-

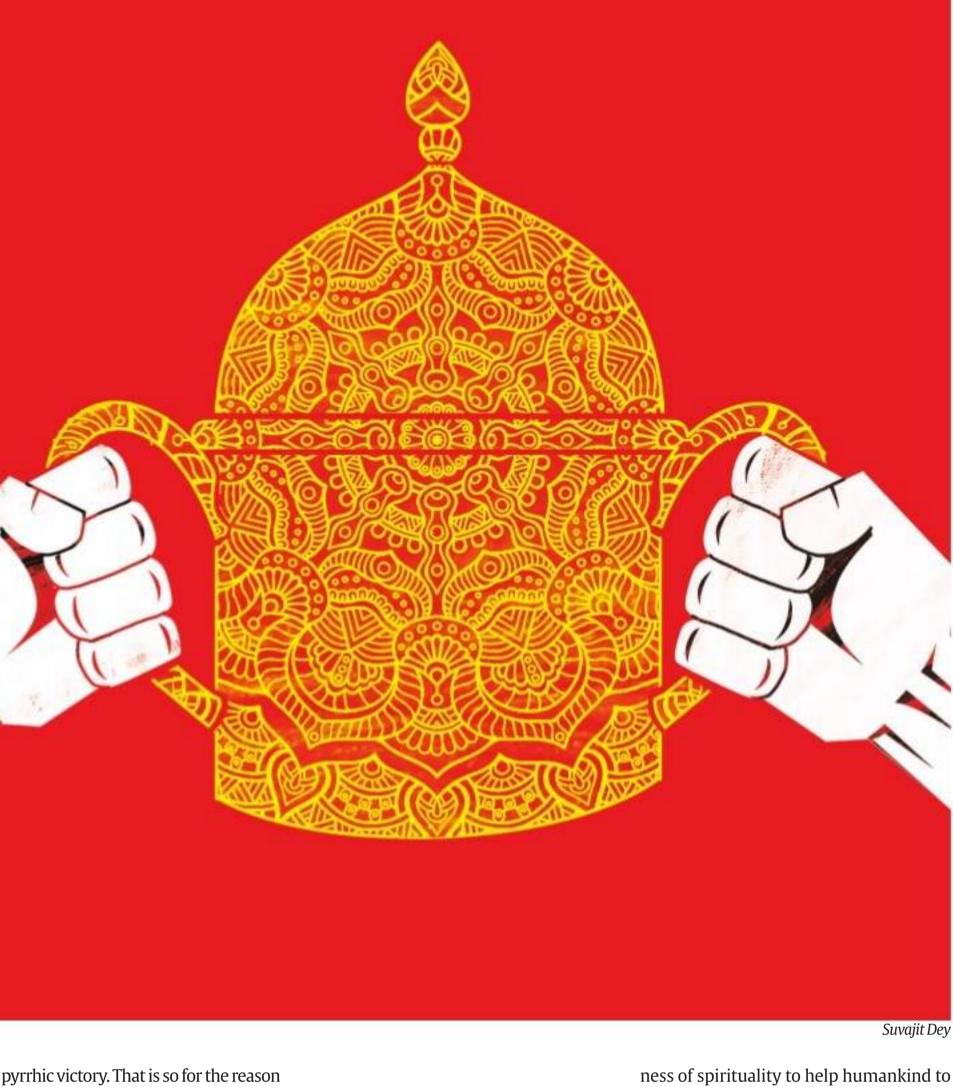
comes a monument. "Believers" may swell a pyrrhic victory. That is so for the reason Priests may ply rites and rituals. But it's that, once the thunder and lightning of the longer, spiritually, a temple. A communitation flict, the belligerent self-assertion over ian meeting place? An identity marker the other, is accomplished, something wakes sign of religious splendour and ascent from deep within — the realisation that dancy? Sure, but not, in truth, a place of defeated one is, somehow, a part of oneworship. Impressive cathedrals were built. One may suppress this awareness. But in the past all over Europe. But their archie birth of this new consciousness is untectural splendour had little to do with twoidable as long as we remain human.

spiritual longings of the people. If anything, The second mode of self-assertion is they signaled cultural pride and presaged antic. This is not achieved through anyspiritual decline. European cathedrals newing muscular, or at the expense of anyone seem, in retrospect, ghostly monuments of . In this model, assertion is co-extensive religious self-assertion overshadowed with consciousness. I don't assert myself spiritual anticlimax. against anyone. I assert and celebrate myself

There is nothing wrong about self-asser for and on behalf of my species — through tion, at the individual or collective level. Texpansion of spiritual consciousness. As live is to assert. Being alive is a good, and then a high school student knows, the merits being celebrated. The all-important atness of a human being is determined question is: How does one assert oneself by the extent of his or her awareness. spiritually valid way? The very fact that suchimals too are aware and imbued with a basic question has not been asked over his ciousness; but their consciousness is decades in relation to a religious cauldrona limited kind. An animal is aware of its like the Ayodhya face-off, points to a decline mediate surroundings and of other aniin spiritual consciousness. mals. For a caterpillar, the leaf it sits on is its

There are two contrary ways in which orld. For a lion, it is the territory it has religious community may assert itself. The religious for itself. Not so, for a human first is the worldly way. It can impose its willing. Human consciousness can be larger on "the other", the designated enemy. In this n the universe. It is this that makes us model, the more belligerently and brutally man. Conversely, reduction in the range community imposes itself on the other, theour consciousness makes us regress to more triumphant it feels. But the probleme animal stage.

here is this sense of fulfillment is, by defini-Our species did not begin its earthly jourtion, shallow and short-lived. It turns out to on a high note of awareness. It began, perhaps, like the caterpillar. It was the busi-



In Good Faith

No temple is a place of worship, if it does not serve continually as a sign and site for man's on-going, neverending search for God. If and when this inward reality changes, a temple becomes a monument. 'Believers' may swell. Priests may ply rites and rituals. But it's no longer, spiritually, a temple. A communitarian meeting place? An identity marker? A sign of religious splendour and ascendancy? Sure; but not, in truth, a place of worship.

grow in consciousness till it reached the acme of spirituality at which it could be said with ecstasy: "The world is one family." The core function of spirituality is to transform "otherness" into togetherness. Seen in the spiritual light, "enemy" emerges as "neigh-

It is naïve to assume that mediation in Ayodhya will succeed somehow. A responsible practice of mediation requires that an outlook conducive to a just denouement is created. It is universally true that nothing changes on the ground, until the outlook changes. Mediation, undertaken from a mindset of self-assertion of the martial kind, is anything but mediation.

It could well be that the Supreme Court is mindful of this logic. Perhaps that explains the inclusion of Sri Sri Ravishankar in the panel of mediators. But, for Sri Sri, this could be a double-edged sword. He will realise soon enough how difficult it is to stand steadfast on the spiritual foundation in a charged atmosphere, in which religion has already been superseded by politics and the dynamic of mediation is overshadowed by triumphalism. But, the beauty of spirituality is that it succeeds in its mission, not because the circumstances are propitious, but because destiny wills it.

Swami Agnivesh is a Vedic scholar and social activist and Thampu is former principal, St Stephen's College, Delhi

Loopholes in the Lokpal

The institution is useful but its design is not thought through



RC IYER

THE LOKPAL and Lokayuktas Act 2013 came into existence on January 1, 2014. It extends to the whole of India and applies to "public servants" as defined in the Act, which includes the incumbent prime minister and Union ministers. Past public servants can also be investigated. This "landmark" law followed prolonged public debates on issues related to corruption, and several demonstrations, including by activists such as Anna Hazare. Some politicians like Arvind Kejriwal, who had supported the enactment, later stated that what was actually enacted was a "Jokepal Act".

The drama of the years prior to the enactment of the law will be etched in public memory. It became possible because the two lead political parties then — the ruling UPA and the NDA — joined hands in the "war against corruption" thinking that the enactment would yield rich political dividend. The passage of the bill did not, therefore, pose any difficulty: At that point, the code of conduct for the 2014 general election had not come in existence. However, it was enacted in great hurry and contained numerous legal infirmities, which will sooner or later be tested in the appropriate courts of law.

This issue was in the works for nearly half a century after the recommendation for a Lokpal at the Centre was first made by the Administrative Reforms Committee of 1966. It had been the subject of several assurances given by incumbent prime ministers on the floor of Parliament. Given this background, the law should have been better drafted. It should have gone before a select committee of Parliament for scrutiny by all the stakeholders.

Some of the provisions of the Act contain directions, which are not tenable. Section 63 of the Act mandates establishment of the Lokayukta in every state, where it is not established "within a period of one year from the date of commencement of this Act". Many of the states have already enacted and developed Lokayukta institutions much earlier, but this section had little effect on states which had not done so till then. Tamil Nadu, for instance, has enacted the law only now, but Lokayukta appointments are yet to be made — the oneyear period is long over. This shows that the section is a dead letter apart from encroaching on the legislative powers of the respective states.

There are many other provisions of doubtful utility. "Competent authorities" are defined in the Act. In section 24, if the findings of the Lokpal disclose any corruption, a copy of the report is to be sent to the "competent authority" while filing a

chargesheet. In the case of the prime minister being the accused, the competent authority mentioned is the House of the People, namely the Lok Sabha. If such "authorities" have no major role in the Act, why call them "competent authorities"? The time limit for "the removal of difficulties" in the Act is already over, unless extended again, by law.

More importantly, what is indeed not adequately appreciated in the fierce anticorruption debate, which will continue with greater intensity in the election season, is that this Act is only applicable to "public servants" who come within the purview of the Union of India and not the states. The scope for the Lokpal to deal with corruption involving public servants would, therefore, be limited to a narrow band of public servants.

A very large part of the corruption we talk about involves state governments, their agencies and bodies of the local self-government, which would fall entirely outside the purview of the central Lokpal — in varying degrees (depending upon the actual state legislation), these come under the state lokayuktas. A fully empowered lokayukta in Karnataka, enjoying "terms of service" equivalent to the chief justice of India, has hardly failed to contain corruption in that state. There were instances when the institution there itself came under a serious cloud, and when the lokayukta himself had to resign following a controversy involving his own son. The point here in any case is not the util-

ity of the institution at the Centre. It is the undue haste with which the law itself was earlier enacted and the obvious haste with which the institution is being operationalised five years later, after assuming a sudden urgency — reportedly on account of the Supreme Court's (SC) admonition. The SC had considered the delay several times in the past few years. So what is new

A code of conduct prior to the Lok Sabha elections has come into place from March 10. The guidelines contained in the model code of conduct do refer to a ban on appointments or promotions in the government, without prior clearance of the Election Commission (EC). It could be argued that these are not election-related appointments in the government, but the appointment of high functionaries by the President. The note below these instructions in the Model Code of Conduct states that the list of dos and don'ts is only illustrative and cases of doubt should be referred to the EC. In this case, the President of India (read as advised by the Union cabinet comprising members of the party in office) may take the stand that they are acting at the orders of the SC. Opposition parties are unlikely to complain either, since the common plank now is "anti-corruption". And the EC too is likely to look the other way, once the President "swears in" the new appointees.

The writer is former Upalokayukta,

LETTER TO THE EDITOR

CLEARING THE AIR

THIS REFERS TO the article 'Once upon a hijack' (IE, March 22). It is appreciable that the writer helped with clarifications about the sequence of events in the infamous 1999 hijack story. In the era of post-truth, the blatant tweaking of facts and selective usage of information has destabilised societal mentality. That he had to step into the picture is a clear indication of the vicious verbal spat that political parties are engaged in for narrow electoral gains.

Vaibhav Dahiphale, Pune

New friends

THIS REFERS TO the editorial, 'To Male, with Care' (IE, March 21). The incumbent Maldives government has committed to "India first" in all its activities. However, we must not turn a blind eye to Chinese activities in the Indian Ocean. Its technological advancements, booming economy and debt-trap diplomacy has compelled many poor nations to be at its mercy. So, we should increase our aid to Maldives and ensure that it remains within our fold.

Sauro Dasgupta, Kolkata

BLINKERED VIEW

THIS REFERS TO the article, 'Islamophobia, theirs and ours', (IE, March 21). The article represents a classic tendency of blindly blaming the majority in this country for all that ails the Muslim world. It is also a case of selectively quoting what is convenient to the author's political worldview. If the Western world is better than Indians in

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. Letter writers should mention their postal address and phone number.

THE WINNER RECEIVES **SELECT EXPRESS PUBLICATIONS**

handling this issue, then can the author explain the banning of burkhas in France? Is he blind to the mindless violence and destruction that has been ravaging the entire Muslim world for which no outsiders can be blamed? Has he forgotten the destruction of Bamiyan Buddhas or the ethnic cleansing of Kashmiri Pandits? Instead of politicising this issue, it's high time the Muslim community and the so-called intellectuals, like this author, who specialise in Hindu bashing, do some introspection. Only such introspection will rid the world of this cult of violence.

H N Bhagwat, Chiplun

VIEW FROM THE Neighbourhood

A weekly look at the public conversations shaping ideas beyond borders — in the Subcontinent. Curated by Asad Ali

OFF THE HOOK

countries

where "both sides have pointed a finger at AN EDITORIAL IN *Dawn* takes a sharp, critic other for not seriously prosecuting cal look at India's special National pups blamed for terrorist acts inside each Investigation Agency court which last weeker's territory". It calls the Pakistan reacquitted all the accused in the 20% onse "as predictable as it is sharp", and Samjhauta Express blast. It minces no words out that, "Islamabad's response aptly as it says that, "The ruling is an insult to the derlines the fact that the terrorists had 42 Pakistani victims of the February 18, 2007 blicly confessed to their 'odious crimes'". bombing of the train that had set off for The editorial ends by saying that Pakistan Lahore, and a sharp reminder of how opposite the opportunity to do better than India by nents of Subcontinental peace are allowedking the Mumbai terror case to its logical to get away with the biggest crimes. It is a E6 nclusion. This would show the world that buke to the more than 20 victims of the exis serious about combating militancy and plosion with Indian nationality and it is a befitting response to India that stands snub to the efforts of those investigators of sponse to make that snub to the efforts of those investigators of sponse to make that snub to the efforts of those investigators of sponse to make that snub to the efforts of those investigators of sponse to make that snub to the efforts of those investigators of sponse to make that snub to the efforts of those investigators of sponse to make that snub to the efforts of those investigators of sponse to make that snub to the efforts of those investigators, who is snub to the efforts of those investigators, who is snub to the efforts of those investigators, who is snub to the efforts of those investigators, who is snub to the efforts of those investigators, who is snub to the efforts of those investigators, who is snub to the efforts of the effort tracked the suspects in a high-pressure RIGHT EDUCATION

The editorial recognises the sincerity of BANGLADESH GOVERNMENT'S direcpurpose of the initial investigators assigned last week to not hold any examinations to the case and says, "That police team over students of Class I, II, and III has found came all kinds of pressure to first reject the mention in an editorial in the Dhaka Tribune, opinion that this was an act carried out bwhich has supported the initiative. The edi-Muslim extremist group, and then to acturial recognises that "exams are not altoally announce it was a job carried out by gether bad", but clarifies, "it is also important ganised Hindu extremists", and, points out understand that exams, especially at such the "painful contrast" between them and the NIA's efforts. It states that "true to form; sures on children's curious minds, and do lit-Delhi tried to find shelter behind the usual to nurture their growth." It lists the examrhetorical exchanges of the types of countries like Finland, Australia and

extent understood the potential damage of exams at too young an age, and moved towards more effective methods of learning".

It praises the government for taking a step in the right direction by recognising what a lot of research in recent times has been corroborating — "that traditional exams are not capable of measuring intelligence effectively". But it also puts into realistic perspective the many goals that the country needs to still achieve vis-a-vis education: "Unfortunately, the problems with our education sector do not end there — from the quality of teachers and textbooks to the corruption which plagues our educational institutions, there is no denying that the Education Ministry has its work cut out if it wants to bring true improvement. There would be little point to merely removing exams if the education that children received was of an inferior quality to begin with."

UNEQUAL WORLD

A COLUMN BY Amish Raj Mulmi in Kathmandu Post trains the spotlight on gender inequality in the context of Nepal's oftdiscussed unequal citizenship laws that are seen as heavily biased towards women — for instance, children of Nepali women who India to say that these places have "to a great marry foreign men cannot get Nepali citizen-

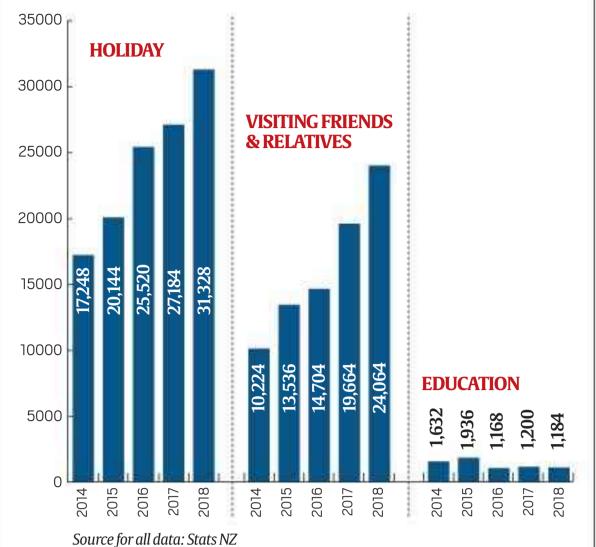
ship by descent. The column comes in the wake of a tweet by a senior male journalist in Nepal: "Consider this tweet made just last week by a senior journalist as the 'debate' around the citizenship bill went on in Parliament: 'Why should those women who cannot reveal the father's name give birth to children? The mother does not give birth to children by themselves, do they? There are several Mary Stopes clinics across Nepal for those women who do not want to reveal their sex partner's name. Why should an infant's destiny be that of a fatherless child?' [translations mine]." Mulmi says that by equating women's citizenship to reproduction, and by insidiously "pointing unwed mothers (or single mothers by choice) towards abortion clinics, the repugnant tweet essentially told us the Nepali man simply considers their woman to be a reproductive vehicle and little else. In his Hindu view of the world, he upholds the idea of the 'virtuous wife', and 'treats women's sexuality as a risk to society at large'."

Mulmi states that as the law on citizenship stands currently, "what emerges with clarity is the idea that Nepali citizenship rights are based on Brahminical ideas of a pure society." and goes on to conclude that it is "not up to the state to declare men and women are equal in the first place."

TELLING NUMBERS

Indians in NZ: holidaymakers multiply, student count drops

PURPOSE OF VISITS FROM INDIA, YEARS ENDING OCTOBER



THE GROWTH of Indian visitors to New Zealand, whose numbers nearly doubled between 2014 and 2018 (The Indian Express, March 23), has been driven mostly by tourists, and New Zealanders' Indian relatives or friends. New Zealand government data show that visits by senior citizens (age 55-64) have increased most significantly, multiplying nearly 2½ times between 2014 and 2018.

The number of Indian nationals visiting New Zealand rose from 34,672 in 2014 to 67,072 in 2018 (years ending October). When this is expanded to include all visitors from India to New Zealand, the counts increase to 36,144 in 2014 and 68,784 in 2018. Holidaymakers and visiting friends and relatives make the bulk of the 2018 visitors. Their count doubled from 27,472 (17,248 on holiday and 10,224 visiting friends and relatives) in 2014 to 55,392 (31,328 and 24,064) in 2018. Significantly, the student segment saw

AGE GROUP OF VISITORS, 2018 4,080 Under-15 5,632 25-34 15,776 7,856 35-44 11,216

a drop from 1,632 education-related visits in 2014 to 1.184 in 2018. Business trips rose by half while visits for conferences more than doubled.

15,600

8,624

In terms of age profile of visitors from India, the largest group remains 25-34 years, with the numbers increasing from 9,248 to 15,776. However, the second largest group (55-64) has seen a much more drastic increase in numbers, from 6,336 to 15,600.

TIP FOR READING LIST

Brexit chronicles: Events, Dreams

55-64

AMID CONTINUING uncertainty over how and when Brexit will eventually take place, two new books look at the inevitability from different perspectives. A Short History of Brexit: From Brentry to Backstop is economic historian Kevin O'Rourke's chronicle of the events leading

up to Brexit, looking at the evolution of British attitudes to Europe, the EU's politics and economics, and focusing on the question of the Irish border. Dreams of Leaving and Remaining is a collection of essays by journalist James

Meek, written for the London Review of Books in the years before the UK voted to leave the EU, and annotated with Meek's current reflections. These essays look at the perspectives of various people on both sides of the Brexit divide.

O'Rourke's book, as a history, throws up no surprises, *The Guardian* says in its review. It adds, however: "Anyone who has found themselves newly politicised by the convulsions of British politics in general or Brexit in particular will find this a handy primer on the events and undercurrents that led to our present dis-

> content. Anyone who is familiar with that history will find something they knew, but hadn't fully appreciated..."

Reviewing Meek's book in the same article, The Guardian calls it a failure when measured on the

yardstick that its essays "are supposed to tell us something about our divided nation and where it should go from here". It appreciates the essays themselves: "But it cannot possibly be right to say that this book is a failure when the account of the places Meek visits and the people he meets is so rich and so moving."

SIMPLY PUT

The cases other than Samjhauta

Aseemanand & others have been acquitted of train blast. A look at where other cases against them stand

DEEPTIMANTIWARY

NEW DELHI, MARCH 24

LAST WEEK, a trial court in Panchkula acquitted all the accused in the 2007 Samjhauta Express train blast case, for want of evidence. Among the accused was former RSS member Naba Kumar Sarkar aka Aseemanand, said to have been the mastermind and ideological guide behind a number of cases that allegedly involved radical Hindu groups. Among six such cases that investigators had linked to former RSS members, this is the second (after the 2007 blasts at Mecca Masjid of Hyderabad) in which all the accused have been acquitted by trial courts. The NIA has challenged neither any of the acquittals, nor any order granting bail to an accused. A look at how these cases have progressed:

Ajmer Dargah blast

On October 11, 2007 a bomb ripped Ajmer Sharif Dargah in Rajasthan killing three people and injuring 17. The case was investigated by Rajasthan ATS until 2011, then transferred to the National Investigation Agency (NIA). The Rajasthan ATS arrested and chargesheeted three people in 2010. The NIA arrested six. All the accused were either directly connected with the RSS or with organisations linked to the Sangh Parivar. From April 2011 onwards, the NIA filed three chargesheets identifying 13 accused.

THE ACCUSED: These were Aseemanand, Devendra Gupta, Chandrashekhar Leve, Lokesh Sharma, Mukesh Vasani, Bharat Mohan Lal Ratishwar, Sandeep Dange, Ramchandra aka Ramji Kalsangra, Sunil Joshi, Bhavesh Bhai Patel, Suresh Nair, Harshad Solanki and Mehul aka Mafat Bhai aka Maheshbhai Gohil. Nair, Dange and Kalsangra were declared absconding; Joshi is dead.

According to NIA chargesheets, the accused, under the ideological tutelage of Aseemanand and operational leadership of Ioshi, decided to avenge attacks on Hindu temples by targeting Muslim-dominated places in bomb attacks. They allegedly chose Delhi's Jama Masjid, Ajmer Dargah, Samjhauta Express train, Malegaon and Mecca Masjid in a meeting held in 2006 in Valsad, Gujarat.

According to the chargesheets, Dange and Kalsangra procured explosives and fabricated two bombs, only one of which exploded; Gupta arranged for SIM cards and mobile phones that were used as timer devices; and Lokesh Sharma ferried the explosives. Leve allegedly played a role in hiding the mobiles



AJMER DARGAH BLAST, 2007: Two convicted

MECCA MASJID BLAST, 2007: All accused acquitted

while Ratishwar gave financial support and provided shelter to the others. The rest were charged with various roles from fabrication of the bombs to their planting.

According to the chargesheet, most of these accused were also involved in the Mecca Masjid blast and the bombs at the two sites were of the same make.

STATUS: This was the first among these cases in which trial was completed. The trial began in June 2014. On March 8, 2017, a special court in Jaipur convicted RSS *pracharaks* Gupta and Patel — the only one among these cases in which the prosecution secured a conviction and later sentenced them to life imprisonment. The court acquitted Aseemanand as well as Harshad Solanki, Leve, Vasani, Lokesh, Mehul and Ratishwar, giving them the benefit of the doubt. The case saw 26 of 149 witnesses turning hostile. While the trial was on. NIA's special public prosecutor Ashwani Sharma said in an interview that the NIA was not protecting its witnesses the way the CBI does.

Mecca Masjid blasts

On May 18, 2007, during Friday afternoon prayers, a bomb exploded inside the mosque, killing nine people and injuring 58. During the probe, two more bombs, unexploded, were recovered. Initially, Hyderabad police detained several Muslim men on suspicion of a jihadi terror group being involved but did not make any no arrests. The case was later handed over to the CBI which, in December 2010, filed a chargesheet against two people

in Nampally court in Hyderabad. In April 2011, the case was handed over to the NIA, which has filed three chargesheets since, identifying 10 accused, including those chargesheeted by the CBI.

THE ACCUSED: These were Aseemanand, Devendra Gupta, Lokesh Sharma, Ratishwar, Dange, Kalsangra, Sunil Joshi, Rajendhar Chowdary, Tejram Parmar and Amith Chowhan. According to the NIA, during meetings from 1999 to 2006, all the accused had entered into a criminal conspiracy to respond to attacks on Hindu temples. These meetings were allegedly held at Kumbh Mela, Ujjain, in 2004, Shabari Dham during 2005-06 and Takur Garh, Valsad. Aseemanand allegedly insisted that "Bomb ka jawab bomb se dena hain". In the meeting at Valsad, Joshi said he had

procured SIM cards and mobile phones with the help of Gupta for using them in IEDs as timers and also for using the same for their mutual communication, according to the chargesheet. At the end of 2006, Kalsangra allegedly collected customised shells from a transport office while coming from Bhopal to Dewas. The bombs, allegedly prepared at Manvata Nagar, Indore, were triggered by using mobile phones with SIM cards as timers.

STATUS: On February 13, 2014, the NIA special court in Namapally framed charges against the accused and summons were issued to 72 witnesses. The trial began only in 2016. On April 16, 2018, a special court in Hyderabad acquitted all the accused.

Gupta, who was among those acquitted had been convicted in the Ajmer case based on the same evidence. He had allegedly bought the SIM cards used in the IEDs; SIM cards from the same set were used in the two blasts.

Of the 266 witnesses listed, 66 did not support the prosecution case. Among them was Lt Col Prasad Purohit, an accused in the 2008 Malegaon blast case and alleged to be part of the group of conspirators in these cases.

Of the other three cases allegedly involv-

The other 3 cases

ing radical Hindu groups, the NIA closed the Modasa blast case in May 2015, while trial in the other two — the two Malegaon blast cases — is yet to begin. In both the 2006 and the 2008 Malegaon blast cases, multiple chargesheets have been filed by the Maharashtra ATS, CBI and NIA. The accused include Sadhvi Pragya Singh Thakur, Lt Col Purohit and Aseemanand.

The 2008 blast case hit a controversial note when the NIA exonerated Sadhvi Pragya Singh Thakur of all charges in its chargesheet. This was months after special public prosecutor Rohini Salian told The Indian Express in an interview that the NIA had put pressure on her to go slow in the case. The court, however, rejected the NIA's views on Thakur and arraigned her as an accused under Unlawful Activities Prevention Act.

Maharashtra ATS and CBI chargesheeted nine Muslim men, the NIA blamed a group led by Sunil Joshi as being behind the blast.

In the 2006 Malegaon blast, where the

THIS WORD MEANS: GOLAN HEIGHTS

Where are they, and why do they matter?

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE NEW DELHI, MARCH 24

PRESIDENT DONALD TRUMP has said "it is time for the US to fully recognize Israel's sovereignty over the Golan Heights". What is this area, who lives here, and why is it contentious?

The land

The Golan Heights are a fertile plateau of around 1,300 sq km area lying to the north and east of the Sea of Galilee, which Israel seized from Syria during the Six-Day War of 1967, and has occupied ever since. The Golan overlooks both Israel and Syria, and offers a commanding military vantage. Syrian forces made an abortive bid to take it back during the Yom Kippur War of 1973; the 1974 ceasefire agreement, however, left most of the area in Israeli hands. In 1981, Israel passed the Golan Heights Law, which extended Israel's "laws, jurisdiction and administration" to the area, in effect annexing it. A UNSC resolution declaring the imposition of Israel's law "in the occupied Syrian Golan Heights... null and void and without international legal effect" has not changed



the situation on the ground, although the frontier has not seen major hostilities for more than 40 years. In 2000, Israel and Syria made

a failed attempt at negotiating a settlement.

The inhabitants

Around 50,000 people are estimated to live on the Golan, divided almost equally between Israeli Jewish settlers and Arabicspeaking Druze people of Syrian origin, who follow a monotheistic Abrahamic religion related to Ismaili Shia Islam. The Druze have remained loyal to the regimes of Bashar al-Assad and his father Hafez al-Assad over the decades, and refused Israeli citizenship.

Trump's move

Trump's tweet marked a reversal of decades of US policy, which has refused to condone the Israeli occupation of Golan, and urged that the dispute must be resolved diplomatically. The President has earlier recognised the disputed city of Jerusalem as Israel's capital, moved the American Embassy there from Tel Aviv, and stopped aid to Palestinian refugees. Last year, the US voted against a ritual annual UN resolution condemning Israel's continued seizure of the Golan Heights. Because nothing is happening on Golan and nobody expects Israel to pull back in any case, Trump's tweet does not change anything — what it does, however, is extend legitimacy to Israel's position, and boost Israeli Prime Minister Binyamin Netanyahu's hardline agenda as he seeks a fifth term in the April 9 elections.

Strategic theatre

Israel argues that Golan is a security buffer against the war in Syria, and Netanyahu has said that if Israel were to withdraw, it would have "Iran [which backs Syria's Assad and has vowed Israel's destruction on the shores of the Sea of Galilee". In 2014, rebel forces fighting the Assad regime took control of the Quneitra province on the Syrian side of Golan, but government forces took back the territory last year, and began facilitating the return of UN troops to their positions. The United Nations Disengagement Observer Force (UNDOF) and United Nations Truce Supervision Organisation (UNTSO) have camps and posts in the area. The Israeli and Syrian armies are separated by a 400 sq km demilitarized zone which neither side can enter. There is a solitary crossing which, before the beginning of the civil war in Syria, was used by UN forces, Druze civilians, and to transport agricultural produce.

In Abel Prize triumph, a statement against gender gap in mathematics

KABIR FIRAQUE

NEW DELHI, MARCH 24

LASTWEEK, American mathematician Karen Uhlenbeck won the Abel Prize, one of the top international honours in the subject. It is important not only as recognition of her work but also as a statement in a field traditionally been associated with men.

Women in mathematics

History has several examples of outstanding women mathematicians. Hypatia (370-415) of Alexandria remains legendary even though her entire work is lost. So does Emmy Noether of Germany for her work in abstract algebra and physics, while Ada Lovelace is credited with writing the first ever computer program. The Hollywood film *Hidden Figures* (2016) shows the gender and racial struggles of three black women prodigies in NASA of

the 1960s — Katherine Johnson who calculated flight trajectories for NASA missions, mathematician Dorothy Vaughan and engineer Mary Jackson.

Yet the number of women achievers compares poorly with those for men. Before Uhlenbeck, 16 male mathematicians had won the annual Abel Prize. The Fields Medal, awarded once every four years, has had 60 recipients since 1936, and only one of these mathematicians has been a woman. Maryam Mirzakhani of Iran, who won the Medal in 2014, died in 2017. The Chern Medal has been presented to three male mathematicians in 2010, 2014 and 2018.

Women have had a low representation in the science Nobel Prizes too. Of the 607 Nobel Prizes awarded to 604 Laureates in Physics, Chemistry and Medicine, 20 have been won by 19 women. The double Laureate is Marie Curie, the only scientist, male or female, to win in two different sub-

AWARDED IN THE SCIENCES



TO SHOW
Karen
Uhlenbeck,
Abel Prize
winner.
ahelnrize no

Prize	Subject	Winners	Women
Abel Prize	Mathematics	17	1
Fields Medal	Mathematics	60	1
Chern Medal	Mathematics	3	0
Nobel Prize	Physics	209*	3**
Nobel Prize	Chemistry	180*	5**
Nobel Prize	Medicine	216	12
*209 individuals h	ave won 210 Physics Pr	izes;180 have won	181

Chemistry Prizes ** Marie Curie won separately in Physics and Chemistry

jects (Physics and Chemistry).

Confidence gap

Various studies have been done on the gender gap in mathematics-oriented fields. An analysis of PISA scores by OECD in 2015

found that the difference in maths scores between high-achieving boys and girls was the equivalent of about half a year at school. But when comparing boys and girls who reported similar levels of self-confidence and anxiety about mathematics, the gender gap in per-

formance disappeared. In other words, when girls were more anxious about maths, they tended to perform poorly. In 2017, a study published by American

sociologists in Frontiers in Psychology found that beliefs in mathematical ability also shapes choices in higher education. Although girls are excelling in maths at school, boys still believe they can do better.

In India, the proportion of women in higher education courses in mathematics decreases as the degree pursued gets higher. The latest All India Survey on Higher Education, published last year, shows that women actually outnumbered men in PG courses (92,000 to 63,000) in maths in 2017-18. The gap narrowed in M Phil (2,700 to 2,100) before women were overtaken by men in PhD Courses (1,700 to 2,100).

Uhlenbeck's work

Uhlenbeck, 76, is acclaimed for her work

with partial differential equations, which she has used to solve problems in geometry and topology. Her breakthrough work, with mathematician Jonathan Sacks, was on "minimal surfaces", such as the spherical surface taken by a soap bubble. This becomes complicated when additional dimensions are added, such as soap film forming around a wire; Uhlenbeck's work covered minimisation problems in higher dimensions. Her diverse fields include gauge theory, which has applications in particle physics and general relativity.

The Abel Prize, first awarded in 2003, includes an award of 6 million kroner (about \$700,000). It is named after Swedish mathematician Niels Henrik Abel (1802-29). The International Mathematical Union and the European Mathematical Society nominate members of the Abel Committee, who in turn recommend recipients to The Norwegian Academy of Science and Letters, which awards the Abel Laureate.



Twelve years later

The Madras High Court has prevented a miscarriage of justice in the 'Dinakaran' case

Tt is not often that political hooliganism is punished in a court of law. In cases that result in loss of life, in-L vestigation and prosecution tend to become inescapable - but the trials are often derailed because of the nexus between party heavyweights and police officers who lean on witnesses to turn hostile. It is therefore gratifying that the Madras High Court has broken the mould to set aside the perverse acquittal of all those involved in the attack on the Madurai office of Dinakaran, a Tamil daily, in 2007 and sentenced nine of them to life. Three persons were killed due to suffocation after parts of the office were set on fire by a mob owing allegiance to M.K. Alagiri, elder son of M. Karunanidhi and then a powerful Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam leader in the temple city. They were angry over an opinion poll carried in the daily, which is part of the Sun Group of Kalanithi Maran, grandnephew of M. Karunanidhi and brother of former Union Minister Dayanidhi Maran. The poll had claimed that Mr. Alagiri was less popular than his brother M.K. Stalin, who now leads the DMK after Karunanidhi's death in 2018. While the initial reaction from the media group and the press fraternity was one of anger and outrage, the cause for justice substantially failed after a patch-up between the feuding sections of the family. Even while the investigation was transferred to the CBI, the political system was working to save the party's hirelings. Most witnesses turned hostile, the trial judge rejected even photographic and videographic evidence on technical grounds, and the CBI failed to bring home the guilt of the assailants.

The High Court has noted that among the eye-witnesses who shied away from deposing in favour of the prosecution were Dinakaran's own reporters and photographers, other journalists who covered the event and many police officers who were at the spot while the protest was turning violent and dozens of party cadre were gathering there with lethal intent. It has made a dark but possibly apposite comparison with the Best Bakery case, in which a key witness turned hostile and it was later revealed she had lied out of fear for her life. The Bench has pulled up the trial judge for "manifest perversity" in his treatment of evidence, especially in rejecting on flimsy grounds the testimony of forensic experts that there was no sign of manipulation or tampering in the photographs and footage presented in court. It was well known to the public that Mr. Alagiri wielded enormous clout at that time and that his supporters were involved in the incident. It is indicative of the atmosphere of intimidation that prevailed that even journalists who covered the incident denied their presence. While the court has prevented a miscarriage of justice in this case, it is a sordid truth that the state of affairs may continue in future too, unless amoral political leaders and pliant police officers mend themselves.

A different league

In its 12th iteration, the IPL fields concerns about its place in the cricket calendar

The Indian Premier League, since its launch in 2008, has become a sporting indulgence every summer. Cricketing purists may sneer at Twenty20s and their lack of historical resonance, but there is no denying the IPL's popularity and resilience. The 12th edition, which started in Chennai on Saturday with an easy victory for the holders Chennai Super Kings, will span diverse venues for the 60 matches. Despite the elections being held through seven phases during April-May, the Board of Control for Cricket in India has ensured that every franchise gets its rightful share of home and away matches. But besides the immediacy of sixes, dot-balls and ecstatic fans, the current IPL has to deal with the elephant in the room. It is expected to conclude on May 12, and immediately the biggest tournament in the International Cricket Council calendar awaits the players. The World Cup starts on May 30, with host England taking on South Africa at the Oval. India will open its campaign with the game against South Africa at Southampton on June 5. But there isn't enough time for the Indian team to recuperate.

Virat Kohli's men have been playing without a break over the last few months, with tours of Australia and New Zealand followed by the limited overs series against visiting Australians. They then plunged into the IPL, and now with the World Cup looming large, that old debate of club vs country has bubbled up again, and rightly so. There are fears about Indian and overseas cricketers picking up injuries in the league, which might scupper their World Cup plans. The national selectors, who are keeping an eye out for some surprise talent emerging in the league, are hoping that the core group of established stars will remain fit for cricket's showpiece event. There is speculation about the BCCI and the Indian team management having had a word with team-owners over workload management so that key players don't suffer a burnout. Yet, there is no clarity about this plan, and the fear of fatigue derailing the cricketers is a genuine one. Amidst this confusion, the IPL still presents an opportunity for a few Indian players to press their claims to be on the flight to London. The Australian duo of Steve Smith and David Warner, who are coming back after a one-year ban following the ball-tampering crisis at Cape Town in South Africa last March, are also keen to excel for Rajasthan Royals and Sunrisers Hyderabad, respectively, and claim their Baggy Green caps. Strangely, the domestic tournament with an international flavour, as Rahul Dravid described the IPL, continues to have no space for Pakistan cricketers, raising questions about its organising principles. Politics and commerce have reinforced each other to make an even deeper impact on the IPL.

Another look at fiscal transfers

The time has come to amend the Constitution to fix the proportion of shareable taxes for the States



C. RANGARAJAN

Tederalism is an old concept. Its origin is mainly political. It is well known that the efficiency of a government depends on, among other factors, its structure. In large countries, it has been felt that only a federal structure can efficiently meet the requirements of people from different regions. Underlying this proposition is the premise that preferences vary across regions.

In our country during the independence struggle, provincial autonomy was regarded as an integral part of the freedom movement. However, after Independence, several compulsions, which included defence and internal security, led to a scheme of federalism in which the Centre assumed greater importance. Also in the immediate period following Independence, when the Centre and all States were ruled by the same party and when many of the powerful provincial leaders migrated to the Centre, the process of centralisation gathered further momentum. Economic planning at a nation-wide level helped this centralising process.

Fiscal federalism

Fiscal federalism is the economic counterpart to political federalism. Fiscal federalism is concerned with the assignment on the one hand of functions to different levels of government, and with appropriate fiscal instruments for carrying out these functions on the other. It is generally believed that the Central government must provide national public goods that render services to the entire population. A typical example cited is defence. Sub-national govern-

ments are expected to provide goods and services whose consumption is limited to their own jurisdictions. An equally important question in fiscal federalism is the determination of the specific fiscal instruments that would enable the different levels of government to carry out their functions. This is the 'tax-assignment problem' which is much discussed in the literature on the subject. In determining the taxes that are best suited for use at different levels of government, one basic consideration is in relation to the mobility of economic agents, goods and resources. It is generally argued that the de-centralised levels of government should avoid non-benefit taxes and taxes on mobile units.

This implies that the Central government should have the responsibility to levy non-benefit taxes and taxes on mobile units or resources. Building these principles into an actual scheme of assignment of taxes to different levels of government in a Constitution is indeed very difficult. Different Constitutions interpret differently what is mobile and what is purely a benefit tax. For example, in the United States and Canada, both Federal and State governments have concurrent powers to levy income tax. On the contrary, in India, income tax is levied only by the Central government though shared with the States. Recognising the possibility of imbalance between resources and responsibilities, many countries have a system of inter-governmental transf-

The Indian Constitution lays down the functions as well as taxing powers of the Centre and States. It is against this background that the issues relating to the correction of vertical and horizontal imbalances have been addressed by every Finance Commission, taking into account the prevailing set of circumstances. However, Central transfers to States are not confined to the re-



commendations of the Finance Commissions. There are other channels such as those through the Planning Commission until recently as well the discretionary grants of the Central government.

In 2010-11, in the combined revenue receipts of the Centre and States, the share of the Centre was 64.68%. After transfer, the share came down to 40.20%. In the case of the States, their share before transfers was 35.32%. After the receipts of transfers the share of States went up to 59.80%. Thus the shares got reversed. In 2016-17, the share of the Centre after transfers was 33.37% and that of the States was 66.63%. In the case of total expenditures, the share of the Centre in 2014-15 was 41.14% and that of the States was 58.86%. The ultimate position appears reasonable. The question may be on the mode of transfers.

New developments

The Fourteenth Finance Commission has broken new ground in terms of allocation of resources. One of its major recommendations has been to increase the share of tax devolution to 42% of the divisible pool. This is a substantial increase by almost 10 percentage points. The commission has argued that this does not necessarily affect the overall transfers but only enhances the share of unconditional transfers. It is true that Centrally sponsored schemes, which

may have 'encroached' on the territory of States. Over years, the performance of the Central government is judged not only on the basis of actions taken which fall strictly in its jurisdiction but also on initiatives undertaken in the areas which fall in the Concurrent and even State lists. Centralised planning has something to do with it. Today, the Central government is held responsible for everything that happens, including, for example, agrarian distress. In viewing the responsibilities of the Centre and States we must take a broader view than what is stipulated in the Constitution.

On the allocation of unconditional transfers, two questions arise. The first is to determine the total transfers that need to be made, while the second is whether all transfers must be done by the Finance Commission alone. Finance Commissions prior to the Fourteenth recognised that some transfers were being made by the Planning Commission; this was kept in mind while deciding on tax devolution. By the time the Fourteenth Finance Commission was required to submit its report, a fundamental change in the institutional framework had occurred.

The Planning Commission was replaced by the NITI Aayog, which was simply a think-tank with no powers of resource allocation. In this context perhaps what the Fourteenth Finance Commission did was justifiable. Of course, the Fourteenth Finance Commission did what it did because the terms of reference had not made any distinction between Plan and non-Plan revenue expenditures. The moot question is about what happens if any future government revives the Planning Commission with financial powers. This will put the Central government in a

Some suggestions Perhaps the time has come for the Constitution to be amended and

that should go to the States fixed at the desired level. The shareable tax pool must also include cesses and surcharges as these have sharply increased in recent years. Fixing the ratio at 42% of shareable taxes, including cesses and surcharges, seems appropriate. Another possible route is to follow the practice in the U.S. and Canada: of allowing the States to levy tax on personal income, with some limitations. Since one of the concerns is that resources do not match functions, this may be a way out. But, as in the U.S., the scheme should be simple and ride on federal income tax, that is, just a levy on the income assessed by federal authorities. The freedom given to the States must be limited. It is important to note that the levy by the Centre and States together should be reasonable.

Also once this power is given to the States, the transfers from the Centre need adjustment. As far as India is concerned, this is an area which needs a fuller study. Adoption of any one of these alternatives will avoid friction between the Centre and the States. Perhaps the first alternative of constitution-

ally fixing the ratio is the easiest. There are issues relating to horizontal distribution. Equity considerations have dominated the allocations. This is as it should be. However, the ability of bringing about equalisation across States in India has limitations. Even the relatively richer States have their own problems and they feel 'cheated' because of the overuse of the equity criterion. An appropriate balancing of criteria is needed particularly in the context of the rise in unconditional transfers. Of course, appropriate balancing is what all Finance Commissions are concerned about.

C. Rangarajan is former Chairman of the Economic Advisory Council to the Prime Minister and former Governor, Reserve

Parallel tracks on trade ties

Economic diplomacy can still prevent the removal of the U.S.'s trade benefits to Indian exports



ould it be that the strained ✓ dia and the U.S. are an outcome not of the U.S.'s domestic politics but of India's? The timeline of U.S. President Donald Trump's decision to rescind the benefits Indian exports enjoy under the Generalised System of Preferences (GSP) programme is revealing.

E-commerce rules

It begins with the change in foreign direct investment (FDI) rules in India. The tightened norms that came into effect on February 1 place several restrictions on ecommerce companies, including Walmart-owned Flipkart and

The unexpected changes came after Walmart, the world's largest retailer, paid over \$16 billion to acquire Flipkart last May. To raise the resources needed, Walmart put one of its biggest international operations, Asda, on the block for \$10 billion.

The calculations behind the \$500 billion retail giant's investment in India have gone awry after the change in the FDI rules. The

Walmart family are close friends of Mr. Trump. On February 20, Walmart CEO Doug McMillon said the company was disappointed that New Delhi had changed the FDI rules without consultation and hoped for a more collaborative process going forward. Days later, on March 4, Mr. Trump notified Congress of his intention to slap punitive action on India by ending preferential treatment for the country's exports.

Walmart has a reputation for killing small retail businesses with ultra-low prices, a concern that influenced New Delhi's decision to tighten the FDI rules. While the FDI policy might be irreversible, economic diplomacy can still defuse the situation and prevent the removal of the GSP benefits that will not take effect for until at least 60 days after the notifications to the Indian Congress and government.

The simmering tensions go back to April 2018 when the United States Trade Representative (USTR) launched a review of New Delhi's eligibility for the GSP programme. Tensions escalated in June, as New Delhi, in response to Washington's 25% tariff hikes on steel and 10% levies on aluminium, immediately accused it of unfair trade practices, and, seeking to signal a muscular approach, threatened retaliatory tariffs on \$235 million of U.S. imports.

Bilateral talks since then have failed to ease tensions and India



now stares at losing the GSP benefits. Foreign Secretary V.K. Gokhale returned empty-handed from Washington recently.

India's GSP status came under review after the U.S. medical and dairy industries complained that New Delhi is not providing them "equitable and reasonable access to its market". India's data localisation policies deepened the rift.

New Delhi's use of price control measures against imported drugs and medical devices has grown noticeably. Cardiac stents were put under price controls in February 2016 and knee implants attracted similar action in August 2017, after which trade margins for many medical devices are sought to be capped.

U.S. manufacturers complain that in doing so, New Delhi has meted out differential treatment to them *vis-à-vis* domestic players.

For domestic companies, the price to distributors is considered while in the case of global manufacturers the base proposed is the landed costs of imports. The U.S. medical device industry wants price controls on cardiac stents and knee implants withdrawn and would like products to be treated on parity with domestic medical devices through a trade margin rationalisation regime.

New Delhi has preferred to act against unreasonable price markups through price controls when exactly the same outcomes can be achieved through other types of policy alternatives. The USTR is right in pointing out that price capping counts as a trade barrier. New Delhi can easily address the concerns by replacing price controls with trade margin rationalisation measures, applying them equally to domestic and foreign manufacturers.

India is the largest beneficiary of the GSP, the largest and oldest U.S. trade preference programme. The GSP is aimed at promoting economic development by allowing duty-free entry of products from designated beneficiary countries. Nearly 4,800 different goods from 129 designated countries enjoy duty-free access under the programme.

The immediate loss for India is preferential access at zero or minimal tariffs to the U.S. in case of about 1,900 products, or about half of all Indian products.

New Delhi has downplayed the impact of the proposed withdrawal of benefits, saying exports worth \$190 million only are likely to be affected and that the tariff advantage was 4% or more on only 2,165 of a total of 18,770 tariff lines.

Estimating losses

This is an underestimation. The loss to the economy would be much larger than what the Department of Commerce is projecting. While it is true that the actual tariff advantage from the programme works out to a meagre \$190 million, which is just 0.4% of the total Indian exports to the U.S., the actual loss will not be limited to the immediate tariff advantage.

Indian exporters are competing for market share in the U.S. with other low-income countries in industries where margins are wafer thin. Even minor price hikes can drive significant drops in export volumes. In which case, losing GSP access will be costlier than the projections.

Among price-sensitive products eligible for higher GSP benefits that risk losing out to competition from other countries are processed food, leather products, plastic products, building materials, tiles, hand tools, engineering goods, cycles and made-ups such as pillow/cushion sleeves and woven women's apparel.

Many of these are the very industries the new e-commerce FDI rules seek to protect.

Puja Mehra is a Delhi-based journalist

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

Strong, swift, sensitive A woman leader has quietly pathbreaking actions,

drawn attention to herself with her quick, firm and breaking stereotypes of what a leader is ('World' page - standalone picture, "Peace ambassador", March 24). Jacinda Ardern, New Zealand's Prime Minister, has exhibited wisdom and immense strength after the Christchurch attacks. There is another subtle message: those leaders whose intent it is to take advantage of religious conflicts should learn from her. FARZANA

At what cost? Whatever may be the compulsions for the Indian

National Congress, its indication that Congress president Rahul Gandhi is likely to enter the fray from a Lok Sabha constituency in the south – possibly Wayanad in Kerala – sends out confusing and wrong signals ("Rahul likely to contest from south too", March 24). There is nothing to prove as the sociopolitical character of Wayanad has always made the seat a safe bet for the UDF. Here, the influence of the BIP and other forces that subscribe to the 'Moditva' ideology is minimal. Such a move would also reveal the skewed priority of the Congress in the national perspectives *vis-à-vis* the fight against the common threat'. If he does stand

from here, Mr. Gandhi's win is a foregone conclusion; it would be a pyrrhic victory of sorts. AYYASSERI RAVEENDRANATH,

■ It would give the impression that the Congress

has admitted defeat even before the first vote is cast. The BJP can easily portray Mr. Gandhi as a general in full retreat from the Hindi heartland to the south, where the BIP's electoral prospects are quite dim. If the Congress is destined to form a non-BIP coalition government, the Left is supposed to support it. So, the Congress's State leadership wants its president to inflict damage on its putative supporter.

Kerala because of the supposedly electrifying presence of Mr. Gandhi, it will be a pyrrhic victory. ABDUL ASSIS P.A.,

Captivating and classic The magical vision of the elusive, striped cat has always floated before my eves ever since I became a Jim Corbett fan. I had the opportunity to serve in the Kumaon region of Uttarakhand (1997-2000) and was always on the lookout for the magnificent tiger while travelling through Ramnagar, Mohan, Molekhal, Manila, Bhikiasen, Masi, Ranikhet and Almora. One day, at Manila, the local canine hero which used to visit our bank branch

heard people discussing it the next day, that the 'baagh' had come the previous night. Whenever stories of mananimal conflicts crop up, one thinks of Jim Corbett ('Magazine', "The legends of Carpet Sahib", March 24). M.V. RADHAKRISHNAN, Avvanthole, Thrissur, Kerala

Three empty stands The standalone picture ('Sport' page, "Full and empty!" March 24) said it all

three deserted stands at

Chepauk and the equivalent of 12,000 seats. I am not sure what the "legal reasons" are but I am sure that there is a way out. The stands also look to be structurally sound. I say this as a senior citizen, 82, having captained the 2nd division TNCA league in the 1960s. Why are the sportloving masses of Chennai not protesting? SHANKER MANGADU,

MORE LETTERS ONLINE:

CORRECTIONS & CLARIFICATIONS:

"Congress, AINRC and MNM candidates file papers" (March 23, 2019, some editions) incorrectly referred to M.A.S. Subramanian as an A*mma Makkal Munnetra Kazhagam* (AMMK) candidate. Actually, he is contesting on behalf of the MNM (Makkal Needhi Maiam).

"In the footsteps of NTR, Chiranjeevi and Jayalalithaa" (March 21, 2019, some editions) erroneously said that Chiranjeevi won the Assembly elections in 1999. It should have been 2009.

The Readers' Editor's office can be contacted by Telephone: +91-44-28418297/28576300;

Even if the Congress sweeps

suddenly disappeared. I

Disinformation is everywhere in India

It is not only social media that is responsible for it, but also news media and some politicians



RASMUS KLEIS NIELSEN

With the Lok Sabha elections coming up, it is critically important that Indians have access to credible and trustworthy information before they vote. The problem is that many do not feel they do. In a brand new survey of English-language Internet users in India conducted by the University of Oxford, we have found that a majority of the respondents are concerned with whether the news they come across online is real or fake.

Who can blame them? After the Pulwama attack, social media and messaging apps were flooded with false and misleading content as people tried to make sense of the horrible violence. As Trushar Barot, a former BBC journalist who leads Facebook's integrity initiatives in India, tweeted, "I've never seen anything like this before – the scale of fake content circulating on one story."

Some of this was ordinary people sharing misinformation in good faith, but much of it was not. As the Central Reserve Police Force noted a few days after losing 40 men in the attack, "It has been noticed that on social media some miscreants are trying to circulate fake pictures of body parts of our Martyrs to invoke hatred while we stand united. Please DO NOT circulate/share/like such photographs or posts." Even as some news media made the occasional misstep and amplified some of this disinformation, other journalists and fact-checkers were working overtime to identify and debunk some of the worst examples shared online, including fake or manipulated material trying to link Congress president Rahul Gandhi and Congress general secretary in-charge of eastern Uttar Pradesh, Priyanka Gandhi Vadra, to

The heart of the problem

Social media and messaging apps are thus at the heart of the disinformation problems that India faces. Of our survey respondents, 52% say they get news via Facebook, and the same percentage say they get news via are concerned about what they consider to be poor journalism (stories that respondents consider marred by factual mistakes, inaccuracies, etc.). And 50% say they are concerned by hyperpartisan political content,



WhatsApp, which is owned by Facebook. With an estimated quarter billion Indians having come online since the last general election, companies like Facebook, Google and Twitter have become central parts of the Indian media environment, including the disinformation problems

But disinformation is not only a problem of social media and digital platforms. In our survey, strikingly, those who use Facebook and/or WhatsApp for news do not report higher levels of concern over whether the news they come across is real or fake than those who do not rely on them. It seems people are as concerned about information from news media as they are about information from social media. More detailed questions in our survey reveal a far more complex set of wider problems. At the heart of disinformation problems are stories that are completely made up for political or commercial reasons, to try to discredit rivals or make money from clickbait. Of our respondents, 51% say they are concerned about this problem. But strikingly, a similar number say they are concerned about what they consider to be poor journalism (stories that respondents consider marred by factual mistakes, inaccuracies, etc.). And 50% say they are concerned by

where facts are spun or twisted to push a particular agenda, whether from politicians, pundits or publishers.

So, when many Indians in the runup to the elections say they are concerned about what is real and what is fake on the Internet, this is clearly in part about social media and digital platforms. But unfortunately, it is also about some news media and some politicians who people see as part of the disinformation problems that India faces. It is only a few years ago that the Press Council of India said that "the phenomenon of 'paid news' has acquired serious dimensions", "goes beyond the corruption of individual journalists and media companies and has become pervasive, structured and highly organised." The Press Council concluded: "It is undermining democracy in India." Cobrapost's sting operation last summer, which exposed large media houses willing to peddle propaganda as news, demonstrates that some of these problems persist.

Low trust in institutions

Beyond the rise of digital media, the backdrop of disinformation problems in India is thus low trust in established institutions. Though there are some admirable exceptions, established institutions often seem to fail the people who rely on them. Other

studies have found low trust in politicians and political parties. Our own survey shows that just 36% of respondents feel they can trust most news most of the time, statistically indistinguishable from the 34% who say they trust news found via social media

Addressing the issues

What can be done do address these issues? It is clear that platform companies have much to do to improve their content moderation and contain disinformation. Facebook has announced that it currently has over 500 full-time employees and at least 3,500 external contractors who focus on election work, on top of the 30,000 people across the company focused on safety and security issues. (Given the fact that India accounts for more than 10% of the global user base of both Facebook and WhatsApp, and is growing rapidly, it would be good to know how many of these people are focused specifically on India.)

Similarly, it is troubling that some coordinated attempts to amplify and spread misleading and false information sometimes seem to emanate from major political parties and activists who support them. This ought to stop, and if it does not, has to be continuously and critically covered by independent journalists to ensure that people are aware of what is going on. Finally, it is clear that Indian news media has a lot of work to do if it wants to gain the trust of the Indian public. Many express high levels of trust in some individual brands, most notably major newspapers and some broadcasters. But many news media are not trusted.

In a situation where disinformation seems to be everywhere, and digital platforms, some politicians and some news media are intertwined in these problems, we can only hope that those news media which genuinely do stand out as providers of credible information are able to convince people that they provide exactly that – news that is worthy not only of people's attention, but also their trust.

Rasmus Kleis Nielsen is Director of the Reuters Institute for the Study of Journalism and Professor of Political Communication at the University of Oxford. Twitter: @rasmus_kleis

FROM THE READERS' EDITOR

Accountable to the public

There is a lot of pressure on legacy media now as unverified information is crowding social media



A.S. PANNEERSELVAN

During election time, there is a lot of pressure on legacy media, especially in this era of information overload. Some readers wonder why this column, which is primarily meant to address the requirements of both the print and online readers of *The Hindu*, also looks at the impact of social media on our information ecology. This is because information that crowds the social mediascape is often used to question mainstream

journalists.

Most WhatsApp forwards from people we know happen to be unconfirmed information and speculation. I often wonder why people compulsively forward messages that they themselves don't believe at times. On the other hand, journalism is an attempt to bear witness and provide news. The act of verification in journalism differentiates it from other sources of information. Even in this digital era, credible news organisations do not depend on copy-and-paste reporting. They try their best to refrain from becoming echo chambers.

Lies on Twitter

I am a social media sceptic, but I am on Twitter primarily to provide a quick forum for the readers to raise questions pertaining to *The Hindu*. I do examine complaints, immaterial of the route through which they reach us. Accuracy and fairness are the central themes of journalism, and legacy media tries to uphold these principles despite the multiple attacks from social media. On social media, a deliberate lie by a politically aligned personality gets amplified in an exponential manner. And some use these lies to question *The Hindu*.

The latest example is a tweet by Madhu Kishwar, editor of the journal, *Manushi*. Her tweet read: "DMK manifesto Page 112...People occupying encroached temple lands will be regularised and ownership transferred. Page 85...Encroached Waqf properties will be reclaimed and handed over to Wakf." After reading this tweet, those who are aligned

Margin %

0.0014%

0.0015%

0.0040%

97.1875%

91.8700%

86.8583%

Anantnag

Baramulla

Sikkim

SSP

with the ruling party at the Centre called and asked us why *The Hindu* has been silent on these crucial issues. The problem does not lie with *The Hindu* because the DMK manifesto was only 76 pages and was widely circulated both in English and Tamil. Can a newspaper buy such disinformation from a partisan social media activist at the cost of truth? Contrary to Ms. Kishwar's religiously polarising politics, the DMK's manifesto talks about functioning without prejudice towards any religion in the country.

When I explained this, some of Ms. Kishwar's apologists tried to invoke the DMK's 2016 manifesto for the Legislative Assembly elections to justify her outlandish claims. But a reading of the 2016 manifesto of the party does not reveal any preferential treatment for any religion. It talks about the party's commitment to

protect the assets belonging to various places of worship irrespective of the religion.

Dealing with problematic content

As The Hindu's Readers' Editor, I have always pointed out the failures within this newspaper, including inaccurate headlines and the dependence on anonymous sources while reporting. The editors of this newspaper have always exhibited a fair sense of propriety and humility by publicly apologising whenever there have been mistake. As journalists, we are accountable only to truth and not to those who wield power. I would like to request all those who derive their information only from social media to read an outstanding paper, 'The Impact of Newspaper Ombudsmen on Journalists' Attitudes', by David Pritchard of the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee. He diligently used data from a national survey of journalists to examine the difference between newspapers with ombudsmen and those without.

Recently, the Election Commission of India met with the representatives of The Internet and Mobile Association of India and various social media organisations to formulate a code of ethics for online platforms. Platforms such as Facebook, WhatsApp, Google, Twitter, ShareChat and ByteDance have agreed to a voluntary code, where the emphasis is on dealing with problematic content. Ms. Kishwar's tweet is a test for this new code.

readerseditor@thehindu.co.in

SINGLE FILE

Deconstructing addiction

The simple home truth is that love and work are all we need for a better life

 $\underline{\mathbf{MADHURIKA}}\ \mathbf{SANKAR}$



Acclaimed musician Sarah McLachlan sings in her addiction anthem Angel: "You are pulled from the wreckage of your silent reverie." She wrote the song inspired by the tragic death of the Smashing Pumpkins keyboardist, Jonathan Melvoin, in the 1990s. In recent years, the stories and statistics on addiction have only escalated in intensi-

ty and number. This can be attributed to several reasons, one of them being an increasingly socially disconnected world – and no, the number of friends you have on Facebook doesn't really count.

In the late 1970s, a series of controversial experiments, the Rat Park experiments, were conducted by Canadian psychologist Bruce Alexander. Their results, while widely debated, aimed to prove a seminal hypothesis: that substance abuse is an outcome of environmental isolation, and therefore can be overcome with reintegration of the afflicted individual into society in a meaningful way. While that was not proven as an absolute, there has been further research into this area of psychology that suggests that there indeed exists a positive correlation between environmental enrichment and positive recovery from substance abuse.

There is copious literature about the best approach to treating addiction, ranging from judgment ("what a weak and selfish person") to mollycoddling ("it's a disease; you're not responsible"). There are many psychotherapeutic and chemical-based treatment options as a result, which have, no doubt, been game changers in the field. But I have come to believe the simple home truth: that love and work are all we need for a better life.

First, we must dispense with nouns dealing with addiction. This means not calling a hooked individual an 'addict'. There is a permanency to that label that is discomfiting to anyone who wishes to clear the slate. And isn't that what life's journey is about – salvation? Evolving into a higher being? No pill is needed for that.

Which bore the question, what if there is unemployment

Which begs the question, what if there is unemployment and zero love? That's where self-love comes into play. That everything we need to become a complete, compassionate individual lies within us. This is a realisation that occurs with time, experience, age and having a few dark nights of the soul. But when that dark night passes, the world view that the individual has acquired is infinitely larger – and one that accommodates the humanity required to forgive ourselves and forget.

There is too much adventure and wonderment in this world to sit by the sidelines, no matter how branded a soul you may possess. Having the fortitude to try again is what redome to

The writer is based in Chennai



DATA POINT

Close calls

The Lok Sabha polls have witnessed wins with vote margins as low as 0.0014% and as high as 97%. A State-wise, party-wise look at the proportion of close calls. By Vignesh Radhakrishnan

The table shows the closest and widest win margins in Lok Sabha elections in terms of vote percentage since 1962

YearStateCandidatePartySeat1989A.P.K.RamakrishnaINCAnakapalli1998BiharSom MarandiBJPRajmahal1996GujaratGaekwad S. DilipsinhINCBaroda

State- and party-wise analysis

1989

1991

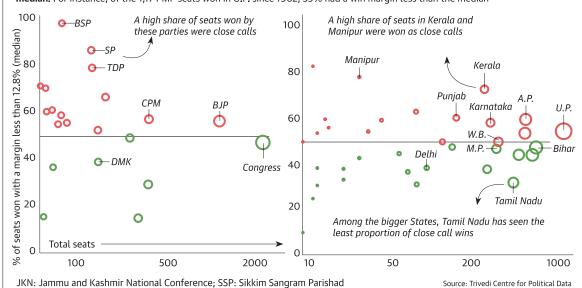
Sikkim

The median vote margin percentage in Lok Sabha polls is 12.18%. For the purpose of this graphic, if the win margin percentage in a seat is less than the median, then it is termed as a close call. The first graph shows the percentage of seats won by parties with a margin less than the median. For instance, of the 2,763 MP seats won by the Congress since 1962, 46.5% had a win margin less than the median. The second graph shows the percentage of seats in a State which witnessed a win margin less than the median. For instance, of the 1,174 MP seats won in U.P. since 1962, 55% had a win margin less than the median

P.L.Handoo

Saif Ud Din Soze

Dil Kumari Bhandari



FROM The Lindu. ARCHIVES

FIFTY YEARS AGO MARCH 25, 1969

PM wants Telangana's grievances removed

The Prime Minister Mrs. Indira Gandhi, is reported to have urged at the meeting of the Congress Parliamentary Party executive to-day [March 24] that proper steps should be taken to meet the situation arising from the Telengana agitation, as otherwise, she feared, it might have repercussions in other parts of the country. Mrs. Gandhi said she was ready to meet MPs from Andhra and discuss possible solutions. In her view, there was a sense of grievance among the people of Telengana and steps should be taken to remove that grievance. She is reported to have mentioned that the Swatantra Party was taking political advantage of the present situation. Mrs. Gandhi is expected to discuss all aspects of this problem with the Andhra Chief Minister, Mr. Brahmananda Reddy, when he comes here INew Delhil to-morrow.

A HUNDRED YEARS AGO MARCH 25, 1919.

Nature's Camouflage.

The word "camouflage" may be a new one, but the thing it means is as old as the hills! And, strangely enough, it is mostly protection from the aviators which it has sought from the beginning. The young grouse among the heather has only to lie still to be invisible even to the telescopic eye of the hovering hawk, so absolutely do its feathers tone with its surroundings. Visitors to the Natural History Museum at South Kensington may see many charmingly set Nature tableaux representing Nature's camouflage. Indeed, so good an artist is Nature that she gives the Arctic fox, the ermine and the ptarmigan the precious gift of turning white to match the all-prevailing snow when winter comes, so that their enemies cannot spot them easily. It is quite possible to examine a plant - say a rose-tree-in the garden with the utmost care and fail to spot a green catterpillar, and the same rose may be infested with green fly which yet require sharp eyes to see them. Doubtless the lovely wings of the butterflies are camouflage too, seeing that these insects

POLL CALL

Silent majority

The silent majority refers to a perceived large group of people who do not make their views known in public. The term was popularised by U.S. President Richard Nixon who believed that only a small minority was busy demonstrating against the U.S.'s involvement in the Vietnam War and that most Americans supported him. The term is often used by political analysts and politicians to caution against over-emphasising the depth of support for certain views simply on the basis of high-decibel campaigns or mobilisation.

MORE ON THE WEB

so often settle upon the petals of flowers.

Watch: A.R. Rahman in conversation with Lydian Nadhaswaram

http://bit.ly/LydianRahman



A ND-NDE

प्रवाह





कभी निजी क्षेत्र की सिरमौर विमानन कंपनी रही जेट एयरवेज की मौजूदा बदहाली चिंताजनक है, लेकिन पूरे विमानन क्षेत्र की दुर्दशा ज्यादा गंभीर है और इससे हवाई यात्रा के प्रति हाल के वर्षों में पैदा हुआ जबर्दस्त उत्साह खत्म हो सकता है।

विमानन क्षेत्र का हाल

दुर्योग ही है कि कभी देश में निजी क्षेत्र की सिरमौर विमानन कंपनी रही जेट एयरवेज का संकट उस वक्त गाढ़ा हुआ है, जब कमजोर रुपया और महंगे ईंधन तथा निजी कंपनियों द्वारा सस्ती विमान सेवा शुरू करने के कारण देश का पूरा विमानन क्षेत्र ही

हिचकोले खा रहा है। हाल के दिनों में विमानन क्षेत्र का संकट दो और वजहों से गहरा गया। एक तो पाकिस्तानी वायुक्षेत्र में उड़ान पर रोक लगने से उड़ानों पर असर पड़ा है, क्योंकि विमानों को अब ठहराव लेना पड़ रहा है। इसके अलावा बोइंग 737 मैक्स एयरक्राफ्ट की उडानों पर प्रतिबंध लगने का असर भी जेट और स्पाइसजेट जैसी कंपनियों पर पड़ा है। इन्हीं सब वजहों से पिछले काफी समय से आर्थिक दबाव झेल रही जेट

एयरवेज ने सात अंतरराष्ट्रीय मार्गों पर फेरों की संख्या घटाने के अलावा आगामी अप्रैल के अंत तक तेरह अंतरराष्ट्रीय मार्गों पर उडान स्थगित करने की घोषणा भी की है, जो उसके घनीभूत संकट के बारे में ही बताती है। दरअसल जेट की परेशानी तो एयर सहारा का अधिग्रहण करने के साथ ही शुरू हो गई थी। बाद में लागत बढ़ने और सस्ती विमान सेवाओं के शुरू होने पर इस पर खुद को टिकाए रखने की चुनौती थी, क्योंकि इसने प्रारंभ से ही अपनी सेवाओं का स्तर अंतरराष्ट्रीय विमानन कंपनियों जैसा बना रखा था। धीरे-धीरे विमानन क्षेत्र में जेट की हिस्सेदारी कम होती गई। आज इस पर करीब 8,200 करोड़ रुपये का कर्ज है और लगातार चार तिमाहियों में उसे घाटा हुआ है। नतीजतन रोजाना लगभग छह सौ उड़ान भरने वाली यह

विमानन कंपनी अब करीब सवा सौ उड़ानों तक सीमित हो गई है, इसके 17,000 कर्मचारियों के सामने अस्तित्व का संकट है और वेतन न मिलने के कारण इसके पायलट दूसरी कंपनियों में जाने की तैयारी कर रहे हैं। ज्यादा चिंतनीय यह है कि सिर्फ जेट नहीं, दसरी विमानन कंपनियों का भी हाल बदतर है, और सीटों की संख्या में आई जबर्दस्त कमी से सस्ती हवाई यात्रा की संभावना पर आघात लगा है। एयर इंडिया का हाल पहले से ही खराब है। इंडिगो भी पायलट की कमी से जूझ रही है और इस महीने तक इसने रोजाना पचास उडानें स्थगित कर रखी हैं। नतीजतन हवाई यात्रा चालीस से पंचास फीसदी महंगी हो गई है। ऐसे में, जेट एयरवेज समेत पूरे विमानन क्षेत्र को पटरी पर लाने के लिए गंभीर प्रयास की जरूरत है।

चुनावी मौसम में राजनेताओं की सुरक्षा



घोषणा हुई, प्रधानमंत्री की सुरक्षा बढ़ा दी गई। विशेष संरक्षा दल (एसपीजी) ने पुलिस महानिदेशक को एक गोपनीय पत्र के जरिये

'क्या करें' और 'क्या न करें' से संबंधित दिशानिर्देश जारी किए हैं। भारी खतरे के कारण एसपीजी ने अपनी सुरक्षा ड्रिल दोगुनी कर दी है। दिलचस्प बात यह है कि एसपीजी सुरक्षा पाने वाले तीन राजनेता 2019 का लोकसभा चुनाव लड़ रहे हैं। चुनाव के दौरान इन राजनेताओं की सुरक्षा एसपीजी के लिए एक बड़ी चुनौती है। ये तीन राजनेता हैं-प्रधानमंत्री नरेंद्र मोदी, सोनिया गांधी और कांग्रेस अध्यक्ष राहुल गांधी। कांग्रेस ने अगर मनमोहन सिंह को टिकट दिया, तो चुनाव में एसपीजी सुरक्षा प्राप्त नेताओं की संख्या चार हो सकती है। 2019 के लोकसभा चुनाव के दौरान अचक सरक्षा पाने वाले देश के शीर्ष सात व्यक्ति हैं-नरेंद्र मोदी, सोनिया गांधी, राहुल गांधी, प्रियंका गांधी वाड्रा, संघ प्रमुख मोहन भागवत, फारूक अब्दुल्ला और उमर अब्दुल्ला।

चुनाव के दौरान न केवल आम नागरिकों को बल्कि देश के अति महत्वपूर्ण नेताओं को सुरक्षा प्रदान करना भी केंद्र सरकार की जवाबदेही है। देश ने पद पर रहते हुए दो प्रधानमंत्रियों-इंदिरा गांधी और राजीव गांधी, को खोया है। उसके बाद से केंद्र सरकार का मंत्रिमंडीय सचिवालय और केंद्रीय गृह मंत्रालय किसी भी पदासीन प्रधानमंत्री की सुरक्षा में कोई कोताही नहीं

लोकसभा चुनाव तो छोड़िए, हाल ही में न्यूजीलैंड में जो हुआ है, उसे ध्यान में रखते हुए हमारी सुरक्षा एजेंसी ने प्रधानमंत्री की सुरक्षा दोगुनी कर दी है। नरेंद्र मोदी दुनिया के सातवें



आतंकवाद के बढते खतरों के बीच अति विशिष्ट व्यक्तियों की अचूक सुरक्षा चुनौतीपूर्ण है, तिस पर चुनावी मौसम में प्रधानमंत्री और दूसरे राजनेताओं की सुरक्षा तो और भी कठिन है।

आर राजगोपालन, वरिष्ठ पत्रकार

सबसे ज्यादा सरक्षा प्राप्त व्यक्ति हैं। इस मामले में पहले नंबर पर अमेरिकी राष्ट्रपति हैं। नरेंद्र मोदी 35 अंतरराष्ट्रीय आतंकी समूहों और आठ पाकिस्तानी आतंकी संगठनों के निशाने पर हैं। एसपीजी की कुल ताकत 5,600 है, और एक समय में 350 एसपीजी ब्लैक कैट कमांडो तैनात रहते हैं। इन सभी को सेना, बीएसएफ सीआरपीएफ और सीआईएसएफ से प्रतिनियुक्ति पर लाया जाता है। एसपीजी का

प्रमुख काम पदासीन व पूर्व प्रधानमंत्रियों तथा उनके परिजनों की सुरक्षा है। वर्ष 1988 में एसपीजी का गठन संसद के एक अधिनियम के तहत किया गया था। इसके संस्थापक निदेशक भारतीय पुलिस सेवा के अधिकारी डॉ. एस सब्रमणियन थे।

एसपीजी का प्रमुख काम हर मिनट प्रधानमंत्री की हर गतिविधि पर नजर रखना है। एसपीजी आतंकी हमलों, प्राकृतिक आपदाओं, राजनीतिक

म पत्रकारों के लिए चुनावों का

मौसम भारत दर्शन पर निकलने

का मौसम होता है। सो पिछले सप्ताह सुबह-सबेरे उठकर मै

सड़क के रास्ते मथुरा की तरफ निकल पड़ी। मैंने

मथुरा लोकसभा क्षेत्र चुना, क्योंकि हेमा मालिनी यहां से सांसद हैं। होली भी थी. तो सोचा कि इस प्राचीन

नगर की होली इतनी रंगीन है कि मेरे इस चुनावी दौरे

में थोड़ा रंग भी आ जाएगा। लेकिन मुझे अफसोस

के साथ कहना पड़ता है कि मथरा तक मैं पहुंची ही

नहीं, क्योंकि रास्ते में जिन गांवों में चुनाव के बारे में

पूछने के लिए रुकी, उनका हाल देखकर होली के

इस क्षेत्र को मैं जानती हूं। मैं जन्माष्टमी मनाने

वृंदावन आ चुकी हूं और बहुत बार मथ्रा भी आई

हूं। लेकिन पिछले कई वर्षों से इस तरफ आना नहीं

हुआ था, सो मुझे बिल्कल जानकारी नहीं थी कि

जहां कभी हरे-भरे खेत होते थे, वहां अब कचरे के

ढेर और गंदी, बेहाल बस्तियां हैं। मुझे मालूम नहीं था

कि जिन छोटे मंदिरों और मस्जिदों को देखकर दिल

खुश हो जाता था, वे भी छिप गए हैं गंदी बस्तियों के

भीतर। बेहाल, गंदी बस्तियों का सिलसिला शुरू

हुआ हरियाणा के पलवल शहर से। इस शहर के

बीच से नया हाइवे निकल रहा है, सो एक मलबे भरे

नाले ने उसको जैसे दो हिस्सों में बांट दिया है। उसके

आसपास जहां तक नजर जाती है, कूड़े के ढेर

दिखते हैं। इन ढेरों के बीच दिखते हैं रेस्टोरेंट, जिम

इस किस्म के दृश्य मथुरा जनपद के हर कस्बे में

दिखे और हाइवे से उतर कर मैं जब गांवों में गई. तो

सारे रंग फीके पड़ गए।

और दुकानें।

लिथुआनिया

आगे

समुहों यानी सभी तरह के खतरों से प्रधानमंत्री की रक्षा करती है। राज्यों में रैलियों के दौरान प्रधानमंत्री की सुरक्षा चार स्तरों पर होती है। एसपीजी प्रधानमंत्री के आंतरिक स्तर के घेरे की सुरक्षा करती है। उसके बाद दूसरे स्तर की सुरक्षा केंद्रीय रिजर्व पुलिस बल करता है। उसके बाद तृतीय स्तर की सुरक्षा की जिम्मेदारी खुफिया ब्यूरो के राज्यों की सहायक इकाइयों के जवान करते हैं और चौथे स्तर की सुरक्षा की जिम्मेदारी राज्य पुलिस की होती हैं। मान लीजिए, प्रधानमंत्री तमिलनाडु के दौरे पर जाते हैं, तो तमिलनाडु पुलिस प्रधानमंत्री के चौथे स्तर की जिम्मेदारी संभालेगी। प्रधानमंत्री की हर यात्रा के लिए पचास से साठ कारों की योजना बनाई जाती है, जिसका समन्वय एसपीजी द्वारा किया जाता है। एसपीजी के पास विशेष जैमर होता है, जो किसी भी विस्फोटक उपकरण के रिमोट कंट्रोल को बेअसर करता है। जैमर की निगरानी और देखभाल एसपीजी द्वारा की जाती है। प्रधानमंत्री जहां भी यात्रा पर जाएंगे, वायुसेना के विमान नई दिल्ली से बुलेट प्रूफ कार उन स्थानों पर ले जाएंगे।

प्रधानमंत्री मोदी की कार को एसपीजी के पांच जवान घेरे रहते हैं। उन्हें सुरक्षा एजेंसी से सख्त निर्देश है कि जब तक बाहर से सुरक्षा मंजूरी नहीं मिल जाती, प्रधानमंत्री अपनी कार का दरवाजा न खोलें। वे पांचों एसपीजी जवान बुलेट प्रूफ जैकेट पहने होते हैं। अगर उन्हें गोलीबारी या भीड़ का कोई खतरा होता है, तो ये जवान प्रधानमंत्री के लिए मानव दीवार बन जाते हैं। वे प्रधानमंत्री को चारों तरफ से घेर लेते हैं, ताकि उन्हें कोई छू भी न सके। एसपीजी के एक जवान के हाथ में काला हैंडबैग होता है। यह सामान रखने वाला कोई थैला नहीं, बल्कि इसमें

इलेक्ट्रिक शील्ड होती है, जो मात्र तीन सेकंड में ख़ुल जाएगी और प्रधानमंत्री को अपने घेरे में लेकर उनकी सुरक्षा करेगी। यह किसी भी रिमोट सेंसिंग से नियंत्रित हथियारों को बेअसर कर देगी। एसपीजी के जवान चारों तरफ देखते रहते हैं और उनकी घूमती आंखों को भीड़ या आतंकवादी न देखें सकें, इसलिए वे हमेशा अपनी आंखों पर काला चश्मा लगाए रखते हैं। काले चश्मे फैशन के लिए नहीं, उनकी आंखों की सुरक्षा के लिए होते हैं।

बढ़ते वैश्विक आतंकवाद के कारण नरेंद्र मोदी की रक्षा सुरक्षा एजेंसियों के लिए एक बड़ी चुनौती है। जिस तरह से आतंकवादी किसी भी व्यक्ति पर हमला करने के लिए नई तकनीक विकसित कर रहे हैं, हमारी सुरक्षा एजेंसियां भी विभिन्न प्रकार की तकनीकों और उपकरणों का विकास कर रही हैं, ताकि प्रधानमंत्री की सुरक्षा हो सके। दुनिया भर में सुरक्षा एजेंसियां बंदूकों जैमरों और बख्तरबंद गाड़ियों जैसे कई सुरक्षा उपकरणों का इस्तेमाल करती हैं।

एसपीजी अधिनियम के अनुसार प्रधानमंत्री किसी निजी वाहन में यात्रा नहीं कर सकते, उन्हें एसपीजी द्वारा मान्य वाहनों में ही यात्रा करनी होगी, जो बुलेट प्रूफ होता है। प्रधानमंत्री की यात्रा से तीन दिन पहले ही एसपीजी उनके लिए भारतीय वायुसेना के विमान से संबंधित स्थान पर बुलेट प्रूफं कार का विशेष प्रबंध करती है।

एसपीजी अधिनियम के अनुसार राष्ट्रपति उप राष्ट्रपति और प्रधानमंत्री की निजी सुरक्षा के लिए पुलिस महानिदेशक और पुलिस कमिश्नर सीधे उत्तरदायी होते हैं। यही कारण है कि एसपीजी हमेशा पुलिस महानिदेशक के साथ तालमेल बिठाती है। एसपीजी केवल प्रधानमंत्री की सुरक्षा करती है, जबकि राज्य पुलिस को प्रधानमंत्री को विरोधियों से भी बचाना होता है।



अतध्वीन

जब एक सिपाही मरता है, तो एक

दुनिया मरती है

बचपन में एक बार मेरे पिता राजा बलदेव सिंह (एक रियासत के राजा) को देखने गए, जो बीमार थे। उनके साथ मैं भी गया। वहां मेरी मुलाकात दो राजकुमारों से हुई, उन्होंने मुझे ु अपने खिलौने दिखाए और मुझसे पूछा, 'डॉक्टर के बेटे! तुम्हारे पास क्या है दिखाने को?' मैंने झेंपकर कहा, 'कुछ नहीं है'। उन्होंने मेरी जेब टटोलकर उसमें से सफेद हत्थी वाला चाकू निकाल लिया। जब मैंने अपना चाकू मांगा, तो राजकुमारों ने नही



दिया। मैंने उन्हें चांटा मार दिया। फिर वे दोनों

खैर, वह चाकू मुझे वापस नहीं मिला। यह तो मुझे बाद में मालूम हुआ कि लोग इसी तरह करते हैं। सफेद हत्थी वाला चाकू, कोई हसीन लड़की, जरखेज जमीन का टुकड़ा, सब इसी तरह हथिया लेते हैं। फिर वापस नही करते। इसी तरह तो जागीरदारी चलती है। मगर अच्छा नहीं किया उन लोगों ने। दो आने के चाकू के लिए उन्होंने मुझे अपना दुश्मन बना लिया। वह सफेद चाकू आज तक मेरे दिल में खुबा हुआ है। इसी तरह आज तक मैंने जो कुछ लिखा है, वह उसी सफेद चाकू को वापस लेने के लिए लिखा है। हालांकि मैंने भी अपनी जिंदगी में अनेक बार झुठी कसमे खाई हैं, अपने आप को और दूसरों को धोखे दिए हैं, खुशामदें की हैं, लड़ा हूं। मैं अपनी प्रशंसा से खुश हुआ हूं, दूसरों की प्रशंसा से जला हूं। लड़ाई से कोई संवेदनशील अदीब खुश नहीं होता...जब एक सिपाही मरता है, तो एक दुनिया मरती है। एक ख्याल मरता है, एक उम्मीद मरती है और एक किताब मरती है। साइंस की नई ईजाद, सच्चाई, सौंदर्य सब मर जाता है और दुनिया पहले से अधिक वीरान,

गरीब और कमजोर हो जाती है। -मशहूर साहित्यकार



बंगलूरू में ऑटो वालों की छवि बदली

मैं कर्नाटक में उडुपी जिले के एक छोटे-से गांव कुंडापुरा का रहने वाला हूं। स्कूली शिक्षा समाप्त करने के बाद करीब बारह-तेरह साल पहले मैं इंजीनियरिंग की पढ़ाई करने बंगलूरु आया था। बंगलूरु में रहते हुए यहां के ऑटो वाले के स्वभाव ने मुझे हैरान किया। महानगर में मैं पहली बार रहने आया था और मैंने देखा कि कॉलेज जाते या वहां से लौटने के क्रम में ऑटो वाले कई बार इशारा करने के बावजूद नहीं रुकते थे। मेरे दोस्तों की भी यही शिकायत थी। बंगलूरू के ऑटो वालों के बारे में यह धारण बन गई थी कि वे बेहद बदतमीज और संवेदनहीन हैं। हालांकि मैं ऐसा नहीं मानता था। बल्कि पढ़ाई के दौरान कई ऑटो वाले से मेरी दोस्ती हो गई थी और मुझे समझ में आया था कि यह काम करते हुए परिवार का पालन-पोषण करने में वे उतने ही परेशान हैं, जितने कि हम अपने भविष्य के बारे में सोचकर होते थे। ज्यादातर लोग किराये का ऑटो चलाते थे और उन्हें रोज दो सौ रुपये ऑटो मालिक को देने पड़ते थे। ईंधन की बढ़ी हुई कीमत, सड़कों पर दिनोंदिन बढ़ते ट्रैफिक



आज मेरे इस संगठन से १,५०० ऑटो वाले जुड चुके हैं, जो रोज बीस हजार से अधिक लोगों को यात्रा कराते हैं।

और साहुकार से लिए गए कर्ज का ब्याज उन्हें परेशान करता था। न तो निश्चित आय की गारंटी थी और न ही ग्राहकों से पेश आने का कोई सलीका उन्होंने सीखा था। तिस पर ट्रैफिक पुलिस का शोषण तो था ही। मेरी पढ़ाई पूरी भी नहीं हुई थी कि मैं पहले सामाजिक उद्यमिता से जुड़ गया, फिर इन्वेस्टमेंट बैंकर बन गर्या। लेकिन मेरी इच्छा थी कि मैं ऑटो वालों की छवि सुधारने की दिशा में कुछ करूं। चूंकि महात्मा गांधी को मैं अपना आंदर्श मानता हूं, इसलिए दो अक्तूबर, 2013 को मैंने बंगलुरू में पीस ऑटो मुवमेंट की शुरुआत की। यह दरअसल एक संगठन था, जिससे शुरुआत में सात ही ऑटो वाले जुड़े। इससे जुड़ने की शर्त यह थी कि कोई ऑटोवाला किसी सवारी को ले जाने से मना नहीं करेगा, अपनी सवारी का हंसकर स्वागत

करेगा, सवारी को ठगेगा नहीं, मीटर के अनुसार ही किराया लेगा और ऑटो में सवारी की कोई चीज छूट गई हो, तो उसे वापस करेगा। इसके लिए भी हमने एक व्यवस्था बनाई है। पीस ऑटो मूवमेंट का अपना फोन नंबर है। अगर किसी सवारी का कोई सामान, चाहे वह पैसा ही क्यों न हो, ऑटो में छूट जाता है, तो वह हमारी संस्था से संपर्क कर उसे वापस ले सकता है। हमारा मानना है कि समाज में एक ऑटो वाले की भी उतनी ही जिम्मेदारी है, जितनी कि एक पुलिस अधिकारी की। यानी देर रात सड़क पर कोई महिला हो, तो उसकी सुरक्षा की जितनी जिम्मेदारी पुलिस की है, उतनी ही एक ऑटो वाले की भी।

आज मेरे इस संगठन से 1,500 ऑटो वाले जुड़ चुके हैं, जो रोज बीस हजार से अधिक लोगों को एक जगह से दूसरी जगह ले जाते हैं। ऑटो वालों को महीने में एक निश्चित राशि, जो मामूली ही है, संगठन को देनी पड़ती है। संगठन के कल्याण कोष में आज 25 लाख रुपये जमा हैं। यह कोष बनाया ही इसलिए गया है, ताकि जरूरत के समय सदस्य यहां से पैसे ले सकें। अगर संस्था से जुड़ा कोई ऑटो वाला घायल हो जाता है, काम करने की स्थिति में नहीं होता, तो संस्था की ओर से उसके ऑटो की मरम्मत के अलावा उसके घर में राशन पहुंचाने की भी व्यवस्था की जाती है। हम बंगलूरू के हर ऑटो वाले को अपनी संस्था से नहीं जोड़ते। आपराधिक पृष्ठभूमि वाले लोगों को हमने अपनी संस्था से दूर रखा है। हम गहन जांच के बाद ही किसी ऑटो वाले को अपनी संस्था की सदस्यता देते हैं।

-विभिन्न साक्षात्कारों पर आधारित।

स्वच्छता के मोर्चे पर

लगता है कि नरेंद्र मोदी के अपने ही साथी स्वच्छता अभियान की योजना को विफल करने में लगे हैं। वे समझ नहीं पा रहे कि यह योजना प्रधानमंत्री को कितनी प्रिय है। अगर वे समझे होते, तो अपने चुनाव क्षेत्रों में स्वच्छता के मामले में कोताही नहीं बरतते।



ऐसा लगा कि मैं नर्क में पहुंच गई हूं। खेतों में फैले कूड़े का ढेर देखकर बहुत बुरा लगा, क्योंकि मुझे याद आया कि हेमा मालिनी जी रोज टेलीविजन पर 'केन्ट का शुद्ध पानी' का प्रचार करती हुई दिखती हैं। क्या अपने कभी अपने चुनाव क्षेत्र का पानी पिया है, हेमा जी? क्या आपने उन गांवों का कभी दौरा किया है, जहां आपके मतदाता बेहद ब्री हालत में जीवन व्यतीत करते हैं? क्या आपने प्रधानमंत्री नरेंद्र मोदी के स्वच्छ भारत अभियान के बारे में कभी सुना भी है?

मैं पहले भी कह चुकी हूं, लेकिन यह ऐसी बात है, जिसको बार-बार दोहराया जाए, तो भी काफी नहीं: नरेंद्र मोदी ने लाल किले से स्वच्छता की बात

लिथुआनिया

दुनिया में सबसे ज्यादा खुदकुशी लिथुआनिया के लोग करते

हैं, जहां प्रति लाख लोगों पर आत्महत्या की दर 31.9 है,

में प्रति लाख लोगों पर आत्महत्या की दर 16.3 है।

2019 के

दूसरे स्थान पर रूस और तीसरे स्थान पर गुयाना है। भारत

करके इस देश पर सबसे बडा उपकार किया है। महात्मा गांधी के बाद वह पहले नेता हैं, जिन्होंने देश की गंदगी और गंदी आदतों की तरफ ध्यान दिलाया ह। स्वच्छ भारत मादा क इस कायकाल का सबस सफल कार्यक्रम रहा है। ऐसा सिर्फ इसलिए नहीं कि खुले में शौच करने की बूरी आदत पूरे देश में लगभग बंद हो गई है, बल्कि इसलिए भी कि जहां बंद नहीं हुई है, वहां कम से कम इतना हुआ है कि इस आदत से गंदगी और बीमारियां फैलने के बारे में लोग अच्छी तरह समझ गए हैं।

लेकिन ऐसा लगता है कि प्रधानमंत्री मोदी के अपने ही साथी इस योजना को विफल करने में लगे हए हैं। मोदी जी, आपके सांसद और विधायक नहीं समझ पाए हैं कि आपको यह योजना कितनी प्रिय है। वे समझे होते, तो कम से कम इतना तो कर दिखाते कि अपने चुनाव क्षेत्रों में नगरपालिकाओं और पंचायतों को सावधान करते कि स्वच्छता के मामले में जरा भी कोताही न बरतें।

शिवराज सिंह चौहान अगर इंदौर और भोपाल जैसे शहरों को साफ कर सकते हैं, तो पूरा देश भी साफ हो सकता है। सो उम्मीद है मोदी जी कि अगर आप दोबारा बनते हैं देश के प्रधानमंत्री, तो अपने सांसदों और विधायकों को स्वच्छता अभियान से जोड़ेंगे। भारत माता का बहुत बुरा हाल है।

हरियाली और रास्ता

राजीव, पिता और उम्मीद

यह एक युवा की कहानी है, जिसने अपने कर्मों से आदर्श स्थापित किया।



राजीव अपने पिता की इकलौती संतान था। उसके पिता बूढ़े हो चले थे, लेकिन राजीव अपनी हर खुशी अपने बूढ़े पिता के साथ बांटना चाहता था। उसने एक नई गाड़ी खरीदी थी, इसलिए वह चाहता था कि उसी गाड़ी पर बिठाकर वह अपने पिता को कहीं बाहर खाना खिलाने के लिए ले चले। उसके पिता को भी बाहर खाना पसंद था। एक दिन दोनों शहर के एक नामचीन होटल में खाना खाने पहुंचे। पूरा हॉल भरा हुआ था, कोई गायिका बहुत सुंदर गजल . सुना रही थी। राजीव और उसके पिता अपनी जगह पर बैठ गए। ऑर्डर करने के कुछ ही देर बाद खाना आ गया। राजीव के पिता के लिए वह शाम बहुत खुशनुमा थी। लेकिन खुशी के मारे खाते वक्त उनके हाथ कांपने लगे और सारा खाना कपड़े पर गिरने लगा। उनके हाथ से चम्मच छूटकर झन्न की तेज आवाज करता हुआ नीचे गिर गया। वहां बैठे सभी लोग उनकी तरफ देखने लगे। कुछ लोग तो उनकी तरफ देखकर मुंह भी बनाने लगे। लेकिन राजीव ने पिता का मुंह पोछा और उन्हें पकड़कर बाथरूम ले गया। बाथरूम जाकर राजीव के पिता बोले, माफ करना बेटा, मेरी वजह से तुम्हें शर्मिंदगी झेलनी पड़ी। लेकिन राजीव ने कहा, कोई बात नहीं पापा। ऐसा कभी-कभी हो जाता है। राजीव के पिता को अपने बेटे पर बहुत गर्व हुआ। बाथरूम से लौटते वक्त राजीव के पिता मुस्करा रहे थे। राजीव ने बिल का भुगतान किया और वे बाहर की तरफ जाने लगे। तभी पीछे बैठे एक व्यक्ति ने कहा, सुनिए। आप कुछ छोड़े जा रहे हैं। राजीव ने पीछे देखा, अपनी जेबें टटोलीं, अपने पिता से इशारों में पूछा, और फिर बोला, नहीं तो। हम कुछ भूल नहीं रहे। वह सज्जन बोला, आप यहां मौजूद हर पिता के

मां-बाप की उम्मीद होते हैं बच्चे। हमें अपने बुजुर्गों का सम्मान करना चाहिए।

लिए एक उम्मीद और हर बेटे के लिए एक

सबक छोड़े जा रहे हैं।

कर्ण की दानवीरता

एक बार भगवान कृष्ण भरी सभा में कर्ण की दानवीरता की प्रशंसा कर रहे थे। अर्जुन को कर्ण की प्रशंसा अच्छी नहीं लगी। श्रीकृष्ण यह बात समझ गए। कुछ दिनों बाद नगर में एक ब्राह्मण की पत्नी का निधन हो गया। ब्राह्मण अर्जुन के पास आकर कहने लगा, धनंजय! मेरी पत्नी मर गई है। उसकी आखिरी इच्छा थी कि उसका दाह संस्कार चंदन की लकड़ियों से हो। क्या आप मुझे चंदन की

लुकड़ियां दे सकते हैं? अर्जुन ने तत्काल कोषाध्यक्ष को पच्चीस मन चंदन की लकडियां लाने की आज्ञा दी। पर उस दिन न तो भंडार में और न ही बाजार में चंदन की लकड़ी थी।

अर्जुन के महल से निराश होकर वह ब्राह्मण कर्ण के पास पहुंचा। कर्ण के सामने भी वही मजबरी थी। पर उन्होंने तुरंत अपने कोषाध्यक्ष को महल में लगे चंदन के खंभे निकाल कर ब्राह्मण को देने की आज्ञा दे दी।

चंदन की लकड़ियां लेकर ब्राह्मण चला गया। शाम को अर्जुन श्रीकृष्ण के साथ टहलने निकले, तो देखा कि वही ब्राह्मण रमशान में कीर्तन कर रहा है। अर्जुन ने ब्राह्मण से लकड़ी के बारे में पूछा, तो उसने बताया कि कर्ण ने अपने महल के खंभे निकाल कर मेरा संकट द्र किया। यह सून श्रीकृष्ण अर्जुन से बोले, चंदन के खंभे तो तुम्हारे महल में भी थे, पर तुम्हें उनकी याद ही नहीं आई। यह सुन् अर्जुन लज्जित हो गए और उन्हें समझ में आ गया कि कर्ण को लोग दानवीर कर्ण क्यों कहते हैं।

-संकलित

बिज़नेस स्टैंडर्ड वर्ष 12 अंक 31

स्टार्टअप के लिए राहत

भारतीय प्रतिभृति एवं विनिमय बोर्ड (सेबी) का डिफरेंशियल वोटिंग राइट्स (डीवीआर) वाले शेयर जारी करने के बारे में मशविरा पत्र लाना गैर सूचीबद्ध कंपनियों के प्रवर्तकों के लिए ख़ुशी की एक वजह तो है। उच्च मताधिकार के साथ जारी किए जाने वाले शेयरों पर सन 2009 में ही प्रतिबंध लगा दिया गया

सुचीबद्ध स्टार्टअप के प्रवर्तकों को करना पड रहा है। यानी बिना अपनी फर्म पर नियंत्रण गंवाए वृद्धि को गति देने के लिए निरंतर फंड की जरूरत। सेबी ने ऐसी कंपनियों को सूचीबद्ध करने का प्रस्ताव भी रखा है, बशर्ते कि मसौदा विवरणिका फाइल करने के पहले एक वर्ष से था। नया कदम दर्शाता है कि सेबी का ध्यान अधिक समय तक प्रवर्तक सुपीरियर वोटिंग राइट अपने पास रखे। गत वर्ष हॉन्गकॉन्ग और सिंगापुर स्टॉक एक्सचेंजों ने दोहरी श्रेणी के शेयरों वाली कंपनियों को सूचीबद्ध करने की अनुमति दी थी।

सूचीबद्धता की प्रक्रिया में सहायता के लिए सेबी ने प्रस्ताव रखा है कि डीवीआर जारी करने के पहले लगातार तीन वर्ष तक मुनाफे की जरूरत जैसे प्रावधान शिथिल किए जाएंगे। प्रवर्तकों को सूचीबद्धता के बाद 'सुपीरियर' शेयर रखने और अधिग्रहण संहिता में बदलाव की अनुमति दी जाएगी। हालांकि ये शेयर सूचीबद्धता के बाद नहीं जारी किए जा सकते, न ही इनका कारोबार किया जा सकता है। गुगल की प्रवर्तक अल्फाबेट, फेसबुक और अलीबाबा जैसी वैश्विक कंपनियों के प्रवर्तकों ने अपनी कंपनियों पर नियंत्रण बनाए रखने के लिए यह तरीका अपनाया है। मशविरा पत्र में सेबी ने प्रति शेयर वोट के मामले में इन कंपनियों का अनुसरण किया है। सुपीरियर वोटिंग राइट के मामले में एक शेयर पर अधिकतम 10 वोट हो सकते हैं। आंशिक मताधिकार के मामले में 10 शेयरों पर एक वोट हो सकता है।

फेसबुक इसे समझने के लिए अच्छा उदाहरण है। एक ओर उसकी काफी आलोचना हुई क्योंकि जकरबर्ग और अन्य प्रवर्तकों के पास 70 फीसदी मताधिकार हैं। उसी समय जकरबर्ग ने 2012 में इंस्टाग्राम को 100 करोड़ डॉलर में खरीदने के लिए अपने उच्च वोटिंग अधिकार का इस्तेमाल किया और उच्च लाभांश का भुगतान किया। 2018 में इंस्टाग्राम का मल्यांकन बढकर 10,000 करोड डॉलर हो गया। इस तरह कंपनी के संस्थापक की

दुरदर्शिता से सभी अंशधारकों का मूल्यवर्धन हुआ। सेबी ने यह कदम ऐसे वक्त उठाया है जब एक शेयर, एक वोट बनाम सुपीरियर शेयर की बहस दुनिया भर में चल रही है। प्रमुख फंड प्रबंधक और कंपनी प्रशासन के विशेषज्ञों ने यह चेतावनी जारी की है कि दोहरी श्रेणी के शेयरों से सार्वजनिक निगरानी में कमी आएगी और अंशधारकों के प्रति प्रबंधन की जवाबदेही भी घटेगी। ऐसे ढांचे निदेशक मंडल के कर्तव्य निर्वहन की क्षमता को भी प्रभावित करते हैं। आलोचक कहते हैं कि मताधिकार को इस प्रकार आर्थिक स्वामित्व से अलग करना अंशधारकों के लिए नुकसानदेह है। खासतौर पर लंबी अवधि में इसका नुकसान हो सकता है। ऐसे ढांचे के खिलाफ अन्य दलीलों में पारिवारिक स्वामित्व वाली कंपनियों

द्वारा किया जाने वाला दुरुपयोग शामिल है। कुछ गलत होने पर अंशधारक ज्यादा कुछ कर नहीं सकते और मताधिकार हस्तांतरणीय होता है। इस संबंध में सेबी ने रूढिवादी रुख अपनाकर समझदारी दिखाई है। उसने सूचीबद्धता के पांच वर्ष बाद सनसेट क्लॉज लागू करने का प्रस्ताव रखा है। अगर बहुलांश अंशधारक सहमत हों तो इसे पांच साल के लिए बढाया जा सकता है। कई अन्य प्रतिबंध भी हैं। आईपीओ के बाद स्वतंत्र निदेशक या अंकेक्षक की नियक्ति या निष्कासन के वक्त. कंपनी के स्वामित्व में बदलाव के वक्त, स्वैच्छिक रूप से उसे बंद करते वक्त सुपीरियर शेयर को सामान्य माना जाएगा। इससे पर्याप्त जांच-परख सुनिश्चित होगी और व्यवस्था का दुरुपयोग कम से कम होगा।



स्वयंसेवी संगठन की तरह चुनाव मैदान में कांग्रेस

कांग्रेस के पास सवाल हैं लेकिन जवाब नहीं, नेता हैं लेकिन विजेता नहीं। पार्टी एक सदाचारी, सत्ता विरोधी स्वयंसेवी संगठन की तरह पेश आ रही है।

हले चरण के मतदान में दो सप्ताह से भी कम वक्त बचा है। ऐसे में प्रश्न यह है कि कांग्रेस इस चुनौती के लिए कितनी तैयार है ? कांग्रेस के बड़े नेताओं और कार्यकर्ताओं का उत्साह कैसा है ? ये बड़े नेता या नेतृत्वकर्ता कौन हैं ? कांग्रेस काफी समय से कह रही है कि मोदी सरकार इतिहास की सबसे भ्रष्ट, अक्षम, विभाजनकारी और विनाशकारी सरकार है। परंतु कांग्रेस हमें यह नहीं बता रही है कि उसके पास इससे निपटने की क्या योजना है। मतदाताओं के लिए महत्त्वपूर्ण मुद्दों मसलन रोजगार और अर्थव्यवस्था, राष्ट्रवाद और सामाजिक समरसता आदि को लेकर उसका क्या रुख है ? यहां मैं एक और प्रश्न करना चाहता हूं। आपको क्या लगता है कि आज कांग्रेस कैसी है ? क्या वह ऐसा राजनीतिक दल है जो अस्तित्व की लड़ाई लड़ रहा है ? या फिर वह एक स्वयंसेवी संगठन (एनजीओ) की भांति है जिसका मानना है कि वह अपने काम से दुनिया बदल देगा?

इससे कांग्रेस समर्थक नाराज हो सकते हैं लेकिन यह बात आवश्यक है। बीते पांच वर्ष में अधिकांश वक्त आपके प्रतिद्वंद्वी ने आपको ठिकाने से लगाए रखा और अब वह अंतिम प्रहार की तैयारी में है। यदि पन: कांग्रेस का प्रदर्शन कमजोर रहा तो पार्टी के कई हताश और व्यग्न सदस्य बाहर की राह लेंगे। इस बात की भी काफी आशंका है कि हार के बाद कर्नाटक और मध्य प्रदेश में कांग्रेस की सरकार गिर जाए। राजस्थान में भी अगर सरकार बच गई तो यह खुशकिस्मती होगी। तब कांग्रेस के पास बचेगा क्या? संभव है कि तब भी यह उन्हीं पुराने या शायद नए स्वयंभ चाणक्यों और मैकियावेलियों और स्वयंभू बौद्धिकों की पार्टी बनी रहेगी जिनमें एक साझा बात यह होगी कि वे कोई चुनाव न लडे हैं और न ही जीते हैं। जहां उनको प्रभार सौंपा गया वहां भी बाजी हाथ से निकल गई। राजनीतिक दलों का एक ही लक्ष्य होता है-चनावी जीत। इसके लिए कडी मेहनत और प्रतिबद्धता की आवश्यकता होती है। सफलता के साथ इनाम आता है और विफलता की कीमत चुकानी पड़ती है। संक्षेप में कहें तो इसका संबंध जवाबदेही से है। आप बताइए कि क्या कांग्रेस में भी हाल के दिनों में ऐसा ही कुछ होता रहा है ? अगर इसका उत्तर ना है तो मैं आपको बताता हूं कि क्यों पार्टी एक स्वयंसेवी संगठन जैसी दिखती है। स्वयंसेवी संगठन भी कडी मेहनत करते हैं लेकिन उनके

लक्ष्य और उनका ध्यान बदलता रहता है। उनकी प्रतिस्पर्धा सरकार से होती है। वे तुलनात्मक रूप से हमेशा सक्षम नजर आते हैं। वहां जवाबदेही दानदाता या लोगों की आत्मचेतना की होती है। वहां भी सत्ता विरोधी भावना होती है।

बीते वर्षों के दौरान कांग्रेस सामंती होती गई और काबिलियत का मान घटता गया। नई प्रतिभाएं बहुत कम सामने आईं। गांधी परिवार समेत पार्टी के पुराने नेता अपनी पकड बचाए रखने में लगे रहे। वे पार्टी का अपने क्षेत्रों में विस्तार तक नहीं कर सकते, वे नए लोगों के लिए जगह भी नहीं खाली करते। यवा प्रवक्ता काफी अच्छे हैं लेकिन वे चुनाव नहीं लड़ते। उन्हें अपनी प्रतिष्ठा और संपत्ति की चिंता रहती है। देश भर में कांग्रेस के शीर्ष 50 लोगों की सूची बनाएं तो आपको इस विरोधाभास का अंदाजा लग जाएगा।

इसके विपरीत दरबार में या जवाबदेही मुक्त स्वयंसेवी संगठन अथवा पारिवारिक कारोबारों में चापलूस प्राय: बचे रहते हैं। आपको शायद मोहन प्रकाश का नाम भी याद न हो। यह पुराने समाजवादी राहुल गांधी की पसंद थे। उन्हें एक के बाद एक महाराष्ट्र और मध्य प्रदेश समेत कई प्रमुख राज्य सौंपे गए। वह राहुल गांधी को कांग्रेस का जयप्रकाश नारायण बताकर प्रसिद्ध हुए और राहुल के करीबी बने। उनकी नाकामियों में निरंतरता साफ नजर आती थी। कांग्रेस के

लोगों से उनके बारे में पछिए तो वे आपको आमिर खान की फिल्म उईडियट्स का गाना सुना देंगे- कहां से आया था वो, कहां गया उसे ढूंढ़ो...। वह इकलौते नहीं हैं। सीपी

राष्ट्र की बात

शेखर गुप्ता

जोशी भी लंबे समय तक राहल गांधी के करीबी पसंदीदा रहे। उन्होंने भी जिस चीज को हाथ लगाया उसे नष्ट कर दिया। इसका ताजा उदाहरण है पूर्वोत्तर। क्या उन्हें जवाबदेह ठहराया गया, कतई नहीं।

बशर्ते कि आप यह न सोचते हों कि राजस्थान विधानसभा का अध्यक्ष बनाया जाना कोई दंड है। मेरे सहकर्मी और दी प्रिंट के राजनीतिक संपादक डी के सिंह ने मुझे राहल गांधी की 'ए' टीम का ब्योरा दिया। वह नाकाम लोगों की फेहरिस्त है। अशोक तंवर जो एक समय राहुल के युवा दलित सितारा थे, वह अपना लोकसभा चुनाव हारने और विधानसभा चुनाव में पार्टी के सफाये के बाद भी हरियाणा कांग्रेस के प्रमुख बने हुए हैं।

हरियाणा में एक और वंशवादी चेहरा हैं पार्टी के मीडिया प्रमुख रणदीप सिंह सरजेवाला। वह हालिया जींद लोकसभा उपचुनाव में बमुश्किल तीसरे स्थान पर रहे। महासचिवों में अंबिका सोनी और मुकुल वासनिक चुकी हुई ताकत होने के बावजूद क्रमशः जम्मू कश्मीर तथा केरल और तमिलनाडु के प्रभारी बने हुए हैं। दीपक बाबरिया मध्य प्रदेश के प्रभारी बने हुए हैं जबिक उन्होंने कभी कोई चुनाव नहीं लडा। विदेश प्रभाग के प्रमुख आनंद शर्मा और पार्टी के शक्तिशाली कोर ग्रुप के समन्वयक जयराम रमेश पर भी यह बात लागू होती है। कोर समूह में ए के एंटनी 2001 के बाद से चुनाव नहीं लड़े हैं। केसी वेणुगोपाल निवर्तमान सांसद हैं लेकिन पार्टी के कामकाज के कारण वह इस बार शायद ही चुनाव लड़ें। क्या आप सोच सकते हैं कि अमित शाह इस बार पार्टी पर ध्यान नहीं दे पाएंगे क्योंकि वह गांधीनगर

से लोकसभा चुनाव लड़ रहे हैं।

राहुल के इर्दिगिर्द मौजूद सलाहकार स्मार्ट और पढ़े लिखे लोग हैं। उनके विश्वसनीय सहयोगी कनिष्क सिंह, बेहतरीन ट्वीट लेखक निखिल अल्वा, पूर्व अफसरशाह के राजू, डेटा वैज्ञानिक प्रवीण चकवर्ती, प्रमुख वैचारिक प्रशिक्षक सचिन राव, पूर्व बैंकर अलंकार सवाई और सोशल मीडिया प्रमुख दिव्या स्पंदना। क्या आपको इनके बीच कुछ समानता दिखती है ? स्पंदना को छोडकर कोई भी राजनेता नहीं है। इनमें सबसे अधिक नजर आने वाले हैं संदीप सिंह। वह जेएनय में आइसा के नेता रहे हैं और राहुल के भाषण लिखते हैं। महासचिवों, कोर ग्रुप और राहुल के प्रमुख सलाहकारों पर नजर डालें तो केवल चंद लोगों के पास राजनीतिक दिमाग है। इनमें सबसे तीक्ष्ण हैं अहमद पटेल लेकिन अब वह केंद्रीय भूमिका में नहीं हैं। याद रहे वह ऐसे पुराने कांग्रेसी हैं जिसने अमित शाह से उनके गृह राज्य में लड़ाई लड़ी और चुनाव आयोग से लड़भिड़ कर राज्य सभा सीट हथियाई। हमने ऊपर जिन तीन मुद्दों के बारे में बात की अगर उन्हें लेकर कांग्रेस की सोच का पता लग जाता तो ये बातें मायने नहीं रखतीं। वह रोजगार, अर्थव्यवस्था और कृषि क्षेत्र की निराशा के मुद्दे पर नरेंद्र मोदी पर हमले जारी रख सकती है। परंतु इससे ये समस्याएं हल कैसे होंगी यह हमें नहीं बताया जाता। इन दिनों राहुल जिन एक्टिवस्टों पर मोहित हैं, उनकी आइसा की शैली की वामपंथी राजनीति कुछ लोगों को लुभा सकती है। परंतु जब हमें दायित्व मिलेगा तब हम उत्तर देंगे वाली शैली सही नहीं है।

राष्ट्रवाद, सुरक्षा, आतंक के खिलाफ जंग, विदेश नीति आदि के मोर्चे पर कांग्रेस जड़ नजर आती है लेकिन तभी कोई सैम पित्रोदा आकर उसे झटका दे देते हैं। कांग्रेस का कोई नेता यह नहीं कहता कि मिराज और सुखोई समेत जिन विमानों और हथियारों से जंग लड़ी जा रही है, उन्हें कांग्रेस की सरकारों ने खरीदा था। दूसरी ओर राहल से ऐसे झुठ बुलवाए जाते हैं जिन्हें आसानी से पकड़ा जा सकता है। उदाहरण के लिए यह कहना कि मिराज एचएएल ने बनाए। एचएएल ने न कभी मिराज बनाया, न बनाएगा। यह विमान दसाँ ने बनाया है और इसका ऑर्डर सन 1982 में उनकी दादी इंदिरा गांधी ने दिया था। तीसरा मुद्दा है सामाजिक समरसता का। यहां प्रेम और सहिष्णुता की बातें करना अच्छा है लेकिन सबरीमला, तीन तलाक और राम मंदिर के मुद्दे पर आप भाजपा से अलग

पिछले दिनों टी एन नाइनन ने अपने स्तंभ साप्ताहिक मंथन में संप्रग सरकार की उपलब्धियां गिनाई थीं। इनमें लोगों की गरीबी दूर करने से लेकर कृषि विकास, बुनियादी व्यय, आधार की सुविधा आदि का जिक्र था। में इसमें नाभिकीय समझौते को शामिल करना चाहुंगा। उन्होंने सवाल किया था कि कांग्रेस अपनी उपलब्धियों का जिक्र क्यों नहीं कर रही और मोदी को यह माहौल बनाने दे रही है कि देश में जो कुछ हुआ वह पिछले पांच साल में ही हुआ ? कांग्रेस को ये मुद्दे उठाने चाहिए। अगर ऐसा नहीं होता तो आप ही तय कीजिए कि यह राजनीतिक दल है या स्वयंसेवी संगठन। स्वयंसेवी संगठन भी सत्ता विरोधी होते हैं, भले ही वे दशक भर सत्ता का हिस्सा रहे हों।

चुनावी वादों की बौछारों में महज कुछ छींटों से भी वंचित वादी

यह वह समय है, जब राजनीतिक पार्टियां घोषणा पत्र जारी करती हैं। उनमें से कुछ ने अपनी वेबसाइटों से पुराने घोषणा-पत्र हटा लिए हैं ताकि जिज्ञासु लोग यह पडताल न कर पाएं कि घोषणा-पत्र के कितने वादे असल में पूरे किए गए। पार्टियों ने अपनी प्रतिद्वंद्वियों के 2014 के घोषणा-पत्रों की नई दिल्ली में होली जलाई है ताकि उनके पूरे नहीं किए गए वादों को उजागर किया

बहुत कम लोगों को ऐसा कोई घोषणा-पत्र याद होगा, जिसमें न्यायपालिका में दशकों से बनी हुई समस्या को पूरी गंभीरता से हल करने की कोशिश की गई। इसी वजह से कोई वादे टूटे भी नहीं। यहां कोई वोट बैंक नहीं है और वादियों का संकट किसानों या बेरोजगार युवाओं के बराबर नहीं है। बहुत से मुख्य न्यायाधीशों ने सरकार को चेताया था कि न्याय प्रणाली कमजोर पड़ रही है। इन मुख्य न्यायाधीशों में से एक ने ऐसा प्रधानमंत्री नरेंद्र मोदी के सामने एक सार्वजनिक कार्यक्रम में कहा था और उन्हें आंखें पोंछते हुए देखा गया था। न्यायाधीशों का अनुमान है कि तीन करोड़ लंबित मामलों को निपटाने में 100 से 200 वर्ष लगेंगे। शिक्षा के प्रसार, लोगों में अधिकारों के प्रति जागरूकता बढने और हर बार आने वाली सरकारों के इस क्षेत्र की अनदेखी करने से समस्या और विकराल बनेगी।

यह जगजाहिर है कि न्यायपालिका के लिए महज 0.2 फीसदी बजट आवंटित किया जाता है। किसी भी चुनावी घोषणा-पत्र में अदालतों में बनियादी ढांचे के मुद्दे को जगह दी गई। उच्चतम न्यायालय की पिछले महीने की एक रिपोर्ट में कहा गया है कि हाल के वर्षों में राज्यों के न्यायिक बुनियादी ढांचे के लिए केंद्र का अनुदान आधा हो गया है। मुख्य न्यायाधीश रंजन गोगोई की अध्यक्षता वाले एक पीठ ने अदालत में कहा कि कुछ निचली अदालतों के दौरे में यह सामने आया कि उनकी हालत बीते कई वर्षों से खस्ताहाल बनी हुई है। न्यायाधीशों ने कहा, अदालती कक्ष पुराने और खराब हालत में हैं। न्यायिक अधिकारी ऐसे अदालती कक्षों में काम कर रहे हैं, जिन्हें पर्दों के जरिये अलग-अलग कक्षों में बांटा गया है। इस वजह से उनके जल्द



अदालती आईना एम जे एंटनी

बहुत कम लोगों को ऐसा कोई घोषणा-पत्र याद होगा, जिसमें न्यायपालिका में दशकों से बनी हुई समस्या को पूरी गंभीरता से हल करने की कोशिश की गई। इसी वजह से कोई वादे टूटे भी नहीं। यहां कोई वोट बैंक नहीं है और वादियों का संकट किसानों या बेरोजगार युवाओं के बराबर नहीं है।

फैसले लिखने के आसार होते हैं।' ऐसी खबरें आई हैं कि निचली अदालतों में 140 मामले 60 से अधिक वर्षों से लंबित हैं।

शीर्ष अदालत में भी स्थिति ज्यादा बेहतर नहीं है। उच्चतम न्यायालय के दस्तावेजों को खंगालने से संकट की गहराई का पता चलता है। ऐसे 260 से अधिक संवैधानिक मामले हैं. जिन्हें पांच न्यायाधीशों के पीठो को भेजा गया है। कुछ की सुनवाई 1992 में होनी थी। ये सवाल बहुत जटिल हैं जैसे 1975 में आपातकाल के दौरान संवैधानिक संशोधनों के बाद संपत्ति का अधिकार। इसके अलावा ऐसे 11 मामले हैं, जिन्हें सात सदस्यों के पीठ के पास भेजा गया है। ये भी पुराने मामले हैं और विधायिका के विशेषाधिकार बनाम मीडिया की स्वतंत्रता जैसे जटिल विषयों से संबंधित हैं। इसके अलावा 132 मामले ऐसे हैं, जिनकी सुनवाई नौ सदस्यों के पीठ द्वारा की जानी है। अगर इन जटिल मुद्दों की सुनवाई संविधान पीठ करेंगे तो उच्चतम

न्यायालय में शेष करीब 60,000 मामलों की सुनवाई में और देरी होगी। बहुत सी पुरानी नागरिक याचिकाओं में वादी या प्रतिवादी के नाम के पीछे (डी) लगा हुआ है। इसका मतलब है कि उनकी मृत्यु हो चुकी है और उन्होंने मामले की फाइलें अपने कानूनी प्रतिनिधियों को दे दी हैं। यह स्थिति उच्च न्यायालयों में और अधिक विकट है।

इन हालात को देखकर ऐसा लगता है कि राजनेता यही चाहते हैं कि न्यायपालिका की स्थिति ऐसी ही बनी रहे। हाल में यह पाया गया कि राजनेताओं के बहुत से मामले तीन दशकों से चल रहे हैं। हालांकि उच्चतम न्यायालय ने आदेश दिया है कि उन्हें एक साल के भीतर निपटाया जाए। आम नागरिकों के कुछ मामलों को चार दशक बीत चुके हैं। इसके नतीजतन जेलों में भीड बढ गई है। कुछ जेलों में तो उनकी क्षमता से दोगुने कैदी हैं। हर तीन कैदियों में से दो अपने मुकदमे खत्म होने का इंतजार कर रहे हैं। कुछ कैदी तो जेल में उससे कहीं अधिक समय बिता चुके हैं, जो उनके अपराध के लिए निर्धारित अधिकतम दंड से अधिक है। उच्चतम न्यायालय की रिपोर्ट दर्शाती हैं कि 3.8 लाख कैदियों के लिए बने कमरों को 4.3 लाख कैदियों को साझा करना पड़ा।

यह तस्वीर उससे बिल्कुल उलट है. जिसमें कथित रूप से कर्नाटक के एक राजनेता को शानदार अपार्टमेंट मुहैया कराया जा रहा है या लंदन के मजिस्ट्रेट के शब्दों में मुंबई की एक सेल को 'फिर से सजाया' गया है, जिसमें एक भगोड़े कारोबारी को लाया जाएगा।

ये आंकड़े घोषणा-पत्रों के शिल्पकारों का ध्यान खींचने के लिए तरस रहे हैं। इनसे सरकार और न्यायाधीशों को चयनित करने वाले कॉलेजियम के बीच तकरार जुड़ी हुई है। हालांकि वादियों की नाराजगी को आर्थिक, धार्मिक या सांप्रदायिक क्षेत्रों के लिए किए जाने वाले वादों में जगह नहीं मिलती है। राजनेताओं को वहां मुनाफा ज्यादा मिलता है।

ऐसा नहीं है कि मतदाता चुनावी वादों को बिना सोचे-समझे स्वीकार कर लेते हैं। लेकिन उन वादियों को भरोसे के कुछ शब्द भी नहीं मिलते. जो अदालती इमारतों में उदासी भरे चेहरे लेकर

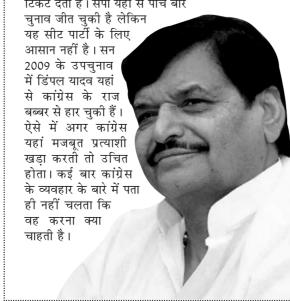
कानाफूसी

जातीय समीकरण

शिवपाल सिंह यादव की प्रगतिशील समाजवादी पार्टी (लोहिया) ने उत्तर प्रदेश में बसपा और सपा के प्रत्याशियों की नींद उड़ा दी है। ऐसा लग रहा है कि शिवपाल की पार्टी इन दोनों दलों के एकजुट होकर भारतीय जनता पार्टी (भाजपा) का मुकाबला करने की योजना को नुकसान पहुंचाएगी। उत्तर प्रदेश में अंकबरपुर लोकसभा सीट काफी अहमियत रखती है। सपा-बसपा गठबंधन ने इस सीट से निशा सचान को प्रत्याशी बनाया है। कांग्रेस ने यहां से राजाराम पाल को प्रत्याशी बनाकर उनको पहला धक्का दिया क्योंकि दोनों ही प्रत्याशी पिछड़ा वर्ग से ताल्लुक रखते हैं। अब शिवपाल सिंह यादव ने भी इस सीट से एक पिछडे प्रत्याशी को टिकट देने की घोषणा कर दी है। ऐसे में अगर भाजपा इस सीट से किसी सवर्ण प्रत्याशी को खड़ा करती है तो इस बात की काफी संभावना है कि वह प्रत्याशी चुनाव जीत जाए क्योंकि पिछड़ा वर्ग के वोट तो तीन प्रत्याशियों के बीच बंट जाएंगे।

फिरोजाबाद की चुनौती

शिवपाल सिंह यादव ने घोषणा की है कि वह फिरोजाबाद सीट से लड़ेंगे। इस सीट से उनके भतीजे यानी रामगोपाल यादव के बेटे अक्षय यादव सपा के प्रत्याशी हैं। कांग्रेस ने कहा है कि वह इस सीट से प्रत्याशी नहीं खडा करेगी। अब सबको इस बात का इंतजार है कि भाजपा यहां से किसे टिकट देती है। सपा यहां से पांच बार



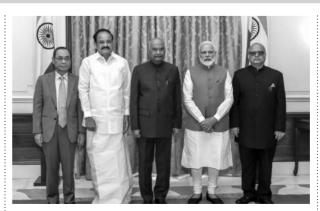
आपका पक्ष

देश को मिला पहला लोकपाल

देश में भ्रष्टाचार पर लगाम लगाने

तथा लोक सेवकों के खिलाफ भ्रष्टाचार के मामलों को देखने के लिए लोकपाल एवं लोकायुक्त कानून 2013 पारित हुआ था। इस कानून के तहत केंद्र में लोकपाल तथा राज्यों में लोकायुक्त नियुक्त किए जाएंगे। नियम के अनुसार लोकपाल समिति में एक अध्यक्ष और और अधिकतम आठ सदस्यों का प्रावधान है। इनमें से चार न्यायिक सदस्य होने चाहिए। इसके अलावा लोकपाल के सदस्यों में 50 प्रतिशत अनुसूचित अनुसूचित जनजाति, अन्य पिछडा वर्ग, अल्पसंख्यक तथा महिलाएं होनी चाहिए। नियम के अनुसार चयन होने के बाद अध्यक्ष और सदस्य पांच साल के कार्यकाल या 70 साल की उम्र तक पद पर बने रह सकते हैं। लोकपाल अध्यक्ष का वेतन और भत्ते भारत के प्रधान न्यायाधीश के बराबर होंगे। वहीं सदस्यों को उच्चतम न्यायालय के

बराबर वेतन और भत्ते मिलेंगे।



राष्ट्रपति रामनाथ कोविंद ने 23 मार्च को देश के पहले लोकपाल पिनाकी चंद्र घोष को शपथ दिलाई। न्यायामूर्ति पिनाकी चंद्र घोष उच्चतम न्यायालय के पूर्व न्यायाधीश हैं। वहीं लोकपाल में न्यायिक सदस्यों में उच्च न्यायालयों के पूर्व न्यायाधीश न्यायमूर्ति दिलीप बी भोसले, न्यायमूर्ति प्रदीप कुमार

शनिवार को राष्ट्रपति रामनाथ कोविंद ने लोकपाल न्यायमूर्ति पीसी घोष को शपथ दिलाई

कुमारी, छत्तीसगढ़ उच्च न्यायालय के वर्तमान न्यायाधीश अजय कुमार त्रिपाठी हैं। गैर न्यायायिक सदस्यों में सशस्त्र सीमा बल की पूर्व महिला मोहंती, न्यायमूर्ति अभिलाषा प्रमुख अर्चना रामसुंदरम, महाराष्ट्र

जैन, पूर्व आईआरएस अधिकारी महेंद्र सिंह और गुजरात कैडर के पूर्व आईएएस अधिकारी इंद्रजीत प्रसाद गौतम हैं। देश में लोकपाल की नियुक्ति के लिए काफी आंदोलन हो चुके हैं। अन्ना हजारे लोकपाल के लिए राजधानी में कई दिनों तक अनशन भी किए थे। इस वक्त लोकपाल नियुक्ति के लिए देश में जनआंदोलन भी चला था। दिल्ली के वर्तमान मुख्यमंत्री अरविंद केजरीवाल भी अन्ना हजारे के आंदोलन शामिल हुए थे। लोकपाल की नियुक्ति के अलावा राज्यों में लोकायुक्त की नियुक्ति की गई है। लोकपाल तथा लोकायुक्त की नियुक्ति के बाद भ्रष्टाचार में कमी लाने तथा लोकपाल एवं लोकायुक्त कानून 2013 का कड़ाई से पालन करने की जरूरत है।

के पूर्व मुख्य सचिव दिनेश कुमार

मोहित कुमार, नई दिल्ली

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।

पुल हादसे रोकने के लिए मरम्मत जरूरी

मुंबई में हाल में हुए पैदल पार पथ पुल दुर्घटना में छह लोगों की मौत हो गई तथा कई लोग घायल हो गए। पुल गिरने का कारण जांच के बाद ही पता चल सकेगा। लेकिन ब्रिटिश काल के समय बने पुलों, रेल डिब्बों पर एक तिथि लिखी जाती थी। इस तिथि के बाद उसका इस्तेमाल नहीं किया जाता था। जहां तक पुलों की बात है उसे उत तिथि से पूर्व मरम्मत करा दी जाती थी जिससे उसका इस्तेमाल किया जा सके और किसी प्रकार के हादसे को रोका जा सके। देश में अब मरम्मत करने की परंपरा की अनदेखी कर दी गई और ऐसे स्थानों पर अब उसकी अंतिम तिथि का लेखन भी बंद कर दिया गया है। अंतिम तिथि का लेखन दोबारा लाने की जरूरत है जिससे पता चल सके कि कोई पुल कितना चलेगा तथा अवधि खत्म होने से पहले उसकी मरम्मत हो सके।



सफलता की सीढ़ी एक-एक पायदान पार करके चढ़ी जाती है

अमीर होते जनप्रतिनिधि

भाजपा ने राहुल गांधी की संपत्ति को लेकर उन पर जो आरोप लगाए उनकी सत्यता पर कुछ कहना कठिन है, लेकिन यह बात हैरान तो करती ही है कि 2004 में 55 लाख की जमीन-जायदाद के मालिक 2014 में नौ करोड़ की संपदा के स्वामी कैसे हो गए? यह सवाल इसलिए और चिकत करता है, क्योंकि सब जानते हैं कि कांग्रेस अध्यक्ष न तो कोई कारोबारी हैं और न ही डॉक्टर या वकील। पता नहीं भाजपा की ओर से जो सवाल उछाला गया उसका कोई संतोषजनक जवाब मिलेगा या नहीं लेकिन ऐसे जवाब केवल राहुल गांधी से ही अपेक्षित नहीं हैं। ऐसे न जाने कितने सांसद हैं जो एक कार्यकाल में ही अप्रत्याशित तरीके से अमीर हो जाते हैं। कुछ ऐसी ही स्थिति विधायकों के मामले में भी देखने को मिलती है। जब ऐसे विधायक या सांसद दिन दुनी रात चौगुनी आर्थिक तरक्की करते हैं तब कहीं अधिक संदेह होता है जो न तो कारोबारी होते हैं और न ही राजनीति के अलावा और कुछ करते हैं। देश जानना चाहेगा कि आखिर जनप्रतिनिधियों के यकायक मालदार होने का राज क्या है? यह सही है कि विधायक और सांसद चनाव के लिए नामांकन दाखिल करते समय हलफनामा देकर अपनी संपत्ति का विवरण देते हैं, लेकिन वे यह कभी नहीं बताते कि उनकी संपत्ति में इतनी तेजी से इजाफा कैसे हुआ ? नतीजा यह होता है कि उनकी संपत्ति का विवरण महज एक खबर बनकर रह जाता है। यह इसलिए पर्याप्त नहीं, क्योंकि हाल में सामने आए एक आंकड़े के अनुसार 2014 में फिर से निर्वाचित हुए 153 सांसदों की औसत संपत्ति में 142 प्रतिशत की विद्ध दर्ज की गई। यह प्रति सांसद औसतन 13.32 करोड़ रुपये रही। यह आंकड़ा यह भी कहता है कि भाजपा के 72 सांसदों की संपत्ति में 7.54 करोड़ रुपये की औसत उछाल आई और कांग्रेस के 28 सांसदों की संपत्ति में औसतन 6.35 करोड़ रुपये की। क्या इसे सामान्य कहा जा सकता है? क्या यह आंकड़ा यह नहीं इंगित करता कि कुछ लोगों के लिए राजनीति अवैध कमाई का जरिया

माना कि कुछ सांसद ऐसे हैं जो बड़े कारोबारी या फिर पुश्तैनी अमीर हैं, लेकिन आखिर इसका क्या मतलब कि सामान्य पृष्ठभूमि और केवल राजनीति ही करने वालों की संपत्ति पांच साल में दो-तीन गुनी हो जाए? दाल में कुछ तो काला है? विडंबना यह है कि इसे जानने का कोई उपाय नहीं कि कुछ जनप्रतिनिधियों की आय को पंख कैसे लग जाते हैं? शायद इसी कारण हाल में सुप्रीम कोर्ट ने इस पर नाराजगी जताई थी कि बेहिसाब संपत्ति अर्जित करने वाले जनप्रतिनिधियों पर निगाह रखने के लिए कोई स्थाई तंत्र क्यों नहीं बनाया गया है? ऐसा कोई तंत्र बनना समय की मांग है, क्योंकि किसी आम आदमी या फिर कारोबारी की संपत्ति में तनिक भी असामान्य उछाल दिखने पर उसे आयकर विभाग के सवालों से दो-चार होना पड़ता है। आखिर विधायक और सांसद विशिष्ट क्यों हैं? कानून की निगाह में राजा और रंक एक ही होने चाहिए। बेहतर हो कि लोकपाल भी इस सवाल पर विचार करे कि कुछ सांसद इतने कम समय में ही अत्यधिक अमीर कैसे हो जाते हैं?

दलबदलुओं पर दांव

चुनावी मौसम में नेताओं का दलबदल करना नई बात नहीं है। देशभर में सभी पार्टियों में दलबदल हो रहा है। पश्चिम बंगाल में तो पिछले दो दशकों से जोड़-तोड़ की राजनीति हो रही है। कांग्रेस छोड़कर ममता बनर्जी ने जब अपनी तृणमूल कांग्रेस बनाई तो उस समय एक दर्जन से अधिक कद्दावर नेताओं को उन्होंने अपने दल में शामिल कराया था। इसके बाद स्थिति धीरे-धीरे बदलती गई। 2009 के लोकसभा चुनाव के बाद एक बार फिर तृणमूल ने विरोधी दलों में सेंधमारी शुरू की, जो अब तक जारी है। अब भाजपा ने भी तृणमूल की राह पर चलते हुए तृणमूल से लेकर कांग्रेस और माकपा तक में सेंधमारी शुरू कर दी है। यही वजह है कि इस लोकसभा चुनाव में एक-दूसरे को कड़ी टक्कर देने को तैयार राज्य में सत्तारूढ़ तणमल और विपक्षी भाजपा अपने जांचे-परखे नेताओं के बदले दल बदलकर आए नेताओं को प्राथमिकता दे रही हैं। दलबदलुओं पर अधिक भरोसा दिखा रही हैं। राज्य में चुनावी परिदृश्य में हावी नजर आ रहे दोनों दलों के अंदर उम्मीदवारों के चयन को लेकर असंतोष है। तृणमूल के वरिष्ठ नेता एवं दक्षिण दिनाजपुर जिले के प्रमुख बिप्लब मित्रा ने कहा कि नए लोगों को टिकट देने एवं पुराने नेताओं को नजरंदाज किए जाने से पार्टी के जमीनी स्तर के कार्यकर्ताओं में रोष है। तृणमूल अकेले लड़ रही है और उसने लोकसभा की सभी 42 सीटों पर उम्मीदवारों के नामों की घोषणा कर दी है। भाजपा ने गुरुवार को राज्य में 28 उम्मीदवारों की पहली सूची जारी की थी। दोनों पार्टियों ने अपने निर्णय का यह कहते हुए बचाव किया है कि जीतने की संभावना उनके लिए सबसे अहम है। हालांकि तृणमूल का मानना है कि पार्टी की आपसी लड़ाई को खत्म करने का यह सबसे बेहतर तरीका है, जबकि भाजपा के लिए इन दलबदलुओं को चुनाव में उतारना मजबूरी है, क्योंकि उसके पास अपनी जीत सुनिश्चित करने के लिए पर्याप्त उम्मीदवार नहीं हैं। तृणमूल की सूची में शामिल 18 नए चेहरे में सात वे हैं, जो पिछले कुछ वर्षों में या तो कांग्रेस से या वामपंथी दलों से पार्टी में शामिल हुए हैं। भाजपा की सूची में छह ऐसे उम्मीदवार हैं, जो पहले या तो तृणमूल या माकपा से जुड़े हुए थे।

राजनीति से विदा होते विचार



हृदयनारायण दीक्षित

व्यक्ति से दल बड़ा है।दल से राष्ट्र बहुत बड़ा है।दल को राष्ट्र निर्माण का उपकरण होना चाहिए, लेकिन यहां राष्ट्र से दल बड़ा है और दल व्यक्ति की जागीर बना हुआ है

नाव असाधारण जनतंत्री महोत्सव हैं। दुनिया की निगाहें भारतीय आम चुनाव पर टिकी हैं। चुनाव इस या उस दल गठबंधन की हार-जीत का कर्मकांड नहीं होते। चुनाव दलतंत्र के विचार, व्यवहार व नीति कार्यक्रम की शल्य परीक्षा का अवसर होते हैं। दलतंत्र को अपनी विचारधारा के प्रचार का मौका मिलता है, लेकिन इस चुनाव में रंगत बदली है। पहले विचारधाराएं टकराती थीं। अब व्यक्तिगत आरोप व अश्लील शब्द आक्रमणों का चलन है। सांस्कृतिक राष्ट्रवाद, मार्क्सवाद और समाजवाद जैसी विचारधाराओं वाले दल सिर्फ जीतने के लिए ही नहीं लडते थे। वे विचारधारा के प्रचार के लिए चुनाव का सदुपयोग करते थे। कांग्रेस भी पहले विचार आधारित राष्ट्रवादी पार्टी थी। गांधी, तिलक, विपिन चंद्र पाल जैसे नेता राष्ट्रवादी थे। बाद में यह 'वंदे मातरम' राष्ट्रगीत से भी दूर हो गई। फिर इसने पारिवारिक संपदा का रूप लिया। पार्टी प्रॉपर्टी नेहरू जी से पुत्री इंदिरा गांधी, उनसे पुत्र राजीव गांधी, फिर पत्नी सोनिया गांधी और अंब पुत्र राहुल गांधी व प्रियंका को हस्तांतरित हो चुकी है। अंतरराष्ट्रीय विचारधारा के दावेदार वामदल भी सिकुड़ गए। उन्होंने लंबे समय तक बंगाल, त्रिपुरा और केरल में सरकार चलाई। उनका हाल बेहाल है। बिहारी महागठबंधन में 40 सीटों में से 20 राजद, नौ कांग्रेस, पांच उपेंद्र कुशवाहा की रालोसपा व तीन-तीन सीटें मांझी और सहनी में बंटी हैं। वहां भी कम्युनिस्ट पार्टियों को सिरे से

कांग्रेस मुक्त भारत का नारा कम्युनिस्ट मुक्त भारत की ओर बढ़ रहा है। स्वतंत्रता के बाद कांग्रेस ने लंबे समय तक सत्ता सुख भोगा। वह कमजोर होती गई। कम्युनिस्ट पार्टी का जन्म भारत में रूसी क्रांति की प्रेरणा से 1925 में हुआ था। कम्युनिस्ट आंदोलन कांग्रेस से सुविधा लेते हुए आगे बढ़ा था। इसी साल 1925 में डॉ. हेडगेवार ने राष्ट्रीय स्वयंसेवक संघ की स्थापना की। संघ ने हिंदू दर्शन को राष्ट्रीय नवजागरण का मंत्र बनाया। हिंदुत्व भारत का अपना स्वाभाविक विचार था। इसी प्रेरणा से 1951 में जनसंघ बना। जनसंघ का 1977 में जनता पार्टी में विलय हुआ। दोहरी सदस्यता के विवाद में अलग हुआ। 1980 में भाजपा बनी। वामपंथ व सांस्कृतिक राष्ट्रवाद दोनों की शुरुआत 1925 में हुई। राजनीतिक दृष्टिकोण से सांस्कृतिक राष्ट्रवादी भाजपा दुनिया की सबसे बड़ी पार्टी बनी। संप्रति केंद्र की सत्ता में है। कम्युनिस्ट भारत की आत्मा से नहीं जुड़े। उन्होंने भारतीय संस्कृति से ही टकराने का काम किया। सो वे विलुप्त होने के कगार पर हैं। कांग्रेस एक परिवार की पार्टी है। शीर्ष पर वरिष्ठों के लिए जगह नहीं है, लेकिन इसके सिकुड़ते जाने के और भी कई कारण हैं। इसने राष्ट्रवाद को सांप्रदायिक व सांप्रदायिक अल्पसंख्यकवाद को सेक्युलर सिद्ध करने का अभियान चलाया। इससे बहुसंख्यक भारतीय अपमानित हुए।

तकनीकी तौर पर देश में सात राष्ट्रीय दल हैं। भाजपा व कांग्रेस पूरे देश में हैं। तृणमूल, बसपा व राष्ट्रवादी कांग्रेस के आधार क्षेत्रीय हैं। माकपा व



भाकपा तीन छोटे राज्यों तक सीमित हैं। तृणमूल व राष्ट्रवादी कांग्रेस पार्टी कांग्रेस से टूटकर ही बनीं।शेष अधिकांश दलों का जन्म और विस्तार गैरकांग्रेसवाद से हुआ, लेकिन 2019 का चुनावी परिदृश्य काफी मनोरंजक है। कांग्रेस, भाजपा के अलावा किसी भी छोटे, लघु, मध्यम या घरेलू दल से गठबंधन को तैयार है। बिहार का राजद स्वभाव से कांग्रेस विरोधी था। इस चुनाव में कांग्रेस व राजद साथ-साथ हैं। परस्पर शत्रु रहे सपा और बसपा ने गठबंधन किया है। दोनों ने कांग्रेस को घास नहीं डाली, लेकिन कांग्रेस दोनों से दोस्ती को व्याकुल है। दिल्ली में सत्तारूढ़ आम आदमी पार्टी के संस्थापक अरविंद केजरीवाल ने कांग्रेस के खिलाफ आक्रामक अभियान चलाया था। अब वह भी कांग्रेस से ही दोस्ती के लिए बेताब हैं। कांग्रेस रूठी हुई है। वह पीछे पड़े हैं। चुनावी ऋतु में मर्यादाएं ताक पर हैं। सब गठबंधन के मूड में हैं। जो कभी राजग के साथ थे, कांग्रेस को गाली देते थे, अब उसी के साथ रूमानी हो रहे हैं। तीन-चार जिलों तक ही प्रभाव रखने वाले दल भी खुब मोलभाव कर रहे हैं।

भारतीय दलतंत्र की संरचना अजब-गजब है। विचारहीन स्थानीय दल हरेक चुनाव में अपनी प्रासंगिकता बनाए रखते हैं। वे प्रायः एक व्यक्ति या परिवार की संपदा होते हैं। वे एकाध स्थानीय जाति समूहों की अलग अस्मिता बनाए रखते हैं। उनका कोई विचार नहीं होता। वे अपने राज्य का भी प्रतिनिधित्व नहीं करते। सपा आरंभ से अब तक स्थानीय दल है। अजीत सिंह का रालोद तीन चार जिलों तक सिमटा है, लेकिन दावा राष्ट्रीय है। बसपा भी ऐसी ही है। तृणमूल पश्चिम बंगाल तक सीमित स्थानीय पार्टी है। दक्षिण भारत में भी परिवार आधारित दल हैं। ऐसी स्थानीय पार्टियां पारिवारिक संपदा जैसी हैं। ऐसे दलों के संस्थापक आजीवन राष्ट्रीय अध्यक्ष रहते हैं। उनके बाद उनके परिजन ऐसी पार्टी प्रॉपर्टी के मालिक बन जाते हैं। राजनीति में ऐसे लघु उद्योग संभवतः लाभकारी हैं तभी तो चुनाव आयोग में 2301 पंजीकृत दल हैं। मूलभूत प्रश्न है कि हरेक चुनाव में स्थानीय दलों की प्रासंगिकता क्यों बनी रहती है? और विचार आधारित दल इन्हें क्यों विशेष महत्व देते हैं?

भारत में क्षेत्रीय विविधता है। समाज में जातियां-उपजातियां हैं। समाज विभाजित है। कह सकते हैं कि यही विभाजन अनेक स्थानीय व्यक्तिवादी दलों के रूप में प्रकट होता है। ऐसा स्वाभाविक होता तो सारे दल अलग-अलग चुनाव भी लड़ते। वे चुनावी फायदे के लिए गठबंधन बनाते हैं। मोलभाव भी करते हैं। क्या ऐसी राजनीति देश सेवा का उपकरण हो

सकती है? हम प्राचीन काल से एक राष्ट्र हैं राष्ट्र की समृद्धि के अनेक रास्ते व विचार हे सकते हैं। राष्ट्र सर्वोपरिता ही सभी विचारधाराओ की आधारशिला है। दलों को अपनी विचारधारा के अनुसार लोकमत बनाना चाहिए विचार आधारित राजनीतिक शिक्षण में ही जनतंत्र की मजबूती है। भारत का आमजन स्वभाव से राजनीति के प्रति उदासीन रहता है। गांधी जी ने यही बात 1895 में ही लिखी थी कि 'भारतीय साधारणतया राजनीति में सक्रिय हस्तक्षेप नहीं करते। उनका धर्म उन्हें भौतिक प्रवृत्तियों के प्रति उदासीनता सिखाता है। उन्होंने जनअभियान चलाकर भारत के मन के राष्ट्रवादी राजनीतिक बनाने के निरंतर प्रयास किए थे। आधुनिक दलतंत्र को भी ऐसा प्रयास

व्यक्ति से दल बड़ा है। दल विचार का संवाहक होता है। दल से राष्ट्र बहुत बड़ा है दल को राष्ट्र निर्माण का उपकरण होना चाहिए लेकिन यहां राष्ट्र से दल बड़ा है और दल व्यक्ति की जागीर बना हुआ है। अधिकांश दल निजी महत्वाकांक्षा का विस्तार हैं। सो जनतंत्र के सबसे बडे उत्सव चुनाव में भी विचार की टक्कर नहीं व्यक्तियों की ही टक्कर है। नीति कार्यक्रम व राष्टीय स्वप्नों की चर्चा कम है। शत्रु राष्ट्र को भी लाभ पहुंचाने वाली बयानबाजी का दुस्साहस है। भारतीय जनतंत्र बेशक परिपक्व हुआ है। 16 आम चुनाव हो चुके हैं। राज्य विधानसभाओं के चुनाव इस संख्या से ज्यादा हैं। तो भी विचारहीन शोर ने चुनाव महोत्सव का आनंद छीन लिया है। अपशब्द हावी हैं। लोकतंत्र के चीरहरण की आशंका है। विचार के अभाव में शब्द अर्थवत्ता खोते हैं। अपशब्द उनकी जगह लेते हैं तुलसीदास ने ठीक लिखा है-तुलसी पावस के समय धरी कोकिला मौन/अब तो दादुर बोलिहैं, हमें पूछि हैं कौन? मतदाताओं के जागृत विवेक पर भरोसा करना चाहिए।

(लेखक उत्तर प्रदेश विधानसभा के अध्यक्ष हैं) response@jagran.com

वक्त की मांग है राष्ट्रीय कृषि नीति

आम चुनाव की घोषणा के साथ ही संसद और विधानसभाओं में महिलाओं को 33 फीसद आरक्षण देने के मुद्दे पर ओडिशा और पश्चिम बंगाल के कुछ दलों ने अमल करने की पहल की है। इसका स्वागत है। इसी तरह देश के किसान भी चुनाव में अपने सवालों की भागीदारी को लेकर आस लगाए बैठे हैं और आशा एवं विश्वास से सभी गतिविधियों पर नजर लगाए हुए हैं। हालांकि बीते लगभग दो-तीन दशकों के दौरान कृषि और कृषकों के सवालों को लेकर समय-समय पर आंदोलन हुए हैं और निःसंदेह इसमें कुछ सुधार भी हुए हैं। हाल में भी किसानों ने विरोध-प्रदर्शन के जरिये अपनी आवाज मुखर की है। बावजूद इसके कृषि को बदहाली से निकालने के लिए अभी बहुत कुछ किया जाना शेष है।

किनारे कर दिया गया।

एक समय था जब देश पीएल-480 गेहूं खाने को मजबूर था और आज किसानों एवं कृषि वैज्ञानिकों के अथक प्रयासों के बाद भारत गेहं और चावल का दूसरा बड़ा उत्पादक देश है। दाल, गेहूं, चीनी आदि के उत्पादन में भी देश अग्रणी है। इसके बावजूद देश का कृषक वर्ग सामाजिक-आर्थिक और विकास के कई मानकों पर काफी पीछे है। शिक्षा, चिकित्सा, आवास आदि सुविधाओं में कमी समेत उनकी संपूर्ण जीवनशैली में पिछड़ापन व्याप्त है। आधारभूत जरूरतों का अभाव और प्राकृतिक-कृत्रिम आपदाओं के कारण फसलों का नष्ट हो जाना उनकी मानसिक-आर्थिक तंगी की बडी वजह है। कर्ज के निरंतर बढ़ते बोझ के कारण किसानों द्वारा आत्महत्या परेशान करती रही है। दिनोंदिन कृषि का घटता रकबा भी चिंताजनक है। पिछले चार दशकों के दौरान कृषि की वास्तविक आय में आई कमी सबक लेने योग्य है। आर्थिक सहयोग संगठन के एक अध्ययन के अनसार पिछले 17 वर्षों में उपज की कीमत कम मिलने के कारण किसानों को करीब 45 लाख करोड़ रुपये का नुकसान हुआ है। एक और रिपोर्ट के अनुसार हाल की कृषि आय अपने सबसे निचले पायदान पर रही है। इस क्षेत्र में सार्वजनिक एवं निजी दोनों तरह के कुल निवेश में निरंतर गिरावट दर्ज की गई है। जैसे कि 2011-12 में निवेश जीडीपी का तीन फीसद था जो 2016-17 में घटकर 2.2 फीसद रह गया। ऐसी सूरत में कृषि की बदहाली की अब और अनदेखी नहीं हो सकती।

2011 की जनगणना के अनुसार देश में कुल 542 में से मात्र 57 संसदीय सीटें शहरी क्षेत्रों में और शेष 144 अर्ध-शहरी एवं 342 ग्रामीण सीटें हैं। इसके बावजूद यह वर्ग अब तक राजनीतिक अनदेखी का शिकार रहा है। हालांकि राहत की बात यह है कि अब कृषि और कृषकों की समस्याएं राजनीतिक विमर्श का विषय बनने लगी हैं। आर्थिक सुधारों के बाद बाजारवाद के दौर में खेती और किसान अप्रासंगिक



तर्ज पर नेशनल इरिगेशन हाईवे की व्यवस्था देश में दूसरी हरित क्रांति को जन्म दे सकती है



होते गए जो समकालीन राजनीति में पुनः मुखर हुए हैं। गत दिसंबर में तीन राज्यों के चुनावी नतीजे और कांग्रेस की कर्ज माफी नीति इसके ताजा उदाहरण हैं। अब केंद्र में सरकार आने पर देश में कर्ज माफी का वादा चर्चा में है। पिछले लोकसभा चुनावों में कृषक वर्ग का बड़ा सहयोग मौजूदा सत्तारूढ़ राष्ट्रीय जनतांत्रिक गठबंधन यानी राजग

इसमें दोराय नहीं कि राजग सरकार द्वारा किसान हित में कई बड़े फैसले लिए गए। चुनावी लाभ के लिए ही सही, अब तक की सरकारें कर्ज माफी और कर्ज की सीमा बढ़ाकर किसानों की वाहवाही एवं समर्थन लूटती रही हैं। निःसदेह कर्जमाफी स्थायी समाधान नहीं है, क्योंकि पंजाब में कर्ज माफी के बावजूद पिछले एक वर्ष में 430 किसानों द्वारा आत्महत्या की जाने की खबर है। यह पहली बार है जब आम बजट में छोटे किसानों को सालाना 6,000 रुपये के सहयोग से उनकी आय को एक आकार देने का काम हुआ है। वहीं न्यूनतम समर्थन मूल्य यानी एमएसपी में भी 50 फीसद की बढ़ोतरी मोदी सरकार की उपलब्धि रही। हालांकि मौजूदा घोषित एमएसपी ए-2 एफएल प्रणाली से निर्धारित है, जबिक स्वामीनाथन आयोग के अनुसार सी-2 फॉर्मूले से निर्धारित एमएसपी किसान एवं उनके संगठनों की मांग रही है। अब किसान हितों की अनदेखी किसी भी दल को महंगी पड़ेगी। अब प्रत्येक दल को कृषि को लेकर अपना एजेंडा स्पष्ट करना होगा। जिस तरह से 1951 में एक

औद्योगिक नीति तैयार की गई थी, उसी तरह की एक राष्ट्रीय कृषि नीति क्यों नहीं हो सकती? एमएसपी तय करने का मौजूदा त्रुटिपूर्ण तरीका क्यों नहीं बदला जा सकता? तय एमएसपी न मिलने पर सजा या जुर्माने का प्रावधान क्यों नहीं होना चाहिए? किसी भी वर्ष को मानक वर्ष मानकर उसके समानुपात में कृषि उत्पाद के दाम तय होने चाहिए। प्रत्येक वर्ष गन्ना किसानों को भुगतान के लिए मिलों के चक्कर काटने पड़ते हैं। इस दिशा में अब तक का कानून-शुगरकेन ऑर्डर विफल साबित हुआ है।

खेती को आर्थिक रूप से स्थायी पेशा बनाए जाने की कवायद देश की आर्थिकी को मजबूत और आत्मनिर्भर ही बनाएगी। इसके लिए सिंचाई सुविधा, उत्पादन लागत पर काबु पाना, बिजली एवं सडक की सुविधा तथा सबसे महत्वपूर्ण किसानों को अपनी फसल अपने अनुकूल समय, मात्रा एवं जगह से बेचने की स्वतंत्रता उन्हें सशक्त करेंगी। जब औद्योगिक उत्पादों पर ऐसी बंदिशें नहीं हैं तो कृषि उत्पादों पर क्यों ? आए दिन किसानों द्वारा आक्रोशित होकर सड़कों पर अपने उत्पाद फेंकने की खबरें सुर्खियां बनती हैं। यहां भी बिचौलियों का बाजार ही गर्म होता है। स्पष्ट है कि खेती में तकनीकी के इस्तेमाल से शारीरिक श्रम कम होगा। इससे खेती के प्रति आकर्षण के साथ ही बुआई-कटाई समय कम हो जाएगा। सस्ते कर्ज, सब्सिडी आदि प्रोत्साहनों से इसमें निवेश बढाया जा सकता है।

इसी तरह क्षति का आकलन भी एक बड़ी समस्या बन रही है। कई बार हास्यास्पद राशि मुआवजे के रूप में मिलती है। रिमोट सेंसिंग के जरिये आकलन कर 30 दिनों के भीतर बीमा का भुगतान किसानों के हित में होगा। भंडारण क्षमता बढ़ाना सरकार के लिए बड़ी चुनौती है। चाय, कॉफी, रबर, तंबाकू, मछली पालन आदि के मौजूदा कमोडिटी बोर्ड में किसानों की भी भागीदारी होनी चाहिए। ट्रांसपोर्ट इंफ्रास्ट्रक्चर, कोल्ड स्टोरेज, वेयर हाउसिंग तथा प्रोसेसिंग के लिए भारी निवेश की आवश्यकता है। इनके अभाव में प्रति वर्ष हजारों टन अनाज सड़-गल जाते हैं और मौसमी फल-सब्जियां लागत मूल्य भी नहीं निकाल पातीं। बढ़ती महंगाई के अनुरूप एक तय आयु सीमा के बाद किसानों को पेंशन, प्रधानमंत्री बीमा योजना का परा प्रीमियम तथा टयबवेल से सिंचाई की स्थिति में निःशुल्क बिजली आदि की व्यवस्थाएं किसान वर्ग को आकर्षित करेंगी। वहीं नेशनल हाईवे की तर्ज पर नेशनल इरिगेशन हाईवे की व्यवस्था दूसरी हरित क्रांति को जन्म दे सकती है।

(लेखक जदयु के राष्ट्रीय प्रवक्ता हैं) response@jagran.com

मेलबाक्स



वचनबद्धता

भारतीय संस्कृति में वचनबद्धता का बहुत महत्व है। प्राचीन कहावत है कि प्राण जाए पर वचन न जाए। मानव चरित्र की इस श्रेष्ठता के सभी कायल हैं। वचनबद्धता कोई हठधर्मिता नहीं है। हठ कभी भी गुण और सहज चरित्र नहीं हो सकता। हठ अंधविश्वास और दुस्साहस से पैदा होता है। वचनबद्धता एक संकल्प है जो धर्म और मानवीय मूल्यों के परिप्रेक्ष्य में लिया जाता है। दिए गए वचन का महत्व तभी समझा जा सकता है जब धर्म और जीवन व्यवहार का ज्ञान और उनके प्रति संवेदनशीलता हो। धर्म का साधारण स अर्थ ईश्वर में आस्था होना है। जीवन में व्यवहार ऐसा ह जिससे ईश्वर की प्रसन्नता प्राप्त की जा सके। ईश्वर की राह सरल नहीं है। जीवन व्यवहार में सदा मानदंड बने रहें यह अत्यंत कठिन है।

परीक्षा की घड़ियां बार-बार आती रहती हैं। कभी प्रलोभन, कभी डर, कभी प्रताड़ना और कभी-कभी जीवन भी दांव पर लग जाता है। ऐसा इसलिए होता है, क्योंकि कलियुग माया और विकारों का युग है। इसका जाल चारो ओर फैला हुआ है। इस जाल से कोई एक ही बच पाता है। माया और विकारों से बच जाना ही सच्चा पौरुष और वीरता है। कोई मनुष्य निर्बल और असहाय मात्र माया और विकारों के आगे होता है। इनके जाल में फंसा हुआ कभी वीर हो ही नहीं सकता। ऐसे मनुष्य से आशा करना व्यर्थ होता है कि वह वचन पर दृढ़ रहेगा। उसकी चेतना और संवेदना पंगु हो जाती है। वह लोभ, अहं, काम, क्रोध वश कुछ भी कर सकता है, किंतु जहां स्वार्थ सिद्धि न हो, पीछे हटते हुए देर नहीं लगती।

धर्म और मानवता स्वार्थ से परे है। इसमें मात्र देना ही है, जब मनुष्य धर्म और मानवता के लिए खड़ा होता है, तब परमात्मा उसे बल देता है। वह भय, लोभ, दबाव से मुक्त हो जाता है। उसके अंदर मृत्यु का भय भी समाप्त हो जाता है। यही कारण था कि महापुरुषों, धर्म नायकों ने परोपकार की भावना से अद्भुत त्याग और बलिदान किए। ऐसे लोग ही-प्राण जाए पर वचन न जाई-की पावन भावना का प्रतिनिधित्व करते हैं। मूल्यों और सिद्धांतों पर दृढ़ता जीवन को सरल और निष्कंटक बनाने का इकलौता मार्ग है। धर्म से जड़कर ही मनुष्य माया और विकारों के चारों ओर फैले हुए जाल से बच सकता है।

डॉ. सत्येंद्र पाल सिंह

मोटापे की बढ़ती समस्या

सौरभ पाठक

आज लोगों की जीवनशैली दिन-ब-दिन खराब होती जा रही है। लोग अपने कार्यों में इस कदर व्यस्त रहते हैं कि खुद के स्वास्थ्य को बनाए रखने के लिए भी समय नहीं निकाल पा रहे। नतीजतन वे कई प्रकार के बीमारियों से ग्रस्त होते चले जा रहे हैं। उन्हीं बीमारियों में से प्रमुख है मोटापा। मोटापा शब्द सुनने में तो सामान्य प्रतीत होता है, किंतु इसके परिणाम घातक होते हैं। मोटापा का वास्तविक अर्थ होता है, शरीर का सामान्य से अधिक वजन होना। शरीर का वजन मुख्यतः तीन वजहों से बढ़ता है-हड्डियों के घनत्व ज्यादा होने से, मांस ज्यादा होने से या फिर शरीर में खराब वसा की अधिकता के कारण। शरीर का असामान्य वजन ज्यादातर खराब वसा के कारण ही होता है।

भारतीयों में ज्यादातर 'सेंट्रल ओबेसिटी' पाई जाती है। सेंट्रल ओबेसिटी का अर्थ है, एब्डॉमिनल एरिया में खराब वसा का एकत्रित हो जाना। यानी तोंद निकलना। मोटापे की समस्या की जांच के लिए बीएमआइ यानी बॉडी मास इंडेक्स की गणना की जाती है। बीएमआइ की सामान्य रेंज 18.5 से 23.5 के बीच होती है।

सबसे महत्वपूर्ण है, स्वस्थ रहना।जब लोग स्वस्थ रहेंगे, तभी अपने कार्य को एकाग्रता तथा रुचिपूर्ण तरीके से कर सकेंगे

इसके अलावा लोग अपने शरीर के वजन की और भी आसान तरीके से गणना करके मोटापे की स्थिति का पता लगा सकते हैं। करना यह है कि अपनी लंबाई को सेंटीमीटर में माप लें और उसमें से सौ घटा दें। इस प्रक्रिया से जो भी वजन आएगा, वह उस व्यक्ति का आदर्श वजन कहलाएगा।

मोटापे की समस्या इतनी तेजी से इसलिए बढ़ रही है, क्योंकि लोगों का जीवन घर और दफ्तर के एक बंद कमरे तक ही सीमित हो चुका है। लोग सुबह से शाम तक कुर्सी पर बैठे-बैठे काम करते रहते हैं, जिसके परिणामस्वरूप शरीर धीरे-धीरे शिथिल पड़ता जाता है। दूसरी वजह है, खान-पान में बदलाव। लोगों का आकर्षण जंक फूड की तरफ बढ़ता जा रहा है, जिसके कारणवश

लोग जाने-अनजाने मोटापे रूपी गंभीर बीमारी की जकड़न में फंसते जा रहे हैं। गौरतलब है कि मोटापा लोगों को मधुमेह, उच्च रक्तचाप, कैंसर, हार्ट अटैक, ब्रेन स्ट्रोंक जैसी जानलेवा बीमारियों का शिकार बनाता है।

मोटापे की समस्या से बचाव या निजात पाने के लिए सर्वप्रथम अपनी जीवनशैली में सकारात्मक बदलाव लाना होगा। चिकित्सक की सलाह के साथ-साथ नियमित रूप से योग या किसी भी प्रकार के व्यायाम को अपने जीवन का अभिन्न हिस्सा बनाना होगा। लोगों को पैदल चलने की ज्यादा कोशिश करनी चाहिए। एस्केलेटर की जगह सीढ़ियों का इस्तेमाल करने से अतिरिक्त कैलोरी बर्न होती है और खराब वसा शरीर से जल्दी खत्म होती है। खान-पान में ज्यादा वसायुक्त और जंक फूड से परहेज करना तथा हरी सब्जियों के सेवन को बढ़ाना अत्यंत आवश्यक है। संतुलित तथा फलयुक्त आहार को अपनी आदत में शामिल करना अनिवार्य है। लोगों को यह समझना होगा कि सबसे महत्वपूर्ण है, स्वस्थ रहना। जब लोग स्वस्थ रहेंगे, तभी अपने कार्य को एकाग्रता तथा रुचिपूर्ण तरीके से कर सकेंगे।

(लेखक मेडिकल छात्र हैं)

सोच-समझकर करें मतदान

मतदाताओं के फैसले की कसौटी शीर्षक से लिखे अपने लेख में संजय गुप्त ने मतदान करते समय मतदाताओं को राष्ट्रीय हित के साथ-साथ राजनीतिक दलों की कथनी और करनी में अंतर पर भी गौर करने की सलाह दी है। यह बिल्कुल सही बात है। अब लोकसभा चुनाव की तिथि जारी हो चुकी है और सभी राजनीतिक दल अपने-अपने प्रत्याशियों को मैदान में उतार रहे हैं। प्रत्याशी तय करते समय राजनीतिक दलों के अपने कुछ भी मानक हों, लेकिन उन्हें जिताकर संसद भेजने का कार्य जनता ही करती है। इसलिए यह और भी महत्वपूर्ण हो जाता है कि जनता सोच समझकर अच्छे प्रत्याशी को चुनकर संसद भेजे। एक अच्छा सांसद काफी हद तक अपने क्षेत्र का विकास कर सकता है। इसके साथ-साथ मतदाताओं को राजनीतिक दलों की पूर्व की कार्यशैली को परखने की आवश्यकता होती है। एक बड़ा प्रश्न है कि जिन दलों ने अब तक शासन किया है, उनको परखने में आम मतदाता को कोई परेशानी नहीं होगी, लेकिन जिन दलों ने केंद्र में अभी तक शासन नहीं किया है, उन्हें कैसे परखा जाए? क्षेत्रीय दलों को राष्ट्रीय हित की जिम्मेदारी देने से पहले यह देखना उचित होगा कि उन्होंने क्षेत्रीय विकास पर कितना बल दिया है? यदि उन्होंने अपने शासनकाल में क्षेत्रीय विकास किया है तो निःसंदेह वे राष्ट्रीय हित के मामलों में श्रेष्ठ ही साबित होंगे। स्पष्ट है कि मतदाताओं को बहुत ही सोच समझकर मतदान करना चाहिए, क्योंकि यह मौका पांच वर्ष बाद ही आता है।

सर्वजीत आर्या, कन्नौज, उत्तर प्रदेश पर्यावरण के प्रहरी

संरक्षण की ओर किसी का ध्यान नहीं है। इस तरह भावी पीढ़ी का भविष्य अंधकारमय लग रहा है। लेकिन जीव प्रेमी और पर्यावरण संरक्षण के लिए राजस्थान के बिश्नोई संप्रदाय ने पूरी दुनिया के लिए एक मिसाल कायम की है। यह संप्रदाय लंबे समय से प्रकृति के काफी गहरा करीब रहा है। यह समाज समय-समय पर प्रकृति प्रेम के लिए परीक्षाएं देता रहा है। इस समाज की महिलाएं हों या पुरुष सदा से ही पर्यावरण हितैषी रहे हैं। यह समाज विलुप्त होने की कगार पर खड़े (काला हिरण, मोर, खरगोश इत्यादि) वन्य प्राणियों को शिकारियों से बचाता रहा है तथा हर महीने अमावस्या को पर्यावरण शुद्धि के लिए घी और नारियल का हवन करते हैं। राजस्थान की अर्ध-शष्क जलवायु एवं उच्च तापमान वाली पृष्ठभूमि मे पारिस्थितिकी तंत्र के संतुलन के लिए सरकार के साथ इस समाज का भी अहम योगदान रहा है। समस्त विश्व को एकजुट होकर पर्यावरण संरक्षण के अपने दायित्वों का निर्वहन करना चाहिए ताकि भावी पीढ़ियों का भविष्य उज्ज्वल हो सके। shriniwaspanwar1999@gmail.com

घोषणापत्र का महत्व

राजनीतिक पार्टियों को अपने चुनावी घोषणापत्र में 5 वर्ष की सुव्यवस्थित कार्य योजना बनाकर जनता के सामने प्रस्तुत करना चाहिए। विशेषकर शिक्षा, स्वास्थ्य, बेरोजगारी, कृषि विकास, मजदूर कल्याण, महिला एवं बाल विकास तथा विदेश नीति पर अपनी पार्टी का रुख साफ करना चाहिए। रक्षा मंत्रालय को सक्षम बनाने और सैनिकों के कल्याण की बात भी विशेष रूप से घोषणापत्र में शामिल होनी चाहिए। कोई भी आज हम लगातार प्रकृति का दोहन कर रहे हैं, जबकि इसके दल अपने चुनाव घोषणापत्र में ऐसा कोई वादा जनता से न करे

जिसे परा करने में उन्हें बाद में परेशानी हो। सभी राजनीतिक दलों की यह जवाबदेही बनती है कि वे अपने घोषणापत्र में देश के सर्वांगीण विकास पर योजनाएं क्रियान्वित करने के संबंध में फोकस करें।

lalit.mahalkari@gmail.com

राजनीतिक सदभाव

जो उड़ी और पुलवामा हमले के बाद हुआ है वैसा कुछ मुंबई हमले के बाद क्यों नहीं हुआ? पाकिस्तान में आतंकियों के ठिकाने पर हमला हर भारतीय चाहता भी था। पाकिस्तान डे पर सरकार द्वारा पाक उच्चायोग के कार्यक्रम के बहिष्कार एवं पाकिस्तानी समकक्ष को पत्र भेजने में कई को विरोधाभास लग रहा है। उच्चायोग का बहिष्कार केवल इसलिए किया गया क्योंकि वहां हुर्रियत नेताओं को निमंत्रित किया गया था। हुर्रियत का शाब्दिक अर्थ आजादी होता है। अभिव्यक्ति की आजादी देशहित पर कुठाराघात नहीं हो सकती। वहीं पाकिस्तान के प्रधानमंत्री को औपचारिक पत्र भेजना दो राज्यध्यक्षों के मध्य मात्र एक राजनीतिक सद्भाव है, जो उचित है।

शैलेंद्र सक्सेना, नई दिल्ली

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।

> अपने पत्र इस पते पर भेजें : दैनिक जागरण, राष्ट्रीय संस्करण, डी–210–211, सेक्टर–63, नोएडा ई-मेल: mailbox@jagran.com

डिजिटल श्रम की तैयारी

वा आबादी और बढ़ती श्रमशक्ति के लिए रोजगार के समुचित अवसर उपलब्ध कराना हमारी अर्थव्यवस्था की प्रमुख चुनौती हैं. चूंकि भारत समेत दुनियाभर में श्रम और तकनीक तथा इनके प्रबंधन का स्वरूप तेज गति से बदलता जा रहा है, इसलिए भविष्य में रोजगार की कोई भी रूपरेखा बनाते समय इस बदलाव का संज्ञान लेना जरूरी है. डेटा संग्रहण और उसके आम जीवन में इस्तेमाल, डिजिटल बैंकिंग एवं लेन-देन, इ-कॉमर्स, इंटरनेट और स्मार्ट फोन का विस्तार, कल्याणकारी योजनाओं को वंचितों तक पहुंचाने आदि के मामलों में हाल के सालों में भारत ने बड़ी उपलब्धियां हासिल की है. इससे न सिर्फ सेवाओं और सामानों के वितरण और विपणन में बढ़ोतरी हुई है, बल्कि आमदनी, कारोबार और काम के नये-नये मौके भी बने हैं. हमारे सकल घरेलू उत्पादन में सेवा क्षेत्र का योगदान लगातार बढ़ा है और आज इसकी हिस्सेदारी करीब 55 फीसदी है. आंतरिक और वैश्विक उथल-पृथल के बावजूद अगर हमारी आर्थिकी आज भी सबसे तेजी से बढ़ रही है, तो इसमें डिजिटल क्रांति का सबसे महत्वपूर्ण भूमिका है, लेकिन सूचना-तकनीक के

आंतरिक और वैश्विक उथल-पुथल के बावजूद अगर हमारी आर्थिकी सबसे तेजी से बढ़ रही है, तो इसमें डिजिटल क्रांति का सबसे महत्वपूर्ण भूमिका है.

जो अत्याधृनिक रुझान हैं, उसके लिए भी हमें तैयार रहना होगा. उत्पादन, वितरण और उपभोग में वैश्विक स्तर पर आर्टिफिशियल इंटेलिजेंस और ऑटोमेशन का उपयोग बढ़ रहा है. इनसे एक ओर गुणवत्ता और सुगमता में बेहतरी हो रही है, वहीं इनकी वजह से रोजगार और उसके अवसरों का रूप भी बदल रहा है. दुनिया की बड़ी तकनीकी कंपनियां संवाद, संचार, मनोरंजन, लेखा, ढुलाई, प्रबंधन और उत्पादन के लिए कंप्यूटरों को क्षमतावान बना रही हैं. तकनीक, बौद्धिकी, डिजाइन आदि अलग-अलग क्षेत्रों में अलग-अलग कोने में बैठे

लोग इंटरनेट के माध्यम से साझेदारी में काम कर रहे हैं. डिजिटल माध्यम से सेवाओं के आदान -प्रदान के इस रूप का वित्तीय आकार लगातार बढता जा रहा है तथा निकट भविष्य में उत्पादन और उपभोग पर इसका बहुत बड़ा प्रभाव पड़ने का अनुमान है. ऐसे में पारंपरिक कारोबारों की दशा और दिशा में व्यापक बदलाव होना स्वाभाविक है. अर्थव्यवस्था की बढ़त को बरकरार रखने तथा आबादी के बहुत बड़े हिस्से को रोजगार और सेवा की उपलब्धता सुनिश्चित करने के लिए भारत को इस रुझान में जोर-शोर से सहभागिता करना होगा. अगर हम डिजिटल इंफ्रास्ट्रक्चर के लिहाज से देखें, तो तकनीक और उसके विस्तार में हम किसी भी देश के समकक्ष खड़े हो सकते हैं, परंतु आर्थिक गतिविधियों के लिए आवश्यक डिजिटल कौशल में निपृण श्रमशक्ति की बड़ी कमी है. पिछले कुछ सालों में कौशल विकास के कार्यक्रमों से श्रम कुशलता में कुछ सुधार हुआ है, लेकिन वह बुनियादी तौर यह पारंपरिक श्रम से जुड़ा हुआ है. इसके अगले चरण में आर्टिफिशियल इंटेलिजेंस, ऑटोमेशन, डेटा प्रबंधन, समायोजन एवं सुरक्षा तथा सेवाओं के निष्पादन में युवाओं को दक्ष और सक्षम बनाने की प्रक्रिया पर ध्यान दिया जाना चाहिए. इस प्रयास में शिक्षा और कौशल विकास केंद्रों का देशव्यापी संजाल बिछाया जाना चाहिए.



धर्म का आचरण

स व्यक्ति को धार्मिक बनना है, उसे अपना आचरण सुधारना है. स व्यक्ति को धाामक बनना ह, उस अपना जायर र अन्य स्थि पोथी पढ़ कर कोई विद्वान नहीं हो सकता है. लोग कहते हैं इस अर्थ में विद्या क्या है? विद्या उसी को कहते हैं, जिसके द्वारा विमुक्ति मिलती है. विमुक्ति क्या है? मुक्ति है बंधन से छुटकारा. किंतु बंधन से छुटकारा मिल जाये, तो दोबारा भी बंधन हो सकता है. एक बार बंधन से छुटकारा हो गया और दोबारा बंधन की संभावना नहीं रह जाती है, तो वह जो विशेष प्रकार की मुक्ति हुई, उसी को विमुक्ति कहते हैं. जिसके द्वारा विमुक्ति मिलती है उसी को विद्या कहते हैं; विद्या जिनमें है वही हैं विद्वान. विद्वान भी वही है, जिनका आचरण बन गया है. अनपढ़ आदमी भी धार्मिक बन सकते हैं, महापुरुष बन सकते हैं. और महामहोपाध्याय पंडित भी अधार्मिक हो सकते हैं. मैं बार-बार कहता हूं कि अपना आचरण बना लो. आनंदमार्ग का दर्शन विद्वानों और पंडितों के लिए है. किंतु आचरण सब कोई बना सकता है. आदर्श का प्रचार करना जैसे साधक का काम है वैसे हीं अपने पवित्र बनना और दूसरों को पवित्र बनाना, धार्मिक बनना और दूसरों को धार्मिक बनाना- यही साधक का काम है. तुम अपने सत् बन गये, उससे काम नहीं चलेगा, समाज को भी सत् बनाना होगा. महामारी के समय मान लो, तुम्हारा घर साफ-सुथरा है, तुम खूब स्नान करते हो किंतु बस्ती गंदी है, उस दशा में महामारी से तुम भी नहीं बचोगे. तो तुम अपने धार्मिक बनोगे और तुम्हारे पड़ोस, तुम्हारे परिचित, परिवार के और अन्य लोग पापी रह गये, तो तुम भी पापाचार से नहीं बचोगे, क्योंकि उनका असर तुम पर पड़ेगा. अपने वातावरण को भी धार्मिक बनाना पड़ेगा. यह जो धर्म का प्रचार है. इस आचारण में दार्शनिक ज्ञान गौण है. मुख्य है अपना आचरण. लोग तुम्हारे पांडित्य से जितना प्रभावित होंगे, तुम्हारे आचरण से उससे अधिक प्रभावित होंगे. आचरण ठीक होने से तुम्हारी भी तरक्की हो रही है और आध्यात्मिक उन्नति भी हो रही है. और जो तुम्हारे संपर्क में आ गये हैं, वे भी तुम्हारे आचरण से प्रभावित होंगे. श्रीश्री आनंदमूर्ति

कुछ अलग

टिक या कट उर्फ टिकट

चालू विवि ने टिकट विषय पर निबंध प्रतियोगिता का आयोजन किया, इसमें प्रथम पुरस्कार निबंध इस प्रकार है-टिकट कई तरह के होते हैं. सिनेमा टिकट, बस टिकट, हवाई जहाज

टिकट और चुनावी टिकट. इनमें सर्वाधिक महत्वपूर्ण चुनावी टिकट होता है. जिसके चुनावी टिकट की सैटिंग सही है, वह सिनेमा, बस और हवाई जहाज का मालिक हो जाता है. इसलिए चतुर सुजान इसी टिकट पर फोकस करते हैं और इस कदर फोकस करते हैं कि चाहे राजनीतिक पार्टियां बदल जायें,पर वह चुनावी टिकट हासिल करके ही मानते हैं. महाराष्ट्र से लेकर उत्तर प्रदेश तक ऐसे कई नेता हैं, जो कुछ दिन पहले सेकुलर बने राष्ट्रवाद को कोसते थे, पर अब टिकट के चक्कर में घणे राष्ट्रवादी होकर सेकुलरवादी हो गये हैं. ये न किसी के विरोधी हैं न किसी के समर्थक हैं. ये सिर्फ और सिर्फ अपने चुनावी टिकट के समर्थक हैं. अगर पाकिस्तान के इमरान खान की पार्टी के टिकट पर भारत में चुनाव लड़ने की अनुमित होती, तो भारत में कई नेता चुनावी

टिकट के चक्कर में इमरान खान की पार्टी के मेंबर हो जाते. टिकट में से अंत का ट हटा दिया जाये, तो टिक बनता है और टिकट में से शुरू का टि हटा दिया जाये, तो कट बनता है. आशय यह है कि टिक ले या कट ले. यानी नेताओं को जमकर टिक कर काम करना चाहिए, वरना कटना पक्का हो जाता है. इधर का कटा उधर जमेगा या नहीं पक्का ना होता. बिहार की कई सीटों पर ऐसे नेता टहल रहे हैं, जो पुरानी पार्टी से कट लिये

आलोक पुराणिक वरिष्ठ व्यंग्यकार puranika@gmail.com

इस उम्मीद में कि नयी पार्टी में चुनावी टिकट मिल जायेगा, पर नयी से टिकट न मिला, पुरानी से कट लिये. यानी पुरानी से कटने से पहले तय कर लेना चाहिए कि नयी जगह टिकना कहां है. टिकटों के मामले दार्शनिक मामले हैं.

बंदा जो और जितनी उम्मीद करता है, उतना नहीं मिलता. एक वक्त था, जब युपी-बिहार में कांग्रेस की हैसियत सारे टिकट तय करने की होती थी. अब कांग्रेस चिरौरीवान स्थिति में है कि कुछ टिकट मिल जायें. टिकट की महिमा है कि टिकट बांटनेवाले को भी एक दिन टिकट मांगना पड़ता है. इस वाक्य का शरद यादव की स्थिति से कोई लेना-देना नहीं है.

कईयों के पास टिकट बहुत हैं, पर जीत कम हैं. कईयों के पास जीत भले ही न हो, पर टिकट बांटने की हैसियत उन्हीं की है. तमाम परिवारवादी दलों में टिकट वही बांटते हैं, जिनके अपने जीतने का रिकॉर्ड संदिग्ध है. कांग्रेस नेता राज बब्बर के पास कुल मिला कर पांच टिकट हैं. यूपी में फिरोजाबाद, आगरा, गाजियाबाद का चुनावी टिकट रहा इनके पास, फिर 2019 में इन्हें मुरादाबाद से टिकट मिला. चुनावी रेल में सवार हो पाते, उससे पहले ही मैसेज आया कि आपका टिकट दूसरे स्टेशन का है- फतेहपुर सीकरी स्टेशन का. ना टिकट पक्का होता है, ना सीट पक्की होती है, बस नेता पक्का होता है कि वह जीतेगा. हमें टिक कर काम करना चाहिए, वरना बेरोजगार होने के खतरे हैं. आखिर हर कोई तो कुछ खास वंशों से न होता, जिनमें रोजगार की गारंटी हर हाल में होती ही होती है!

राजनीति में युवाओं को मीका मिले

वन के हर क्षेत्र में पीढियों का परिवर्तन हमेशा मुश्किल होता है. इसके लिए साहसिक पहल की जरूरत होती है. भारत आज विश्व में सब से अधिक युवा आबादी वाला देश है. इतनी युवा आबादी किसी देश के पास नहीं हैं, लेकिन हर क्षेत्र में युवाओं की अनदेखी की जा रही है. दलील दी जाती है कि उनके पास अनुभव की कमी है. जान लीजिए कि अगर राजनीति समेत जीवन के विभिन्न क्षेत्रों में युवाओं को मौका नहीं दिया गया, तो हम इस अवसर को गंवा देंगे. पिछले दिनों भाजपा के उम्मीदवारों की सूची में लालकृष्ण आडवाणी का नाम नहीं था. उनके स्थान पर गांधीनगर से अमित शाह को उम्मीदवार बनाया गया है इसको लेकर मीडिया में खासा हो-हल्ला मचा. आडवाणी गांधीनगर से छह बार सांसद रहे हैं और उनकी उम्र 91 साल से ज्यादा हो चुकी है. अब उनके विश्राम का समय आ गया है. 2014 में भी भाजपा ने 75 साल से अधिक उम्र के नेताओं से अनुरोध किया था कि वे लोकसभा का चुनाव न लड़ें, लेकिन यह फैसला बुजुर्ग नेताओं को रास नहीं आया था और उनकी नाराजगी से बचने के लिए उन्हें टिकट देना पड़ा, जबकि यह निर्णय तो वरिष्ठ नेताओं की ओर से आना चाहिए था, ताकि उन्हें गरिमामय विदाई दी जा सके. भाजपा ही नहीं, सभी दलों में कमोबेश यही स्थिति है. कोई नेता रिटायर होना ही नहीं चाहता है, जबकि चुनाव न लड़ने से किसी नेता का योगदान कम नहीं हो जाता. भाजपा का जब भी जिक्र होगा, लालकृष्ण आडवाणी और अटल बिहारी वाजपेयी के योगदान को याद किया जायेगा. भाजपा को दो सीटों की पार्टी से यहां तक पहुंचाने में उनका अहम योगदान है. आडवाणी ने 1992 की अयोध्या रथ यात्रा निकाल कर भाजपा को कांग्रेस के विकल्प के रूप में खड़ा कर दिया था. एक दौर था, जब लालकृष्ण आडवाणी भारत की राजनीति की दिशा को तय करते थे और उन्हें प्रधानमंत्री पद का प्रबल दावेदार तक माना जाता था.

सबसे दिलचस्प बात यह है कि हमेशा आडवाणी पर

कटाक्ष करने वाली कांग्रेस की ओर से बयान आया कि भाजपा अपने बुजुर्ग नेताओं का आदर नहीं करती है, जबिक कुछ समय पहले कांग्रेस अध्यक्ष राहुल गांधी के सामने एक ऐतिहासिक अवसर आया था, जब वह मध्य प्रदेश और राजस्थान में सत्ता की कमान युवाओं को सौंप सकते थे, लेकिन राहुल गांधी ने यह ऐतिहासिक मौका गंवा दिया. उन्होंने मध्य प्रदेश की कमान 72 वर्षीय कमलनाथ को सौंपी और राजस्थान में 67 वर्षीय अशोक गहलोत को मुख्यमंत्री बना दिया. कांग्रेस के दो युवा नेताओं ज्योतिरादित्य सिंधिया और सचिन पायलट को किनारे कर दिया गया. मुख्यमंत्री चुने गये दोनों नेता बुजुर्ग हैं और अपने करियर के ढलान पर हैं. वह अवसर था, जब कांग्रेस अध्यक्ष राहुल गांधी युवा नेतृत्व को मौका दे कर राजनीतिक जोखिम उठा सकते थे. इस ओर शायद लोगों का ध्यान नहीं गया कि भाजपा ने मनोहर पर्रिकर के निधन के बाद 45 वर्षीय प्रमोद सावंत को गोवा का मुख्यमंत्री बना कर भाजपा ने पीढ़ी परिवर्तन कर दिया है.

पद की जिम्मेदारी देने से न केवल पीढियों का अंतर हो जाता है, बल्कि सोचने के तौर तरीके में भी बदलाव आ जाता है. युवाओं में कुछ कर दिखाने का जज्बा होता है. मैं इस पक्ष में हूं कि पुरानी पीढ़ी के अनुभव का हमें लाभ उठाना चाहिए, लेकिन पीढियों के परिवर्तन के

किसी युवा नेता को मुख्यमंत्री



आशुतोष चतुर्वेदी प्रधान संपादक, प्रभात खबर

ashutosh.chaturvedi

@prabhatkhabar.in mail

कोई नेता रिटायर होना ही नहीं चाहता है, जबिक चुनाव न लड़ने से किसी नेता का योगदान कम नहीं हो जाता . भाजपा का जब भी जिक्र होगा, लालकृष्ण आडवाणी और अटल बिहारी वाजपेयी के योगदान

को याद किया जायेगा. अथवा राजनीतिक का रण, हर जगह यह बात नजर आती है. क्रिकेट में

भी आपने गौर किया होगा कि अक्सर जब तक खिलाडी को बाहर बैठने के लिए नहीं कह दिया जाता, तब तक उसकी आकांक्षा टीम में बने रहने की होती है. हालांकि कई खिलाड़ी इसके अपवाद भी हैं. क्रिकेट विश्व कप होने वाला

79 सांसद थे.

लिए हमें साहसिक कदम उठाने होंगे.

लेकिन देश का दुर्भाग्य है कि हमारे

सोचने का तरीका पुराना ही है. सरकारी

अथवा निजी क्षेत्र की नौकरी से आम

आदमी 58 या फिर 60 साल की उम्र

में रिटायर कर दिया जाता है और

उसके स्थान पर कोई युवा जिम्मेदारी

संभालता है. लेकिन राजनीति में उम्र

की कोई सीमा नहीं होती. भले ही

आप शारीरिक और मानसिक रूप से

उतने चैतन्य न रहें, लेकिन सत्ता का

मोह नहीं जाता है. यही वजह है कि

सभी राजनीतिक दलों में बूढ़े नेता

सत्ता से चिपके रहते हैं. 2014 में

जब लोकसभा के चुनाव हुए थे, तब

चुने गये 543 सांसदों में से 253 की

औसत उम्र 55 साल से अधिक थी.

विश्लेषकों का कहना है कि यह सबसे

बुढ़े सांसदों वाली लोकसभा थी. संसद

में युवा वर्ग का प्रतिनिधित्व देश के

युवाओं के अनुपात में बेहद कम था.

उपलब्ध आंकड़ों के अनुसार पिछली

संसद में 45 साल से कम के केवल

में, चाहे वह खेल का मैदान हो

सार्वजनिक जीवन के हर क्षेत्र

है और इसमें भारत का नेतृत्व विराट कोहली करेंगे और उन्हें धौनी के अनुभव का लाभ मिलेगा. भारत को विश्व कप जिताने वाले कपिल देव और महानतम बल्लेबाज सुनील गावस्कर और सचिन तेंदुलकर को कभी-न-कभी तो जाना पड़ा. वह हमेशा तो भारतीय टीम में बने नहीं रह सकते थे. आपको तेंदुलकर का मामला याद होगा. उनका प्रदर्शन स्तरीय नहीं चल रहा था, लेकिन वह रिटायर नहीं हो रहे थे. चयनकर्ताओं में साहस नहीं था कि वे कह सकें कि अब आपको रिटायर हो जाना चाहिए. यह फैसला सचिन के ऊपर ही छोड़ दिया गया था और काफी इंतजार के बाद उन्होंने यह फैसला किया.

भारत आज विश्व में सब से अधिक युवा आबादी वाला देश है. भारत के मुकाबले चीन और अमेरिका बुजुर्गों के देश हैं. चीन में लगभग 21 करोड़ और अमेरिका में लगभग 7 करोड़ युवा हैं. 1991 की जनगणना के अनुसार देश में लगभग 34 करोड़ युवा थे. माना जा रहा है कि 2020 तक भारत दुनिया के सबसे युवा देश हो जायेगा. आप गौर करें कि युवा देश में अब भी जीवन के हर क्षेत्र की बागड़ोर बुजुर्ग लोगों के हाथों में है. हमारे यहां एक और समस्या है कि अलग-अलग क्षेत्रों में युवा की परिभाषा भिन्न-भिन्न है. राजनीति में तो 50 से 60 साल तक के लोगों को युवा मान लिया जाता है. 2003 में राष्ट्रीय युवा नीति में युवाओं का पारिभाषित किया गया था और 13 से 35 वर्ष की आयु वर्ग के लोगों को युवा माना गया था. भारत के युवा होने की खबर पर पूरी दुनिया की नजर है. कुछ समय पहले ब्रिटेन के जाने माने अखबार गार्डियन में इयान जैक ने एक विस्तृत लेख लिखा था, जिसमें उन्होंने कहा है कि युवा भारत दुनिया को बदल सकता है. इस लेख में कहा गया है कि युवा भारतीयों में पारंपरिक एशियाई संस्कृति और अमेरिकी युवाओं की आकांक्षाओं का समावेश है. हर तरफ इस बात की चर्चा है, लेकिन अपने ही देश में इस बड़े परिवर्तन की अनदेखी हो रही है.

लोकपाल की नियुक्ति-प्रक्रिया पर प्रश्न



रविभूषण वरिष्ठ साहित्यकार

ravibhushan1408@gmail.com

अब पिनाकी चंद्र घोष १९ मार्च, २०१९ से भारत के प्रथम लोकपाल हैं. मोदी सरकार को लोकपाल नियुक्त करने में पांच साल लगे . चुनाव के ठीक पहले हुई इस नियुक्ति का क्या चुनाव पर कोई प्रभाव पड़ेगा?

रत के पहले लोकपाल की नियुक्ति प्रधानमंत्री नरेंद्र मोदी, भारत के मुख्य न्यायाधीश रंजन गोगोई और लोकसभा अध्यक्ष सुमित्रा महाजन की चयन समिति ने 17 मार्च, 2019 को, सत्रहवें लोकसभा चुनाव के कुछ दिन पहले कर दी है. चयन समिति के चौथे सदस्य पूर्व महान्यायवादी मुकुल रोहतगी थे. विपक्ष के नेता मल्लिकार्जुन खड़गे इस चयन समिति में विशेष रूप से आमंत्रित थे, जिन्हें किसी प्रकार का अधिकार नहीं था. वे चयन समिति की बैठक में उपस्थित नहीं हुए. अब लोकपाल की नियुक्ति-प्रक्रिया पर सवाल उठ रहे हैं, क्योंकि जिस संतुलित चयन समिति का होना आवश्यक था, वह नहीं हो सका है.

मुकुल रोहतगी वाजपेयी सरकार के समय भारत के अतिरिक्त सॉलिसिटर जनरल नियुक्त किये गये थे. उन्होंने वाजपेयी सरकार में पांच साल और मोदी सरकार में तीन साल काम किया है. अटॉर्नी जनरल के तौर पर उन्होंने सेवा-विस्तार नहीं चाहा था और यह कहा था, 'सरकार के साथ मेरे अच्छे संबंध हैं, लेकिन मैं अब निजी प्रैक्टिस करना चाहता हूं.' जज लोया की मौत के मामले में स्वतंत्र और निष्पक्ष जांच के लिए दायर याचिका के विरोध के लिए महाराष्ट्र सरकार ने मुकुल रोहतगी को नियुक्त किया था. उस समय निष्पक्ष जांच के लिए दायर याचिका के संबंध में उन्होंने कहा था कि यह याचिका न्यायपालिका को 'स्कैंडलाइज' करने के लिए दायर की गयी है. उन्होंने कर्नाटक विधानसभा चुनाव के बाद के घटनाक्रम में वहां के राज्यपाल का बचाव किया था. लोकपाल चयन सिमिति में उनकी नियुक्ति प्रमुख विधिवेत्ता के रूप में की गयी.

लोकपाल कानून की धारा-4 के अंतर्गत पारदर्शिता की बात थी. सार्वजनिक जांच की बात भी की गयी थी. अब लोकपाल के चयन में पारदर्शिता न बरतने की बात कही जा रही है. खोज समिति द्वारा उम्मीदवारों की संक्षिप्त सूची की कोई जानकारी नहीं है. लोकपाल की चयन समिति की बैठकों के कार्यवृत्त (मिनट्स) को 'गुप्त सूचना' कहा गया है. इन कारणों से यह अनुमान किया जा रहा है कि लोकपाल के कामकाज के पहले ही सरकार ने इस संस्था को कमजोर कर दिया है.

मनमोहन सिंह के कार्यकाल में 22 दिसंबर, 2011 को लोकपाल बिल संसद में रखा गया था और 27 दिसंबर, 2011 को लोकपाल एवं लोकायुक्त बिल पास हुआ था. जांच एजेंसियों के प्रति अविश्वास के कारण लोकपाल की जरूरत समझी गयी थी. जन लोकपाल बिल सुप्रीम कोर्ट के पूर्व न्यायाधीश संतोष हेगड़े, वकील प्रशांत भूषण और अरविंद केजरीवाल ने मिल कर तैयार किया था. पांच अप्रैल, 2011 को अन्ना हजारे ने जंतर-मंतर पर अनशन आरंभ किया था. उनके साथ अरविंद केजरीवाल, किरण बेदी, प्रशांत भूषण, बाबा रामदेव सब थे. उस समय भारत सरकार से एक मजबूत भ्रष्टाचार-विरोधी लोकपाल विधेयक बनाने की मांग की गयी थी. लोकपाल बिल का एक मसौदा भी दिया गया था. मनमोहन सरकार का रवैया नकारात्मक रहा था. अनशन ने आंदोलन का रूप ग्रहण किया और अन्ना आंदोलन लोकपाल विधेयक से जुड़ा था. मनमोहन सिंह ने संसद में इस आंदोलन के पीछे विदेशी शक्तियों के हाथ होने की बात कही थी. यूपीए-2 के दौरान भ्रष्टाचार चरम पर था. नरेंद्र मोदी के कार्यकाल में भगोड़े और आर्थिक अपराधियों की संख्या बढ़ी. लोकपाल बिल ढंडे बस्ते में पड़ा रहा. अप्रैल 2017 में सुप्रीम कोर्ट में लोकपाल की नियुक्ति न किये जाने का मामला आया. सरकार अवमानना याचिका के बाद हरकत में आयी. सुप्रीम कोर्ट के आदेश के बावजूद सरकार ने लोकपाल की नियुक्ति नहीं की. भ्रष्टाचार के मुद्दे पर ही नरेंद्र मोदी ने लोकसभा का चुनाव (2014) जीता था.

अब पिनाकी चंद्र घोष (28 मई, 1952) 19 मार्च, 2019 से भारत के प्रथम लोकपाल हैं. ये सुप्रीम कोर्ट में 8 मार्च, 2013 से 27 मई, 2017 तक न्यायाधीश थे. वे कलकत्ता हाइकोर्ट के जज और आंध्र प्रदेश उच्च न्यायालय के मुख्य न्यायाधीश रह चुके हैं. साल 2022 तक वे लोकपाल रहेंगे. पांच पीढ़ियों से इनका परिवार वकालत में है. इसी परिवार के सदस्य हरचंद्र घोष थे- 1867 में कलकत्ता के सदर दीवानी अदालत में पहले भारतीय प्रमुख जज. पिनाकी चंद्र घोष कलकत्ता हाइकोर्ट के पूर्व मुख्य न्यायाधीश शंभु चंद्र घोष के पुत्र हैं.

भारत के लोकपाल के आठ सदस्यों (चार न्यायिक और चार गैर-न्यायिक) की नियुक्ति हो चुकी है. चार न्यायिक सदस्य हैं- इलाहाबाद हाइकोर्ट 46वें मुख्य न्यायाधीश दिलीप बाबासाहेब भोसले (24 अक्तूबर, 1956), झारखंड उच्च न्यायालय के पूर्व मुख्य न्यायाधीश प्रदीप कुमार मोहती (10 जून, 1955), मणिपुर उच्च न्यायालय की प्रथम महिला मुख्य न्यायाधीश अभिलाषा कुमारी (23 फरवरी, 1956) और छत्तीसगढ़ उच्च न्यायालय के मुख्य न्यायाधीश अजय कुमार त्रिपाठी (12 नवंबर, 1957). चार गैर-न्यायिक सदस्य हैं- भारत के सशस्त्र सीमा बल की पूर्व महानिदेशक अर्चना रामासुंदरम (1 अक्तूबर, 1957), महाराष्ट्र के पूर्व मुख्य सचिव दिनेश कुमार जैन (25 जनवरी, 1959), पूर्व भारतीय राजस्व सेवा अधिकारी महेंद्र सिंह (9 दिसंबर, 1958) और गुजरात कैडर के पूर्व भारतीय प्रशासनिक अधिकारी इंद्रजीत प्रसाद गौतम (२ अप्रैल, 1953).

मोदी सरकार को लोकपाल नियुक्त करने में पांच साल लगे. चुनाव के ठीक पहले हुई इस नियुक्ति का क्या चुनाव पर कोई प्रभाव पड़ेगा?



आपके पत्र

भाजपा की सतर्कता

भाजपा ने लोकसभा चुनाव के लिए छह सूची के माध्यम लगभग 297 प्रत्याशियों को टिकट दिया है. भाजपा की चुनाव समिति द्वारा जारी की गयी लिस्ट से स्पष्ट है कि इस बार पार्टी जरा-सा भी रिस्क नहीं लेना चाहती, क्योंकि पार्टी ने ऐसे-ऐसे सांसदों को टिकट से वंचित किया है, जो लंबे समय से अपने क्षेत्र से चुनाव जीतते आ रहे हैं. पिछले दिनों छत्तीसगढ़, मध्यप्रदेश और राजस्थान के विधानसभा चुनाव में मिली हार से भाजपा और भी सतर्कता बरत रही है. इसलिए इन्हीं राज्यों से सबसे ज्यादा पुराने उम्मीदवारों को टिकट से वंचित किया है. पार्टी को इस बात का ध्यान रखना होगा कि कहीं इस प्रयोग से उसे वोटों की संख्या में नुकसान न हो जाए. दूसरे दल से आये नेताओं को पार्टी ने टिकट देने में रुचि दिखायी है. दल-बदल वाले नेताओं पर भरोसा कितना सही है, वह तो आनेवाला समय ही बतायेगा.

शुभम गुप्ता, धनबाद

कितना कारगर होगा लोकपाल

50 साल के जद्दोजहद के बाद आखिरकार देश को पिनाकी चंद्र घोष के रूप में पहला लोकपाल मिला ही गया. इसमें चार न्यायिक एवं इतने ही गैर न्यायिक सदस्य हैं. 2013 में जब बिल पास हुआ था, तब राजनेताओं की मर्जी से नहीं, बल्कि जन आंदोलनों से बाध्य होकर पास हुए थे. उसके बाद भी पांच साल इन लोगों ने पार कर दिये, मगर सुप्रीम कोर्ट के बार-बार के हस्तक्षेप के आगे कार्यपालिका को बाध्य होना पड़ा. नेता विपक्ष नहीं होते हुए भी अंत में मल्लिकार्जुन खड़गे को बुलाया गया. यही काम पहले भी कर सकते थे. प्रधानमंत्री को इसमें रखा तो गया है, मगर बहुत सारे किंतु-परंतु के साथ. शिकायतकर्ता को शुरू में ही डरा दिया गया है कि अगर उसका आरोप गलत हुआ, तो उन्हें जेल जाना पड़ेगा. अन्य देशों को देखते हुए इस लोकपाल से यह आशा करना की भ्रष्टाचार अब इतिहास हो जायेगा. गलत होगा.

जंग बहादुर सिंह, गोलपहाड़ी, जमशेदपुर

दयनीय ग्रामीण स्वास्थ्य सेवाएं

ग्रामीण क्षेत्रों में स्वास्थ्य सेवाओं की स्थिति ठीक नहीं है. इसलिए गांवों के अधिकतर पढ़े-लिखे लोग शहरों में रहना पसंद करते हैं. गांव के अधिकांश लोग झोला छाप डॉक्टरों और झाड़-फूंक वालों के भरोसे रहते हैं. गंभीर रोगों की चपेट में आने पर इनका सही इलाज नहीं हो पाता है और समय से पहले ही काल के गाल में समा जाते हैं. हालांकि ग्रामीण क्षेत्रों में भी सरकार की बहुत सारी स्वास्थ्य संबंधी योजनाएं चल रहीं हैं, परंतु किसी कारणवश लोगों को इन योजनाओं का लाभ ग्रामीणों को नहीं मिल पाता है. इसका कारण अशिक्षा, गरीबी, जागरूकता की कमी या स्वास्थ्य केंद्रों की दूरी हो सकता है. सरकार तथा प्रबुद्ध नागरिकों को मिल कर इसके कारणों का पता लगा कर समस्या का हल निकालना चाहिए, जिससे कि ग्रामीण क्षेत्र के लोग भी सरकारी प्रदत्त स्वास्थ्य सेवाओं का लाभ ले सकें.

वशिष्ट कुमार हेंब्रम, रांची

कार्टून कोना

ब्रेग्जिट' का समय यूरोपियन यूनियन (ईयू) के नेताओं ने तय किया

ब्रिटेन के लिए यह 'हार्ड

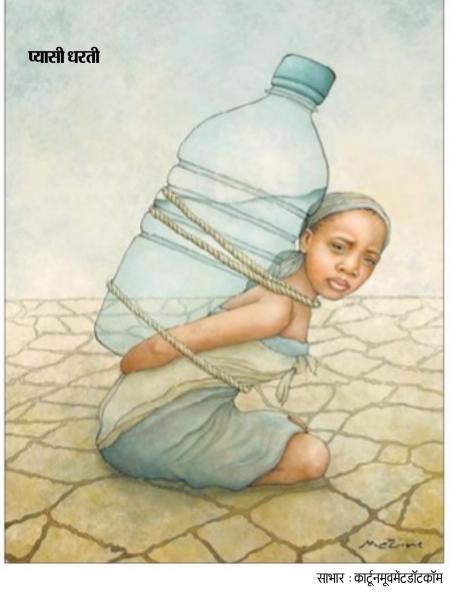
देश दुनिया से

है कि ब्रिटेन के ईयू से निकलने की अंतिम समय-सीमा को बढ़ाया जायेगा. इसके लिए ब्रिटेन को कुछ शर्तें भी माननी होंगी. आगामी 29 मार्च को बिना किसी समझौते के ईयू से बाहर निकलने के कगार पर खड़े ब्रिटेन के लिए यह एक बहुत 'हार्ड' ब्रेक्जिट होता. ब्रिटेन की प्रधानमंत्री टेरेसा मे के अनुरोध पर ईयु ने इसकी समय सीमा को बढ़ाने का प्रस्ताव दिया है. मे ने संसद की सहमति लेने और



समझौते में सुधार के लिए और समय दिये जाने की मांग की थी. ईयू के साथ

हुए ब्रेक्जिट समझौते को ब्रिटिश संसद ने दो बार रद्द कर दिया था. में को उम्मीद है कि तीसरी बार प्रस्ताव जरूर पास हो जायेगा. अब ईयू ने संसद द्वारा समझौते के अनुमोदन की स्थिति में ब्रेक्जिट के लिए 22 मई, 2019 तक का समय देगी. ईयू और ब्रिटेन की तरफ से जारी संयुक्त बयान में कहा गया है कि अगर ब्रिटिश संसद इसे मान्यता नहीं देती है, तो ब्रिटेन को ईयू छोड़ने के लिए 12 अप्रैल, 2019 तक का समय दिया जायेगा. यूरोपीय परिषद के अध्यक्ष डोनाल्ड टुस्क ने बताया कि केवल 12 अप्रैल तक ही ब्रिटेन के सामने दोनों विकल्प खुले हैं.



पोस्ट करें : प्रभात खबर, १५ पी, इंडस्टियल एरिया, कोकर, रांची ८३४००१, **फैक्स करें** : **०६५१–२५४४००**६. मेल करें : eletter@prabhatkhabar in पर ई-मेल संक्षिप्त व हिंदी में हो . लिपि रोमन भी हो सकती है