Supreme Court door ast

The vacation bench can move south on an experimental basis, avoiding political heat, dust and 'fixers'



OUT OF COURT

M J ANTONY

ext week, the Supreme Court will close down for its conventional two-month summer vacation. A bench will remain to hear urgent matters and another to clear old matters, if the lawvers in them choose to remain in Delhi. It is the silly season

The time has come to review the tra-

dition of long summer recess that came down from the colonial days when Delhi was deserted by the rulers who went up the hills or sailed to their native lands. There was no air-conditioning, no internet, no e-library, no e-filing facilities and video conferences. All that has changed now. There is little reason to justify long vacations because of summer heat and dust of the north. Now the library is on the net and even the Supreme Court judges' library can be accessed from any part of the globe. There is no need to trundle books to other cities and no cost is involved either to the court or to the litigants. Counsels often argue with laptop in front. Some are e-courts without paper. Therefore, as an experimental measure, the sittings in the summer could be moved to a cooler place like Bengaluru.

Last week, another strong reason came to the surface with allegations of 'fixers' and power brokers roaming about the court. The capital is a power hub, swarming with lobbyists and influence peddlers in every field of state activity. Two years ago, a whistle blower brought to the Supreme Court the log book kept at the official residence of a former CBI director, which showed that wheeler dealers trooped to his house for nocturnal conclaves. Last week's events, followed by the setting up of a committee headed by a former judge to look into the shady dealings around the court, tended to confirm what was till then rumours.

The court itself has discounted geographical distances in legal procedure. Last week, it directed examination of a witness in Nigeria by a sessions court in Churu, Rajasthan, via video conference. Earlier, a similar order was passed by an Indian court to reach persons in the US. Dangerous prisoners in Bihar are often examined in criminal court on video. Therefore,

Delhi is not the only place to conduct legal proceedings.

However, Supreme Court judges have persistently objected to setting up of benches in places other than Delhi. Their main objection is that it would affect the unitary character of the constitutional court and dilute the integrity of the institution. This argument has again become weak in the electronic age when AI is poised to take over much of judicial work including research. There is also some irony in the judges' stand as they pass conflicting judgments sitting in 14 adjacent court rooms. That is why hundreds of cases are referred to larger benches. In any case, the integrity of the court will not be affected if a vacation bench moved south for two months.

A vacation bench consisting of one or two judges now hears a limited number of urgent matters. Such benches used to sit only one or two days a week, though the number of sittings has increased lately. Even then they finish the list of some 30 new petitions before lunch time. Half of them are dismissed at the threshold, the judges remarking, "No urgency". The bench passes mainly interim orders. This summary exercise can be done in any other city as well. It would lead the way to permanent benches or circuit benches in later stages. It would allay southern discomfort.

The Supreme Court has so far kept a stony face confronted with at least eight Law Commission reports and a Parliamentary Committee report that recommended establishment of benches in other parts of the country. A 2015 petition pointing out the constitutional power under Article 130 to set up benches in other places was dismissed with the Chief Justice sternly telling a litigant from the south, "Article 130 can be used some other time. Not now".

As a result of such uncompromising stance, litigants have to grin and bear wrong judgments only because they cannot afford to travel to Delhi and pay exorbitant fees charged by lawyers there. This has been proved by several independent studies which had shown that the number of appeals is the highest from states near Delhi. Appeals from north-eastern states, for instance, are comparatively few. The curse of a Sufi saint on a Delhi king ("Dilli is far away") is squarely applicable to the commoners who approach the Supreme Court.

tors, China has scored over India in spreading literacy among farmers and

at the same time sustaining highly

effective extension services. Over the

years, the country has assiduously pro-

moted literacy among rural masses through programmes like nine-year

compulsory education and adult edu-

cation. Hasn't professor Amartya Sen

said investment in universal education

and health provides the fuel for growth

system or one-party rule in China, for

the government to secure political

legitimacy it must ensure food securi-

ty. Towards this end, both the coun-

tries have the challenge of preserving

the quality and volume of arable land

in the face of urbanisation and also

consolidating farmland without caus-

ing social tensions. In the face of grow-

ing claims of land for other uses,

Beijing has drawn a "red line" that says

the country must have a minimum of

about 125 mh at all times. Many Indian

states have also become highly selec-

Whether it is India's democratic

in developing economies?

CHINESE WHISPERS

Adding fuel to the fire



A fire broke out at New Delhi's Shastri Bhavan on Tuesday. Shastri Bhavan houses several union ministries, including information and broadcasting and

corporate affairs. The Delhi Fire Service pushed half a dozen tenders into service. Congress President Rahul Gandhi (pictured) was quick to tweet this: "Modiji burning files is not going to save you. Your day of judgement is coming." Fire department officials maintained nothing of any importance was burnt. "The fire broke out on the top floor in the waste material of cooler and electrical wires. The reason behind the fire has not been ascertained," a fire official said. However, the Congress social media team latched on to the incident to trigger some wild theories, including one about important files being burnt.

What's in a meme





While politicians of our era might consider social media to be the best thing to have happened to them, here's at least one person who thinks it has done more harm than good. During the launch of a book, The Real Face of Facebook in India, in the capital on Tuesday, Delhi University professor and public intellectual Apoorvanand pointed out how one of the problems with Facebook is that it has reduced public conversations to memes. And memes, in turn, have reduced the whole discipline of public debate into a game oneupmanship. "Phrases like aag laga di (destroying something) or khaat khadi kar di (putting someone in great trouble) have entered the discourse, which is not a good thing," he said. The book has been authored jointly by Paranjoy Guha Thakurta and Cyril Sam and, as the name suggests, talks about the hidden dangers of Facebook.

Call data

The tribal majority district of Dhar in Madhya Pradesh has taken pride of place in an Election Commission (EC) ranking. According to district-wise data of calls received by the EC's call centre, people of Dhar made some 1,700 calls since the implementation of the model code of conduct, catapulting the district among the top callers. Of these, only 72 were made to lodge complaints. As many as 659 calls were made to offer suggestions and another 223 calls were about poll-related query. Of course, the highest number of calls in the state were made from Indore. People from the city made 6,574 calls, of which 5,765 calls were made to seek information and another 618 to lodge complaints.

How farmers are losing the plot

Lack of literacy is compromising the ability of farmers in India and China, two of the world's most populous countries with the smallest farm size, to raise productivity without losing soil fertility

KUNAL BOSE

he world's two most populous countries China and India have the onerous challenge of ensuring food security for 2.75 billion through seasons of good rains and drought, with their ownership of farmland and water resource disproportionately small compared to the global total.

India, with 18 per cent of world population, has 9.6 per cent, that is, 179.8 million hectares (mh) of global net cropland area. More worryingly, it has a meagre share of 4 per cent of global water resource. China, which

hosts about one-fifth of the world population, has ownership of 7 per cent of the earth's farmland. The country's share of global fresh water resource at 7 per cent is, however, higher than India's. Another common handicap is that the average farm size in the two countries is among the smallest in the world. That poses a challenge to any worthwhile mecha-

According to the 10th agriculture census, not only did the average Indian farmland size shrink in excess of 6 per cent to 1.08 h from 1.15 h between 2010-11 and 2015-16, but the share of small and marginal holdings ranging up to 2 h rose to 86.2 per cent from 84.97 per cent of total holdings.

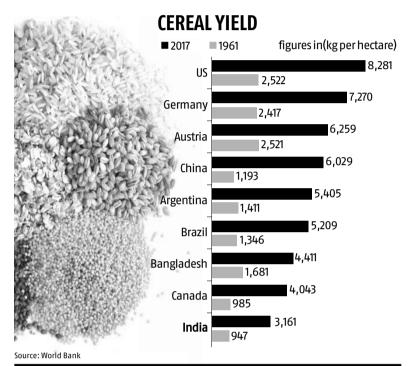
During the survey period, the number

to 125.86 million (m) from 117.25 m.

What about China? According to the country's ministry of natural resources, the combination of land diversion to construction, natural disasters and environmental degradation led to a fall in total arable land for a fourth year in a row in 2017 to 134.86 mh, down by 60,900 h from the previous year. Not only that, of this about 15 mh is marked as polluted or set aside for time-consuming rehabilitation. Much akin to the Indian situation, well over 90 per cent of about 200 m farms in China are less than 1 h in size. No wonder, then, a National Geographic correspondent has found

the Chinese agricultural landscape "less like a blan-ket green" found in the West than a "patchwork quilt." The Indian farm landscape outside Nagaland, Punjab and Haryana — where the average farm size is a lot higher than the national average looks no different than in China.

How then will the vast majority of farms in China and India compare in terms of productivity with the ones in Western countries, particularly the US where the average farm size in 2018 was 180 hectares? The World Bank data show that all countries across the board had raised cereal productivity between 1961 and 2017 – some such as Austria, Canada, France, China and the US significantly, while others such as India and Bangladesh moderately



and still others in Africa at a snail's pace. During this period, the per hectare cereal productivity in China was up from 1,1193 kg to 6,029 kg, the US from 2,522 kg to 8,281 kg and India from 947 kg to 3,161 kg. Spectacular progress in farm productivity in Western countries and in China has got much to do with their intense focus on agricultural research and ensuring early transfer of research results from laboratory to farms.

Interestingly, our neighbour Bangladesh, which found its rural economy in tatters at the time of independence in 1971, managed to put things in order earlier than the rest of the world expected to lift per hectare cereal productivity to 4 411 kg in 2017

from 1,681 kg in 1961, when it was part of Pakistan. Whether it is China, India, or Bangladesh, there is predominance of marginal and small farmers and a good percentage of them in the latter two countries is illiterate. India's 2017-18 Economic Survey says lack of literacy stands in the way of "absorbing technologies and adopting risk-mitigating measures."

What certainly is not good for Indian farming is that 30 per cent of marginal and small farmers are still illiterate. That compromises their capacity to manage farm inputs in appropriate combinations for specific crops, which is a sure way to raise productivity without losing soil fertility, the curvey observes. From all indica

tive in permitting farmland to be used or other purposes. Growing urbanisation in India and China calls for radical structural changes in agriculture where livestock and dairy must have an increasingly greater weight in gross value added in

the sector. The World Bank says that half the Indian population will be living in urban centres by 2050. China is already 60 per cent urban and by 2030, 1 billion of its people will be living in cities. Urban residents with higher per capita income than their counterparts in rural centres will have meat, fish and dairy products in their diet. As migration to urban centres will reduce the numbers of agricultural workers, the two countries will be left with no alternative to mechanisation of farming suitable for small holdi:

INSIGHT

the changes,

CMA and all

suggested by the UK

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cannot just survive

interest, audit

Why the UK CMA report is relevant for India

The report gives a pragmatic framework that calls for a shift if statutory audit is to survive as a private sector activity



VISHESH C CHANDIOK

he CMA of UK recently released its much awaited report on changes necessary in the audit profession. There is absolutely no doubt that the current audit market in most countries suffers from dated and artificial restrictions, which end up preventing the growth and development of multiple credible audit firms in the profession, in the end harming

An audit business is run as a partnership (or LLP) and not as a company. An amalgamation of many senior professionals who come together as coowners (provide capital and their skills) to deliver the promise of protecting public interest and assume joint and several liabilities in the process. The model, therefore, has an infinite ability to self-finance and grow provided there is demand.

Anything that artificially restricts the ability of a group of capable professionals getting together and competing in a profession will not serve public interest, on the contrary, it shall restrict choice for not just companies and users, but also for the practitioners themselves.

The Big4 tag, is one such artificial restriction that has become a barrier to allowing companies to choose an auditor outside those that are a part of this group, and provide a false and artificial halo of quality linked to size. Audit is perhaps the only service industry or profession where size is perceived to be synonymous with quality. Just consider are the best hospitals, the best lawyers, the best hotels also the biggest by size? Has one ever asked to be taken to a Big3 hospital or served by a Big5 lawyer or be only booked in a Big2 hotel chain?

Just like Europe banned If we adopt some of any restrictive covenants on auditor selection (so called Big4 only clauses), and India has also adopted a similar approach (in the case of FDI), we ought to go further. It's an absolutely travesty how many quality audit firms have nearly gone out of business in

India because investors insist on a 'BigX' auditor (a term that itself was not prevalent in India or relevant to this market, where we had many quality firms of our own). Remember even today over 100 Indian audit firms have connections with an overseas firm, and each of these firms is as capable as any-

The challenge is demand, not supply. If there was demand for their services, many of these 100 firms could beef up their supply by attracting partners and staff. It is a chicken and egg situation but demand will create the supply, and without these artificial barriers being removed there won't be demand.

The UK CMA report which recommends mandatory joint audit (MJA) between a Big4 firm and a non-Big4 firm for FTSE 350 companies is pathbreaking in this respect as it addresses all these issues head on, extends accountability to audit committees. and does so in a manner that is gradual and leaves room to revert to Single Audit Firm (SAF) in a few years once this problem has been fixed.

The Report has recognised that audit is not the only business at Big4, resulting in a financial interests

that may cast doubt on their objectivity as auditors, and therefore recommending split of audit and non-audit businesses. In India, the Committee of Expert set up by the MCA recognised this issue as well. The CMA has gone one step further in its recommendations of operational split in the business-

es of the multi-disciplinary firms. Indian regulators ought to take note of what proportion are audit revenues to the total revenue of a firm and more particularly for an audit client.

The report has accepted that mindset of a Big 4 while selection of auditors needs to change and therefore recommended audit committee reviews. This is a typical problem in Indian market as well. The selection of audit firms is often driven by a perception that Big 4 brings audit quality, whereas there are a number of alleged failures to counter that perception. Indian regulators

hoped that mandatory audit firm rotation would bring in vibrancy and create larger audit focused firms, something that our Prime Minister publicly stated as a vision. However, one needs to evaluate if the mandatory audit firm rotation, indeed helped in that purpose and how many audits of large listed companies moved out of the Big4; and if this concentration is indeed acceptable. The CMA report clearly outlines specific steps to move away from this Big4 concentration and our regulators ought to take a cue from that.

I hope the NFRA and the MCA will take notice of this report and consider adopting a similar requirement for at least the Top 100 companies by market cap as and when they next need to change an audit firm because of 10year mandatory firm rotation. Whilst this may seem against the interest of the Big4 firms initially, I would urge the partners in those firms to consider if they would rather have more opportunities that will make the whole profession vibrant and keep audit valuable, or continue to hope that artificial barriers remain where only four to five firms continue to serve the market, as even for these firms' audit growth has saturated as a share of their total pie (shift to more profitable 'advisory' businesses).

I also urge the shareholders and audit committees of these 100 largest listed entities in India to support the creation of perhaps 10 large audit firms in India that will, in the long run, help make our capital markets more efficient and attractive, and be open to examine the possibly of MJA.

The CMA report gives a pragmatic framework that will require a shift if statutory audit is to survive as a private sector activity. If we adopt some of these changes, and all concerned think a little beyond self-interest, audit cannot just survive but actually thrive.

The author is CEO, Grant Thornton India LLP

LETTERS

Make things transparent



This refers to "On a high horse" (April 30). The Supreme Court decision will have farreaching implications. The depositors and public will be able to peruse the

annual inspection reports (AIRs) of banks, find out about the quality of management, the efficacy of the internal control systems, the lending and investment practices and the financial health of these entities. Financial indicators regarding liquidity and solvency of banks will be available in the public domain. Issues about how banks deal with big loan defaulters will also be revealed. The AIRs will also reveal the quality of the supervisory mechanism of the central bank. It will be revealed whether important aspects concerning the functioning of banks were looked into and commented on adequately. It will definitely bring greater transparency about how the banking system functions.

However, there are serious pitfalls too. Uninformed readers who don't know about the way banks function could draw wrong conclusions after reading the AIRs and base their analysis on faulty premises. Ill-informed reports and faulty analysis floating around in the public domain could cause serious harm. It is imperative that the information available in the AIRs are studied carefully and that there is balanced analysis and greater responsibility before putting them in the public domain. Arun Pasricha New Delhi

Gaming the system

This refers to "Do not dilute IBC" (April 25). The conclusion that the mediation should be before the insolvency process and not during, is unexceptionable. At the same time, I want to draw attention to the very succinct comment on mediation made by Debashish Basu in today's newspaper in his article under the heading. "IBC: Towards the inevitable". He has described this mediation mechanism as an impractical quick fix. I agree with him that this mediation will be one of the ways by which the promoters and lawyers will try to "game the system" into inevitable delay. If the promoters want mediation, they can do it before the insolvency process themselves. They do not need any legal provision for this. Once there is legal provision, they will play with it to buy time. According to me, it is easy to see the game. There should be no provision for mediation by amending the law.

Sukumar Mukhopadhyay New Delhi

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

► HAMBONE



MUMBAI | WEDNESDAY, 1 MAY 2019

Anti-profiteering authority's term should not be extended

Unfair intervention

t's close to two years since the new indirect tax regime, the goods and services tax (GST), was rolled out. But the anti-profiteering authority set up under the GST seems to be hitting its stride by taking on cases of various differing values. Recently, it held that Starbucks had raised the base price of one coffee variant after tax rates on restaurants were cut in November 2017 in such a way that consumers paid the same amount before and after; the authority determined that Tata Starbucks made undue profit as a consequence. It has also moved against at least three large fast-moving consumer goods companies, and is expected to widen its scope to investigate other companies. Another sector that is coming under the scanner of the Directorate General of Anti Profiteering (DGAP) is real estate. The DGAP might investigate as many as 50 large property developers to see if they failed to pass on the benefit of input tax credit.

It has also been reported that the government has considered extending the term of the DGAP, which is supposed to have a two-year sunset horizon. The government claims this is because the GST council continues to tweak tax rates and so anti-profiteering continues to be required. Meanwhile, the DGAP itself has also expanded the nature of its operation. It earlier depended upon complaints from consumers to initiate an investigation. It appears it now will seek to buy and cancel invoices, determine if there are prima facie questions on that basis, and begin investigations on its own recognisance. As many warned at the time, the creation of a new form of state intervention is dangerous, purely because once a bureaucracy is created it seeks to find plausible reasons to extend its own life and enhance its intervention in normal commercial activity. This is precisely how things have turned out.

The anti-profiteering authority was neither a good idea in theory nor was it implemented properly in practice. It was poorly implemented because the government did not lay out details on how it would determine that profiteering had occurred — in other jurisdictions that have undergone the transition to a GST, such as Australia, it is specified how the equivalent authority should investigate the net margin on a particular good. But in India, nothing is specified other than the process to be followed. But it is also bad in theory. Companies should be free to respond to tax changes, particularly complex ones such as the GST which have multiple conflicting effects on their costs, in a manner determined by competitive dynamics and commercial considerations. If competitive dynamics are weak and do not allow for proper transmission of tax cuts, that is the business of the Competition Commission. Nor does a permanent authority make any sense. A temporary authority might be required because the purpose of the GST introduction was to minimise the effect on the consumer. But all future tax changes cannot be judged on the same yardstick as the initial introduction of the GST. They might not all be meant to lower prices for consumers — other economic goals might be in play. Thus, the stated reason to extend the authority's term makes little sense. It should be wound up by the scheduled date.

A key shift

Maruti's decision to phase out diesel is prudent

aruti Suzuki sprung a surprise last week when it announced that it would phase out all diesel cars from its portfolio from April 1, 2020. It was only in March that the country's largest carmaker unveiled a brand new diesel engine, which had more power and more torque than the outgoing unit, to address a long-standing weakness in its product lineup. Since then, it has released newer versions of its best-selling models such as the Ciaz and Ertiga with the new diesel engine. Moreover, one-third of all the cars sold by Maruti Suzuki run on diesel engines at present. There are many segments where the company risks a significant dent in sales. For instance, Maruti Suzuki's Vitara Brezza dominates the compact SUV segment where 70 per cent of the market belongs to diesel engines. Vitara Brezza does not have a petrol version.

Despite all this, Maruti Suzuki has taken a prudent decision. There are two reasons for this. First, India, in line with the rest of the world, is moving towards more stringent fuel emission norms. Diesel cars have lost their shine in Europe, the world's biggest market for diesel cars where sales of many variants have fallen by as much as 20 per cent during 2018. Then, there is diesel's reputation as a dirty fuel, leading the Supreme Court to ban the sale of all high capacity diesel cars, last year. The court directed that diesel cars could only be registered for 10 years in Delhi. This decision had an immediate, huge impact on diesel car sales in the national capital, which is the biggest car buying region. Second, the Indian car market is at Bharat Stage IV, and each shift to a higher level involves costly re-engineering of existing models and engines. Maruti Suzuki Chairman R C Bhargava has said that the shift to Bharat Stage VI emission norms implies that diesel cars will become costlier than their petrol versions. The share of diesel cars in total sales has anyway been dropping from the high of 60 per cent in 2014, driven largely by the government decision to deregulate the price of diesel that whittled down the price advantage of diesel over petrol. In the past, typically, consumers were willing to put up with higher upfront prices of diesel models because the running costs were significantly lower than the petrol ones. But this gap has steadily reduced over the years — for instance, seven years ago, every litre of diesel was ₹27 cheaper than petrol. Today, that gap is barely over ₹6 per litre.

Maruti Suzuki is thus justified in its conclusion that consumers are likely to steadily move away from diesel models for reasons of pricing, which remains a key determinant. It is true that just like the consumers, the whole ecosystem around diesel-powered cars, especially of Maruti which operates mostly at the lower and middle end of the market (almost 70 per cent of small cars sold at present in the domestic market run on petrol engines), are likely to witness significant disruption as a result of this decision. As a fuel, diesel should compete on its own merits in the Indian car market, and not piggyback on fuel pricing policy flaws, as it did so often in the past.

ILLUSTRATION BY BINAY SINHA



Are financial savings under-reported?

If the real reporate, the term premium and credit spread were to normalise, borrowing rates could fall by more than 2 percentage points

re we saving enough? Like it is for households, the question is an important one for the economy too. A paucity of savings would mean inadequate funds for investment, which in turn has two adverse consequences: It makes capital more expensive and also increases the economy's dependence on foreign capital. The latter in particular makes the economy vulnerable to volatility in global capital flows.

Of greater analytical interest are financial savings by households, as they move relatively freely through the economy and are an important driver of the cost of funds; savings by private corporations and by the public sector on the

other hand generally get invested within the entity.

Historically, gross household financial savings have been about a third of total savings in the economy, and for the last three decades have been between 9 per cent and 12 per cent of GDP. The drop in this ratio to 9.4 per cent in FY17 (the year of demonetisation), a two-decade low, had raised concerns on excessive consumption and the economy's inability to finance investments. At a time when real interest rates have been

so high, which generally stimulates financial saving, this was a puzzling number. The strong rebound to 11.1 per cent reported for FY18 has been relatively less discussed, as also the continuing improvement to a likely 11.3 per cent (our estimate) in FY19, a nine-year high. This is when one uses the Reserve Bank of India's (RBI) estimation process, which, as we will see now, may be under-estimating them.

The current account is a metric for aggregate net savings in the economy: The excess of consumption over production. But calculating gross household financial savings (called just "savings" in the rest of this article) is not straightforward, even though, given that they are by definition formal, their estimation requires fewer assumptions than most other macroeconomic variables for the Indian economy. One needs to be careful about double-counting, and at the same time, be as comprehensive as possible to include all savings products.

Drilling into components of financial savings, we discover two large areas of potential under-estimation.

First, the jump in mutual fund (MF) inflows: Whereas cumulative flows into mutual funds were ₹3.5 trillion in FY17, of which about ₹1.7 trillion would be from households, the amount mentioned in the reported statistics was just ₹128 billion (7.5 per cent of ₹1.7 trillion). The reported number for "shares & debentures", of which MFs are a part, did jump to ₹1.5 trillion in FY18, but by then, in addition to strong MF inflows, rising retail participation in stock markets had pushed assets under management of Alternative Investment Funds (AIFs) and Portfolio Management Services (PMS) higher

by ₹1.8 trillion that year. There is nearly a 1 per cent of GDP gap therefore between the reported financial savings in "shares & debentures" and what one can estimate using parallel sources like the Association of Mutual Funds of India (AMFI) and the Securities and Exchange Board of India (Sebi).

Second, inflows into small savings schemes (like in post offices, or specialised schemes for senior citi-

zens and girl children) have jumped from about half a trillion rupees a year till FY17 to over ₹2 trillion a year now. But the corresponding sub-segment of reported savings (claims on government) still shows an 820 billion number for FY18, nearly half of the inflows that year.

We estimate that in total the under-estimation of savings could be potentially 2 per cent of GDP in FY17 and well over 1 per cent of GDP in FY18. It is quite possible that all the above inflows have been considered for the reported statistics, and that there are some offsetting flows that we have not incorporated (the granularity of data available to a regulator or the government is much better than to us), but placing the two sets of charts next to one another makes that appear unlikely.

There is a second big concern among observers that state and central governments are distorting the country's finances by appropriating a larger part of savings due to delayed fiscal consolidation and large extra-budgetary spending. However, contrary to popular fears of a deterioration, public sector savings have been largely unchanged as a share of GDP for several years, as savings of non-government public entities have offset government revenue deficits. Even at a net level, that is, after adjusting for borrowings by public sector enterprises, the drain on private savings has reduced (at least till FY17, the last data available). In the last two years, quite possibly, the situation may have worsened on the extra-budgetary spending front, but this slippage is unlikely to be more than half a per cent of GDP: Far less than the improvement in household financial savings over the same period.

These are not just statistical nuances, but can have significant impact on the cost of funds in the economy. The interest rate at which an entity borrows can be split into three parts: the reporate, the term premium, and the credit spread. The first is the rate set by the Monetary Policy Committee (MPC), the second is the difference between the yield on the 10-year government bond (the GSec yield) and the repo rate and the third is the difference between the rate at which a company borrows and the GSec yield. All three are elevated currently; the real repo rate (that is, the repo rate minus inflation), is inordinately high given the slowing economy, the term premium is close to decadal highs, and capacity issues in the financial system are keeping credit spreads high as well. If the real repo rate, the term premium and the credit spreads were to all normalise, borrowing rates could fall by more than two percentage points.

While the repo rate may drift down with inflation being persistently lower, the credit spread may not compress anytime soon, given capacity issues in the financial system. But the term premium is unjustifiably high and should fall with better clarity on the two statistics discussed above, translating to the share of financial savings appropriated by governments being significantly lower than feared and also compared to what it has been historically. Economic growth has suffered, as the government has tried to tighten fiscally, but the benefits of that have not appeared in monetary conditions that have remained too tight. As a broader theme, this further demonstrates the need for better quality data for better functioning of markets.

 $The writer is co-head of Asia \ Pacific \ Strategy \ and \ India \ Strategist for \ Credit \ Suisse$

My best growth forecast ever

TESSELLATUM

NEELKANTH MISHRA

merica's real GDP growth rate of 3.2 per cent for the first quarter of this year is impressive, as was the 3 per cent average growth in 2018 (measured from the fourth quarter of 2017 to the fourth quarter of 2018). Since the end of the Great Recession — from 2011 to 2017 — the US economy grew by only 2.1 per cent per year, on average. What accounts for the recent acceleration?

The tax reform of 2017, which took effect in 2018, was viewed prospectively, and now retrospectively, as a contributor to growth. But there was — and remains — a great deal of controversy over the size of the macroeconomic effects of the tax changes.

In January 2018, in the spirit of resolving some

the controversy, the Brookings Institution recruited Jason Furman (chair of the Council of Economic Advisers under President Barack Obama) and me to write a joint paper focusing on the prospective growth effects of the tax changes. No doubt Brookings thought that combining a liberal viewpoint (Furman's) with mine (which I view as pro-market) would avoid political bias and thereby generate estimates closer than usual to the "truth." I leave it to other observers to assess whether this bold attempt at consensus was successful.

Much of our analysis emphasised the tax changes for businesses, including a cut in the federal tax rate on corporate profits from 35 per cent to 21 per cent (for C corporations, which include the largest businesses) and a smaller reduction in the tax rate for passthrough businesses (partnerships, S corporations, and sole proprietorships). All businesses benefited from a move to full expensing for equipment, though this change did not apply to structures. Our research predicted a substantial long-term increase in capital accumulation, which would generate sizable gains in labour productivity and real wages. Real GDP growth was predicted to be higher over 10 years by an average of

about 0.2 per cent per year. Thus, the predicted growth effect was moderate but long-lasting.

The other important change in the 2017 tax package was an almost across-the-board reduction in marginal income-tax rates on individual incomes. On average, the decline in the marginal tax rate was around 2.3 percentage points (adjusted downward from 3.2 points to take account of the reduced tax deductibility of state income taxes). By comparison, the average cut in marginal tax rates was 4.5 percentage points under President Ronald Reagan's 1986 legislation; 3.6 points under President John Kennedy and President Lyndon B Johnson's tax cuts, passed in 1964; and 2.1 points under President George W

Bush's 2003 reform. Furman and I estimated from previous research that President Donald Trump's cut would propel GDP growth by a substantial 0.9 per cent per year for 2018-19, but would not contribute to growth after that. Thus, the predicted growth effect was larger than that of the tax cuts for businesses in the short run, but smaller in the long run

When we computed the overall boost to short-run GDP growth, we got an estimate of 1.1 per cent per year for 2018-2019. When added to a baseline growth forecast of 2 per cent (reflecting contemporaneous consensus views and recent history), our estimated incremental effect from the 2017 tax law implied a forecast of real GDP growth of 3.1 per cent per year for 2018-19. Frankly, although there is doubtless a large element of luck here, this is the best growth forecast that I can recall ever making. Moreover, our forecast in early 2018 of incremental effects from the 2017 law contrasts with many economists' predictions of recession.

As an aside, I have a bet with a famous Harvard colleague who has promised to eat his proverbial hat if 3 per cent GDP growth persists over a longer period.

I recall that the bet specified the period as the full two years — 2018 and 2019 — but he now remembers it as the three years from 2018 to 2020. I think I must be right, because I never forecasted high economic growth for 2020.

Of course, it is always possible to find reasons for why one's forecast turned out badly. A currently popular argument of this type is that the Federal Reserve has turned out to be much more expansionary than one would have predicted. Similarly, expectations that a trade war with China and other countries would dampen economic growth — a particular concern of mine last fall — have brightened (though I remain worried on this score).

Basically, a prediction such as the one for 3.1 per cent GDP growth that Furman and I advanced in early 2018 should be viewed as a non-contingent forecast that can always be conditioned on (or explained away by) an array of unanticipated events. And, more generally, there is always a lot of uncertainty in annual GDP growth rates, which is why the accuracy of our forecast has to be viewed as reflecting a good deal of luck.

I take it as self-evident that faster economic growth is better than slower economic growth. Underlying this sentiment is that millions of people benefit from higher growth rates, which are typically accompanied by higher wages and lower unemployment, which especially help the worse-off. Yet today, the antipathy toward the Trump administration is so intense that many people, including some of my economist colleagues, are rooting for lower economic growth just to deny Trump a political win.

I understand this viewpoint, but I still think that the direct benefits from a better economy outweigh this kind of political calculus. More to the point, the beneficiaries — which include most people and most voters — must favour faster over slower growth.

The writer is Professor of Economics at Harvard and a visiting scholar at the American Enterprise Institute.

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Javanka Inc



KANIKA DATTA

he ascent of Ivanka Trump and her husband Jared Kushner as presidential advisors is one of multiple controversies that assail Donald Trump's presidency. His regime that has seen unprecedented turnover at senior levels — Mr Trump is on his third Chief of Staff, that too in a temporary capacity. But his daughter and son-in-law have displayed more resilience than achievement. What makes this underachieving power couple tick? Journalist and author Vicky Ward attempts to answer that question in *Kushner Inc: Greed. Ambition. Corruption.*

Bannon, Donald Trump's powerful White House Chief Strategist, bestowed on the couple. Mr Bannon was sacked after Michael Wolff's book *Fire and Fury*, the sensational insider account of the Trump regime, revealed him as the principal informant of Mr Kushner and Ms Trump's shenanigans. But the nickname has endured.

Much of the information in this book is not new but taken together, the facts suggest a Third World regime than the rule-based democracy of the world's most powerful nation. Mr Wolff's book quotes Mr Bannon as saying that Javanka were using their stints to prepare for future presidential bids: first Ivanka, then Jared. Ms Ward sort of confirms this but suggests that their immediate interests are more prosaic: for Jared to save his family from a disastrous real estate deal — the purchase of 666 Fifth Avenue — and Ivanka to pursue her fashion line.

Ms Ward paints a picture of two dysfunctional families led by billionaires with elastic morals and ethics. Donald Trump's scandal-ridden history is well documented. But as Jared came into the limelight, the Kushner family came under scrutiny, and it's not a pretty story either. Kushner Senior is a devout and domineering patriarch, selfappointed doyen of the Jewish community and realtor extraordinaire. But he is also a convicted felon, spending 14 months in federal prison for tax evasion and related misdemeanours (a saga that included blackmailing his sister and brother-in-law).

Ms Ward supplements published reportage with wide-ranging interviews — not difficult in this leaky White House — that recreate Javanka's gilded world. Neither, it is clear, is the sharpest knife in the box but both have the street smarts to exploit their access to power.

As she writes, "It was felt both at the offices of the *Observer* [the paper Jared's father bought for him to run] and at 666 Fifth Avenue that the couple was well-mannered and more self-controlled than either of their volatile fathers, but beneath the polish was a toxic mix of arrogance and ignorance. Elizabeth Spiers, a former *Observer* editor, noticed during a visit to Jared and Ivanka's apartment that there was not a book in

sight and the pair had zero intellectual curiosity. (Others refute that 'no books' claim: they recall a few art books — or 'decorator-curated books')."

ROBERT J BARRO

There are other digs at the couple's sub-par intellect. Jared had up on his office wall a frame containing the famous opening lines of Charles Dickens' *A Tale of Two Cities* —"It was the best of times, it was the worst of times." He loved the phrase, he told a reporter. But when a visitor sought to discuss the classic, Jared admitted he hadn't read it.

As for Ivanka, her supposed moderating impact on her father have been a conspicuous failure (his creepy relationship with her is duly noted). Her ostensible agenda to promote the cause of working women has had a modest impact, though it allows her to globe-trot on taxpaver dime. Her claims to have contributed to tax policy have been hotly refuted. According to Ms Ward, she arrives late to the office, hair and makeup professionally done. Last year, she wound up her business after consumers and retail outlets shunned her brand but, mysteriously, her companies continue to amass patents in China in the midst of a trade war between the two countries.

Jared's survival is no less mysterious. He has a weighty portfolio by any standards: from forging peace in the Middle East, to solving the opioid crisis, to government reform, criminal justice reform, liaison with Mexico, with China, with Muslims. We know how all of that has turned out. Yet he has escaped scrutiny on his meetings with Russians, his role in the sacking of FBI chief James Comey, his limited divestiture from his businesses (last year his sister offered Chinese investors US visas if they invested in Kushner Companies) and his secretive bromance with Saudi Arabian crown prince Mohammad Bin Salman (who privately told the UAE crown prince that he has Jared in his pocket).

has Jared in his pocket).

Like the Mueller report, Ms Ward's book points to much circumstantial evidence of ethical transgressions. Her contributions to the mass of reportage on Javanka are two. First, that Mr Trump told John Kelly, "Get rid of my kids, get them back to New York." Apparently, he thought they were giving him bad press. When the FBI declined to grant Jared toplevel security clearance, Kelly obliged by savagely downgrading his access. Then, nothing happened. Instead, Kelly exited;

Javanka are still around.

Second, early in the presidency, Ivanka tried to reorganise the East Wing, traditionally the preserve of the First Lady, and was thwarted in no uncertain terms by Melania. In an interview, Ms Ward said only the reclusive first lady can counter Javanka's influence with President Trump. Implausible? In the Mad Hatter's Tea Party that is the Trump White House, all bizarre options are on the table.

From the Adams to the Roosevelts, Kennedys, Bushes and Clintons, dynasts have been part of the US political scene for at least two centuries, and those in power have not hesitated to promote their relatives. But even by those amoral standards, Javanka have lowered the bar. That is, the bar as set by American standards. Indians inured to the deep-rooted corruption of our myriad political dynasties may wonder what the fuss is all about.

KUSHNER INC:Greed. Ambition. Corruption Vicky Ward

St Martin's Press; \$29.99, 292 pages



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GLOBAL TECH HUB

M Venkaiah Naidu, India's vice-president

Every city, every town in India is evolving as a Silicon Valley. India is already home to one third of all start-ups in the world, next only to China and the US. You all are today no strangers to artificial intelligence, internet of things, big data, cloud computing...

SC does well to reject the forced NSEL-FTIL merger

It went against the principle of limited liability, didn't meet the 'public interest' criterion & attached assets covered the liability

Shah-promoted FTIL—now called 63 Moon Technologies—with its subsidiary NSEL, the move made little sense and was fraught with danger. While NSEL was a spot exchange, instead of being used for buying and selling commodities, it was mainly being used to do illegal lending using paired contracts and, at the time things fell apart, investors found ₹5,700 crore of their funds had got stuck, with the borrowers not repaying this and with inadequate collateral with NSEL to make good the shortfall. Since NSELdidn't have the money to make good the amount, the government felt that the cash-rich FTIL could be tapped since, in any case, it was the parent company. There were, however, several problems with this argument. For one, in an exchange, the exchange cannot guarantee settling of transactions beyond what is collected in a dedicated fund out of the members' contributions; eventually, since members transact with one another, they are ultimately responsible for the payment.

Also, modern business is organised around the principle of limited liability where an investor's liability is restricted to the equity investment in a firm. Once this principle was given the go-by, assets of promoters or parent companies could be attached at will; most infrastructure investments, for instance, are made using SPVs to insulate the parent company. There was also the question of who was liable for the loss since the 24 brokers who got clients to invest on NSEL were likely to have known the scheme was illegal. The parallel of RBI forcing bank mergers was made in this context, that the central bank forces a merger with another bank to protect the interest of innocent depositors; if it was okay in that case, it was okay for FTIL-NSEL.

The problem with these arguments, as the Supreme Court verdict quashing the forced merger points out, is that they pre-judged guilt, apart from other mistaken assumptions. So, SC said that while such forced mergers were allowed in the Companies Act—Section 396 has only been used twice so far, to merge PSUs several decades ago—to safeguard "public interest", it could only see "the private interest of the investors/traders who have been allegedly duped"; and it said the issue of who duped whom was to be established by courts. Also, if NSEL's 13,000 investors comprised the 'public'who were duped, surely FTIL's 63,000 shareholders also comprised the 'public'? As for the other reason given by the government for the merger, to restore "public confidence" in forward contracts and exchanges which are an integral and essential part of the Indian economy, SC said this "does not obtain as there were only three commodity exchanges in the country, all of which were shut down w.e.f. September 2014...no similar exchanges have been created subsequently...in any case, the business done at such exchanges cannot be said to be an integral and essential part of the Indian economy".

The SC raised another issue, of the urgency. While the government spoke of an "emergency situation" when it first planned the merger in 2014, SC said this had "been largely redressed without amalgamation" since when the final order was passed—in February 2016—it recorded that, as compared to the ₹5,700 crore that was due from 24 defaulters who traded on NSEL, injunctions against the assets of defaulters worth ₹4,400 crore had already been obtained, court decrees worth ₹1,233 crore had been obtained against five defaulters and assets worth ₹5,444 crore belonging to the defaulters had been attached. Hopefully, given what the SC judgment has said, the government will examine how a decision was taken on the merger despite it being patently unfair. Jignesh Shah and NSEL may have broken several laws, and need to be punished for that, but another company cannot be punished as collateral. Such arbitrary action only serves to further spook investors.

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Capex recovery will be slow

Demand is slowing even as costs of doing business are rising

HATTHE CREATION of net fixed assets has slowed substantially in the last five years, as data from CMIE shows, isn't surprising. For one, it is the services sector that has driven the economy over the last decade. Moreover, the general slowdown in the economy, primarily the result of the twin balance sheet problem, has left capacity utilisation at levels of 75% or thereabouts, not necessitating fresh capacity addition in manufacturing. Some sectors such as automobiles and telecom have seen large investments and companies such as Tata Steel have set up new facilities. However, by and large, manufacturing companies have tended to be quiet. While demand hasn't exactly gone through the roof, tough labour laws, too, have reined in their ambitions. In the last two years, promoters with spare cash have opted to pick up assets via the inorganic and IBC routes, especially steel, cement and power plants. That is probably why the level of gross fixed capital formation (GFCF) as a share of GDP has stagnated at around 28-29% of GDP and the manufacturing sector isn't throwing up enough job opportunities. Given the economy is losing momentum and demand is flagging, it doesn't seem likely private sector capex will pick up meaningfully in the next two years. Much of the blame for this lies with the government; the frequent changes in regulations have resulted in turmoil in the telecom sector while it has been unable to deliver fuel to private sector utilities, pampering public sector units. Investments into sectors such as renewable energy, too, have slowed due to operational constraints—falling tariff rates and higher input costs. In the future, businessmen—and bankers—will be extremely wary of risking capital in areas which are vulnerable to changes in regulations and difficult labour laws. In short, the cost of doing business is going up as are the uncertainty levels.

The good news, as the CMIE data shows, is that the pace of investments in intangibles such as patents is going up. Indeed, a greater focus on R&D would be of great benefit to the country not only because of the technological advancements it would achieve but also because it will utilise the large pool of scientists. But it is worrying that fixed investments—in plant and machinery and such—are slowing. Although better technology and a growing shared economy will help improve productivity, the number of jobs created may fall far short of the numbers needed. Also, CMIE's data shows, dividend payouts have risen to 77% of net earnings compared to 50% earlier, suggesting promoters are taking home more money. While this trend could have been exacerbated by the large amounts that the government has taken out from public sector undertakings, it is nonetheless a worry.

FedComics

The US Fed has been using comics to impart financial awareness and encourage prudent behaviour

OMIC BOOKS, STRIPS and graphic novels have often been part of unofficial propaganda—remember the Cold War?—but lately, they seem to have become part of official messaging. The US Federal Reserve, no Marvel or DC, has published more than two dozen comics since the 1950s. The latest, the sci-fi styled *The Story of Monetary Policy*, was published last week. It deals with the daily, commonplace struggles of money—collecting, spending, saving and wasteful expenditure. Similarly, in the other comics published by the central bank, the message embedded pertains to financial education, soundness and wisdom.

An older Fed publication, *Once Upon a Dime*, is a fairy tale about the origins of money set on an imaginary island. The Fed's incorporation of such creative breadth into their work enables the desired message of financial soundness to be understood to a greater extent by the readers, because the medium of the message is likely to have wider appeal. RBI's financial education initiative is a programme intended to create awareness about sound financial decision making, end-consumer protection rights, and the different financial products and services on offer by the financial system of the country. India's central bank, too, has designed interactive content such as a Financial Awareness Messages booklet, targeted financial literacy content for five groups, and audio-visual matter for the general public on digital transactions and UPI. While Marvel and Disney have their universe of heroes, villains, humans and aliens, Fed comics have their penny pincher, profligate and blue collar workers. The million dollar question is whether the comics can come to the Earth's rescue and help fight risky financial behaviour that precipitated a crisis like the 2008 recession?

NEED FOR OBJECTIVITY

US'S CHINA BASHING IS MORE AN OUTGROWTH OF DOMESTIC PROBLEMS THAN A RESPONSE TO A GENUINE EXTERNAL THREAT

America's false narrative on China

NARARE moment of bipartisan agreement, America's Republicans and Democrats are now on the same page on one key issue: Blaming China for all that ails the United States. China bashing has never had broader appeal. This fixation on China as an existential threat to the cherished 'American dream' is having serious consequences. It has led to tit-for-tat tariffs, escalating security threats, warnings of a new cold war, and even whispers of a military clash between the rising power and the incumbent global hegemon. With a trade deal apparently imminent, it is tempting to conclude that all this will pass. That may be wishful thinking. Sino-American trust is now in tatters. The likelihood of a superficial deal won't change that. A new era of mutual suspicion, tension, and conflict is a very real possibility.

But what if the US chattering class has it all wrong and the China bashing is more an outgrowth of domestic problems than a response to a genuine external threat? In fact, there are strong grounds to believe that an insecure US—afflicted with macroeconomic imbalances of its own making and fearful of the consequences of its own retreat from global leadership—has embraced a false narrative on China. Consider trade. In 2018, the US had a \$419 billion merchandise trade deficit with China, fully 48% of the massive overall trade gap of \$879 billion. This is the lightening rod in the debate, the culprit behind what US president Donald Trump calls the "carnage" of job losses and wage pres-

But what Trump—and most other US politicians—won't admit is that the US ran trade deficits with 102 countries in 2018. This reflects a profound shortfall of domestic saving, owing in large part to the reckless budget deficits approved by none other than Congress and the president. Nor is there any recognition of supply-chain distortions—arising



from inputs made in other countries but assembled and shipped from China—that are estimated to overstate the US-China trade imbalance by as much as 35-40%. Never mind basic macroeconomics and new efficiencies from global production platforms that benefit US consumers. Apparently, it is much easier to vilify China as the major obstacle to making America great again.

Next, consider intellectual property theft. It is now accepted "truth" that China is stealing hundreds of billions of dollars of US intellectual property each year, driving a stake into the heart of America's innovative prowess. According to the accepted source of this claim, the so-called IP Commission, in 2017, IP theft cost the US economy between \$225 and \$600 billion.

Leaving aside the ridiculously broad range of such an estimate, the figures rest on flimsy evidence derived from dubious "proxy modelling" that attempts to value stolen trade secrets via nefarious activities such as narcotics trafficking, corruption, occupational fraud, and illicit financial flows. The Chinese piece of this alleged theft comes from US Customs and Border Patrol data, which reported \$1.35 billion in seizures of total counterfeit and pirated goods back in 2015. Equally dubious models extrapolate this tiny sum into an aggregate guesstimate for the US and impute 87% of the total to China

(52% to the mainland and 35% to Hong Kong).

Then there is the red herring emphasised in the Section 301 report published by the US Trade Representative (USTR) in March 2018, which provides the foundational justification for tariffs levied on China: forced technology transfer between US companies and their Chinese joint venture (JV) partners. The key word is

that innocent US companies that enter will-The point is not to ingly into contractual deny China's role in agreements with Chipromoting economic nese counterparts are tensions with the US, coerced into surrendering their proprietary but to stress the technologies in order to need for objectivity do business in the and honesty in country. assigning blame

To be sure, JVs obviously entail a sharing of people, business strategies, operating plat-

"forced", which implies

forms, and product designs. But the charge is coercion, which is inseparable from the presumption that sophisticated US multinationals are dumb enough to turn over core proprietary technologies to their Chinese partners. This is another shocking example of soft evidence for a hard allegation. Incredibly, the USTR actually admits in the Section 301 report (on page 19) that there is no hard evidence to confirm these "implicit practices". Like the IP Commission, the USTR relies instead on proxy surveys from trade organisations like the US-China Business Council, whose respondents complain of some discomfort with China's treatment of their technology.

The Washington narrative also paints a picture of China as a centrally planned behemoth sitting astride massive state-owned enterprises (SOEs) that enjoy preferential credits, unfair subsidies, and incentives tied to high-profile industrial policies such as Made in China 2025 and Artificial Intelligence 2030. Never mind a large body of evidence that underscores the low-efficiency, low-return

Nor is there any doubt that comparable industrial policies have long been practiced by Japan, Germany, France, and even the US. In February, Trump issued an executive order announcing the establishment of an AI Initiative, complete with a framework to develop an AI action plan within 120 days. China is hardly alone in elevating innovation to a national policy priority.

characteristics of China's SOEs.

Finally, there is the time-worn issue of Chinese currency manipulation—the fear that China will deliberately depress the renminbi to gain unfair competitive advantage. Yet, its broad trade-weighted currency has risen over 50% in real terms since late 2004. And China's once-outsized current-account surplus has all but vanished. Still, the currency grievances of yesteryear live on, getting prominent attention in the current negotiations. This only compounds the false narrative.

All in all, Washington has been loose with facts, analysis, and conclusions, and the American public has been far too gullible in its acceptance of this false narrative. The point is not to deny China's role in promoting economic tensions with the US, but to stress the need for objectivity and honesty in assigning blame—especially with so much at stake in the current conflict. Sadly, fixating on scapegoats is apparently much easier than taking a long, hard look in the mirror.

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New law on DVRs required

Differential voting rights (DVR) can help founders/promoters retain control over the company they create and grow and serve as a defence mechanism against any hostile bid for acquisition of a company



In addition to

serving as a defence

mechanism, DVRs

are used in the

structuring of

mergers and

acquisition

transactions



ONE SHARE, ONE vote" is the bedrock of Indian law on voting rights of shares. This means shareholders have one vote for each share held in a company, giving them voting rights proportionate to their shareholding. This might undergo change now as the concept of dual class structures for Indian shares is introduced. The dual class shares are commonly called differential voting right (DVR) shares. The DVRs are not new in the Indian context. The Indian company law introduced them way back in 2000. However, because of the stringent rules governing them, they remain unattractive even today. Thanks to SEBI regulations, listed entities cannot issue shares with superior rights with respect to voting or dividend over the other equity shares issued by a listed company. SEBI had recently released a con-

sultation paper on DVRs. The paper described that DVRs can help founders/promoters retain control over the company they create and grow. The paper said that dual structures help in fundraising without the promoters having to dilute their control and DVRs can also serve as defence mechanism against any hostile bid for acquisition of a company. The importance of having DVRs for promoters was hotly discussed in a recent hostile bid where L&T wanted to take control of Mindtree. Whether or not Mindtree's promoters could have used DVRs (if the law had permitted) to avert this hostile bid is a question of interest and debate. Globally, many jurisdictions, including the

US, allow founders to have DVRs to

ensure they can keep control over their companies. Google's and Facebook's founders hold such shares. SEBI has recommended the issue of superior rights-based DVRs only to promoters of unlisted companies and to no other person. This is contrary to the Companies Act, 2013, which allows DVRs to be issued to anyone including the promoters.

In addition to serving as a defence mechanism, DVRs are used in the structuring of mergers and acquisition transactions. For instance, they can be used in private equity deals where promoters can take DVRs for higher voting rights

while private equity investors can take them to get higher financial returns in the form of dividends.

The rules that apply

The rules that apply for DVRs depend upon the company—private company, publicly unlisted company or listed company. An unlisted company (whether private or public) is governed by

Section 43 of the Companies Act, 2013, and the Companies (Share Capital and Debentures) Rules, 2014 ("Rules"). A private company, by its memorandum and articles of association, can exempt itself from these provisions. Therefore, it can avoid compliance with the difficult rules of DVRs and is free to have its own terms for its DVRs. A publicly unlisted company does not enjoy the same advantage. It needs to necessarily follow the

rules, including the one requiring it to have a consistent track record of distributable profits for the last three years and also the rule which caps DVRs till only 26% of the company's total capital. Therefore, start-ups or tech companies (where DVRs are quite popular) prefer setting up private companies. But sooner or later, they need to go for a public listing to ensure an exit for their investors. It is at that stage that DVR rules, applicable to a listed company, kick in.

The SEBI (LODR) Regulations, 2015, do not allow listed entities to issue shares in any manner which

may give any superior rights with regards to voting or dividend over the rights on equity shares that are already listed. This means a DVR with superior rights is not allowed while an inferior rights share is permitted. The SEBI's proposals in the consultation paper seem equally stringent (if not more) than the existing law on DVRs. These include issuance of DVRs

include issuance of DVRs to only promoters and that too only pre-IPO and not after the IPO; permanent lock-in on DVRs, with no rights to trade and transfer them (even amongst promoters), and coattail provisions (i.e, provisions where DVRs will be treated as normal voting right shares). It appears that SEBI wants to test waters before allowing DVRs in a big way. It remains doubtful that DVRs will become more attractive than before.

THE EDITOR Democratic growth

LETTERS TO

Serving the larger public interest in a

developing economy with a federal structure calls for a collaborative work relation amongst political entities on a sustainable basis. Earnest efforts by hitherto laggards to work hand-in-glove with the incumbent regime and developing a viable long-term vision therefore assumes high importance. Authorities are often confronted with conflicting objectives to function cost effectively without resorting to austerity measures in order to prioritise public welfare and control inflation despite increasing the net income for producers. Coordination at different levels of governance and across divisions in the state is thus necessary to not only meet the goals but also preserve integrity/decorum in the democracy — Girish Lalwani, Delhi

Rahul's citizenship

It is baffling as to why the BJP is raising a question over Rahul Gandhi's citizenship right in the middle of the Lok Sabha elections. On its part, the MHA deemed it fit to issue a notice to the Congress president to clarify his alleged acquisition of British citizenship and prove his Indian citizenship in two weeks' time. By its own admission, it acted on Subramanian Swamy's finding that Rahul Gandhi is a British citizen by choice. The claim made by BJP has already been dismissed by the country's top court. It should be clear that the allegation of Rahul Gandhi's dual citizenship is a 'poll gimmick' and a 'fake narrative' to deflect attention away from existential issues affecting the lives of

— G David Milton, Maruthancode

●Write to us at feletters@expressindia.com

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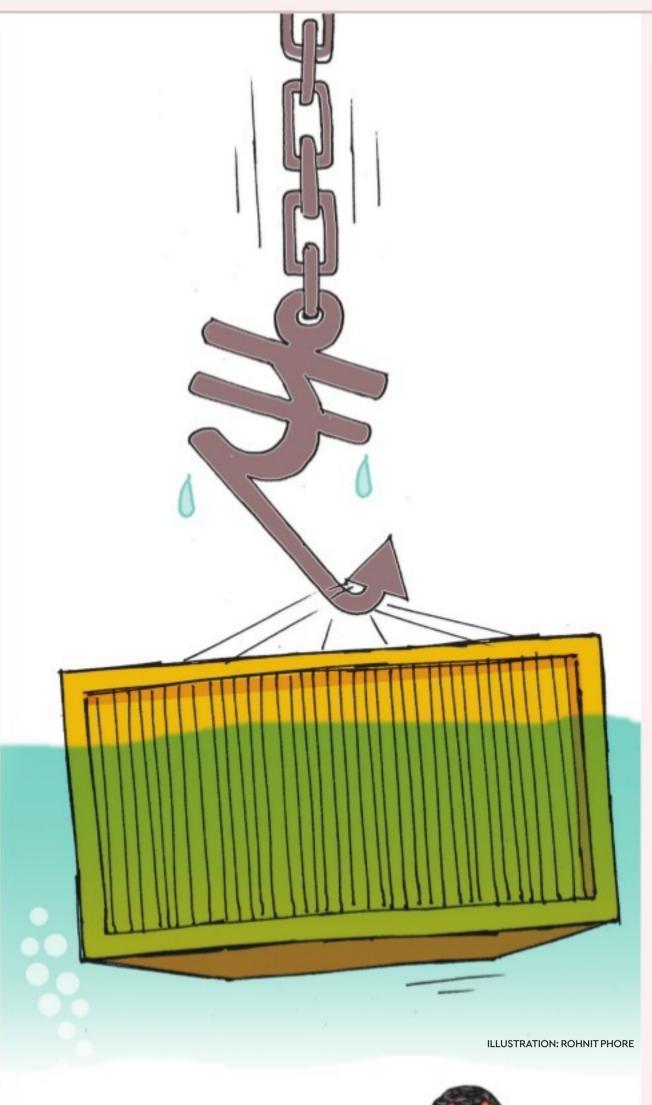
HE REVIVAL OF private investment and exports is a must to achieve and sustain over 8% growth. The recent performance of India's exports which expanded 11% (year-on-year) in March 2019, taking the figure to \$32.5 billion in the month of March, vis-à-vis 2.4% in the previous month—is good news. Various categories of intermediate exports—engineering goods, organic and inorganic chemicals, ready-made garments of all textiles, and drugs and pharmaceuticals—contributed to this revival. The question, however, is whether this recovery is sustainable or not?

India's exports have been sluggish and had turned negative, particularly merchandise exports, between 2013 and 2016, which, along with private investment, dragged down the country's growth. Merchandise exports affect manufacturing and, thus, jobs. Although there have been signs of exports recovery since the early 2017, the revival has not been robust and consistent. In fact, during 2018-19, merchandise exports and imports witnessed the same growth rate of around 9%, totalling \$331 billion and \$507 billion, respectively, resulting in 8.9% of merchandise trade deficit. The sector that contributed the maximum to exports is engineering, with a 25% share, followed by electronics and chemicals.

India is doing well in exports of chemicals, both organic and inorganic, due to better quality and also as a result of high scrutiny of China's chemical exports on environment grounds. Exports of readymade garments—among top exports are experiencing weak growth for the last few years. India is losing market share in some of its traditional markets such as the Middle East, France, Sri Lanka, etc, due to rising competition from countries such as Bangladesh and Vietnam, and the domination of unorganised players at the low end of the value chain. India has been losing out on important exports sectors such as iron and steel, non-ferrous metals and products, leather and leather products, etc. Protectionist measures in the West and aggressive pricing strategies of China, along with developments in the domestic economy (for example, shutting down Sterlite affecting copper exports), don't help the cause either.

There has been a shift in the exports basket towards value-added manufacturing and technology-driven products, but the country is losing out on important traditional sectors such as metals, textiles, leather, etc. India has the potential to do better in agricultural and primary products. Given growing demand for agricultural commodities, the policy focus on agriculture, plantations, horticulture, fisheries and meat will contribute. India is the largest producer of milk and the second largest of fruits and vegetables. Thus, the recently announced Agriculture Export Policy is expected boost exports of the primary sector.

The country needs to sustain this recovery momentum and accelerate exports growth, even though the outlook for the world trade does not look promising due to a rise in nationalism and protectionist measures. The US-China tariff war is still on, and developing countries





INDIA'S EXPORTS

Are there signs of recovery?

Indian exports are in a recovery stage and need support. Short-term measures include exemption of GST for SME exporters, online refund of input credit, easing of credit to industry, interest equalisation support to agri-exporters

including India have started imposing higher tariffs selectively to protect their domestic industries. Monetary tightening in developed countries, along with tariff wars, may lead to volatility in global financial markets, which would lower trade finance. Such developments do not augur well for trade agreements at the WTO and for globalisation. India's is also on the priority "watch list" of the US for not giving adequate protection to American companies due to weak IPR regimes.

The WTO's World Trade Outlook Indicator, released in February, gave a reading of 96.3%, below the baseline value of 100 in the index, indicating below-trend trade expansion for the first quarter of 2019. This is driven by steep declines in component indices such as export orders, international air freight, automobile production and sales, electronic components, and agricultural raw materials.

Even though the full-fledged and long tariff war between the US and China is not good for globalisation and even for India, it actually offers a short-term opportunity for India's exports. As the UNCTAD 2019 report brings out, only about 6% of the \$250 billion Chinese exports subject to US tariffs will be picked up by US firms, whereas only about 5% of the \$85 billion US exports will be picked up by Chinese firms. Therefore, India may be able to gain some traction in textiles, garments, and gems and jewellery if the Chinese exports to the US slow down.

Indian exports are in a recovery stage and need support. As the Trade Promotion Council of India (TPCI) rightly puts, we need short-term support measures for exports such as exemption of GST for SME exporters, easing of credit to the industry, online refund of input credit and interest equalisation support to agricultural exporters. Also, measures facilitating Indian firms participating in global value chain/production network, internationalisation of Indian SMEs and trade facilitation would help Indian exports in the medium to long term. It's time to work on the recommendations (Economic Survey 2017-18) on improving trade-related logistics that would reduce trade cost and improve exports competitiveness. At the same time, India has to negotiate on many trade issues at multilateral and bilateral level, such as India's data protection rules, challenges faced by India's export subsidies, e-commerce policy, import duties on Indian exports such as by the EU on electronics, and dropping India from the Generalized System of Preferences (GSP) regime. Apart from increasing India's exports competitiveness, the country also needs to explore more markets in Africa and Latin America. It's also time to incentivise labour-intensive sectors like leather and to address the issues faced by exporters.

India has been witnessing consistent merchandise trade deficit over last two decades, reflecting on out export competitiveness. Promoting exports eventually help boost the GDP of a country, create more jobs, boost the manufacturing sector and earn more foreign exchange. A growing and competitive economy should have increasing trade ratio, but in India's case, the trade openness has gone done from 55% in 2012 to 40% in 2017.

● INDIA-US

GSP revocation bad for both



The author is president & CEO, US-India Strategic Partnership Forum



HE MARCH 4, 2019, United States Trade Representative (USTR) decision to revoke duty concessions allowed to India under the Generalized System of Preferences (GSP) is a setback to a strong US-India partnership. That said, enough depth and maturity exists on both sides to appreciate the broader range of shared interests to enable de-escalation. The dynamics of the GSP withdrawal could trigger undesirable actions on both sides, but these moves should not impact the deepening strategic partnership and defence ties envisioned to be the core of the US-India bilateral relationship.

On the Indian side, US technology companies have observed multiple tariff increases in a single calendar year, demonstrating less-than-transparent policymaking that is meant to block Chinese companies' access to India, but unintentionally will affect other foreign companies. Policy changes on e-commerce could have been managed better through a consultative process, and we expect that will be the case this time around as policymakers firm up the draft policy. There have also been arbitrary price controls in the healthcare/medical device sectors and unwarranted certification standards in dairy sectors. FDI from the medical devices has averaged hundreds of millions of dollars in the past years, but investors remain uncertain of their future in the country, especially with the lack of direction regarding new technology in India. On the US side, we have seen tariffs on steel and aluminium imported from India and an inordinate delay in processing of high-skilled visa applications from Indian technology companies.

The irony is that 2018 saw merchandise trade between the two countries grow by 17.2% to now a record \$87.2 billion, the highest ever. US exports to India grew by 29% and India's imports from the US grew by 12%. India is one of the two countries that has been able to reduce its trade deficit

(by 7.3% in 2018) with the US—achieving a fundamental cornerstone of President Donald Trump's trade policy.

This impressive progress cannot diminish the real-world impact that lack of GSP concessions will have. The withdrawal of duty concessions will make Indian exports of eligible products (textiles, gems and jewellery, chemicals, agricultural items, components and machinery) to the US costlier as importers of these products will have to pay MFN duty,

revoke duty concessions to India under the **Generalized System** of Preferences (GSP), businesses are bullish on India

But despite the

USTR decision to

instead of a concessional duty rate allowed under GSP. MFN is a non-preferential regular duty rate applicable to all countries. Consequently, ending GSP for India will likely result in fewer orders for Indian products originating from the MSME sector, which supports thousands of Indian jobs.

According to USTR 2017 estimates, India is the largest GSP beneficiary, with Indian exporters benefiting from zeroduty benefits on \$5.6 billion worth of exports to the US up to this point. Many media reports latch on to the \$5.6-billion figure, which is misleading. The Indian ministry of commerce has said that GSP revocation will cause only \$190 million losses in terms of duty payments, but the cascading impact will hit SMEs in terms of jobs in the Indian handloom and agricultural sectors, which are engaged in export production. Moreover, US companies that source from India could experience financial burden from the revocation.

Under US laws, GSP withdrawal may not take effect until at least 60 days after the notification to India, which will coincide with the formation of the new government in India. We must use this window to derive solutions to trade policy issues that promote mutual benefits and try to neutralise the losses due to GSP withdrawal.

Despite this setback, the US-India Strategic Partnership Forum (USISPF) remains optimistic due to the immense potential of US-India trade opportunities. An internal publication has calculated that both countries can easily double the trade to \$250 billion in the next four years even if an average 15% growth in trade is maintained. We see continued higher bilateral trade engagement over the next decade due to huge energy and aerospace deals, which, in turn, can help boost India's manufacturing ecosystem. This opportunity can make both countries a model for economic cooperation for global prosperity. Continuation of GSP benefits could have given a fillip to bilateral trade volumes, albeit businesses remain bullish on commercial opportunities against the backdrop of India's impressive growth prospects in the short to medium term.

Google gives reminder rapid growth isn't guaranteed

OVIDE

Bloomberg

GOOGLE INVESTORS MAY have had a

flashback Monday to the company's bad old days of 2015. That year may feel like a distant memory. That was before news cycles were measured in seconds. It was before people were talking in earnest about FAANG stocks and before Mark Zuckerberg had sat through multiple rounds of congressional hearings. Back then, Google's growth looked as if it hit a wall, and investors didn't trust the company to spend its money wisely.

On Monday, then, it was a surprise to people with memories longer than milliseconds when Google parent company Alphabet turned in relatively meek revenue growth for the first quarter, although with restrained spending by Google standards.

The company said that its Google segment advertising revenue rose about 15% from a year earlier, which was the slowest growth rate by that measure since late 2015.

One slightly wobbly quarter doesn't detract from Google's impressive track record of steady growth since its rough patch several years ago. Tech investors, however, are an anxious lot in these late days of US economic expansion and extra scrutiny of tech companies' power.

Monday's results—combined with some growth hiccups at Amazon, Apple and Facebook—showed the potential vulnerability of the US tech superstars' potent combination of rapid growth and alluring profits. It is that combination that has powered US stock markets, and that is what investors have come to expect from

the technology titans. Shares of Alphabet sagged about 6% in after-market trading following the release of first-quarter results.

There didn't seem to be obvious culprits, and the company doesn't disclose enough granular information about its sprawling businesses to diagnose possible temporary problems. Alphabet talked Monday about the weakness of currencies in some of its largest markets, which weighs down the company's reported revenue in dollars. Executives hinted at some changes to YouTube advertisements and

the "timing" of advertising formats that

weighed on revenue growth. And to be fair, most companies anywhere close to Alphabet's more than \$140 billion in annual revenue would be thrilled to grow at a rate that was a comedown for Alphabet.

Alphabet told investors three months ago that its rate of spending growth would moderate in 2019, and the company followed through in the first quarter. Excluding the impact of Alphabet's latest fine from European regulators, Alphabet's operating profit was better than expected, and its spending slowed on big capital pro-

jects such as computer data centres. Investors have been nervous about Alphabet's spending recently, while the company's growth rate has held strong. Now the opposite is true, and company watchers would be forgiven for wishing the growth to come back.

HE MOST REMARKABLE phenomenon characterising 21st century India is the emergence of the 350-million-strong middle class. The importance of this development is not just limited to the statistical significance of the growing numbers of this class, it also extends to the decisive influence this class will have in moulding public opinion on many national issues. Its voting behaviour may well determine outcomes in the current

Since 1950-51, India's GDP has grown by about 50 times in real terms. Currently, with a GDP of \$2.6 trillion and a growth rate of about 7%, India is the world's fastest growing major economy. Later this year, it is expected to overtake the UK to become the world's fifth largest economy.

general elections as well.

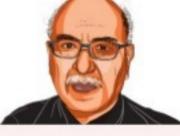
Decades of economic growth have had two major outcomes: One, every minute, according to a Brookings study, 44 Indians escape the trap of extreme poverty, estimated by the World Bank at \$1.9 per person per day. Such poverty, currently at 5%, may decline to 3% by 2022 and be eliminated altogether by 2030.

Two, equally importantly, the country has also witnessed an unprecedented social mobility which has enabled millions to climb on to the bandwagon of the burgeoning middle class. With an annual per

The rise of the new middle class

No political party can afford to take them for granted

HARDAYAL SINGH



The author is former chief commissioner of income tax and ombudsman to the Income Tax Department, Mumbai

capita GDP of nearly \$2,000, India is now increasingly becoming a low middle income rather than a poor country.

This middle class, currently estimated at 350 million or about 25% of the population, will rise to 583 million or 41% of the population by 2025. These educated people, with annual income ranging between ₹2 lakh and ₹10 lakh, are to be found in tier-2, tier-3 and tier-4 cities. They drive both consumption as well as savings in the economy. At a personal level, they aspire to live in their own houses, and many of them closer to the lower end of the threshold fondly look forward to owning

their first refrigerators, washing machines and two-wheelers.

Historically, this new middle class is the product of three forces: One of these was unleashed when economic reforms, implemented in the 1990s, generated opportunities for millions of people. Politically, a new post-reforms consensus centring on a market-based economy thus emerged. This replaced the earlier Nehruvian consensus based on a much more public-sector-dominated command-andcontrol model.

Two, at about the same time, thanks to VP Singh's support to the decade-old Man-



dal Commission report, a large number of backward caste youth agitated for greater representation in public employment and in institutions of higher learning. Eventually, they succeeded in achieving their objectives when the Constitution was amended to grant them 27% reservation. This provided middle class access to many poor people who otherwise may not have been able to gain such entry.

Three, when in the wake of the Mandal agitation, the Hindu society began to split on the lines of caste identity, a worried BJP found—in the birthplace of Lord Rama—a perfect symbol for the revival of Hindu

pride and nationalism. And the swelling ranks of this new class readily embraced this ideology. Currently, too, many of these people are

nationalistic to a fault. Not surprisingly, many of them are avid supporters of the BJP. They want their children to be better educated them, and are ready to spend amounts they can scarcely afford on their education in English-medium schools. This is because they see proficiency in English as a passport to success.

Typically, these people prefer simple laws and hassle-free processes. They frown on subsidies financed out of taxes they pay. Like taxpayers the world over, they want to see the fiscal connection between the taxes the government collects from them and the benefits they get in return. Voluntary compliance often suffers when they fail to make this connection. As such, they are unlikely to happily pay taxes for large-ticket dole schemes such as the Congress party's Nyuntam Aay Yojana (NYAY).

No political party can really afford to take these people for granted. Since they are educated, they cannot be easily manipulated as a vote bank. In Delhi, many of them supported Anna Hazare's crusade against corruption, and later Arvind Kejriwal's Aam Aadmi Party. But when the latter failed to deliver on its anti-corruption agenda, many of them withdrew support to this party.

Both the BJP and the Congress have, in their manifestos, tried to woo these people with promises of lowering income-tax rates, improving compliance, reducing joblessness, working towards good governance, etc. However, unless these intentions are translated into action, it is unlikely that empty promises will fool these people for long.

What is much more likely is that, as in developed countries, with time, they will enter different political parties and begin to influence political agendas as well as electoral outcomes, much more decisively.

THE INDIANEXPRESS, WEDNESDAY, MAY 1, 2019 THE INDIANEXPRESS, WEDNESDAY, MAY 1, 2019 THE INDIANEXPRESS, WEDNESDAY, MAY 1, 2019

WORDLY WISE

I SAY LET THE WORLD GO TO HELL, BUT I SHOULD ALWAYS HAVE MY TEA.

— Fyodor Dostoevsky

The Indian EXPRESS

∽ FOUNDED BY ∽ RAMNATH GOENKA

BECAUSE THE TRUTH INVOLVES US ALL

WRONG STEP

Colombo's ban on the niqab is against a woman's right to choose — and is just the thing extremists feed on

RESIDENT MAITHRIPALA SIRISENA has taken the extraordinary step of effectively banning the niqab, a face covering worn by some Muslim women, under the country's Emergency regulations, promulgated after the Easter Sunday bombings claimed by ISIS. It makes Sri Lanka the only country outside Europe to take such a decision. The directive does not explicitly mention the garment, which covers the face almost entirely and leaves narrow openings only for the eyes. It says all face coverings are banned for national security reasons. It is unfortunate that President Sirisena took such an extreme step without wider consultation, as it goes against the fundamental freedoms set out in the Sri Lankan constitution. Even accepting that the Emergency gives the government vast powers to suspend some freedoms, this is an unwarranted and extreme measure. The niqab is an import from the Middle East. It is not a common sight in Sri Lanka. Few women wear it. There is now the danger that the ban on the nigab will be read up in its implementation to include the more commonly worn hijab and burga, especially as there have been demands earlier by Buddhist extremists that these garments should be banned. It could also open up demands for banning other visible identity markers, such as caps and bears worn by men.

Significantly, even before the President took the step, Muslim civil society organisations and the clergy had already urgently appealed to their "sisters" to stop wearing the full face veil or desist from being seen in public spaces wearing it. It is unclear if the male dominated civil society groups and the leadership of the clergy thought through the implications of the appeal. It is clear the community, which is more integrated into the Sri Lankan polity and economy than the Tamils, are fearful of the repercussions of the attack, and wants to play down identity markers. It is unclear if the women in the community were consulted. They are being asked to shoulder the burden of holding up the community's credentials.

It cannot be stressed enough that the problem that has erupted in Sri Lanka has not been caused by women's apparel. Banning the niqab may make the government look as if it is taking action, but it is hardly the way to meet the challenge posed by radicalism of the ISIS kind. From 2015 at least, Sri Lanka has been aware that some of its young citizens have been attracted to ISIS and were travelling to Syria for battle innoculation. There is no evidence to show that it acted seriously on this information. True, Sri Lanka was still in the first flush of the post-Rajapakse years, and the government was more focussed on dismantling some of the authoritarian structures from his time. Still, it is beyond comprehension that the government did not have an accurate handle on the radicalisation of even the handful of ISIS recruits.

Pushing Buttons

Process of examining complaints of EVM malfunction is legally problematic and detracts from the sanctity of the elections

HE HARD-PRESSED ELECTRONIC voting machine (EVM) is again controversial, but now the issue is legal, rather than yet another allegation of malfunction. The Supreme Court has sent notices to the Election Commission on a petition seeking the withdrawal of penal provisions in the Conduct of Election rules, 1961, which threaten voters complaining of EVM malfunction or "deviant behaviour" with a jail term, if the allegation is not borne out. At present, under Rule 49MA read with Section 177 of the Indian Penal Code, which deals with supplying false information, the onus of proof lies with the complainant. The threat of punishment stifles free speech and has the effect of deterring complaints which, the petitioner has argued, are integral for improving any process. These effects were visible in Assam in the course of the ongoing election. H K Deka, a former director general of police of the state, refrained from challenging the patency of a machine where he had cast his vote, even though the Voter Verified Paper Audit Trail (VVPAT) showed a different outcome from his input. He hesitated because he did not have full faith in the process of verifying a claim.

Indeed, it is legally fraught. The presiding officer, having informed the complainant of the punishment which could ensue if the claim could not be proved, proceeds to test the machine by registering a single vote in the presence of other poll officers. If it is accurately reflected in the VVPAT, the complainant is presumed to have lied. This is scarcely an infallible method, since a machine may produce "deviant behaviour" (in the words of the petition) at intermittent intervals. Besides, it makes the complainant a witness in his own case, which militates against the principles of justice.

Though parties across the political spectrum have cast aspersions on EVMs in the past, the 2019 general election has thrown up an unusually rich crop of malfunctions from West Bengal, Uttar Pradesh, Kerala, Gujarat, Odisha and Goa. Akhilesh Yadav has made sweeping allegations. The Telugu Desam Party has accused the EC of shying away from the issue, and a candidate in Anantapur district smashed an EVM. The machine may not be the problem, but the enduring controversy about it, and the draconian provision limiting complaints, are serious issues which detract from the perceived credibility of elections. The failure of the EC to address the problem does a deep disservice to democracy.

BED-CHAI PE CHARCHA

Bed tea is an institution in railway junctions. But like the trains, it sometimes arrives late, and that could ruin your day

SANSOL, A JUNCTION at the heart of the one of the oldest divisions of the Indian railways, is steeped in a long tradition of bed tea. Here, the line going "upcountry" (as English railwaymen termed north India) forks into the main ▶ line via Patna and the Grand Chord via Gaya, Another line connects the busy junction with the Sahibgunj Loop, opened to traffic in 1866. Passengers on these lines with evocative names have been plied with bed tea in their bunks since colonial times. And the railwaymen quartered here for generations have institutionalised bed tea in the town. The fortunate sip it from porcelain in their homes, the less fortunate from thick tumblers at tea stalls. Which, in Asansol, are conveniently located wherever one tumbles out of bed. Didi takes care of all.

But in our troubled times, the great tradition is sometimes broken. Trains do not run on time, and the bed-tea is late. No chai, no charcha. Moon Moon Sen, Trinamool Congress candidate in Asansol, did not learn and could not tell of the mayhem her party workers had wrought in the constituency because her bed-tea was served late. The workers had got their tea right on the button, while she slept, oblivious. Suitably energised, they had

got a head start on the day. But Sen is being unfairly pilloried over her other comment, that the political violence we are seeing is a piffle compared to what her generation had experienced. This is the honest truth. The streets of Kolkata, the state capital, have seen political workers in police helmets running amok with police lathis. Lethal attacks were fairly commonplace. But not any more. Didi takes care of all. Smell the bed-tea. Go back to sleep. Don't get excited until May 23. There's no future in it.

The new techno-nationalism



In this imagination, the focus is on creating carriers of national power in the form of private companies

PRATAP BHANU MEHTA

TECHNOLOGY AND NATIONALISM have always had a very intimate relationship. Technology has often been an instrument of national power; and the quest for national power has, in turn, led to the investments in, and the creation of, different models of scientific organisation. In some senses "technonationalism" has always been around as long as states have existed. Over the last two-three decades, the rhetoric of globalisation blunted visible expressions of techno-nationalism. One of the most euphoric ideological constructions of recent technological revolutions was that it would make the nation as a unit less salient for the development and deployment of technology. But there is a growing sense that the zeitgeist might be shifting. The one common thread that we will see emerge in global discourse is the more open reassertion of techno-nationalism. A techno-nationalist imagination will be more ascendant in political discourse, and this will shape the course of economic reform as well. India's politics is too distracted to focus attention on this. The RSS has been calling attention to the issue of techno-nationalism for a while, and don't be surprised if it rises up the agenda very quickly after the elections.

The current moment of techno-nationalism has both continuities and discontinuities with the past. The rise of China has upended technological globalism in several ways. First, many people around the world now buy the old argument that techno-nationalism is a good development policy. Chinese success, then, is not seamless integration into a global system; rather it is the artful use of the rhetoric of integration into the world economy to advance national technological goals. For Indian critics, the missing piece in our reform story is that there is no serious national technology strategy as a development policy. Second, China demonstrated capabilities to resist the western-led institutional order in a number of key areas such as information technology; precisely the areas that techno globalists thought would dissolve national salience. Third, as in the past, great power competition will in part depend upon countries' abilities to take the right bets in technologies of the future, and these have to be proprietary national tech-

The nexus of big companies, state power and consumerist populism might be the new carriers of technonationalism, instead of the old public sector. So one of the oddest manifestations of techno-nationalism will not just be conventional arguments for investing in more R&D. They will be arguments for the subtle promotion of a few big companies, now positioned

in their nationalist avatar.

nologies. This race is now increasingly at the heart of Sino-US rivalry. The fourth issue is the redefining of the relationship between political order and information order. The Chinese and Russians have done this in two ways: First, by demonstrating that political control of the information order can still be possible in this age; and, second, if this political control is not exercised, open information orders can be vulnerable to manipulation. Even as authoritarian tendencies grow in democracies, the desire to reassert political control over information orders will surface more and more. Given the nature of modern technologies, it is difficult to see that assertion happening without a degree of techno-nationalism. Fifth, techno-globalism is always premised on shared values in the international system. As consensus around the shape of the international order weakens, and more countries take divergent authoritarian paths, the temptation for technological nationalism will grow. The concerns would lead countries to cre-

ate national technology strategies. But there are other curious ideological aspects to the new discourse of techno-nationalism as well. One is an old trope, namely new nations telling a narrative of their past in terms of "national" traditions of science. Some recent writing in China uses Joseph Needham's classic work to reassert China's national identity in terms of a distinctive scientific tradition. India has its own version of "India as Scientific Civilisation" trope, unfortunately hijacked more by its nuttiest proponents rather than those who engage more thoughtfully with the question of the relationship between science and tradition.

But the more curious aspect of the current wave of techno-nationalism is the association of private companies with the techno-nationalist imaginary. States have often aligned to promote the interests of national companies. But in this techno-nationalist moment, many see the presence of big companies as a sign of being able to harness national technology prowess. In Indian techno nationalist circles you will always get questions like: Where is the Indian Amazon or Indian Alibaba? This might be a sensible question and an answer might focus on the

nature of Indian regulation, Indian companies could use a lot of help in many areas. But the underlying premise is less about regulation or development; it is more about creating large private sector icons as signs of national capabilities. There is open talk in many circles that what India will need is a couple of behemoth private companies that can leverage scale to rival global giants. It is almost as if Amazon versus Jio versus Alibaba becomes a proxy for national prowess. The economic logic of this construction is not the issue here. What is of interest is that in the new technonationalist imagination, the issue is not protecting small producers or indigenous technology etc. The focus is on creating what people believe to be the carriers of national power in the form of large companies. India's regulatory flip flops on globalisation in recent months (most notably in e-commerce), are in part driven by this temptation that we need to create big Indian private companies that are also national icons.

Again, the issue here is not the technological or economic logic at work. The issue will be positioning the necessity of these behemoths as signs of success of techno-nationalism. To take a random example, the rise of Jio and associated companies, becomes a national mission, not just an ordinary private sector investment. The nexus of big companies, state power and consumerist populism might be the new carriers of techno-nationalism, instead of the old public sector. So one of the oddest manifestations of techno-nationalism will not just be conventional arguments for investing in more R&D. They will be arguments for the subtle promotion of a few big companies, now positioned in their nationalist avatar. Of course, reality will be far messier than a simple unfolding of techno-nationalism. In reality, countries like India will continue to be hobbled by capacity issues. But both the changes in the international system, and the new domestic political economy, point in the direction of a greater salience for techno-nationalism, in all its varieties. We might enter an "RSS meets Jio" ideological world.

> The writer is vice-chancellor of Ashoka University. Views are personal.



Welfare For Quality

Tamil Nadu's success in education underlines empowering, assertive populism

SUNNY JOSE AND BHEEMESHWAR REDDY A

THE NATIONAL INSTITUTIONAL Ranking Framework (NIRF) ranking for 2019 has just been released. This year, 860 higher education institutions are ranked, up from 445 in 2018. The NIRF ranking covers institutions from nine categories, such as overall, university, engineering, college, management, pharmacy, law, architecture, and medical. For what it's worth, the NIRF ranking not only measures the performance of education institutions in India, but also, for good measure, expects them to measure up. Can the NIRF ranking exercise help enhance the quality of higher education?

To play up its potential is to be unrealistic, yet to despise it as an unworthy attempt is to be myopic. A prudent endeavour would be to scrutinise the NIRF ranking, identify interesting or intriguing patterns, and initiate an informed discussion. Our attempt is aimed at this. What we observe from the 2019 NIRF ranking is a remarkable regional dominance and disparity. Such dominance and disparity might appear, to the voodoo pundits, prosaic. To our understanding, they are primarily the products of, and draw attention to, substantive aspects — policies and governance.

Of the 860 institutions ranked, 182 institutions (accounting for 21 per cent) are from Tamil Nadu (TN). The combined contribution of six big states — Bihar, Gujarat, Madhya Pradesh, Odisha, Rajasthan and Uttar Pradesh − is 127 institutions. In relational terms, they The welfare policies were fortified with and paved a way for a carefully crafted micropolitics of identity creation and assertion. Identity-based reservation in education and employment was an important component of this form of populism. These two aspects created a critical mass of quality education institutions, which in turn benefited and empowered the middle and bottom groups.

account for about two-thirds of the singular contribution of TN.

The above regional disparity appears from the category of "overall", which is generic, denoting nothing novel or nuanced. "Colleges" would be a better category to scout, as they serve as the backbone of higher education in India. Again, of the 200 colleges ranked by the NIRF in 2019, 74 colleges are from TN. Kerala, with 42 colleges, comes next. Thus, these two states are home to more than half of the quality colleges in India. Delhi, with 37 colleges, comes third. Surprisingly, no college from Bihar, MP, UP and Odisha is of a standard to find a place in the 200 ranked colleges. Even the share of Gujarat and Rajasthan together is

minuscule — five colleges. Thus, an important pattern emerges: The adequate contribution of TN coexisting with the inadequate share of some big states combined. Is there something unique to Tamil Nadu? An analysis of its performance, welfare and politics brings out two important insights. First is the "populist" nature of its welfare policies. The regional parties which have been governing TN since 1960s progressively built a competitive populist platform. Central to this is a progressive and expanding pool of welfare programmes, a fair measure of effectiveness in delivery, and a reasonable degree of commitment to their stability.

The second aspect is the "form" of populism — it is empowering and assertive. The

welfare policies were fortified with and paved a way for a carefully crafted micropolitics of identity creation and assertion Identity-based reservation in education and employment was an important component of this form of populism. These two aspects created a critical mass of quality education institutions, which in turn benefited and empowered the middle and bottom groups, which were marginalised or ignored by the earlier political regime and its ruling elites.

The demands and assertions of these groups, in turn, forced the state to deliver and expand the services. Of the 74 ranked colleges from TN, only one-third (17 colleges) are based at Chennai and the rest (57 colleges) are spread across various cities. This raises an important question: Can populism promote quality? TN's experience shows that it is eminently possible to deliver and sustain higher education institutions without lowering their quality and access. The populist form notwithstanding, what Tamil Nadu's case underlines also is effective welfare policies and governance. This brings us back to the issue posed at the beginning. It is possible to use the NIRF ranking to draw attention to issues of governance and quality that blight higher education in India.

The writers are with the Birla Institute of Technology and Science-Pilani, Hyderabad Campus. Views are personal

May 1, 1979, Forty Years Ago



RESTORING THE STATUTE THE PRESIDENT TODAY gave his assent to the 44th Amendment Bill restoring to the Constitution to a great extent what it lost during the Emergency — it has been passed by the Lok Sabha and, with some modifications, the Rajya Sabha. The Bill seeks to undo the damage done to the Constitution by Indira Gandhi's 42nd Amendment and to deprive the executive possible avenues of cutting into the democratic content of the Constitution.

ROUGH FLIGHT THE PARLIAMENTARY COMMITTEE on public undertakings, in four reports, has voiced "se-

rious suspicion" about the bona fides of Air India's purchases of Boeing 747 aircraft, and recommended that "further deals with the Boeing company should be stopped immediately". The committee had pointed out that the airline paid no income tax on its profits for three years, allowed its outstanding sums to mount to over Rs 45 crore, and built serious imbalances into its fare structure.

FAMILY GOALS THE JOINT CONFERENCE of the Central Councils of Health and Family Welfare has scaled down the national family planning target for 1979-80 in the light of poor performance by some states on the family planning front in 1978-79. The earlier national target was to cover, through different methods, 10.7 million people. It has now been scaled down to 9.65 million.

PROBING PM'S FAMILY THE CHIEF JUSTICE OF India refused to look into the corruption charges against the family members of Prime Minister Morarji Desai and Deputy Prime Minister Charan Singh. The matter has been placed before a retired judge of the Supreme Court, Justice Vaidialingam, who will say whether any prima facie case exists in respect of charges which pertain to the period after the Janata government came to office.

—THE GUARDIAN

THE INDIAN EXPRESS, WEDNESDAY, MAY 1, 2019

THE IDEAS PAGE

WHAT THE OTHERS SAY "The best candidate (for US President) w

ANJU GUPTA

ISIS HAS RELEASED the second video of its

supreme leader, Abu Bakr Baghdadi on

April 29, the first since he appeared in a

video delivering a sermon as the Caliph at

the Al Nuri Mosque of Mosul in Iraq on July

5, 2014. The focus of the video was to show-

case Baghdadi, alive and healthy, discussing

global matters with masked commanders.

He praised attacks by "brothers" in Sri

Lanka to avenge the loss of the last bastion

of the Caliphate in Syria, Baghouz, on

March 23, as well as an Australian jihadi holding a key position within the group.

of decimation of the Caliphate, on April 21,

ISIS has claimed attacks in Sri Lanka — ar-

guably the second-deadliest attack in his-

tory after 9/11. The selection of the day, time,

targets, modus operandi and media mes-

saging strongly indicates that ISIS must have

been planning its "signature" global attacks

on the chosen day to project a message to

the Global Coalition to Defeat ISIS, as well

as to its own fighters and supporters, that

"ISIS is alive and kicking". Now, Baghdadi

has himself owned the attacks as revenge

for targeting Baghouz — where over 2,000

airstrikes over three months eventually

seemingly low-threat country, which had

ample number of targets, a local network,

and a known radicaliser, Zaharan Hashim,

who had made his loyalty to ISIS known. His

online presence for some years helped build

Thowheed Jamat (NTJ), and its smaller ally,

were not capable of mounting such attacks

on their own. The scope, precise execution

of the serial bombings and deadly suicide-

responses to raids by Sri Lankan forces, be-

tween April 21-25, point to months of train-

ing by top-class experts, including dry runs.

Training of more than seven suicide

bombers is a supremely difficult task,

fraught with the risk of some developing

cold feet, or exposure before the targeted

date of attacks. Such detailed planning and

training required key ISIS experts, who

would have kept the bombers motivated,

and kept control over their thought

fight frontal battles with security forces and

supportive militia. This trend continued upto

March 2019 when it lost its last bastion in

Since August 2014, ISIS has chosen to

processes and activities, till the final act.

However, a small group like the National

the credibility of it being an ISIS attack.

The group chose Sri Lanka carefully — a

managed to evict ISIS completely.

Less than a month after the declaration

"The best candidate (for US President) will understand the urgency of restoring U.S. leadership throughout the world, in respectful concert with democratic allies from Mexico and Canada to Japan and South Korea to India and Europe."

Aresurgence

foretold

Since its defeat in Syria, ISIS has been updating its

strategy. Terror through local proxies, as in Sri

Lanka, is part of its evolving modus operandi

New era, old scars

Japan switches from Heisei to the new Reiwa era, but old cultural and political faultlines remain



KEVIN RAFFERTY

JAPAN IS MAKING much fuss, including an unprecedented 10 consecutive days of holiday, over the end of the Heisei era and the beginning of Reiwa on May 1, as Emperor Akihito abdicates in favour of his son, Crown Prince Naruhito.

For all the hype, and acres of newsprint and online space about the new emperor, and, prime minister Shinzo Abe's determination to milk the change for electoral advantage, any talk of a new era is largely wishful thinking.

Japan's old ghosts will continue to haunt it, and no political leader has shown a clue on how to frighten them away: Deep scars remain from war and defeat, the economy is sluggish, population decline is beginning to bite, Japan Inc — meaning the business and bureaucratic establishment — remains set in the post-war past; while politicians' horizons, with Abe leading the pack, get pushed further back.

Akihito deserves the praise heaped on him. He has shown himself as a caring father figure: In tough times, after a volcanic eruption, or earthquake, or nuclear meltdown, Akihito and Empress Michiko were quickly on the scene, bending to mourn, comfort and listen to the concerns of the devastated people in ways unthinkable before. Akihito has consistently displayed a common, relatable touch, absent in other Japanese leaders, especially politicians.

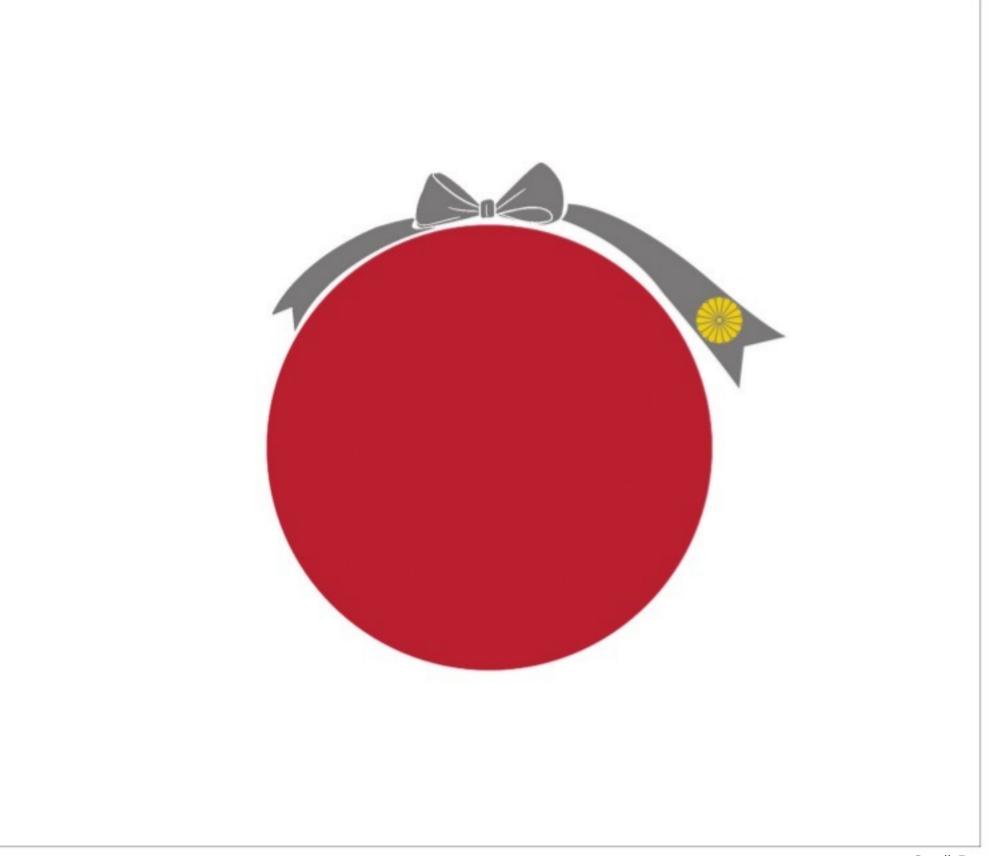
The question remains whether Naruhito can fill his father's shoes. He has the advantage of a good education, including two years at the Oxford University, where he did his own laundry, and flooded the room. He married a highly intelligent and personable woman, Masako Owada, herself educated at both Harvard and Oxford, who gave up a burgeoning career as a foreign ministry diplomat.

Naruhito pledged his love and protection for his princess. But his wife still suffered from crushing court protocols, retiring from public life several times because of nervous exhaustion — no doubt affected also by pressures to produce a male heir, unsuccessfully. Indeed, even their daughter, Princess Aiko, now 17, took days off from school in her early teens because of "fatigue". Despite their foreign experience, the new imperial couple have remained hidden — imprisoned, I am tempted to say — behind the court walls.

In Japan, there is always a big gap between form and substance. From May 1, the Heisei era will be gone and Reiwa year one will start. Many dates, from identity cards, government bills and even local train tickets are designated in terms of the imperial era — so a bus ticket issued on May 31, 2019, would be Reiwa 1, 05, 31; a local council bill for 2020 would be Reiwa 2; and someone born in 1961 was born in Showa 36, referring to the era of Akihito's father, Hirohito.

The emperor may control the calendar, but he is not even the head of state. According to Japan's constitution, he is the symbol of the state. Walter Bagehot famously said that the British monarch had limited but powerful powers, to consult, advise and warn the prime minister. Japan's emperor does not regularly meet Abe in the way that the British prime minister goes to Buckingham Palace every week, usually on a Wednesday at 6.30 pm, to inform the queen of what is happening.

Even the name Reiwa was chosen by the government with no input from the emperor, neither Akihito nor Naruhito. Reiwa has been officially translated as "beautiful harmony", and Abe boasted that the name came from an ancient Japanese anthology of poems, instead of drawing from old Chinese texts, as with previous era names. The "rei" character is some-



Suvajit Dey

times used to mean "command" or "order", which would fit Abe's philosophical vision.

In applauding the choice of Reiwa, Abe stressed the importance of traditional values. This reflects the crux of Japan's problems: At the very start of Reiwa, it is stuck with old attitudes while the world changes around it at whirlwind speed.

Critics concede that the Heisei era was marked by peace, but also by natural disasters and economic stagnation. Reiwa offers a new opportunity, they contend. Innovation should be a Reiwa goal, claimed one commentator. That's perhaps even nicer than the American belief in motherhood and apple pie, but wishing it isn't the same as achieving it.

Abe reigns supreme politically, but owes his dominance to an uneasy coalition of lukewarm reforming conservatives and traditional conservatives who thrive on pork barrel politics. This has led to awkward choices of ministerial colleagues, not least of which is Yoshitaka Sakurada, who recently resigned as Olympics minister: He had previously been a cybersecurity minister who could not use a computer, and, in 2016, he described Korea's comfort women — press-ganged by the Japanese Imperial Army into brothels for the troops — as "professional prostitutes".

Abe learned his politics literally at the knees of his grandfather, Nobusuke Kishi, who signed Japan's declaration of war, but escaped punishment to become a post-war prime minister. He still carries the baggage of war in his determination — despite popular opposition — to change Japan's "no war" constitution to legitimise its armed forces. This has also undermined Japan's repeated apologies for wartime atrocities, which China or Korea do not consider to be very genuine.

Internationally, Abe has put his faith in Donald Trump, who will be the first foreign leader to make a state visit to Reiwa Japan. But Abe's faith in his buddy Trump is risky. The US president is unhappy about Japan's trade surplus and is likely to turn on Abe to demand damaging changes in their trade relations.

Bias towards Trump's US also leaves Japan blindsided in dealing with China or responding to South Korea's initiatives with the North. Abe's own hardline views have made him come across as unreliable in Beijing, Seoul, not to speak of Pyongyang.

Japanophiles claim that economically and socially, the country is managing its relative decline. Unemployment is at a record low, and female participation in the labour force is as high as in the US. Abe has opened the door to large numbers of immigrants to fill labour shortages.

But this is a roseate view. If immigrants enter in the numbers required to sustain the economy, will they become confined to ghettos or be allowed to compete for top jobs — something Japanese women have failed at? Because Japan Inc resists women: There is no woman heading a Nikkei 225 company, only 6.5 per cent of women as directors in the top companies, no woman heading a major bank or university, and, only one woman in Abe's cabinet.

Japan Inc and innovation are almost polar opposites, even as leading companies like Olympus, Toshiba, Tokyo Electric Power, Kobe Steel, not to mention the car company Nissan, succumb to scandal, financial irregularities and poor management. The electronics company Sharp suffered the indignity of being bought by Hon Hai Precision (Foxconn) of Taiwan.

There's nothing magical that a new imperial reign can accomplish, especially as Abe and his conservatives refuse to allow women to sit on the Chrysanthemum throne: After the Crown Prince ascends the throne, from May, there will only be three male heirs, aged 53, 12 and 83. Innovation is hardly in evidence except on the cultural fringes, including manga.

But hey, Japan is the safest country in the world, even though it's living beyond its means. The water is warm and it's only getting hotter slowly, as the frog said, on the way to being boiled to death.

The writer is former editor of The Financial Express and has covered Asia as reporter and editor for 50 years Syria. It is unthinkable that the core ISIS leadership was not working on a strategy for its post-Caliphate phase, like the al Qaeda did after 9/11, anticipating the US-led response.

ISIS was steadily losing territories in Iraq and Syria since late-2014, yet it continued its global operations. Even though attacks in Western Europe were lower in number in 2018, leading experts are of the view that attempts to attack did not reduce. In May 2017, ISIS Wilayat in Philippines (ISP) gained control over the city of Marawi and was evicted only after five months of sustained military operations, with international support.

The UN, in its August 2018 report, assessed that ISIS had about 20,000 fighters in Syria and Iraq, including those "concealed in sympathetic communities and urban areas... the group's leadership has also decentralised to mitigate further losses, and is thus likely to survive in the two countries in the medium term, due to the ongoing conflict and complex stabilisation challenges."

It has been reported time and again that thousands of foreign fighters escaped from Syria and Iraq before the Caliphate fell. On the strength of the idea of the Caliphate, ISIS has already amassed huge wealth through oil, taxes, extortion, ransom, bank robbery, sale of artefacts, etc.

It is clear that for the post-Caliphate phase, ISIS has also changed its external and internal communications strategy, as its previous strategy has been effectively countered. The three media companies of ISIS, namely Al Bayan, Al Furqan and Amaq are active in circulating messages through pro-ISIS accounts. Key ISIS accounts are not as easily visible or approachable, and can only be joined by screened "invitation links". Hence, the challenge to detect the organisation's online presence is much greater for law enforcement agencies.

Unlike Bangladesh — where the ISIS claimed many attacks before the big attack in Dhaka (July 2016) — in Sri Lanka, in order to recruit fighters for the Caliphate, ISIS waited to mount attacks on a scale and at a time of its choosing to deliver a strong message to the Global Coalition. The pattern of ISIS attacks in Sri Lanka and Bangladesh, as well as other theatres, clearly indicate that ISIS is fashioning strategy and tactics on the basis of local complexities. Local groups appear to be following the diktat of the main group, with regard to selection of targets, timing and media messaging.

The April 21 attacks in Sri Lanka are surely not a one-off event for the region or the world. Like the al Qaeda, ISIS may now also make concerted efforts to use "front groups" to capture pockets of influence in conflict zones, while carrying out its signature global attacks, seemingly, at will.

The writer is an IPS officer. Views are personal

Japan's old ghosts will continue to haunt it, and no political leader has shown a clue on how to frighten them away: Deep scars remain from war and defeat, the economy is sluggish, population decline is beginning to bite, Japan Inc — meaning the business and bureaucratic establishment — remains set in the post-war past.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

FARMERS ARE RIGHT

THIS REFERS TO the editorial, 'Lay off' (IE, April 30). The case by PepsiCo against Gujarat potato farmers goes against all logic. The farmers have not breached any IPR. It's better that PepsiCo withdraws its case against the farmers at the earliest as it will yield no benefit to the company. The farmers are right in their stand on this case.

Sanjay Chawla, Amritsar

Elusive cure

THIS REFERS TO the article, 'A healthy signal' (IE, April 30). With the increase in life expectancy in the last few decades, providing affordable healthcare is a non-negotiable concern for the government. As the writers point out, there is a dearth of manpower not only for doctors but other technical staff like nurses and lab technicians. Some states like Jharkhand and Haryana have a very poor doctor-population ratio. The need of the hour is for the next government to think beyond PMJAY and not only create sustainable public healthcare infrastructure but ensure that they attract talent at all levels.

Bal Govind, Noida

UNREALISTIC LAWS

THIS REFERS TO the editorial, 'Regulator's role' (IE, April 30). The Supreme Court has given two edicts to the RBI recently. The first challenges the time-frame of 270 days under the insolvency law and now it has asked the central bank to reveal the details of defaulters. This highlights two things: First, the laws are at odds with each other as the RTI act enjoins the RBI to divulge defaulters' names but the

LETTER OF THE WEEK AWARD

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banking secrecy law prevents it from doing so. Second, 270 days is an unrealistic time-frame given the way the law operates in the country.

Deepak Singhal, Noida

CREDIT IS DUE

THIS REFERS TO the article, 'Newspeak on poverty' (IE, April 30). Since it assumed office at the Centre, the BJP has been finding faults with the Congressled UPA government's policies. But at the same time, it has tweaked some of them, given them new names and taken credit for them. The BJP and the Congress must be generous and give credit to each other's policies wherever due.

Tarsem Singh, Mahilpur

VIEW FROM THE RIGHT

THE EDITORIAL IN the *Organiser* on April 30

ATTACKS IN SRI LANKA

comments on the recent attacks on luxury hotels and churches in Sri Lanka and a mosque in New Zealand. It says that when "Bharat is finding its own way to fight statesponsored terrorism from across the border and trying its best to build a consensus on defining and tackling terrorists, a new debate is shaping up globally". It notes that

and trying its best to build a consensus on defining and tackling terrorists, a new debate is shaping up globally". It notes that "though the Islamic State has claimed responsibility for the attack, a local group called the National Thowheed Jamath is considered the main executor". "This is believed as the revenge attack in response to the Christchurch terror strike by a few white supremacists," it adds.

The editorial talks of the perpetrators of the attacks and notes that "first, we have to accept that this Jamaat does not consist of a senseless, directionless, poverty-stricken, uneducated youth. They are well-educated and well-to-do individuals, inspired by a fundamentalist religious thinking that essentially believes in converting the entire world to the same faith and there is a clear politico-religious ideology and modus operandi to this." "When a demographic jihadism is considered as a threat by some whites, then it is termed as Islamophobia, but at the same time, the kafirophobia that inspires so many radical organisations is not even named," the editorial argues.

editorial argues.

It talks of another aspect: "The Jamaat works unconsciously to support these radical elements. In the name of charity or religious brotherhood, these people always remain in ghettos of insecurity." It describes this "third layer" as "perhaps the most dangerous". It argues that the Jamaat will use legal instruments and intellectual might "to either protect terrorists or project them as poor, exploited human beings. Distorting history and discarding evidence to glorify blatant acts of terrorism has been a common practice".

AIRLINE GROUNDED

AN ARTICLE IN the *Organiser* on April 30 talks of the Jet Airways crisis. It notes "that after many incidents of defaults on meeting liabilities on many occasions, the bankruptcy of Jet Airways looks to be an utmost possibility. If the bids of May 10, 2019 are not accepted by lenders, they would move to

National Company Law Tribunal (NCLT) for insolvency proceedings under Insolvency and Bankruptcy Code (IBC) 2016. And coming back from that point would be almost impossible for Jet Airways". This would render "20,000 employees jobless" and also raise "question on the sustainability of already struggling aviation sector in India". The article talks of the Indian aviation industry's dilemma: The industry does not seem to be "sure which model (low cost or full fledged) of operation it should opt for". "Profits of a few profitable carriers are continuously falling and most are making huge losses and this clearly indicates that on overall aviation sector is not in good health," the article notes. It contends "that a careful look in the incidents over a few decades in the industry clearly indicate that the reasons for the problems in the aviation sector are not only limited to the operational strategies of these carriers but also the government's policies on fuel pricing and maintenance charges imposed by the Airport Authority of India". It goes on to ascribe the situation to a "regulatory failure to ensure good corporate governance practices."

"Moreover, the statuary committees seem to be not working efficiently. Independent directors failed to ring a bell. Ministry of Corporate Affairs and Ministry of Aviation along with AAI could not check whether its policies are working well for the industry or not. This needs to be addressed. Besides these, there is a need to check the way financing is done in the industry," the article notes.

Matter of Degree

AN ARTICLE IN *Organiser* on April 23 alleges that Congress president Rahul Gandhi's series of lies do not seem to end. It claims that after his lies on Rafale were exposed in the Supreme Court, "it has come to light that the president of the Indian National Congress has lied in his election affidavits filed both in Amethi and Wayanad Lok Sabha constituencies". It says that while "we wait" for "the returning officer at Amethi and the Election commission to act, it is also time that Rahul Gandhi comes clean on these charges".

A similar report in *Panchjanya* says that after Indira Gandhi, Rajiv Gandhi and Sonia Gandhi, questions have been raised on the educational qualification of Rahul Gandhi. The report says that Congress has become defensive on the issue of educational qualification of its president. It claims that Indian politicians misleading people about their educational qualification is nothing surprising. West Bengal CM Mamata Banerjee had once claimed that she has a doctorate from East Georgia University. "There is no such university across the world," the report claims.

Compiled by Lalmani Verma

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

THIS WORD MEANS -

THE CHRYSANTHEMUM THRONE & REIWA ERA

The world's oldest surviving hereditary monarchy, which has witnessed its first abdication in 200 years



In the final moments of his reign, Japan's Emperor Akihito (left) and Empress Michiko (second from left) with Crown Prince Naruhito (second from right) and Crown Princess Masako (right) at the abdication ceremony at the Imperial Palace in Tokyo on Tuesday. Japan Pool via AP

OM MARATHE

AT MIDNIGHT Tuesday — 8.30 pm IST — Japan's 59-year-old Prince Naruhito officially succeeded his father Akihito as Emperor, the 126th incumbent of the Chrysanthemum Throne, the world's oldest surviving hereditary monarchy. Akihito, 85, who became Emperor in 1989, had declared in a rare speech in 2016 that he feared his age and poor health would make it difficult for him to carry out his royal duties. In June 2017, Japan's Parliament passed a law to allow the Emperor to abdicate, and on December 1 that year, it was announced that the country would have a new Emperor on May 1, 2019. On Tuesday, Akihito became the first Emperor to step down in 200 years.

The Imperial Throne...

Legend has it that Japan's ruling dynasty was founded by the Emperor Jimmu, whose accession is traditionally dated to 660 BC. The Japanese Emperor is revered in the Shinto religion, in which the royal family is believed to have divine descent. Emperor Hirohito, the father of Akihito, renounced his divinity as part of Japan's surrender in World War II – and the 1947 Constitution identified the Emperor as "the Symbol of the State and the Unity of the People". While the Chrysanthemum Throne refers to the monarchy itself, it is also the name of an actual octagonal throne that sits in the Tokyo Imperial Palace, which is used on special occasions.

...And Imperial Era

The monarchy is an institution beloved of the Japanese people, and an integral part of their national identity. The reign of each Emperor is given a name, or gengo, which is used with the Western calendar to mark years. With the end of the reign of Akihito, the 'Heisei' era ended, and with the ascension of Naruhito to the Chrysanthemum Throne, the new 'Reiwa' era has begun in Japan. Reiwa is made of the characters *Rei* — that can mean either 'commands' or 'order', or 'auspicious' or 'good' — and *Wa*, meaning 'harmony', which is used in the word 'hei-wa', or 'peace'.

The name of the new era has been taken from an ancient anthology of Japanese poems, the Manyoshu, which dates back to the 8th century, and symbolises Japan's "profound public culture and long tradition", Prime Minister Shinzo Abe had said when the name was unveiled. The name of the new era is picked from a list that scholars and experts draw up. The name appears on coins, newspapers, driver's licences and official documents; it also stands for a certain period and what is seen as its defining spirit — such as "the 90s" or "the Victorian era", the BBC wrote in an explainer on the new Emperor and his

Emperor Akihito's gengo, Heisei, or 'achieving peace', followed the Showa era (1926-89), which translates as 'enlightened harmony'. Showa was preceded by the Taisho era (1912-26), or 'great righteousness', and the Meiji era (1868-1912), which translates as 'enlightened rule'.

SIMPLY PUT

Footprints in snow: myth, fact

Army has claimed large footprints it has seen are of the Yeti. The mythical creature has often been the subject of expedition reports and depicted in popular culture, but there is no scientific evidence that it exists.

AMITABH SINHA PUNE, APRIL 30

GIANT FOOTPRINTS 32 inches long and 15 inches wide — that is what an Indian Army team claims to have seen during a Himalayan expedition earlier this month.

The longest known feet of a human being, according to the Guinness Book of Records, measure 15.78 inches. The normal width of human feet is not more than two to four inches. The average size of feet of apes like the gorilla is between 10 and 14 inches.

This has led to the Indian Army concluding that the footprints they have observed — and whose photographs they have put out on the Internet — must be of the Yeti, a mythical snowman that is said to inhabit the high Himalayas. There is no scientific evidence thus far that a creature like a snowman — bipedal, hairy, five to eight feet tall — exists, but the Yeti remains a part of Himalayan folklore, making frequent appearances in popular culture, including in fiction and children's books like Tintin and in movies, where it is often depicted as a bigger version of a mountain gorilla.

Buying into the myth

The Indian Army is not the first to buy into the Yeti myth. For over a century, mountaineers, adventurers and scientists from the West have brought back tales of the Yeti from their expeditions in the Himalayas, having possibly heard these from their local guides for whom the Yeti is a matter of faith. Some of them reported to have actually sighted the beast, like N A Tombazi, a Greek photographer and geologist (some texts describe him as an Italian), who during an expedition in Sikkim in 1925 claimed to have seen the Yeti from about 200 to 300 yards.

"It walked upright and bent down occasionally to uproot a few rhododendrons. It looked dark against the snow and wore no clothes. Within a moment or so it had moved on to disappear in the undergrowth. I examined the footprints which in shape were like those of a man but only about 5 inches long. The five toes and the arch were distinctly recognisable, and the imprints were certainly those of a biped," he is reported to have written in his Account of Photographic Expedition to the Southern Glaciers of Kanchenjunga in the Sikkim Himalaya, published in 1925.

The footprints

There have been several reports of large footprints in the Himalayan snow, and described as being of the Yeti. The most famous of these were photographs of a long line of apparently fresh footprints taken by Sri Lanka-born mountaineer Eric Shipton and his colleague, Michael Ward, a surgeon, in a 1951 expedition. The footprints they saw were 13 inches long and 8 inches wide. Having no measuring equipment, Shipton took the photograph of the footprint alongside an ice-axe to bring an element of scale. Those photographs triggered immense excitement, were studied extensively and taken as strong evidence of the existence of the Yeti. They also became the genesis for many expeditions aimed solely at searching for the Yeti, many of which returned with hairs, bones and faeces claimed to be of the mythical creature.

In July 1986, the legendary mountaineer Reinhold Messner reported having seen "gigantic" footprints in Tibet. "It was absolutely distinct. Even the toes were unmistakable. To see that the imprint was fresh I touched the soil next to it. It was fresh," he was quoted as saying in Graham Hoyland's book Yeti: An



Photo tweeted by the Indian Army, which said it was of Yeti footprints and taken close to Makalu Base Camp (in Nepal) on April 9. "The elusive snowman has only been sighted at Makalu-Barun National Park in the past," the tweet said.



Abominable History.

A number of other eminent mountaineers, including Sir John Hunt and Sir Edmund Hillary, too have reported their encounters with the Yeti, mainly in the form of strange footprints that did not look like those of humans or any other known animal.

Scientific tests

These repeated accounts of footprints led to rigorous scientific analysis of various specimens brought back by the expeditions. Two of the most recent studies were published in the Proceedings of The Royal Society B, in 2014 and 2017.

The 2014 study, led by geneticist Bryan Sykes, now an emeritus fellow at the University of Oxford, studied 30 hair samples brought from different sites in the Himalayas. It said all samples except two could be matched with known species. But the study suggested that those two samples, which appeared to belong to a polar bear, could not be matched fully with any known species, thereby giving rise to speculation that an unknown animal could be lurking. However, upon rechecking the results, it was found that there was a mistake, and what appeared to be the genetic sequence of a new animal was in fact an incomplete sequence of known species.

The 2017 paper was by a group of re-

searchers led by Tianying Lan of Department of Biological Sciences at the University of Buffalo, New York, and described a comprehensive genetic survey of all available specimens collected from the Himalayas and claimed to belong to the Yeti. This group discounted the possibility of the existence of the Yeti from the available evidence.

"This study represents the most rigorous analysis to date of samples suspected to derive from anomalous or mythical 'hominid'like creatures, strongly suggesting that the biological basis of the Yeti legend is local brown and black bears," the study concluded.

Whose footprints, then?

Several explanations have been offered for the unusually large footprints that have been observed and photographed. Writing many years later, in 1997, about the photographs that he and Eric Shipton had taken in 1951, Michael Ward, the surgeon, said that these could be the footprints of human beings with unusually large and deformed feet.

"The attribution by some people of the footprints seen by Shipton and myself... to a Yeti seems untenable, as many years of investigation have revealed no evidence of any such animal. A more likely explanation is that they were those of a local inhabitant with cold-tolerant feet and possibly some congenital or acquired abnormality or foot infection. The possibility that they were formed by overlapping prints must be considered. Other possibilities are that the prints are those of a brown bear or Langur monkey, but no tail marks were seen. It is doubtful if this puzzle will ever be solved," he wrote.

Ward said he had personally come across people in the Himalayas who walked barefoot in snow and cited a couple of examples. In another article titled The Yeti Footprints:

Myth and Reality, he wrote "We will never know for certain what man or animal made the footprints in the Menlung basin in 1951, but I think that the above possible explanations (human deformed feet) are as plausible as any that have been put forward so far.

Many others have suggested that these could be the footprints of bears found in the region — Asiatic black bear, Tibetan brown bear and Himalayan brown bear. "A frequent comment about the prints is that they may have been made by a smaller, known, animal, whose tracks were subsequently distorted and enlarged by melting. This is no doubt true of some of the footprints found in the Himalayas..." wrote J A McNeely, E W Cronin and H B Emery in their 1973 article The Yeti - Not a Snowman.

The footprints reported by the Indian Army could be the biggest ones spotted till date, but possibly again be attributed to local bears.

"This is most certainly the Himalayan black bear, with overprints of hind foot on to front foot," said Daniel C Taylor, author of Yeti: The Ecology of a Mystery, told The Indian Express. "If only one footprint, this is the size of a dinosaur. So it has to be an overprint (overlap), almost certainly Ursus thibetanus (Asiatic black bear). Maybe a mother bear with a cub hopping behind," he said.

Charlotte Lindqvist, an associate professor at the University of Buffalo, and co-author of the 2017 genetic study, also suggested that these footprints could only be of bears "So far, all genetic evidence extracted from supposed yeti remains show that they came from bears that live on the region today. No research has proven the opposite and I am not at all convinced these footprints provide any new evidence to prove otherwise. I am sure there are many more plausible explanations for these footprints," she told The Indian Express.

"It is indeed curious that they seem to follow in a line, and where did these other prints on the picture come from? I believe experts have said before that bears can walk in their own footprints, possibly making the imprints look larger and possibly explaining such large footprints," she said.

TIP FOR READING LIST

- Yeti: The Ecology of a Mystery, by Daniel C Taylor
- My Quest for the Yeti, by Reinhold Messner ■ Yeti: An Abominable History, by Graham Hoyland
- Yetis, Sasquatch and Hairy Giants, by David Hatcher Childress

After the video, 3 questions about ISIS leader Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE NEW DELHI. APRIL 30

Is the video released by ISIS that claims to be a message from its leader, Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi, genuine?

The video was published by al-Furqan, the media wing of the Islamic State (or ISIS), late evening India time on Monday. Its authenticity has not been questioned. The SITE Intelligence Group, which tracks the online activity of ISIS and other jihadist groups, posted the video on its site, and said Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi had "reemerged in visual form" after his first video appearance in July 2014.

Al-Furgan "is part of ISIS's central media ministry and is responsible for putting out some of the most important ISIS releases to date... as well as audio recordings of the group's leadership", Rukmini Callimachi, who covers ISIS for The New York Times, posted on Twitter. The publication of the video was preceded by a build-up by ISISlinked channels that began on Sunday, promoting what would be the first video from al-Furgan Media Foundation since 2016.

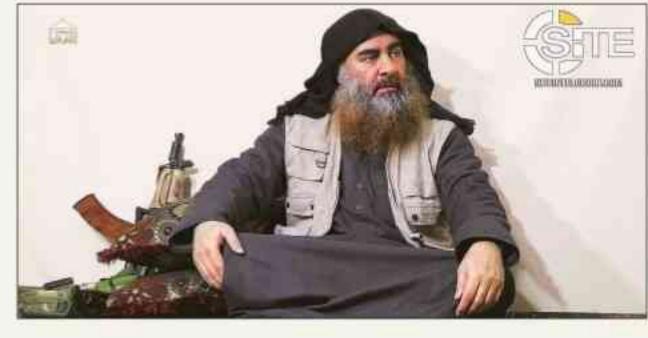
CNN quoted Col. Scott Rawlinson, spokesman for the US-led coalition fighting the ISIS, as saying they were "working to independently corroborate the validity of the

video... reportedly showing Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi". The man in the 18-minute video, sitting crosslegged on the floor, leaning on a cushion with an assault rifle to his right, strongly resembles al-Baghdadi, if a little heavier than the man seen delivering a sermon at the Great Mosque of al-Nuri in Mosul, Iraq, nearly five years ago in the only other known video of the ISIS leader. (Some experts say he appeared in a video in 2008 too, but was wearing a mask.) His beard is a lot more grey than in the 2014 video, and hennaed from about halfway to the tips. Experts agree that it is indeed, al-Baghdadi, who is believed to be around 47 years old now.

Why has it been released now? This is a key question because, as

Callimachi tweeted, "Baghdadi has always maintained an extreme security protocol, which explains how he's stayed alive since 2010, when he became emir of the Islamic State of Iraq." He has taken "the enormous risk of showing his current appearance to rally his followers", she suggested, "perhaps because the terror organization he leads is at an inflection point".

Al-Baghdadi described the attacks in Sri Lanka on Easter as revenge for the defeat in Al-Baghuz Fawqani in Syria, which was taken from ISIS in late March —the last remaining bit of territory of the Islamic proto-state he



Al-Baghdadi in image made from a video released by an Islamic State media group and distributed by the SITE Intelligence Group on Monday. SITE Intelligence Group via The New York Times

once ruled, as big as Great Britain at the height of its power in 2015, with millions of inhabitants across Iraq and Syria. "Our battle today is a battle of attrition, and we will prolong it for the enemy; they must know that the jihad will continue until Judgment Day," he said in a translation of the video provided by SITE.

According to experts quoted in multiple media reports, al-Baghdadi was forced to reveal himself in order to underline that the military defeat notwithstanding, ISIS continued to exist and he remained its emir, and to warn that its fighters would keep staging attacks indefinitely.

In June 2017, Russia claimed he had been killed in an airstrike near Ragga, Syria; two weeks later, the mostly reliable Syrian Observatory of Human Rights reported "confirmed information" that al-Baghdadi was dead. He has proved now that he is not dead, and not crippled. "Baghdadi has remained off the grid for

so long that his sudden appearance will very likely serve as both a morale boost for ISIS supporters and remaining militants and as a catalyst for individuals or small groups to act," *The New York Times* quoted Colin P Clarke, a senior fellow at the Soufan Center, a research organisation for global security issues, as saying. "He is essentially reasserting his leadership and suggesting that he sits atop the command-and-control network of what remains of the group, not only in Iraq and Syria, but more broadly, in its farflung franchises and affiliates."

The formal structure of ISIS has crumbled, but thousands of its fighters are believed to have gone underground — and the Sri Lanka attacks showed that its affiliates overseas can in 2019 kill double the number they killed in Paris in November 2015. In an interview given to *The Indian Express* soon after she finished her reporting assignment in Baghuz, Callimachi said: "...ISIS lives on and today it is much stronger than it was in 2011, when American troops pulled out of Iraq and the group was considered defeated. At that point, CIA estimated that the group had just 700 fighters. Now according to General Joseph Votel [the top US general overseeing military operations in the Middle East], it has tens of thousands of fighters, and

is present as a physical insurgency in Iraq and Syria and remains as deadly and as destructive a terrorist forces as it was."

Besides its thousands of fighters in Iraq and Syria, ISIS has a Khorasan province and provinces in the Philippines and West Africa, Callimachi said, and it was "strong and growing in Afghanistan". "These are groups that are robust on the ground and there is enough evidence to suggest that there is connective tissue between the affiliates and ISIS's core group in Iraq and Syria."

Where is al-Baghdadi now?

It is not known. He released an audio message in 2018, but his location was not clear. Multiple US agencies are hunting him, and some analysts believe he is hiding in the sparsely populated desert along the Iraq-Syria border, using no electronic devices that would give him away. Iraq's Prime Minister Adil Abdul-Mahdi al-Muntafiki was quoted as saying Tuesday that the video was recorded in a "remote area", but did not mention a country. It was unclear when the recording was done, but the parts that refer to recent events like the Sri Lanka attacks, the Israel elections, and the toppling of Omar al-Bashir in Sudan and Abdelaziz Bouteflika in Algeria, are on audio, not video, which suggests the video was made earlier, and newer audio portions were added subsequently.

DELHI THE HINDU WEDNESDAY, MAY 1, 2019

Transparency road

India and China should be guided by the Wuhan spirit, and not by differences over BRI

wo years after the Belt and Road Initiative forum was unveiled with fanfare, Chinese President Xi Jinping's address to the second BRI forum was a clear indication that Beijing is coming to terms with the pushback his ambitious project has received. Mr. Xi's speech to 37 heads of government and the UN Secretary General and the IMF Managing Director had many significant takeaways, including a stated commitment to "transparency and sustainability" of BRI projects, and to greater debt sustainability in the "financing model" of the Belt and Road under new guiding principles. Since 2017, India, the U.S. and other countries have been critical of the lack of transparency with which many of the BRI projects were negotiated with governments. Sri Lanka, the Maldives, and Malaysia had second thoughts on some of the infrastructure projects over fears of a "debt trap", and allegations of corruption in BRI projects became election issues. In April last year, European Union Ambassadors to Beijing issued a statement saying the BRI ran "counter" to their agenda for liberalising trade and "pushed the balance of power in favour of subsidised Chinese companies". After Central Asia and South East Asia, China's biggest foray is into Europe, and the criticism did not go unheeded by Beijing. China agreed to renegotiate terms on projects, reached out to regional organisations like the Arab and African forums and the EU, where Premier Li Keqiang pledged to "respect EU rules and standards" at a summit of "17+1" Central and Eastern European countries that are part of the BRI. It is hoped that China will take this understanding forward beyond Mr. Xi's speech and help build an infrastructure financing network that is equitable and transparent, especially for smaller states.

While Mr. Xi's words on transparency and inclusivity will be welcomed in India, they don't address New Delhi's main concern over the BRI, of sovereignty. India's objection to the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) is that it runs through parts of Pakistan Occupied Kashmir, and this has led to the Modi government's decision to stay away from the summit. India's other concern over the BRI's inroads in South Asia will also grow: at the summit, China listed the China-Myanmar Economic Corridor and the Nepal-China Trans-Himalayan Multi-dimensional Connectivity Network, and the CPEC as focus areas. Even so, India has abandoned its sharp rhetoric against the BRI this time compared to 2017, and China issued statements saying it would not allow the decision to affect the bilateral relationship. This was an indicator that both would rather be guided on the issue by the Wuhan spirit than by the deep differences they continue to have over the BRI project.

Off the mark

The Telangana exam fiasco necessitates a fresh review of all the papers

Then the school-leaving certificate remains the most important outcome for a student at the **V** end of a dozen years of study, governments have a duty to ensure that it is accurate. The serious errors in the Telangana State Board of Intermediate Education results this year, which have triggered 21 student suicides, show that policymakers and the bureaucracy can badly fail at meeting their responsibilities. A few hundred students were declared absent and passed, without their marks being displayed, and in other cases, as absent and failed, although the candidates had taken the examination. In one case, apparently caused by human error, the student's marks statement recorded a zero, when in fact she had scored 99. The State-appointed inquiry committee that went into the examinations issue has pointed to errors on the part of the company that was chosen to handle the results, notably absence of checks on the system's performance and sufficient trials of the software application to assess its robustness. Chief Minister K. Chandrasekhar Rao has ordered free reverification of the papers, but the government's major concern should be the restoration of public confidence. It should review all the papers and make them available to candidates for scrutiny without any fee.

Among the issues raised after the Telangana fiasco is whether the private agency selected to process the results could handle the scale of the operation. This year, over 8.7 lakh candidates took the Intermediate examination, and the inquiry has determined that there was no significant variation in the pass percentage in some of the difficult subjects, compared with 2018. But the agency contracted to do the processing had encountered problems with data even during the collection of fees, which should have led to rigorous scrutiny of the technology. There was also a lack of understanding among examiners, since some errors were traced to wrong entries in machine-readable forms. Independent verification, review of results and future preparedness are now being pursued, but many families have lost loved ones and others have been deeply traumatised. It is imperative that all school boards learn from Telangana's mistakes. The tragic consequence of examination muddles is a spate of student suicides. This distressing annual phenomenon is witnessed in many States, but governments have not addressed it with any degree of alarm. Students should be counselled at school that marks in the final examination are not the sole determinants of success. Policymakers should follow up such an assurance by creating more opportunities for all youth to acquire life-building skills that match their aptitude. Such counselling can also help parents, who view school-leaving marks as the make-or-break numbers for a child. A proper examination is important, but in a diversified, growing economy, sound learning and job skills hold the key to securing the future.

An employment-oriented economic policy

In the heated debate on jobs, the crucial link between macroeconomic policy and unemployment has not been flagged



PULAPRE BALAKRISHNAN

nnumerable tasks with respect to the economy await the win-Iner of the parliamentary elections now under way, but two may be mentioned and they are connected. The first is to review the conduct of macroeconomic policv. Though it must come across as arcane, this is an element of public policy that makes a difference to whether we enjoy economic security or not. This brings up the second task for the winner, namely employment generation.

The macroeconomic policy pursued in the past five years needs overhauling. The government has continued with fiscal consolidation, or shrinking the deficit, while mandating the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) to exclusively target inflation leaving aside all other considerations. This has contracted demand. That high fiscal deficits and high inflation per se can never be good for an economy does not justify a permanently tight macroeconomic stance. The rationale given for one is that it is conducive to private investment, said to be shy of fiscal deficits and held back by inflation. Both the deficit and inflation have trended downward in the past five years, yet investment as a share of national income has remained frozen.

Inflation targeting

Now, while fiscal consolidation was something the Narendra Modi government had inherited, it has taken credit for having moved India onto the path of 'inflation targeting'. Arguably though, India has seen a virtual inflation targeting since 2013 when the policies of

the RBI became more closely aligned to the practices of central banks in western economies. Thus in 2013-14 the real policy rate saw a 🙎 positive swing of over four percentage points, and it has more or less remained there. Admittedly, at double digits, inflation had been high in 2012-13 but that could have been due to abnormal hikes in the procurement price and not due to runaway growth. However, as the theory underlying inflation targeting asserts that it reflects an overheating economy, an interest-rate hike is triggered. The high interest rate regime in place since 2013 could not but have had a negative impact on growth by raising the cost of capital to industry. The negative impact of a high policy rate may, however, have appeared elsewhere too.

Reviewing RBI's role

A regime of high interest rates can be bad not only for investment and thus for growth and employment – but also for financial stability. Sharp increases in interest rates can trigger distress. A tradeoff between low inflation and financial stability could emerge depending upon how the former was purchased. If low inflation is achieved via high interest rates it can trigger financial instability in two ways. The first is via the direct impact on the cost of financing in a floating interest-rate regime; a higher policy rate translating into a higher borrowing rate. Second, if rising interest lowers growth, revenue will grow more slowly for firms. Both these mechanisms can render once-sound projects unprofitable, leaving banks stressed. It appears that this did not find a place in the operating manual that goes with the 'modern monetary policy framework', with inflation targeting as its primary focus, instituted in India in 2015. That our concerns are not purely imaginary

is evident in the fact that there has been a growth of non-performing assets of banks even after a change in the method of classification first resulted in their surging in 2015. This feature along with the spectacular collapse of the giant Infrastructure Leasing and Financial Services Ltd (IL&FS) recently point to the need to review the role of the RBI.

Experience suggests that it must be tasked with far greater responsibility for maintaining financial stability while being granted wider powers. It goes without saying that the Finance Ministry and its nominees on the RBI Board should desist from insisting upon actions that could jeopardise financial stability in trying to quicken the economy. At the same time, the RBI's leadership may want to reflect on the mindset that leads to publicly lecturing the government of India on the fate of incurring the "wrath of financial markets". Whatever be the compulsions of securing the balance of payments, such a view privileges the interests of international finance capital over the public interest in a democracy. It also suggests that the movements in the financial markets are to be treated as the bellwether in economic policy-making. Actually, over the past 30 years, from Mexico to southeast Asia, financial markets can be seen to have been fickle, self-serving and capable of causing great harm as they switch base globally in search of profits

through speculation.

The entire gamut of macroeconomic policy in India needs rethinking. In the heated public debate on job creation that we have seen recently, the link between macroeconomic policy and unemployment has not been flagged. When policy holds back investment, and we have seen above that it can, the prospect for employment growth is weak. The conduct of macroeconomic policy in India in recent years has compromised the principle that its two arms of fiscal and monetary policy must be used in a countervailing matter if aggregate demand is not to be affected. Instead, for too long, macroeconomic policy in India has been contractionary across the board, impacting employment adversely.

Job creation Even as we shift towards macroeconomic policies that maintain the level of aggregate demand, we can assist the unemployed by strengthening the employment programme we already have, namely the Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme (MGNREGS). Three actions may be taken towards this end. First, there have been reports that though the budgetary allocation for the scheme may have increased, workers face delay in payment. This is unacceptable, especially in this digital era when beneficiary identification and money transfer are cheap and reliable. Second, as has been suggested, there is a case for extending the MGNREGS to urban India for there is unemployment there. Of course, some rationalisation of existing public expenditure would be needed to generate the fiscal space needed, but we may yet expect a positive sum outcome when this is done imaginatively.

However, as with macroeco-

nomic policies, a thorough review of how the MGNREGS works on the ground is necessary. In the context, we often find a reference to "asset creation". This is an important criterion but we need not rule out the provision of public services under the scheme. The point is to ensure that we have desirable outcomes beyond just the iob statistics. There is reason to believe that this matter is given no importance in the implementation of the scheme at present. An example would make this clear.

In Kerala, employment under the MGNREGS is also organised to clear the vegetation at the roadside. However, what at times is found to remain after the MGNREGS work team has left is the garbage that was earlier concealed by the undergrowth. The organised 'cleaning' expertly skirts the garbage unconscionably deposited at the roadside! This is more than just a matter of aesthetics and can be dangerous when, for instance, waste from abattoirs has been dumped in the shrubbery. It makes a mockery of publicly-funded programmes that they can leave us worse off, and speaks of the unaccountability that pervades so much of government intervention in the economy. But recognising the hazard opens up an opportunity for improvement. The MGNREGS should target the waste dotting our countryside, and when extended to urban India should aid municipal wastemanagement efforts. We would then have a cleaner environment and have at the same time created jobs. That would a fitting tribute to the man after whom the programme is named, one who had worked for a clean India much of his life.

Pulapre Balakrishnan is Professor of Ashoka University and Senior Fellow of

A Washington pipe dream

The American stance on Iranian oil exports could only cause mayhem in West Asia



.S. Secretary of State Mike Pompeo announced on April 22 that the United States would not issue any additional 'Significant Reduction Exceptions' to existing importers of Iranian oil who had received such exemptions last November. Mr. Pompeo declared that the objective was to bring Iranian oil exports to "zero". India, China and Turkey, the principal remaining oil importers from Iran, will feel the greatest impact of this policy, which will take effect on May 2.

The end of the waivers is expected to bring different responses from the main importers. China, one of the largest importers of Iranian oil, is likely to defy the American demand because as a great power and potential challenger to U.S. hegemony it will not want to be seen as bowing to American pressure. Furthermore, Beijing is firmly opposed to unilateral sanctions, as it fears that one day it may be subjected to similar

Turkey and Iran have overlapping strategic interests regarding Kurdish secessionism, the territorial integrity of Iraq, and shared antipathy towards Saudi Arabia.

Iran is the second largest supplier of energy to Turkey and a leading trading partner as well. Furthermore, Turkey's relations with the U.S. are currently rocky over U.S. support to the Syrian Kurdish militia, the YPG, that Ankara consid- ₽ ers a terrorist organisation because of its close relations with the secessionist PKK. The threat of American sanctions on Turkey following the latter's decision to buy S-400 missile defence systems from Russia has also contributed greatly to tensions between the two countries. Therefore, it is unlikely that Turkey will bend completely to American will although it may do so partially to placate its NATO ally.

Indian capitulation?

The American decision could not have come at a worse time for India with the country in the midst of a bitterly fought election campaign and policy makers focussed on the domestic scene. Nevertheless, the Indian response is expected to be the most weak-kneed of the three. New Delhi is likely to comply with American demands, as India's relations with the U.S. in the economic sphere are very important to it. The U.S. is India's largest trading partner and a leading source of foreign investment. It has become increasingly important in the strategic arena as well because of the convergence of American and Indian interests regarding containing China in the Indo-Pacific region. Moreover, the ci-



vil nuclear relationship with the U.S. is very important for India, as is American support for India's bid to enter the Nuclear Suppliers

However, compliance with the American diktat will not come without costs. India is heavily involved in building the Chabahar port in southern Iran. This port is expected to become a major access route for India not only to Iran but also to Afghanistan and Central Asia bypassing hostile Pakistani territory. Tehran is also important for New Delhi in the context of Afghanistan as both are unequivocally opposed to the Pakistan-supported Taliban returning to power even in a power-sharing arrangement. Furthermore, Iran shares India's antipathy toward Pakistan, which it considers Washington's proxy and Saudi Arabia's ally. India's decision to stop importing oil from Iran at America's behest could drive a wedge between New Delhi and Tehran that will be very difficult to

repair and cost India strategically. The most important question is whether Iran will capitulate to the American threat of cutting oil imports down to zero and accept Washington's demand to revise its position on issues the U.S. considers important. These include Tehran totally giving up its right to enrich uranium and closing down all nuclear facilities including those engaged in research for peaceful purposes. Additionally, it would entail Iran drastically curtailing if not completely eradicating its ballistic missile programme, and radically changing its West Asia policy to fall in line with American preferences in Syria, Iraq, Lebanon and

However, this appears to be a Washington pipe dream. Iran has stood up to unprecedented sanctions for four decades and remained unbowed. The current American policy of forcing Tehran to cut its oil exports to zero will only aid Iranian hardliners and end up with Tehran adopting an even more virulent anti-American posture, further impeding the realisation of American strategic objectives in the region.

A dark scenario

While this confrontationist policy may please Israel and Saudi Arabia, it can well become a prelude to another major war in West Asia. Pushed to the wall by its inability to export oil in sufficient quantities, Iran is likely to retaliate by withdrawing from the nuclear ac-

cord and resuming full-scale nuclear enrichment close to weapon grade-level. This could lead to either an American and/or Israeli air and missile strikes on Iran's nuclear facilities. Such attacks are bound to invite Iranian retaliation against American targets in Iraq, Syria, and Afghanistan and around the Gulf, either through proxies or directly. Iranian retribution is likely to include air strikes against Saudi and Emirati targets as well and concerted efforts to block the Straits of Hormuz.

The mayhem that this actionreaction phenomenon will cause in the region can be disastrous for West Asia and could seriously disrupt the flow of energy supplies from the Gulf through the narrow Straits of Hormuz. It is ironic that some of the authors of America's disastrous invasion of Iraq, such as National Security Adviser John Bolton, are also the masterminds behind the current American confrontationist policy towards Iran. If not reversed, such a strategy could well lead to another American misadventure in West Asia before which the tragic consequences of the Iraqi invasion, such as state failure and the boost to international terrorism, are likely to pale into insignificance.

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

Fourth phase As the general election moves to its last stages, one wonders what more is in store for the electorate: the ruling dispensation trying all the tricks of the trade to retain power and the Opposition trying hard to expose the BJP (Page 1, "Violence mars voting in Bengal, turnout up in fourth phase", April 30). Come May 23 and the world's largest democracy is sure to witness the results of one of the most keenly fought polls since Independence. The expectation of the people is for a government that will address serious and several basic issues whose solutions are still elusive, and not issues concerning religion. G.B. SIVANANDAM,

PM's comment The comments of the Prime

Minister while addressing

an election rally in Hooghly district, West Bengal, that "40 MLAs" of the Trinamool Congress "are in touch" with him and probably ready to crossover once the election results are out, are in bad taste ("Mamata has betrayed State: PM", April 30). Though nobody is naive enough to believe that political parties would always be practising Swach rajneeti, one cannot expect such a statement coming from the Prime Minister. While the BJP has had no reservations or hesitation in using horse trading and other backdoor manoeuvres to grab power, like most other parties would, it is unbecoming of a person of the PM's stature

subversions of democracy. Dr. D.V.G. SANKARARAO,

to publicly stamp his

approval on such

Telangana exam results What has happened in Telangana as a result of bungling in the Intermediate examination is inexcusable ("Students demand Minister's resignation over Inter fiasco" and "Student who scored 99 given zero", both April 30). A student has every right to expect a fair examination. Also, marking a student's answer sheet may be a ritual but it must be done fairly and correctly as it dictates a student's future. In Telangana, who will take responsibility for the mess? BEENA ANIL,

Chennai

Growing resistance The world needs a 'Project Manhattan' for antibiotics as the U.S. did when it was

working on nuclear

weapons ('Life page', "'Drug-resistant diseases could kill 10 million a year by 2050'," April 30). No new antibiotic has been developed over the past 30 years. Antibiotic use has to be balanced and wisely applied. Easy access to antibiotics that is prevalent in the country should be regulated. In this pharmacists and the medical fraternity can play a critical role. All eyes are on who bags the Longitude Prize, a £10m prize fund, ' which will reward a team of researchers who develop a point-of-care diagnostic test that will conserve antibiotics for future

generations and

revolutionise the delivery of global healthcare'. H.N. RAMAKRISHNA. Bengaluru

Chennai

Going EV India has a long way to go before it can be a part of the electric vehicle (EV) revolution. In addition to having good battery technology, which includes making the charged battery work longer, there is also the challenge of bringing 'charging' infrastructure in place. Subsidy is one element in this. India needs a comprehensive policy on EV, a mechanism for the together, and also for the private sector to participate. Funding aspects need to be taken care of. C.K. MOHAN,

As bibliophiles are aware, books for personal use are not liable to customs duty and come under the **General Exemption** Customs Tariff Act 1975. However, there are instances, where one has had to pay customs duty and taxes for books bought from overseas for personal use. Authorities, in this instance at the Bangalore Customs zone, pleaded helplessness and finally said the change is with effect from February, 2017. Two complaints, registered under the Public Grievances Portal and also with the Revenue Secretary. Government of India, have not been responded to. NAGESH HAVANUR,

MORE LETTERS ONLINE:

The RSS is at war with India's past

All it wants to do is to demolish secular India and the Gandhi-Nehru state to erect a Hindutva state



"Beyond a doubt, the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS) is the most powerful organisation in India today... Its pracharak (active preacher) Narendra Modi is now Prime Minister of India. Its stamp is evident in very many fields of national life," writes the leading constitutional expert and political analyst in his new book, The RSS: A Menace to India. The RSS is at war with India's past, he says, and is belittling three of the greatest builders of the Indian state, Ashoka, Akbar and Jawaharlal Nehru. "The poison" of Hindu right-wing communalism "has spread alarmingly," he says in the introduction, but points out that the "forces that spread it are not invincible. They can be defeated provided that those who oppose it are ready and equipped to meet the challenge at all levels... what is at stake is not only the Indian Dream. What is at stake is the soul of *India.*" *An excerpt:*

In March 2015, the Indian Council of Historical Research became the first of the learned institutions to be 'reconstituted' to suit the tastes of the saffron rulers.

A Hindu Rashtra

The RSS believed that its hour had arrived. Mohan Bhagwat [sarsanghchalak, or chief] said on February 9, 2015, that this was a "favourable time". He asserted that "the idea of Hinduism is the only idea in the world which brings all together... Hindustan is a Hindu Rashtra, which is a fact. We are going ahead with this (idea). All Hindus have to be organised to make this nation great. When our country will become great that will benefit the entire world." He was being modest; for the usual refrain was that a 'Hindu India' would be a Vishwaguru or a Jagadguru (world teacher). The world expected the RSS to lead. "The job of the organisation is to unite Hindus and this cannot be done through speeches alone. The time has come when the whole society wants the RSS, and has ex-



The RSS

A.G.Noorani

RSS workers in Mangaluru in 2016. •H.S. MANJUNATH

must grow in order to fulfil these expectations. We have to unite Hindu society, make it fearless, self-reliant and selfless."

The icon of the secular state

The RSS had every reason to be pleased with Modi's ventures, which were based on three fundamentals. First, wipe out the secular national consensus evolved since the 19th century by the leaders of the freedom movement such as Dadabhai Naoroji, Badruddin Tyabji and Surendranath Banerjea. It was also enunciated by Vallabhbhai Patel in his presidential address to the Congress in 1931 and by Maulana Azad in his presidential address in 1940 as a retort to the Muslim League's clamour for the Partition of India. Nehru faced the reaction thereafter. The tragic situation brought out the best in him and he emerged as the most articulate exponent of and the icon of the secular State.

Secondly, next only to Ashoka and Akbar, Nehru became a great builder of the Indian state. He won the nation's love and confidence and the world's admiration. But his concept of that state was that of a secular, democratic state based on a tolerant, pluralist society. This was in direct contradiction to the ideology of the RSS and its political progeny. He fought them tooth and nail. He is the one Congressman the RSS has always pectations from us. The organisation hated the most. On the Partition of a menace to India; and not only to its

The RSS has set before itself this, the second task - the destruction of the Gandhi-Nehru state after brainwashing the nation into acceptance of Hindutva. Soon after the 1989 elections, Jaswant Singh went about campaigning for an ideological "idolbreaking". Modi is at work on this ignoble venture.

Lastly, the RSS wants to eliminate the minorities, chiefly Muslims and Christians as minorities, and reduce them politically to being nonentities. Mobilise "the Hindu vote bank", denounce the "appeasement" of a "Muslim vote bank" and either eliminate all opposition parties ("Congress Mukt", Modi's ideal) or absorb them; the willing ones are too small and too contemptible to mention. The Sikhs are not overlooked. [K.S.] Sudarshan's characteristically Quixotic venture to Punjab earned him a loathing.

Sudarshan became RSS chief on March 10, 2000. He advised, "The Prime Minister should bring in economic advisers who believe in the swadeshi concept". He also demanded that the Constitution of India be scrapped. "This 'remake' of the British model in [sic] in 1935" should be replaced with one based on the "aspirations of the people". In drafting the present Constitution "Indian ethos and aspirations were not taken into account". He added that "the RSS did not expect the Review Committee appointed by the Government to do this [take a fresh look] as it has been asked not to alter the basic structure of the Constitution".

The RSS: A

Menace to India

LeftWord

Books

India, it wanted to establish a Hindu

State, Gandhi, Nehru and Patel op-

posed it. It fell to Nehru to expound

the ideal by word and deed. He did

so by a relentless campaign of edu-

cating the people and by building in-

stitutions cast in the secular mode.

He espoused the concept of a com-

posite culture of India. The former

Jana Sangh leaders accepted this ve-

ry concept in 1979, only to resile

The RSS and its creature the BJP want

to wipe out and demolish the secular

state and erect a Hindutva state

based on the fascist 'Leader' princi-

ple. It would be sustained by a socie-

ty from which religious tolerance is

banished as was done, one hopes

momentarily, in Gujarat before and

after the 2002 pogrom. This is 'The

Gujarat Model' which the RSS and its

pracharak Modi seek to replicate at

the Centre. Not only will India's de-

mocracy and secularism suffer, the

India which the nation loves and the

world admires will perish. The RSS is

from it a few years later.

The 'Gujarat model'

A.G. Noorani

On the same day, in his first address to RSS activists in Nagpur, Sudarshan said: "These non-Hindus are not foreigners but ex-Hindus; they are Indians but their faiths will have to be Indianised."

He attacked Gandhi as well as Nehru. "Even Gandhi blamed the Hindu community for creating an environment congenial to communal conflicts." He asserted that the "third phase in RSS history was marked by Jawaharlal Nehru's efforts to curb the organisation". The demolition of the Babri Masjid, he claimed on March 19, "has made Hindus all over the world proud".

Excerpted with permission from LeftWord

The battle for Sabarimala

The issues raised in Kerala this election were related not to matters of mortals but those relating to God



The will of the people of Kerala, more inscrutable than before, is safely sealed in rooms with extra security as demanded by the times. The long wait for the Lok Sabha election results will mark an anti-climax, with temples getting a break from the delirium of devotees. Offerings from candidates will quietly pour in, making it comfortable for temples to regenerate and repair the damage done. As activists leave the temples, devotees can return to their prayers in peace. The rhythms, the bells and the music will be heard again, without being immersed in political cacophony.

Embracing Hinduism

This is the first time that God and temple rituals came to the forefront as election issues in Kerala. Earlier, it was only entreaties and special prayers that marked the election process. The first signs of the change appeared when some of the communist conclaves featured Christ and Krishna, together with Karl Marx and Fidel Castro. The explanation was that divine teachings may have influenced communism, but that was the beginning of the efforts to end the monopoly of the BJP over Hinduism. Soon enough, every party began to create its own version of Hinduism to prove that the BJP version was extremist. Political parties began to embrace Hinduism of different varieties rather than alienate Hindus, many of whom were inclined towards the BJP.

A Supreme Court judgment on the longstanding issue of whether women between the ages of 10 and 50 should be allowed to enter the Sabarimala shrine caused a tremor in Kerala, though initially there was a general consensus that constitutional rights would eventually let women of all ages enter the temple. There were some issues about women being unable to remain pure in body and soul for the entire 41 day-period of penance because of menstruation. But the surprising insistence of the Kerala government on enforcing the decision without any concern for the safety or the convenience of the women pilgrims led to sharp differences over the Supreme Court verdict. Following the model of the Ram temple, which brought the BJP to power in Delhi, the highly polarised political parties took on the cause of the vast number of devotees, who wanted customs

and traditions to be protected. The strongest position was taken by the BJP, which espoused the view that young women should not enter and a review of the verdict should be sought. The Congress hesitated for a moment, but in keeping with its soft Hindutva agenda, supported the traditionalists. The government stood firm and turned Sabarimala into a battlefield, openly escorting activists to the sanctum sanctorum.

Gaining political mileage

As political postures developed around the issue, the Left parties pushed for a renaissance movement to reform outdated practices, while the powerful Nair Service Society sought protection of the faith by either reviewing the Supreme Court decision or by legislative action. The BJP supported the faithful and championed their cause, but stopped short of using its majority in the Lok Sabha to issue an ordinance to counter the decision of the Supreme Court. The Congress eventually came to the side of the believers. As a consequence of these developments, the Kerala government was seen as a renaissance group, while the others became champions of faith and rituals. Since the line between the BJP and the devotee groups was thin, the BJP got more political mileage out of the controversy than the others and, therefore, is expecting to open its parliamentary account in Kerala this time. The Congress also believes that it has gained popularity with the devotees. The Left believes that it too has gained on account of its government-sponsored renaissance, demonstrated by protests staged under its auspices by women.

Rise in number of voters

The vexatious issue on the day after the polling was the phenomenal rise in the number of voters compared to previous elections. Each side believes that more voters came to vote this time because of its own enhanced popularity. Obviously, the issues raised this time were not those of mortals, like unemployment and price rise, but those relating to God. Though the Chief Electoral Officer of the State had decreed that Lord Ayyappa's name should not be dragged into the campaign, the Sabarimala issue was on the minds of voters as they went to the polling booths. The description of Kerala as 'God's Own Country' was a mere tourist slogan once, but today political parties are banking on divine intervention to determine Kerala's

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SINGLE FILE

We are all similar

The neuroscience of Indianness and a case for unity

MADHURIKA SANKAR



We are living in an increasingly polarised world. When we draw lines in the sand to demarcate our sociocultural and religious identities, the consequences are violent. This is visible in the threats to liberal institutions, in mob lynchings, in suicide bombings, and in the building

of walls that would put ancient Chinese engineering to However, our self-identity has been scientifically proven

to have a strong biological basis and that contradicts the notion that, as human beings, we voluntarily choose certain behaviours over others.

In his fascinating book, The Man Who Wasn't There, Anil Ananthaswamy illustrates how when things go awry in the brain, we get a peek into the way certain neurobiological processes work. For instance, it seems so obvious to say, "I exist". But people who suffer from Cotard's Syndrome claim, "I don't exist." By understanding abnormal neurobiological underpinnings, we have gained an insight into the neuroscience of our notions of self-identity.

Neurologist-philosopher Gerhard Roth's words are profound: "Irrespective of its genetic endowment, a human baby growing up in Africa, Europe or Japan will become an African, a European or a Japanese... he will never acquire a full understanding of other cultures since the brain has passed through the narrow bottleneck of culturalization."

Indeed, cultural neuroscience is a cutting-edge area of scientific exploration, using highly sophisticated brainimaging tools such as fMRIs, which examine the neurobiological underpinnings of self-identity and how the culture we live in affects the neural pathways that dictate behaviour.

For example, when solving simple arithmetic problems, native English speakers engage the left perisylvian cortices areas that are typically involved in linguistic processing. However, native Chinese speakers show very little activation in this area. Instead, they show marked activation in a pre-motor association area. This demonstrates that the same behavioural outcome is accomplished by different brain pathways, depending on their cultural backgrounds.

Renowned psychoanalyst Sudhir Kakar examines the above biological phenomena through the lens of Indian identity in his book, The Indians, and posits that Indians, no matter which nook of the country they are from, share certain biologically predicated responses in thought and behaviour to the same stimuli.

The notion that we are more similar than different – whether Hindu, Muslim, Christian, forward or backward caste, rich or poor, local or from the diaspora – may elicit ire in some people. But where do socio-cultural assertions by an insular few stand in the face of larger forces - biologically-proven phenomena that, in a beautifully Socratic irony, have partial bases in the very cultures they stem from?

GAME OF THRONES - WEST BENGAL

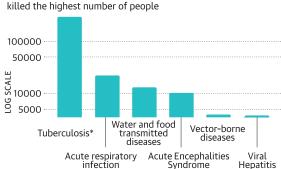
DATA POINT

Infectious killers

Tuberculosis claimed close to three lakh lives between 2012 and 2016, making it one of India's deadliest infectious diseases. Sikkim and Himachal Pradesh registered a high number of deaths per one lakh population. Though deaths due to TB have come down, casualties due to vectorborne diseases have been on the rise in recent years. By **Sumant Sen**

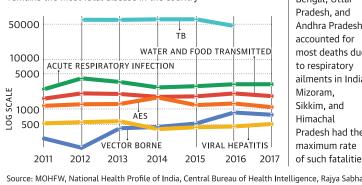
TB, a grave concern

The chart shows the infectious diseases which caused the most number of deaths in India from 2011 to 2017. Tuberculosis



Alarming trends

The chart shows the number of deaths due to diseases over the years. Although casualties due to TB reduced in 2016, it still remains the most fatal disease in the country



State-wise split the highest deaths per lakh of the population (66 per 1 lakh population) due to TB. The least deaths per 1 lakh population were recorded in Lakshwadeep Bihar, and Jammu & Kashmir

Breathing State/UT Total troubles While West Bengal, Uttar W.B. 4,243 Pradesh, and U.P. 3,842 Andhra Pradesh 2.064 accounted for M.P. most deaths due 1,358 to respiratory Delhi 1,315 ailments in India, Mizoram 302 Mizoram, Sikkim 127 Sikkim, and Himachal Himachal 1,233 Pradesh had the 480 maximum rate of such fatalities

24 19 16 12 Puducherry 172 12

*TB data from 2012 to 2016

NO, OF DEATHS PER 1 LAKH

Nicobar Islands

FROM The Mindu, ARCHIVES

FIFTY YEARS AGO MAY 1, 1969

Desai denies charge of Budget leakage

Mr. Morarji Desai, Deputy Prime Minister and Finance Minis ter, to-day [April 30, New Delhi] vehemently denied there had been any leakage of the budget proposals as alleged by the S.S.P. member, Mr. Madhu Limaye. Mr. Desai who was replying to the general discussion on the Finance Bill in the Lok Sabha did not agree that the levy on fertilizers would either discourage the use of fertilizers or hit the farmer. He also defended the stringent penalties for the failure to file Wealth Tax returns. Mr. Desai who was replying amidst interruptions from the Opposition benches, characterised Mr. Limaye's demand that the Customs department should appeal against the Appellate Board decision which dealt with the BOAC case as "fantastic". "My honourable friend still persists even though there is no case in it," he said.

A HUNDRED YEARS AGO MAY 1, 1919.

Behar Planters.

The General Secretary, Behar Planters' Association, has addressed a lengthy letter to the Government of India [as it is available in Calcutta] urging upon the latter the immediate necessity for taking effective measures to prevent any recurrence of recent outbreaks in the Punjab and other Provinces. After reviewing the action of the Government with regard to Mr. Gandhi's activities in Champaran, Knaira and other places the letter concludes: My Association wishes to impress upon the Government of India the fact that the responsibility for recent outbreaks and consequent loss of life must be shared alike by the instigators of agitations against the Rowlatt Bills and by the Government of India itself. It is impossible to believe either that the organisers of the Satyagraha movement did not realise the inevitable effect of their propaganda on the mobs and students of the towns in which they worked or that they would have gone to the lengths they did had they not had good reason to believe from previous experience that the Government would be unlikely to take any strong action against them.

POLL CALL

Dissolution of Lok Sabha

In India, the Lok Sabha has a five-year term, but can be dissolved earlier. According to Article 83(2) of the Constitution, completion of five years from the first day of its meeting amounts to dissolution of the Lower House. In this case, an election is held to elect the new Members of Parliament. The Lower House can also be dissolved earlier by the President on the advice of the Prime Minister. It can also be dissolved if the President feels that no viable government can be formed after the resignation or fall of a regime.

MORE ON THE WEB

Taking it on the chin like a woman

https://bit.ly/2DQHdSL

The writer is based in Chennai

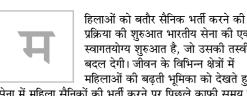


दुनिया के लोग शांति, स्थिरता, न्याय और सहयोग पाने की आकांक्षा रखते हैं...

...ट्रान डुक लुओंग, वियतनाम के राजनेता

अधिकारियों के बाद अब सेना में बतौर सैनिक महिलाओं के लिए दरवाजे खोलना एक बड़ा बदलाव है, जिससे आने वाले दिनों में सेना में महिलाओं की भूमिकाएं और बढ़ेंगी।

अब महिला सैनिक



प्रक्रिया की शुरुआत भारतीय सेना की एक स्वागतयोग्य शुरुआत है, जो उसकी तस्वीर बदल देगी। जीवन के विभिन्न क्षेत्रों में महिलाओं की बढ़ती भूमिका को देखते हुए

सेना में महिला सैनिकों की भर्ती करने पर पिछले काफी समय से विचार हो रहा था, जिसे रक्षा मंत्रालय ने विगत जनवरी में मंजूरी दी। जिस सैन्य पलिस या पीबीओआर (पर्सनल बिलो ऑफिसर रैंक) के पद पर महिलाओं की भर्ती प्रक्रिया शुरू हुई है, उनका मूल काम जवानों की आवाजाही और साज-ओ-सामान ढोने की प्रक्रिया को संचालित करना तथा सैन्य प्रतिष्ठानों और छावनी क्षेत्र की देखरेख करना है। महिला सैन्य पुलिस यह काम तो करेगी ही, उसके जिम्मे दुष्कर्म और छेड़छाड़ की जांच की जिम्मेदारी भी रहेगी। इसके अलावा जम्मू-कश्मीर तथा दूसरे अशांत क्षेत्रों में पत्थरबाज और

दूसरी आंदोलनकारी महिलाओं की तलाशी तथा गिरफ्तारी में सेना उनकी मदद ले सकेगी। खासकर जम्मू-कश्मीर में महिला सैनिकों की जरूरत पिछले काफी समय से महसूस की जा रही थी। उन सैन्य कॉलोनियों की देखरेख की जिम्मेदारी भी महिला सैनिकों के सुपुर्द किए जाने की बात की जा रही है, जहां सैनिकों के परिवार रहते हैं। साफ दिखाई देता है कि समय बदलने के साथ-साथ सेना में महिलाओं की भूमिका किस तरह बढ़ रही है। वर्ष 1993 में सेना ने पहली बार महिलाओं के लिए दरवाजे खोले थे. पर तब उनकी नियुक्ति मेडिकल, सिग्नल, शिक्षा, इंजीनियरिंग आदि क्षेत्र में सिर्फ अधिकारियों के तौर पर होती थी, वह भी शॉर्ट सर्विस कमीशन के जरिये। बाद में कुछ क्षेत्रों में इन्हें स्थायी कमीशन दिया गया। अब सैन्य पुलिस के रूप में महिलाओं की भर्ती की शुरुआत कर भारत जर्मनी, कनाडा, ऑस्ट्रेलिया, अमेरिका, ब्रिटेन आदि देशों की श्रेणी में आ गया है, जहां महिला सैनिक हैं। सेना के तीनों अंगों में महिलाओं



की मौजदगी बेशक अभी कम है: अभी थलसेना में 3.80 फीसदी. वायुसेना में 13.09 प्रतिशत और नौसेना में छह फीसदी महिलाएं हैं। पर वायुसेना और नौसेना में क्रमशः फाइटर पायलट और एसएससी वुमन पायलटों को प्रशिक्षण दिया जाने लगा है, तो सेना में साइबर सुरक्षा के अलावा युद्ध क्षेत्र के लिए महिला सैनिकों की भर्ती करने पर विचार किया जा रहा है, जो बताता है कि आने वाले दिनों में सेना में महिलाओं की भूमिका और बढ़ने वाली है।

जाति और आकांक्षाओं का मिश्रण

गठबंधन के भीतर निहित अंतर्विरोध ने उसे प्रभावी उपकरण बनने से रोक दिया, अन्यथा ऐसा हो सकता था। इसलिए गठबंधन भाजपा को बिहार में बेशक टक्कर दे रहा है, पर जैसी अपेक्षा पहले की गई थी, वह वैसा बेहतर प्रदर्शन करता नहीं दिख रहा है।



यपुर हवाई अङ्डे पर मेरी जांच करने वाली महिला सुरक्षाकर्मी से मैंने पूछा, राजस्थान में चुनाव प्रचार कैसा चल रहा है, तो उसने मुझे बताया कि वह बिहार से है।फिर मैंने उससे पूछा कि बिहार में चुनाव में क्या

कन्हैया कुमार जैसे युवा राजनीति में आएं। उसका जवाब सुनकर मैं हैरान रह गई। राजस्थान में तैनात एक बिहारी महिला पुलिसकर्मी अपने राज्य में नए किस्म का नेतृत्व चाहती है! क्या वह आकांक्षी थी, जो अपने अतीत से छुटकारा चाहती थी?

बेगुसराय निर्वाचन क्षेत्र में गांव की धूल भरी सड़कों पर लोग कन्हैया



नीरजा चौधरी वरिष्ठ पत्रकार

हो रहा है, तो उसने कहा कि हम अब चाहते हैं कि

की एक झलक पाने के लिए इंतजार

कर रहे थे, हालांकि उस ग्रामीण इलाके में अंधेरा होने लगा था। कन्हैया कुमार को उनके विरोधी 'टुकड़े-टुकड़े गैंग' का सदस्य बताते हैं। पर उनके पैतृक स्थान में ऐसा नहीं माना जाता। वहां उन्हें 'बेगूसराय का लाल' कहा जाता है। आंगनवाड़ी में काम करने वाली मां के बेटे ने अपनी अच्छी छवि बनाई है, चाहे लोग उन्हें वोट दें या नहीं। वह स्थानीय बनाम बाहरी का कार्ड खेल रहे हैं और बिना नाम लिए गिरिराज सिंह को बाहरी बताते हैं। इस बार बेगूसराय में भाजपा का चेहरा गिरिराज सिंह हैं, वह भी भूमिहार जाति से हैं। लेकिन लोग खुलेआम बताते हैं कि हम मोदी को वोट दे रहे हैं. गिरिराज तो गौण हैं। कन्हैया का महत्व उसके बिहारी जीन और भूमिहार डीएनए से आगे जाता है, और उनकी विचारधारा के आधार ने उन्हें राजनीतिक रूप से परिपक्व

बना दिया है। मुहावरेदार भाषण की उनकी कला उन्हें आम लोगों से जोड़ती है। वह एक मंदिर के किनारे रुक जाते हैं और वहां सड़क किनारे खड़ी महिलाओं के चरण छूकर उनसे आशीर्वाद मांगने लगते हैं। वह कभी नहीं कहते कि मुझे वोट दीजिए, लेकिन अपने संक्षिप्त भाषणों में मुद्दों की बात करते हैं। वह स्थानीय युवाओं के लिए आइकन बन गए हैं।

बिहार की राजनीति आज आकांक्षाओं और जाति की मजबूत पकड़ का



मिश्रण है, जिससे वफादारी बंधी हुई है और इससे लोगों को सुरक्षा मिलती है। इसलिए अगर उन्हें अपनी जाति भूमिहार (जिसकी संख्या चार लाख है) के वोट बड़ी संख्या में नहीं मिलेंगे, तो उसका लाभ भाजपा को हो सकता है। मुस्लिम मतदाता हालात को बहुत ध्यान से देख रहे हैं। अगर कन्हैया को भारी जनसमर्थन मिलता है, तो वे उन्हें ही वोट देंगे, अन्यथा राजद उनके लिए पसंदीदा विकल्प है। लेकिन कन्हैया कुमार को जितना अधिक समर्थन मिलेगा, उतना ही गठबंधन के समर्थन में कटौती की संभावना है और यह गिरिराज सिंह को जनसमर्थन पाने में सक्षम बना सकता है। कई बिहारियों का मानना है कि कन्हैया को गठबंधन का उम्मीदवार होना चाहिए था. तब वह भाजपा को अच्छी टक्कर दे सकते थे। तेजस्वी के उभार को देखते हुए लालू यादव नहीं चाहेंगे कि कोई दूसरा सितारा बिहार में उभरे, जो विपक्ष की जगह हथिया ले, जबकि तेजस्वी अच्छा काम कर रहे हैं और पार्टी पर अपनी पकड़ मजबूत बना रहे हैं।

और यहीं पर मुश्किल थी। गठबंधन के भीतर निहित अंतर्विरोध ने उसे प्रभावी उपकरण बनने से रोक दिया, अन्यथा ऐसा हो सकता था। इसलिए गठबंधन भाजपा को बिहार में बेशक टक्कर दे रहा है, पर जैसी अपेक्षा पहले की गई थी, वह वैसा बेहतर प्रदर्शन करता नहीं दिख रहा है। तेजस्वी राजनीतिक रूप से कुशाग्र हैं और त्वरित राजनीतिक प्रतिक्रिया देते हैं, लेकिन महागठबंधन भाजपा की तरह सुसंगठित नहीं है। लालू की अनुपस्थिति को 2019 के समर में याद किया जा रहा है।

महागठबंधन को मुस्लिम और यादवों (माई) का समर्थन मिल रहा है। 2014 में कुछ यादव भाजपा के पाले में चले गए थे, लेकिन इस बार वे लालू की पार्टी के पक्ष में मजबूती से खड़े दिखते हैं। हाल ही में राबड़ी देवी ने आरोप लगाया है कि उन्हें और उनके परिवार को जेल में लालू यादव से मिलने नहीं दिया जा रहा है और लालू को जहर देने की कोशिश की गई थी। इससे यादवों की भावना राजद के पक्ष में ही जाएगी।

बिहार में इस बार के चुनाव की कुंजी अत्यंत पिछड़ी जातियों (ईबीसी) के पास है। अलग-अलग रूप में उनकी संख्या कम है, लेकिन एकजुट होने पर वे राज्य की आबादी का 32 फीसदी हिस्सा हैं। वे किसी एक नेता के पक्ष में नहीं हैं। आज सभी पार्टियां उन्हें लुभाने में लगी हैं। और बिहार के इतिहास में पहली बार 11 अत्यंत पिछड़ी जाति के लोगों को टिकट

अपने माई समीकरण को विस्तार देने के लिए महागठबंधन ने इस बार उपेंद्र कुशवाहा की आरएलएसपी, मल्लाह समुदाय का समर्थन पाने के लिए मुकेश साहनी की वीआईपी पार्टी और मुसहरों का समर्थन पाने के लिए जीतनराम की हम पार्टी को शामिल किया है। इन पंक्तियों की लेखिका ने पिछले तीन दशक में बिहार में मुसहरों की जिंदगी में कोई बदलाव नहीं देखा है, हालांकि बिहार की विभिन्न सरकारों ने उनके मुद्दों का समर्थन किया है। लालू यादव के पंद्रह वर्षों के शासन के दौरान वे लालू के पक्ष में रहे, फिर जब नीतीश कुमार ने भाजपा के साथ सरकार बनाई, तो वे नीतीश के पाले में चले गए। यह सवर्ण जातियों, ईबीसी, महादिलत, पसमांदा मुस्लिमों का गठबंधन था, जिसने नीतीश को शासन करने में सक्षम बनाया। शराबबंदी की नीति लागू करके नीतीश कमार ने महिलाओं का समर्थन हासिल किया है। पर आज ईबीसी बंटा हुआ है और महादिलत भी। लालू यादव और वास्तव में जदूय ने, जब 2015 के विधानसभा चुनाव में वे साथ थे, तो आरक्षण का कार्ड खेला था और ओबीसी की आशंकाओं को गहरा किया था कि आरक्षण खत्म हो जाएगा। इस बार लालू के ही बेटे तेजस्वी ने आर्थिक रूप से कमजोर तबकों (ईडब्ल्यूएस) को दस फीसदी आरक्षण दिए जाने को अपना हथियार बनाया है और ओबीसी के उस डर को हवा दी है कि ईडब्ल्यूएस आरक्षण देना सरकार का आरक्षण को खत्म करने का पहला कदम है। यह विचार यादवों और छोटी पिछड़ी जातियों के समर्थन को मजबूत बना रहा है।

सतह पर कन्हैया कुमार जैसे युवा का किसी बड़ी पार्टी का हिस्सा बनना आसान है, पर दूसरी तरफ सीपीआई जैसी छोटी पार्टी का हिस्सा बनकर उन्हें मुदुदों की राजनीति करने के लिए ज्यादा स्वतंत्रता और लचीलापन मिल सकता है, जिन्हें वह दीर्घकाल की राजनीति का औजार बनाना चाहते हैं।



उम्मीद है इस बार वर्ल्ड चैंपियनशिप में मौका मिले



दोहा में 23वीं एशियाई एथलेटिक्स चैंपियनशिप में 15 सौ मीटर की दौड़ में स्वर्ण पदक जीतना मेरे लिए दोहरी खुशी का मौका है। एक तो मैं 2017 में मिला अपना खिताब बचाने में कामयाब हुई। इसके अलावा मैंने जकार्ता की हार का बदला लिया।



मेरा घर केरल के पलक्कड़ जिले के मुंदुर में है। हमारा गांव प्राकृतिक रूप से बेहद खूबसूरत है। यहां से 20 किलोमीटर की दूरी पर ही विशाल मलमपुझा बांध स्थित है। गांव के दूसरे बच्चों की तरह ही मेरा बचपन बीता है। हम चार भाई-बहन हैं, जिनमें मैं तीसरे नंबर की हूं। मेरे पिता उन्नीकृष्णन और मां वसंत कुमारी दोनों ही खेतिहर मजदूर हैं, लेकिन उन्होंने हम सब भाई-बहनों की परवरिश में अपनी ओर से कोई कसर नहीं छोड़ी है। आज मैं रेलवे में नौकरी कर रही हूं मगर कई बार ऐसे भी मौके आते थे, जब माता-पिता के पास कोई काम नहीं होता था और हमें बचा-खुचा खाना खाकर सोना पड़ता था। लेकिन इससे मेरा हौसला कमजोर नहीं पडा।

रोज 25 रुपये मिलते थे

मैंने स्कूल की पढ़ाई मुंदुर से ही की है। खेल की वजह से ही मुझे मुंदुर हायर सेकंडरी स्कूल में पढ़ने का अवसर मिला। यह डे बोर्डिंग स्कूल था, जहां मुझे केरल स्पोर्टर्स काउंसिल की ओर से रोजाना पच्चीस रुपये मिलते थे। इसके अलावा भारतीय खेल प्राधिकरण की ओर से छह सौ रूपये महीने भी मिलते थे, जिससे मैं पढ़ाई और खेल के बीच संतुलन बनाने में सफल हुई।

उपहार में मिली नैनो कार

वर्ष 2011 को मैं अपने जीवन का एक निर्णायक मोड़ कह सकती हूं। उस वर्ष नेशनल स्कूल गेम्स महाराष्ट्र के पुणे में हुए थे। इसमें मैंने 1,500 मीटर, 3,000 मीटर और 5,000 मीटर की दौड़ में स्वर्ण पदक और तीन किलोमीटर की क्रॉस कंट्री दौड़ में कांस्य पदक जीता था। उस वक्त मैं 16 वर्ष की थी। इसके अगले ही वर्ष 2012 में मैंने केरल स्टेट स्कूल गेम्स में 1,500 मीटर, 3,000 मीटर और 5,000 मीटर की दौड़ में स्वर्ण पदक जीता। अच्छे प्रदर्शन के साथ ही मुझ पर इसे कायम रखने का दबाव भी बढ़ता जा रहा था। 2013 में उत्तर प्रदेश के इटावा में और 2016 में रांची में हुए नेशनल स्कूल गेम्स में मैंने इन तीनों स्पर्धाओं के साथ ही तीन किलोमीटर क्रॉस कंट्री दौड़ में भी स्वर्ण पद जीतकर अपना प्रदर्शन बेहतर किया। मेरी इस सफलता पर उत्तर प्रदेश विधान परिषद ने नैनो कार देकर मुझे सम्मानित किया था।

2017 में लंदन में हुई वर्ल्ड एथलीट मीट में भारतीय दल के लिए मेरा चयन नहीं किया गया था। जबकि मैं अच्छा प्रदर्शन कर रही थी। मैंने एथलीट फेडरेशन ऑफ इंडिया (एएफआई) से संघर्ष किया। मुझे लोगों का समर्थन मिला। मैंने केरल हाई कोर्ट से अपने हक के लिए गुहार लगाई, जहां अदालत ने मेरे पक्ष में फैसला दिया। इसके बाद एएफआई ने इंटरनेशनल एसोसिएशन ऑफ एथलेटिक्स फेडरेशंस (आईएएएफ) से मुझे शामिल करने का आग्रह किया। लेकिन तब तक देर हो चुकी थी और आईएएएफ ने उनका आग्रह ठुकरा दिया और वर्ल्ड चैंपियनशिप में पदक जीतने का मेरा सपना अधूरा रह गया। एशियाई एथलेटिक्स चैंपियनशिप में मिली कामयाबी से मैं उत्साहित हूं, लेकिन मैं वर्ल्ड चैंपियनशिप को क्वालीफाई करने के कड़े मानक से थोड़ी दूर रह गई हूं। फिर भी मैं उम्मीद करती हूं कि 27 सितंबर से दोहा में शुरू होने वाले वर्ल्ड चैंपियनशिप में इस बार मुझे भारत का प्रतिनिधित्व करने का जरूर मौका मिलेगा।





कभी-कभी असुविधाएं भी दिखाती हैं नई राह

मेरा जन्म एक बड़े व्यावसायिक परिवार में हुआ। फार्मोसा प्लास्टिक समूह के नाम से मेरे पिता वांग युंग-चिंग ने पेट्रोकेमिकल्स और प्लास्टिक की कंपनी की स्थापना की। जब मैं मात्र पंद्रह वर्ष की थी, तो मुझे अपनी बहन के पास रहने के लिए लास एंजेलिस भेज दिया गया। हालांकि मैं ज्यादा दिन तक वहां नहीं रही, क्योंकि मेरी बहन के पति को डेट्रॉएट में एक नई नौकरी मिल गई। मेरी बहन ने मेरा दाखिला ऑकलैंड के सबसे अच्छे स्कल में करा दिया। स्कली शिक्षा के बाद मैं उच्च शिक्षा हासिल करने गई। हालांकि पियानो बजाने के शौक के चलते मैं बर्कले में संगीत में

अपना करियर बनाना चाहती थी, लेकिन कुछ कारणों से मैं ऐसा नहीं कर सकी और अर्थशास्त्र का अध्ययन करने लगी। यूनिवर्सिटी ऑफ कैलिफोर्निया से ग्रेजुएट करने के बाद मैंने अपने भाई की कंपनी फर्स्ट इंटरनेशनल कंप्यूटर जॉइन कर ली। वहां मुझे मदरबोर्ड बेचने के लिए यूरोप की यात्रा करनी पड़ती थी। बाद में मैंने एक नया पर्सनल कंप्यूटर ब्रांड लियो कंप्यूटर शुरू किया और उद्यम को बढ़ाने पर ध्यान केंद्रित किया। लेकिन दुर्भाग्य से लियो कंप्यूटर चला नहीं। लेकिन वह विफलता मेरे उत्साह को खत्म नहीं

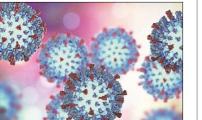


कर पाई। यूरोप की यात्रा के दौरान मुझे एहसास हुआ कि पर्सनल कंप्यूटर भारी और कहीं ले जाने में असुविधाजनक होते हैं। बस यहीं से मेरे मन में हाथ में पकड़े जाने लायक उपकरण का नया विचार सूझा, जिसे जेब में या ब्रीफकेस में ले जाया जा सके। मैंने अपना यह विचार एक करीबी दोस्त के साथ साझा किया। उसी समय माइक्रोसॉफ्ट के एक परिचित ने मुझसे संपर्क किया, जो विंडोज सीई ऑपरेटिंग सिस्टम का उपयोग करके हाथ में पकड़े जाने वाले उपकरण के निर्माण के लिए निर्माता तलाश रहा था। बस यह मुझे एक अवसर की तरह लगा और मैंने अपने उस दोस्त के साथ एचटीसी कंपनी की शुरुआत की। पहले हमने लैपटॉप बनाया लेकिन वह उतना नहीं चला, लेकिन हमारे पास पहले से एक और योजना तैयार थी। हमने अन्य कंपनियों के साथ भागीदारी करके मोबाइल फोन बनाया। और इस बार हमारा आइंडिया काम कर गया। लेकिन मैं यहीं रुकने वाली नहीं थी। मैं स्मार्टफोन के बाजार में एचटीसी को एक अग्रणी ब्रांड बनाना चाहती थी। और काफी संघर्ष करने के बाद ज्यादा पूंजी लगाकर हमने अपना स्मार्ट फोन बाजार में उतारा। फिर तो जो हुआ, वह इतिहास है।

मन में कुछ कर गुजरने की लगन हो और संकल्प दृढ़ रहे, तो एक न एक दिन सफलता जरूर मिलती है।

सी साल बाद एलिस का मूल्यांकन घुमती तस्वीरों के दौर में फ्रेंच महिला फिल्मकार एलिस

गाई ने ज्वलंत विषयों पर फिल्में बनाई थीं।



खसरे का प्रकोप

डब्ल्यूएचओ के अनुसार दुनिया में खसरे से पीड़ित देशों में भारत तीसरे स्थान पर है।

अमेरिका में एक बार फिर से खसरे का प्रकोप दिखने लगा है। यह चौंकाने वाला है, क्योंकि इस रोग को वहां पर 2000 में देशव्यापी रूप से समाप्त कर देने की घोषणा कर दी गई थी। राज्य और स्थानीय स्वास्थ्य विभागों के आंकड़ों के मुताबिक इस साल 695 से ज्यादा मामले सामने आए हैं। इससे पहले 2014 में आई रिपोर्ट में इन मामलों की संख्या ६६७ थी। खसरा वायुजनित रोग है, जो

विशेष रूप से मोर्बिलीवायरस के जीन्स पैरामिक्सोवायरस से उत्पन्न होता है। इसके वायरस खांसी, छींक व सांस लेने के दौरान फैलते हैं। ऐसे लोग जो संक्रमित व्यक्ति के आसपास रहते हैं और जिनमें रोग प्रतिरोधक क्षमता कम होती है. वे इसकी चपेट में जल्दी आ जाते हैं। यह संक्रमण औसतन 14 दिनों तक प्रभावी रहता है। इससे संक्रमित व्यक्ति को बुखार, खांसी, बहती हुई नाक, लाल आंखें और एक सामान्यीकृत चकत्ते के साथ 2-4 दिन पहले से दाने निकलने की शुरुआत हो जाती है, और अगले 2-5 दिनों तक इससे संक्रमित रहता है। वर्ष 1912 में अमेरिका की यह राष्ट्रीय

बीमारी बन गई। अमेरिका में इसकी चपेट में आकर मरने वालों की संख्या प्रतिवर्ष छह हजार तक पहुंच गई थी। कई शोध के बाद 1960 के दशक में, वे उस वायरस को एक टीके में बदलने में सक्षम हो गए। डब्ल्यूएचओ के मुताबिक 2019 में दुनिया भर में खसरे के मामलों में वृद्धि हुई है। जनवरी से अप्रैल के बीच भारत में इसके 7,246 मामले सामने आए हैं।

न्यूयॉर्क टाइम्स के लिए एलिजाबेथ व्हिजमैन जब आप क्लासिक फिल्मों के दिग्गजों के नाम पर

विचार करते हैं. तब आपके दिमाग में किसका नाम आता है? इतना तय है कि फ्रेंच फिल्मकार एलिस गाई ब्लेक का नाम उसमें नहीं होगा, जो शुरुआती फिल्मकार थीं। हाल तक एलिस का जिक्र ज्यादातर फुटनोट में होता था: पहली महिला फिल्म निर्माता के तौर पर उन्हें याद तो किया जाता था, पर एक प्रभावी फिल्मकार के रूप में उनके महत्वपूर्ण योगदान की अनदेखी कर दी जाती थी। जबकि 1896 में अपनी फिल्म यात्रा की शुरुआत करने के बाद दृश्यबंध तथा विषयवस्तु की सीमा का निरंतर अतिक्रमण करते हुए उन्होंने लगभग 1,000 फिल्में बनाईं। फिल्मों में उन्होंने ध्वनि, रंग और विशेष प्रभाव के क्षेत्र में प्रयोग किए, तो लिंग, नस्ल और वर्ग की खोज की। उन्होंने सर्गेई आइसेंस्टाइन और अल्फ्रेड हिचकॉक जैसे भविष्य के फिल्म दिगाजों को प्रेरित भी किया।

अब हॉलीवुड में महिलाओं की भूमिका का व्यापक मूल्यांकन करने के क्रम में उनकी विरासत को फिर से खंगाला जा रहा है। इसी सप्ताहांत में



रिलीज हो रही पामेला ग्रीन की नई डॉक्यूमेंटरी, बी नेचुरल : द अनटोल्ड स्टोरी ऑफ एलिस गाई ब्लेक उस महान फिल्मकार द्वारा आखिरी फिल्म बनाने के लगभग सौ साल बाद उनका नए सिरे से मूल्यांकन करती है। ग्रीन कहती हैं कि वर्ष 2000 में उन्होंने सुसान तथा क्रिस्टोफर कोच की टीवी डॉक्यूमेंटरी, रील मॉडल्स में एलिस गाई का नाम सुना। 'मैं उनका काम देखकर हैरान रह गईं। मुझे आश्चर्य होता है कि प्रारंभिक दौर की इतनी अच्छी फिल्मकार होने के

बावजूद उनका नाम लोगों की जुबान पर क्यों नहीं है', ग्रीन कहती हैं। 'लंबे समय से यह धारणा बनी हुई है कि फिल्म निर्माण पुरुषों का काम है। इस सोच अनेक महिला फिल्मकारों का अवमुल्यन किया है, एलिस गाई का तो इससे भारी नुकसान हुआ है,' फिल्म इतिहासकार शैली स्टांप कहती हैं।

वर्ष 1873 में पैदा हुईं एलिस गाई की मां फ्रेंच थीं, जबकि पिता एक बौद्धिक थे, जो फ्रेंच थे, पर चिली के वैलपराइसो और सैंटियागो में उनकी किताब की दो दुकानें थीं। जब एलिस गर्भ में थीं, तब उनकी मां ने चिली से नाव से फ्रांस जाने का फैसला किया, ताकि उनकी बेटी फ्रांस में पैदा हो। फ्रांस में रहते हुए पढ़ाई पूरी करने के बाद एलिस लिइन गोमोन्ट के दफ्तर में स्टेनोग्राफर बन गईं।। गोमोन्ट और ल्यूमेयर बंधु तब घूमती तस्वीरें बनाने और उनके प्रदर्शन में व्यस्त थे। पर एलिस को सिर्फ दृश्यांकन पसंद नहीं आए। उन्होंने गोमोन्ट से गुजारिश की कि वह एक फिल्म के कुछ दृश्यों की कहानी लिखना चाहती हैं। और यहीं से उनका जीवन बदल गया। उन्होंने स्त्री-पुरुष के दोहरेपन पर कॉमेडी फिल्म बनाई, तो रंगभेद के खिलाफ भी कदम उठाए। चौरानबे साल की उम्र में उनकी मृत्यु हुई-यानी उन्होंने अपने जीवन काल में ही अपनी लंबी उपेक्षा देखी। बी नेचुरल की कार्यकारी निर्माता जुडी फोस्टर कहती हैं, 'एलिस के जीवन को खोज निकालना एक उत्सव जैसा है। काश, आज वह



इस हफ्ते के शब्द

योगेंद्र पुराणिक जापान में विधानसभा का चुनाव जीतकर ४१ वर्ष के र्योगेंद्र पुराणिक ऐसा करने करने वाले पहले भारतवंशी बन गए हैं।



स्टैन (STAN) इस शब्द को मरियम-वेबस्टर डिक्शनरी में शामिल किया गया है। इसका मतलब होता है, अत्यधिक उत्साही और समर्पित प्रशंसक।



ट्रांसजेंडरों की गिरफ्तारी

73 हजार

से ज्यादा ट्रांसजेंडरों को बीते चार साल में रेल यात्रियों से जबरन वसूली करने के कारण रेलवे सुरक्षा बलों ने गिरफ्तार किया।

बिज़नेस स्टैंडर्ड वर्ष 12 अंक 60

डिजिटल भविष्य

और हकीकत से दर के गलत आख्यानों को बढ़ावा देने के लिए याद रखे जाने लायक इस चुनावी मौसम में मोदी सरकार डिजिटल रूप से संबद्ध देश की दिशा में महत्त्वपर्ण प्रगति का दावा कर सकती है। मैकिंजी ग्लोबल इंस्टीट्यट की तरफ से तैयार रिपोर्ट 'डिजिटल इंडिया: टेक्नोलॉजी टू ट्रांसफॉर्म ए कनेक्टेड नेशन' में यह तथ्य उभरकर सामने आता है।

इंटरनेट उपभोक्ताओं की संख्या के लिहाज से भारत (56 करोड़) अब चीन के बाद दूसरे

कई मायनों में काफी निचले स्तर पर आ चुके स्थान पर आ चुका है। वर्ष 2018 में भारत के स्मार्टफोन धारकों ने 12.3 अरब ऐप डाउनलोड किए थे। किसी भी देश की तुलना में सोशल मीडिया पर सबसे ज्यादा वक्त भारतीय ही बिताते हैं। इंडोनेशिया को छोडकर किसी भी अन्य देश की तुलना में भारत सबसे तेजी से डिजिटल हो रहा है और अब भी इसके विस्तार की काफी गंजाइश है। प्रति व्यक्ति आय के तुलनात्मक स्तर पर कोई भी देश इन पैमानों पर समान दायरे में नहीं दिखता है।

यह स्थिति किस वजह से आई है ? अगर

इसका संक्षिप्त जवाब दें तो आधार, जियो, जनधन और वस्तु एवं सेवा कर (जीएसटी) इसके लिए जिम्मेदार हैं। जीएसटी लागु होने के बाद 1.03 करोड़ कारोबारी इकाइयां कर-भगतान के डिजिटल मंच पर आ चकी हैं। मैकिंजी रिपोर्ट कुछ सुविदित तथ्यों का भी जिक्र करती है। मसलन, इंटरनेट डेटा की लागत वर्ष 2013 के बाद से 95 फीसदी कम हो चुकी है जबकि फिक्स्ड लाइन पर डाउनलोड की रफ्तार चौगुनी हो चुकी है। इसके चलते प्रति व्यक्ति मोबाइल डेटा उपभोग सालाना 152 फीसदी बढ चुका है। इसके अलावा अपेक्षाकृत गरीब राज्य भी संपन्न राज्यों के साथ डिजिटल खाई पाटने में लगे हए हैं। अकेले उत्तर प्रदेश की ऑनलाइन आबादी करीब 3.6 करोड बढी है। कस्बों एवं गांवों में रहने वाले बेहद सामान्य लोग भी अब ऑनलाइन प्लेटफॉर्म पर जाकर खबरें देखते हैं, दोस्तों से बात करते हैं, पैसों का लेनदेन करते हैं, फिल्में देखते हैं और खरीदारी करते हैं। इन सभी बातों को एक साथ रखकर देखें तो यह किसी कायाकल्प से कम नहीं है। मोदी सरकार को इस शब्द का इस्तेमाल कई मायनों में पसंद है।

नौकरियों समेत कई क्षेत्रों पर डिजिटलीकरण के वृहद-आर्थिक असर होते हैं। लेकिन रिपोर्ट में कहा गया है कि डिजिटल अर्थव्यवस्था में वर्ष 2025 तक 6-6.5

करोड़ रोजगार अवसर पैदा होंगे जो इसकी वजह से संकट में आए करीब 4-4.5 करोड नौकरियों से 2 करोड अधिक ही होगा। कृषि कार्यों में इस्तेमाल होने वाले उत्पादों का प्रभावी उपयोग होने से खेती की लागत 20 फीसदी तक कम हो सकती है और ऑनलाइन नेटवर्क पर अधिक मूल्य मिलने से कृषि आय 15 फीसदी तक बढ सकती है। फसल कटाई के अवशिष्ट में भी काफी कमी लाई जा सकती है। रखरखाव पर लागत जीडीपी

की 14 फीसदी है जो अन्य देशों की तुलना में करीब दोगनी है लेकिन टकों की आवाजाही की प्रभावी निगरानी से इस अंतराल को पाटा जा सकता है। डिजिटल प्रौद्योगिकी के इस्तेमाल से स्वास्थ्य मंत्रालय के अलावा शिक्षा क्षेत्र को भी काफी फायदा हो सकता है। वास्तव में.

डिजिटल तकनीक को साप्ताहिक मंथन अपनाने के मामले में बडे एवं छोटे कारोबारों के बीच

टी. एन. नाइनन

के फर्क को भी समय के साथ कम किया जा सकता है। जहां बडी कंपनियां कृत्रिम बुद्धिमत्ता (एआई) और इंटरनेट ऑफ थिंग्स (आईओटी) का अधिक लाभ ले पाएंगी. वहीं कनेक्टिविटी बेहतर होने और डेटा की कीमतें कम होने से यह फासला भी कम होता जाएगा।

हालांकि इनमें से कोई भी स्थिति अपने-आप नहीं पैदा होगी। मैकिंजी का कहना है कि सरकारों, कारोबार जगत और आम लोगों

को यह बदलाव आत्मसात करना होगा और डिजिटलीकरण की दिशा में आगे बढने के सबसे अच्छे तरीके तलाशने होंगे। मसलन, भूमि रिकॉर्ड और कारोबारी पारदर्शिता के लिए प्रयास करने होंगे। डिजिटलीकरण की इस धारा के कुछ पहलू अच्छे नहीं हैं। इनमें विषाक्त सोशल मीडिया और निजता का ह्रास शामिल हैं। इस नई दुनिया के नियम इतनी सावधानी से बनाने होंगे कि कारोबार को बंदी के कगार पर पहुंचने और राजनीतिक इस्तेमाल से रोका जा सके और नागरिकों को हिंसा की गतिविधियों से सुरक्षित किया जा सके।

इसके लिए लागत को कम करने और लाभ को अधिकतम करने की जरूरत है। फिर भी यह संदेश एकदम साफ है कि डिजिटलीकरण की संभावनाएं अगर अपरिहार्य नहीं तो इतनी अधिक लाभप्रद हैं कि इस नई हकीकत के मुताबिक ढलने में जो भी अवरोध बनेगा वह पीछे छूट जाएगा।



वित्तीय क्षेत्र का नियमन हो विवेकसंपन्न

वित्तीय क्षेत्र में सूक्ष्म और समझदारी के साथ नियमन बहुत अधिक आवश्यक हो चला है। इस संबंध में विस्तार से दृष्टि डाल रहे हैं **अजय शाह**

न दिनों हमें बैंकों, म्युचुअल फंड, गैर बैंकिंग वित्तीय कंपनियों (एनबीएफमी क्रांच अचल संपत्ति क्षेत्र में लगातार कठिनाइयों का सामना करना पड़ रहा है। ये सारी कठिनाइयां आपस में जुड़ी हुई हैं। इनके घटक आपस में अलग-अलग नहीं हैं। ऐसे में एक बंद वित्तीय नियामक ढांचे के लिए सूचनाएं जुटाना, मूलभूत कारणों का विश्लेषण करना और समस्याओं को हल करना काफी कठिन होता है।

नियामकों में समस्याओं को टालने की स्वाभाविक प्रवृत्ति होती है। हमें एफआरडीआई विधेयक, वित्तीय डेटा प्रबंधन केंद्र (एफडीएमसी) और वित्तीय स्थिरता एवं विकास परिषद (एफएसडीसी) में तकनीकी सचिवालय की आवश्यकता है। इन तीन घटकों के अभाव में हमें एक अनौपचारिक टीम की आवश्यकता है जो इन संस्थानों के काम का स्वतः अनुकरण करे।

चीजों और परिस्थितियों को देखने के नजरिये में अंतर को लेकर निरंतर तनाव की स्थिति बनी रहती है। इन दोनों नजरिये से हालात एकदम अलग-अलग नजर आते हैं। बीते कुछ दिनों में इस बात की आवश्यकता स्पष्ट हुई है कि देश के वित्तीय क्षेत्र की आवश्यकताओं को समग्रता में देखा जाए।

सक्ष्म और विवेकसंपन्न नियमन का काम वित्तीय कंपनियों की विफलता की संभावनाओं को सीमित करना। उदाहरण के एक दशक में 2 फीसदी से अधिक बैंक विफल नहीं हों। मोटे तौर पर बात करें तो इसका यही अर्थ हुआ कि एक दशक में देश में दो बड़े बैंक नाकाम हो सकते हैं। सूक्ष्म-विवेकसंपन्न नियमन ऐसे नियम बना सकता है जो बैंकों को अतिरिक्त जोखिम उठाने से रोकते हों। ऐसा करने से किसी भी बैंक की विफल होने की आशंका एक दशक में 2

म्युचुअल फंड के मामले में तो कंपनी के विफल होने की कोई आशंका नहीं है। सुक्ष्म विवेकी नियमन को लेकर सेबी की चिंता यह सुनिश्चित करने की है कि शुद्ध परिसंपत्ति मल्य (एनएवी) के बारे में हमेशा सही जानकारी दी जाए और प्रतिदान के वादे हमेशा पुरे किए जाएं।

फीसदी से अधिक नहीं होगी।

इन लक्ष्यों को प्राप्त करने के लिए सूक्ष्म विवेकसंपन्न नियमन, एक समय में किसी एक वित्तीय कंपनी के बारे में गंभीरतापूर्वक विचार करता है। नियामक को कारोबार की गहरी समझ होनी चाहिए और उसे ऐसे चुनिंदा हस्तक्षेप की भी जानकारी होनी चाहिए जो उसके लक्ष्य को हासिल करने में सहायक साबित हो। इस दौरान उत्पादों और प्रक्रियाओं के केंद्रीय नियोजन से बचा जाना चाहिए।

वित्तीय क्षेत्र में ऐसे सूक्ष्म और विवेकसंपन्न नियमन की आवश्यकता है। परंत यह व्यवस्थित सोच से अलग है। हमें हाल के वर्षों की कुछ घटनाओं पर नजर

लिए हमारा लक्ष्य यह भी हो सकता है कि डालनी चाहिए और यह देखना चाहिए कि वित्तीय तंत्र के विभिन्न घटकों ने किस तरह व्यवहार किया।

> गैर वित्तीय कंपनियों (अधोसंरचना एवं अचल संपत्ति) में ऋण का तनाव 2008 में उभरा। अगर शुरुआती दौर में दिवालिया प्रक्रिया अपनाई जाए तो समस्या हल हो सकती है लेकिन अगर ऐसा नहीं किया गया तो कर्ज की राशि बढती जाती है। कर्जदार के संकटग्रस्त होने के साथ ही पुराने कर्ज को चुकाने के लिए नए ऋण की आवश्यकता होती है। बैलेंस शीट बढ़ती जाती है और नए ऋण लेकर पुराने कर्ज चुकाए जाते हैं, इस प्रकार डिफॉल्ट को टाला जाता है। इससे यह सवाल उठता है कि आखिर नया कर्ज आ कहां से रहा है?

> कई वर्ष तक बैंक और आरबीआई ने समस्या से निजात पाने की कोशिश की। बैंकों ने कमजोर कर्जदारों को और अधिक ऋण दिया। जब तक बैंक इस अत्यधिक ऋण वितरण को लेकर सचेत हुए तब तक म्युचुअल फंड, एनबीएफसी और बॉन्ड बाजार के रूप में एक नया फंडिंग चैनल तैयार हो गया था। बीते एक वर्ष से यह चैनल भी कठिनाई में नजर आ रहा है। अब हमारे पास कर्जदारों का एक ऐसा समूह है जिसके पास पुराना ऋण चुकाने और नया हासिल करने का कोई तरीका नहीं बचा है। हमारे वित्तीय तंत्र में चार तनावग्रस्त घटक हैं। इनमें से तीन फीडबैक लूप है जहां कर्जदारों, अचल संपत्ति मल्यों, बॉन्ड बाजार,

म्युचुअल फंड, एनबीएफसी और बैंकों की समस्याएं एक दूसरे पर दबाव बना रही हैं।

उपरोक्त दो पैराग्राफ व्यवस्थित सोच को दर्शाते हैं। हमें वित्तीय व्यवस्था को एक उच्चस्तरीय दृष्टिकोण से देखना होगा और इन दबावों और इनके आपसी रिश्ते पर भी नजर डालनी होगी।

सक्ष्म विवेकसंपन्न स्टाफ दो वजह से ऐसा नहीं कर सकता। पहला सुक्ष्म विवेकसंपन्न नियामक का काम है किसी तय समय में फर्म की नाकामी का अनुमान लगाना। दुसरा, लिक्षत दर से परे फर्म की नाकामी वास्तव में इस नियमन की नाकामी है। सक्ष्म विवेकसंपन्न नियामक के मन में समस्याओं को छिपाने का पूर्वग्रह होता है।

इस सवाल का परीक्षण न्यायमुर्ति श्रीकृष्ण वित्तीय क्षेत्र विधायी सुधार आयोग (2011-2013) ने किया था। वित्तीय क्षेत्र में व्यवस्थित सोच मौद्रिक नीति के साथ तालमेल वाली नहीं है क्योंकि यह प्राथमिक रूप से वृहद अर्थव्यवस्था से संबंधित है। यानी कम और स्थिर मुद्रास्फीति से। वित्तीय क्षेत्र का व्यवस्थित सोच क्षेत्रवार वहद विवेकसंपन्न नियामकों की सोच से मेल नहीं खाता। उनका ध्यान एक समय में एक फर्म पर रहता है और उनके मन में कठिनाइयों को स्वीकार न करने का एक किस्म का पूर्वग्रह भी रहता है।

इसके चलते एफएसडीसी के रूप में एक परिषद का गठन हुआ। इस परिषद में वित्तीय नियामकों के विभिन्न चेयरमैन और वित्त मंत्री शामिल होंगे और इसे एक तकनीकी सचिवालय का समर्थन हासिल होगा। इसे व्यवस्थित सोच में विशेषज्ञता हासिल होगी। इसके पास एफडीएमसी के रूप में विस्तृत डेटाबेस भी होगा। इसके अलावा वित्तीय कंपनियों की दिवालिया प्रक्रिया के बारे में भी एक विचार था जिसे निस्तारण निगम को अंजाम देना है। इसे एफआरडीआई विधेयक में स्थान दिया गया है। गैर वित्तीय कंपनियों के लिए यह काम आईबीसी को करना है। आईबीसी के रूप में अब हमारे पास इन चार घटकों में से एक है। हाल के वर्षों में अगर हमारे पास अन्य उपाय होते तो हालात शायद अधिक बेहतर होते।

जब हम पलटकर 2000-2001 के वित्तीय संकट की ओर देखते हैं तो उसके प्रमुख कारक थे यूटीआई, बीएसई और कलकत्ता स्टॉक एक्सचेंज। उस वक्त एफएसडीसी या एफडीएमसी कहीं तस्वीर में भी नहीं थे। वित्तीय फर्म के निस्तारण के लिए एफआरडीआई विधेयक की आवश्यकता भविष्य की बात थी। यही कारण है कि संकट से निपटने के लिए वित्त मंत्रालय द्वारा गठित एक अनौपचारिक टीम की सहायता ली गई। इसमें एफएसडीसी, एफडीएमसी और आरसी के कुछ तत्त्व शामिल थे।

ऐसा रुख मौजूदा संदर्भ में भी कामयाब हो सकता है क्योंकि एफएसडीसी, एफडीएमसी और आरसी के निर्माण के लिए कम से कम तीन वर्ष का समय चाहिए। इस समय आईबीसी के रूप में एक ऐसी सहायता उपलब्ध है जो पहले नहीं थी। कंपनियों को आईबीसी की प्रक्रिया से जल्द से जल्द गुजारना और कर्जदाताओं को निस्तारण और नकदीकरण के बीच चयन के लिए कहना एक अहम उपाय है जो अब उपलब्ध है।

भारतीय मीडिया की कैसे सुधारी जा सकती है छवि

क्या चीजें और बिगड सकती हैं ? गत रविवार को जब श्रीलंका के होटलों और चर्च में विस्फोट की खबरें आईं तो भारतीय राजनेताओं ने सबसे पहले इसका फायदा आम चुनाव में उठाने की कोशिश की। इसके बाद भारतीय समाचार माध्यमों ने कुछ लोगों को इसके लिए जिम्मेदार ठहराना भी शुरू कर दिया जबकि श्रीलंकाई पुलिस अभी जांच में ही लगी थी। सोमवार तक श्रीलंकाई मीडिया और वहां के नागरिक हमारे राजनेताओं, मीडिया और ट्रोलों पर लानत भेजने लगे। ऐसा कई घटनाओं के साथ हो चुका है। उदाहरण के लिए इस वर्ष मार्च में न्यूजीलैंड में एक मस्जिद में हुए विस्फोट में मुस्लिमों के मारे जाने पर भारतीय ट्रोल काफी प्रसन्न थे।

दुनिया भर में भारतीयों को सीखने, लोकतंत्र के सम्मान और बढती अर्थव्यवस्था का वाहक होने के कारण मान-सम्मान मिलता है। भारत के लोगों को ऐसी बौद्धिक क्षमता से संपन्न माना जाता है जो दुनिया भर में आईटी, शिक्षण जगत और दुनिया की कुछ शीर्ष कंपनियों के प्रबंधन में अपना लोहा मनवा रहे हैं। हालांकि बीते कुछ वर्ष के दौरान यह छवि काफी हद तक धूमिल हुई है। समाचार चैनलों, अखबारों और सोशल मीडिया से भारतीयों की छवि उन्मादी, युद्ध चाहने वाले लोगों की बन रही है जिन्हें हर उस व्यक्ति के खिलाफ जबानी और शारीरिक हिंसा पसंद है, जो उन्हें पसंद नहीं है।

मीडिया को दोष देना बहुत आसान है। खासतौर टेलीविजन को। समाचार मीडिया वह बौद्धिक खुराक है जो हमारी दलीलों, बहसों और निर्णयों को प्रभावित करती है। हम इनके जरिये तय करते हैं कि किसे वोट देना है। परंत बीते दो वर्ष से समाचार मीडिया अपना काम भलीभांति नहीं कर रहा है। वह एकतरफा खबरें देता है, गलत रिपोर्टिंग करता है और बहस में केवल चीख-चिल्लाहट होती है। खबर गायब रहती है। विज्ञान, प्रौद्योगिकी. कारोबार और सामाजिक बदलाव पर टेलीविजन समाचार चैनलों का ध्यान ही नहीं है। इसके बावजूद ज्यादा से ज्यादा लोग उसकी ओर आकर्षित हो रहे हैं। टेलीविजन पर समाचार दर्शकों की संख्या 2018 में बढ़कर 7.2 फीसदी हो गई, जो 2015 में 6.5



मीडिया मंत्र वनिता कोहली-खांडेकर

बीते दो वर्ष से समाचार मीडिया अपना काम भलीभांति नहीं कर रहा है। वह एकतरफा खबरें देता है, गलत रिपोर्टिंग करता है और बहस में केवल चीख-चिल्लाहट

होती है। खबर गायब रहती है। इसके बावजूद ज्यादा से ज्यादा लोग उसकी ओर आकर्षित हो रहे हैं

फीसदी थी। ये आंकडे ब्रॉडकास्ट ऑडियंस रिसर्च काउंसिल के हैं। व्हाट्सऐप पर खबरों के

प्रचार-प्रसार ने हालात और अधिक खराब कर दिए। वहां खबरें गढ़ी जाती हैं. गलत बातों को खबर के रूप में तैयार किया जाता है और इनके माध्यम से कम जाता है। यही कारण है कि आज समाज का एक बड़ा हिस्सा यह यकीन करता है कि पंडित जवाहर लाल नेहरू के नाम से जो भी कचरा परोसा जा रहा है, वह सब स्वयं उन्होंने बोला था। इस प्रभाव को खत्म न सही लेकिन निष्क्रिय करने के चार तरीके हैं।

पहला, देश के 400 समाचार चैनल अपनी फंडिंग के स्रोत उजागर करें। वे अपने अंशधारकों. मुनाफे, लॉस अकाउंट और बैलेंस शीट की पूरी जानकारी हर तिमाही दें। लाइसेंस देने के लिए इन बातों को पूर्व शर्त बना देना चाहिए। देश के आधे से अधिक समाचार चैनलों का मालिकाना हक राजनेताओं, बिल्डरों या ऐसे लोगों के पास है जो किसी न किसी प्रकार प्रभाव का इस्तेमाल करते हैं और ईमानदारी से पैसे नहीं कमाते। न ही उनका इरादा पत्रकारिता की सेवा करने का होता है। ऐसा करने से फर्जी कारोबारी बाहर हो जाएंगे या उन पर निगाह रखी जा सकेगी।

दूसरा, सरकारी नियंत्रण से मुक्त एक मीडिया नियामक बनाया जाए। यह उन सभी संस्थाओं के विलय से बनाया जाए, जो इस समय 'स्व-नियमन' को अपना रही हैं। इस कदम को सफल बनाने के लिए जरूरी है कि यह नियामक सरकारी नियंत्रण से मुक्त हो। यह ब्रिटिश संचार उद्योग के नियामक एवं प्रतिस्पर्धी प्राधिकरण ऑफकॉम जैसा होना चाहिए।

तीसरा, दुरदर्शन को स्वतंत्र बनाएं। इस समय यह 'स्वायत्त' प्रसार भारती का हिस्सा है। हालांकि यह सामग्री तैयार करने, नियुक्तियों, वितरण या अपने तरीके से पैसा खर्च करने में स्वतंत्र नहीं है। इनमें से ज्यादातर चीजों पर अब भी केंद्र सरकार का नियंत्रण है। अगर डीडी सही मायनों में स्वायत्त होता तो यह अपने आप समाचार बाजार की शक्ल बदल देता।

ब्रिटेन में समाचार एवं मनोरंजन क्षेत्र में बीबीसी, चैनल 4 और आईटीवी समेत पांच सार्वजनिक प्रसारक हैं। सभी विश्वस्तरीय हैं। प्रतिस्पर्धी लगातार यह शिकायत कर रहे हैं कि उन्हें कैसे सब्सिडी दी जा रही है। निश्चित रूप से वे सरकारी धन से चल रहे हैं। लेकिन इसे बेहतर तरीके से खर्च किया जा रहा है। इन पांचों प्रसारकों ने समाचारों और मनोरंजन का एक ऐसा तंत्र तैयार किया है, जिससे निजी प्रसारक भी खुद में सुधार करने के लिए प्रयास कर रहे हैं। भारत में ऐसा कोई बेंचमार्क नहीं है। आखिर में क्या हम भारतीय

सभ्यता से ऑनलाइन सहमत या असहमत हो सकते हैं, हमारे पास आने वाले प्रत्येक अग्रेषित संदेश और भ्रामक इतिहास तथा तथ्यों को लेकर सवाल उठा सकते हैं। क्या हम उन शोर-शराबे वाले समाचार चैनलों को नहीं देखने का फैसला ले सकते हैं, जो हमें बांटते हैं? इससे स्थितियों को थोड़ा बेहतर बनाने में मदद मिलेगी और उम्मीद है कि हम फिर से वे भारतीय बन जाएंगे, जिनका पूरा विश्व सम्मान करता है।

अपना परिचालन बंद करना पड़ा

जिससे बहुत से कर्मचारियों को

नौकरी और जीवनयापन का

संकट हो गया है। कर्मचारी सड़कों

पर प्रदर्शन कर रहे हैं। इसी तरह

सरकारी क्षेत्र की विमानन

कंपनी एयर इंडिया के संकट का

समाधान अभी तक नहीं हो सका।

दुसरी विमानन कंपनियां भी

कानाफूसी

संदेह का पटाक्षेप

अगर लोकसभा चुनाव के बाद समाजवादी पार्टी और बहुजन समाज पार्टी गठबंधन की स्थिरता पर किसी को कोई संदेह था तो गुरुवार को डिंपल यादव ने सुनिश्चित किया कि इन सभी संवालों को समाप्त कर दिया जाए। कन्नौज लोकसभा सीट से समाजवादी पार्टी की उम्मीदवार और पार्टी अध्यक्ष अखिलेश यादव की पत्नी डिंपल ने लोकसभा क्षेत्र में हो रही एक रैली के दौरान लोगों को संबोधित करने से पहले मंच पर आसीन बसपा सुप्रीमो मायावती के पांव छूकर आशीर्वाद लिया। डिंपल को 2014 के लोकसभा चुनाव में इस सीट से जीत मिली थी। हालांकि इस तरह के कुछ संदेहों का पटाक्षेप उस समय हो गया था जब मायावती और पूर्व सपा प्रमुख मुलायम सिंह यादव ने करीब दो दशक के बाद पिछले सप्ताह मंच साझा किया था।

रॉयल चैलेंजर्स और 'डिंडा अकादमी'

आईपीएल के इस सीजन में रॉयल चैलेंजर्स बेंगलूरु (आरसीबी) टीम का अब तक का प्रदर्शन ज्यादा अच्छा नहीं रहा और इसके गेंदबाज सोशल मीडिया पर ट्रोलिंग का शिकार हो रहे हैं। कुछ सोशल मीडिया उपयोगकर्ताओं ने मोहम्मद सिराज और उमेश यादव समेत आरसीबी के कुछ गेंदबाजों को 'डिंडा अकादमी' का छात्र बताया। इसका संदर्भ पूर्व भारतीय और आरसीबी के तेज गेंदबाज अशोक डिंडा से था जो अपनी गेंदबाजी में काफी अधिक रन देते थे। हालांकि बुधवार को उमेश यादव की बेहतर गेंदबाजी

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के कारण आरसीबी ने किंग्स इलेवन पंजाब से जीत दर्ज की। जीत के बाद सोशल मीडिया ट्रोलरों पर व्यंग्य करने का अवसर देखते हुए आरसीबी ने ट्वीट किया, 'डिंडा अकादमी? यह क्या होती है ?'। हालांकि इसे बाद में हटा लिया गया लेकिन इसके स्क्रीनशॉट ले लिए गए थे और फिर सोशल मीडिया पर इन अटकलों का दौर चलने लगा कि इस ट्वीट को करने के पीछे और हटाने में किसका हाथ हो सकता है।

आपका पक्ष

मजदूरों के उत्थान पर हो ध्यान

देश में निर्माण कार्यों जैसे भवन, सड़क, और पुल बनाने, रेलवे बिजली का उत्पादन, बांध, नहर, जलाशय, खुदाई, जल पाइप लाइन और केबल बिछाने जैसे कार्य करने वाले मजदूरों को निर्माण मजदूर कहते हैं। आंकड़ों के मुताबिक साल 1983 से 2011-12 तक देश लगभग 5 करोड़ निर्माण मजदूर थे। भवन या अन्य निर्माण मजदूरों व अन्य ट्रेड यूनियनों के एक लंबे संघर्ष के बाद इन कामगारों के काम के दौरान व परिवार की आर्थिक व सामाजिक सुरक्षा को ध्यान में रखते हुए 1996 में निर्माण श्रमिक अधिनियम पारित हुआ जिसके तहत इन मजदूरों के कल्याण के लिए एक बोर्ड का गठन किया जाना सुनिश्चित किया गया था। हालांकि बहुत पहले से राज्य और केंद्र

सरकारों द्वारा इन निर्माण मजदूरों



की अनदेखी की गई। इंडिया स्पेंड मजदूरों के कल्याण के लिए की एक ताजा रिपोर्ट के मुताबिक निर्माण के काम में लगे मजदूरों की भलाई के नाम पर 1996 से अब तक 36,685 करोड़ रुपये जारी किए गए लेकिन पिछले 23 सालों खर्च किया गया। कई बार सरकारें में इसका केवल 25.8 प्रतिशत ही

ं देश में आर्थिक समानता के लिए गंभीर प्रयास किए जाने चाहिए

लोकलुभावन योजनाएं शुरू तो कर (9,967.61 करोड रुपये) इनपर देती हैं लेकिन बाद में उनका कभी

लेखांकन नहीं होता। राज्य सरकारों के कल्याणकारी बोर्ड से मजदूरों को कई सहलियतें दी जाती हैं लेकिन इनमें से अधिकांश को लेकर शिकायतें आती रहती हैं। राज्य और केंद्र सरकारों को असंगठित क्षेत्र के मजदूरों के कल्याण के लिए अभी कई कारगर कदम उठाने होंगे जिससे देश के आर्थिक विकास में एकरूपता आ सके।

विमानन संकट का समाधान

देश में अधिकांश विमानन कंपनियां कई तरह की चुनैतियों से जुझ रही हैं। हाल ही में जेट एयरवेज को

नौकरियों में कमी कर रही हैं। दरअसल इसके लिए काफी हद प्रियंबदा, गोरखपुर तक कंपनियां ही जिम्मेदार हैं। वे अपनी वित्तीय स्थित देखे बिना ग्राहकों के लिए लगातार विभिन्न तरह की छूट देती रहती हैं जिससे कंपनियों को आर्थिक घाटा उठाना पड़ता है। इन समस्याओं के समाधान के लिए केंद्र सरकार और विमानन कंपनियों को एक साथ मिलकर बातचीत करनी चाहिए और सार्वजनिक परामर्श लेते हुए दीर्घावधि की रणनीति पर काम करना चाहिए।

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

अन्सता

सकट और साख

भारत की न्यायपालिका गंभीर संकट में है। यह संकट उसकी साख और विश्वसनीयता को लेकर उठा है। मामला ज्यादा चिंताजनक इसलिए है कि देश के आम नागरिक से लेकर खास. अमीर-गरीब और सत्ता प्रतिष्ठान, सबके लिए न्याय की अंतिम आस सुप्रीम कोर्ट से रहती है। यहां से जो विधि-सम्मत न्याय मिलता है, वही अंतिम माना जाता है। और संदेह से परे होता है। इसलिए अगर न्याय के इस मंदिर के बारे में ऐसी बातें सुनाई देने लगें जो आमजन के भीतर इसकी विश्वसनीयता को लेकर संदेह पैदा करने वाली हों, छवि को धूमिल करने वाली हों और न्याय करने वाले माननीय न्यायाधीश गंभीर आरोपों में घिरने में लगें, तो लोकतंत्र के इस महत्त्वपूर्ण स्तंभ के लिए इससे ज्यादा बुरा कुछ नहीं हो सकता। चिंता की यही ध्वनियां माननीय न्यायाधीशों की ओर से आ रही हैं। इसीलिए अदालत को उन लोगों को चेताने को मजबूर होना पड़ा है जो सर्वोच्च न्यायपालिका को बदनाम करने का षड्यंत्र कर रहे हैं। पिछले हफ्ते देश के प्रधान न्यायाधीश पर सुप्रीम कोर्ट की एक पूर्व कर्मचारी ने अमर्यादित आचरण करने का आरोप लगा कर सबको सकते में डाल दिया था। इस आरोप की जांच तीन जजों की एक कमेटी कर रही है।

लेकिन प्रधान न्यायाधीश पर ऐसे आरोप के बाद जिस तरह के घटनाक्रम बने और बातें सामने आईं, वे कहीं ज्यादा चिंताजनक और हैरान करने वाली हैं। एक वकील के इस दावे से कि प्रधान न्यायाधीश पर लगे आरोप के पीछे बड़ी साजिश और फिक्सर कॉरपोरेट लॉबी काम कर रही है, सब सन्न रह गए। इसीलिए सर्वोच्च न्यायालय ने इस वकील के आरोपों और दावों की जांच के लिए तत्काल सुप्रीम कोर्ट के ही पूर्व न्यायाधीश एके पटनायक को इसकी जांच सौंप दी। साथ ही सर्वोच्च अदालत ने सीबीआइ, खुफिया ब्यूरो (आइबी) और दिल्ली पुलिस के प्रमुख को इस जांच में न्यायमूर्ति पटनायक के साथ मदद करने को कहा गया है। साख को बचाने के लिए न्यायपालिका को आरोपों की तह तक जाना जरूरी है ताकि सच्चाई सामने आ सके और साजिश करने वालों का पर्दाफाश हो सके। प्रधान न्यायाधीश पर लगे आरोपों से ज्यादा कहीं गंभीर बात तो यह है कि न्याय के इस पवित्र और सर्वोच्च संस्थान को बाहर से नियंत्रित करने के प्रयासों की बातें सामने आ रही हैं। जांच में भले ऐसे आरोप बेबुनियाद निकलें, लेकिन तत्काल देश की जनता के भीतर न्यायपालिका को लेकर जो संदेह पैदा हुए होंगे, उन्हें आसानी से दूर नहीं किया जा सकता।

अपने ऊपर आरोप लगने के बाद प्रधान न्यायाधीश ने साफ कहा था कि वे कुछ महत्त्वपूर्ण मामलों की सुनवाई करने वाले हैं और इस तरह के आरोप उन पर दबाव बनाने के लिए लगाए गए हैं। न्यायपालिका की स्वतंत्रता को प्रभावित करने वाले ऐसे मामले पहले भी सामने आए हैं जब न्यायाधीशों को भारी दबाव का सामना करना पड़ा है, लेकिन वे इन दबावों के आगे झुके नहीं। पिछले साल जनवरी में सुप्रीम कोर्ट के चार जजों ने सार्वजनिक रूप से प्रधान न्यायाधीश पर जो आरोप लगाए थे, उनमें एक बड़ा आरोप रोस्टर को लेकर था। तब प्रधान न्यायाधीश पर कुछ खास मुकदमों को अपने पास रखने और परंपरा के विपरीत काम करने का आरोप लगा था। हालांकि अभी तक इन आरोपों की सच्चाई सामने नहीं आई है। इसलिए अगर अब फिर से ऐसे आरोप लग रहे हैं कि सुप्रीम कोर्ट में फिक्सरों की भूमिका है, तो इससे न्यायपालिका के प्रति अविश्वास पैदा होगा। कुछ महीनों पहले सीबीआइ में जिस तरह का घमासान मचा, उससे जांच एजेंसी की साख को भारी बट्टा लगा। अगर न्यायपालिका और जांच एजेंसियों की आजादी पर इस तरह से हमले होंगे और इनकी विश्वसनीयता को लेकर लोगों के मन में शक पैदा किया जाएगा तो ये संस्थान कैसे बचेंगे और लोकतंत्र में अपनी भूमिका निभाएंगे!

आप्तार पर हर चुनाव में अलग-अलग पार्टियों की ओर से मतदाताओं के वोट हासिल करने के मकसद से पैसे देकर या दूसरी सुविधाओं का लाभ पहुंचा कर उन्हें लुभाने के मामले सामने आते रहते हैं। यह एक तरह से स्वच्छ और निष्पक्ष मतदान को प्रभावित करने की कवायद है और इससे आखिरकार लोकतांत्रिक प्रक्रिया बाधित होती है। हालांकि चुनावों के दौरान चुनाव आयोग अपनी ओर से इस तरह की संदिग्ध गतिविधियों पर नजर रखता है और ऐसा करने वालों के पकड़े जाने पर कार्रवाई भी करता है। फिर भी ऐसे मामले आम हैं कि कानून के कठघरे में खड़े होने के डर से बेफिक्र राजनीतिक दल चुनावों में बेलगाम खर्च और भ्रष्ट धन का सहारा लेने से नहीं चूकते हैं। जहां तक फिलहाल जारी सत्रहवीं लोकसभा के चुनावों का सवाल है, अब तक इसके तीन चरण पूरे हो चुके हैं और इस तरह के कई मामले पकड़ में आए हैं। चुनाव आयोग की ओर से मुहैया कराई गई जानकारी के मुताबिक चुनावों के दौरान 24 अप्रैल तक अलग-अलग जगहों पर की गई छापेमारी में करीब साढ़े सात सौ करोड़ रुपए नकद और लगभग बारह सौ करोड़ रुपए के मादक द्रव्य जब्त किए गए हैं।

यह अंदाजा लगाना मुश्किल नहीं है कि अवैध तरीके से कहीं रखी गई या ले जाई रही इतनी बडी रकम का इस्तेमाल या तो वोट हासिल करने के लिए गलत तरीके से मतदाताओं को प्रभावित करने में होता या फिर उनका उपयोग कानूनी दायरे में नहीं था। इसी तरह एक साथ इतने बड़े पैमाने पर मादक द्रव्यों की जब्ती भी ऐसी ही आशंका को मजबूत करती है। यह किसी से छिपा नहीं है कि चुनावों के दौरान कई उम्मीदवार मतदाताओं को लुभाने के लिए उनके बीच मुफ्त में कुछ सामान या फिर सीधे नकदी ही बांटते हैं। मतदान के एक दिन पहले शराब बांटे जाने के भी मामले सामने आते रहते हैं। इन गतिविधियों का मकसद सिर्फ एक हो सकता है कि किसी भी तरह वोटरों को अपनी ओर लुभाया जा सके। यों अगर कोई राजनीतिक दल अपनी पार्टी की नीतियों और देश में जरूरी मुद्दों पर हस्तक्षेप करके लोगों की मुश्किल और समस्याओं के हल का वादा कर-के उनके वोट मांगता है तो इसमें कोई हर्ज नहीं है। लेकिन पैसे या शराब बांट कर उन्हें वोट देने के लिए लुभाने की कोशिश गैरकानूनी है और ऐसा करने वालों के खिलाफ चुनाव आयोग को सख्त कार्रवाई करनी चाहिए।

विडंबना यह है कि जो राजनीतिक दल या नेता ऐन मतदान के मौके पर आम मतदाताओं के वोट पैसे या मादक द्रव्यों के बूते खरीदना चाहते हैं, वही सामान्य दिनों में देश के लिए महत्त्वपूर्ण साबित होने वाले मुद्दों पर अपनी राय का प्रसार करने की जरूरत नहीं समझते, ताकि लोगों को सोच-समझ कर अपने पक्ष में वोट देने के लिए जागरूक किया जा सके। बल्कि कई बार ऐसा लगता है कि ज्यादातर राजनीतिक दल और नेताओं के पास वैसे नीतिगत मसलों पर कोई स्पष्ट राय नहीं होती, जिनसे आम जनता के जीवन पर सीधा असर पड़ता है। शायद यही वजह है कि देश में ऐसे लोगों की संख्या काफी है जो मतदान तो करते हैं, लेकिन उनके सामने देश की दशा और दिशा को समझने और उसके मुताबिक वोट देने का फैसला करने की स्थितियां नहीं होती हैं। जबिक लोकतंत्र की मजबूती के लिए जरूरी है कि एक ओर चुनावों में बहाए जाने वाले अवैध धन पर रोक लगाने के लिए हर उपाय किए जाने चाहिए तो दूसरी ओर मुद्दों पर ठोस और परिपक्व फैसला लेने के लिहाज से आम जनता के राजनीतिक सशक्तिकरण के उपाय भी किए जाएं।

कल्पमधा

जो सचमुच प्रेम करता है उस मनुष्य का हृदय धरती पर साक्षात स्वर्ग है। ईश्वर उस मनुष्य में बसता है क्योंकि ईश्वर प्रेम है। -लेमेन्नाइस

सवालों में घिरी उड्डयन नीति

संजीव पांडेय

हालांकि सरकार नागरिक उड्डयन को और विकसित करने के दावे करती रही है। छोटे-छोटे शहरों को भी हवाई सेवा से जोड़ने का दावा किया जा रहा है। देश के तमाम हिस्सों में एयरपोर्टी के विकास के लिए तमाम दावे किए जा रहे हैं। लेकिन सच्चाई यह है कि देश के कई हवाई अड्डों पर घने कोहरे में विमान उतारने के लिए अत्याधुनिक तकनीक नहीं है, जो पश्चिमी देशों के हवाई अड्डों पर उपलब्ध है।

ट एयरवेज के संकट ने भारत के नागरिक . उड्डयन क्षेत्र के तेजी से हो रहे विकास पर सवाल खड़ा कर दिया है। उड़ानें बंद करने के जेट एयरवेज के फैसले ने नागरिक उड्डयन नीति पर भी सवालिया निशान लगा दिया है। जेट एयरवेज पहली कंपनी नहीं है, जिसने अपनी हवाई सेवा बंद कर दी है। इससे पहले किंगफिशर और एयर डेक्कन को भी अपनी हवाई सेवाएं बंद करनी पड़ी थीं। एयर सहारा का भी बुरा हाल हुआ था, जिसे जेट एयरवेज ने खरीदा था। इसलिए सवाल सिर्फ एक विमानन कंपनी की उड़ानें बंद होने का नहीं है। सवाल भारत में नागरिक उडडयन को लेकर बनाई गई नीति को लेकर भी है। आखिर यात्री संख्या में जोरदार बढोतरी के बाद भी विमान कंपनियां घाटे में जा रही हैं, यह अहम सवाल है। घाटे में जाने वाली कंपनियों में सिर्फ निजी क्षेत्र की कंपनियां नहीं हैं, बिल्क सार्वजनिक क्षेत्र की कंपनी एयर इंडिया का घाटा भी खासा बढा है।

नब्बे के दशक के आर्थिक सुधार ने भारत में निजी एयरलाइन कंपनियों को अच्छा अवसर दिया था। धीरे-धीरे भारत में उड्डयन उद्योग यहां तक पहुंच गया कि सालाना दस करोड़ यात्री हवाई सफर करने लगे। आंकडे बताते हैं कि 2018 में भारत में ग्यारह करोड यात्रियों ने हवाई सफर किया। इसका बड़ा हिस्सा निजी विमान कंपनियों को मिला। इसमें सबसे बडी हिस्सेदारी इंडिगो की थी। यात्रियों की बढ़ती संख्या निजी विमान कंपनियों के लिए काफी उत्साहवर्धक रही है, क्योंकि विमान कंपनियों को ये यात्री घरेलू रूटों पर ही मिले। साल 2000 में भारत में हवाई यात्रा करने वालों की संख्या लगभग डेढ करोड थी। पंद्रह सालों में यह संख्या सालाना दस करोड़ से उपर पहुंच गई। इसके बावजूद कुछ विमान कंपनियों का भट्ठा बैठता गया। यात्रियों की बढ़ती संख्या के बावजूद विमान कंपनियों का घाटे में जाना हैरान करने वाली घटना है। विमान कंपनियों का बंद होना कहीं न कहीं नागरिक उड्डयन क्षेत्र को लेकर बनाई गई नीतियों पर सवाल खड़े कर रहा है। इसके अलावा

अंतरराष्ट्रीय परिस्थितियों ने भी भारतीय उड्डयन क्षेत्र को खासा नुकसान पहुंचाया। पहले निजी एयरलाइन कंपनी एयर डेक्कन बंद हो गई। इसके बाद विजय माल्या की कंपनी किंगफिशर बंद हुई। अब जेट एयरवेज ने अपनी उड़ानें बंद कर दीं। दरअसल, ये कंपनियां हजारों करोड़ के कर्ज

में डूब गई हैं और कर्ज चुकाने में नाकाम रही

हैं। हालांकि इन कंपनियों को यात्री अच्छे मिल रहे थे। लेकिन विमानों की परिचालन लागत ने भी विमान कंपनियों को भारी नुकसान पहुंचाया। विमान के रखरखाव से लेकर तमाम खर्चों से कंपनियां दबती चली गईं, क्योंकि कंपनियां गलाकाट प्रतिस्पर्धा में लोगों को सस्ते से सस्ते टिकट देती रहीं। कंपनियों का रोना यही था कि बढती परिचालन लागत और सस्ते किराए ने कंपनियों को मार दिया। हालांकि निजी विमान कंपनियों के प्रबंधन भी कंपनियों की माली हालत खराब होने के लिए जिम्मेवार हैं, लेकिन सरकार की नीतियों ने भी नागरिक उड्डयन क्षेत्र को भारी नुकसान पहुंचाया है, इससे इंकार नहीं किया जा सकता है।

नागरिक उड्डयन क्षेत्र में एकाधिकार खत्म करने की नीति भारत में 1990 के बाद लाई गई। लेकिन नागरिक उड्डयन क्षेत्र में असल क्रांति 2000 के बाद आई। हवाई जहाज आम लोगों की पहुंच में हो गया। 2003 में कैप्टन जीआर गोपीनाथ ने सस्ती विमान सेवा एयर डेक्कन शुरू की। इसके बाद कई और कंपनियां आईं। स्पाइस जेट, इंडिगो और गो एयर भी सस्ती विमान सेवा लेकर उतरीं। इन सारी निजी विमानन कंपनियों का कारोबारी मॉडल ज्यादा यात्री संख्या और सस्ते टिकट पर आधारित था। रेलगाड़ियों के वातानुकूलित कोचों में यात्रा करने वाले भी हवाई जहाज में उड़ने लगे। इससे विमान यात्रियों की संख्या में खासा इजाफा हुआ। पर जिस एयर डेक्कन ने सस्ती विमान सेवा शुरू की थी, उसकी आर्थिक स्थिति 2007 तक आते-आते खराब हो गई। खराब आर्थिक स्थिति के कारण एयर डेक्कन को किंगफिशर ने खरीद लिया। लेकिन तीन-चार साल बाद ही किंगफिशर की भी हालात खराब हो गई। 2012 तक आते-आते किंगफिशर कंगाल हो गई, इसके सारे विमान जमीन पर आ गए। अब यही हालत जेट एयरवेज की है। सार्वजनिक क्षेत्र की विमानन कंपनी एयर इंडिया का घाटा भी बढता जा रहा है। इसकी हालत भी कोई अच्छी नहीं है। किसी तरह सरकारी समर्थन से यह अपने को बचाए रखने में अभी तक सफल है। पर



जेट एयरवेज, जिसकी यात्री बाजार में बयालीस फीसद तक हिस्सेदारी थी, उसकी बाजार हिस्सेदारी इस साल की शुरुआत में मात्र दस फीसद रह गई।

भारतीय मुद्रा यानी रुपए के डॉलर के मुकाबले लगातार कमजोर होने के कारण भी विमान कंपनियों को भारी नुकसान पहुंचा है। अपने कुल परिचालन खर्च का तीस फीसद तक विमान कंपनियों को भुगतान डॉलर में करना होता है। इसमें विमान का लीज किराया, जमीन पर होने वाले रखरखाव का खर्च, विदेशों में जाने वाले जहाजों की पार्किंग जैसे बड़े खर्च शामिल हैं। ये सारे भुगतान डॉलर में करने होते हैं। इसके अलावा विमान कंपनियों को पूरी दुनिया के मुकाबले सबसे ज्यादा ईंधन पर पैसे का भुगतान भारत में करना पड़ रहा है। भारत में विमान को दिए जाने वाले ईंधन (एटीएफ) पर भारी टैक्स लगाया जाता है। विमान को दिए जाने वाले ईंधन पर चौदह फीसद

उत्पाद शुल्क और उनतीस फीसद बिक्री कर है। काफी लंबे समय से विमान कंपनियां मांग कर रही हैं कि विमान के ईंधन को जीएसटी के दायरे में लाया जाए। लेकिन सरकार ने इनकी मांगों को अनसुना कर दिया। विमान कंपनियों का तर्क रहा है कि वर्तमान में ईंधन को लेकर जो ढांचा सरकार ने लागू कर रखा है, वह विमान कंपनियों को भारी नुकसान पहुंचा रहा है। दुनिया के दूसरे देशों में विमान ईंधन पर टैक्स कम है और इस कारण ईंधन पर विमान कंपनियों को अपने कुल खर्च का सिर्फ बीस फीसद तक खर्च करना पड़ता है। पर भारत में कंपनियों को चालीस फीसद तक ईंधन पर खर्च करना पडता है।

हालांकि बीच में सरकार ने देश में संचालित होने वाले विशेष दर्जे की ट्रेनों में किराए के ढांचे में फेरबदल किया था। सरकार को उम्मीद थी कि इससे विमान कंपनियों को लाभ पहुंचेगा। हालांकि इससे रेलवे को भारी नुकसान हुआ। सरकार ने राजधानी एक्सप्रेस और शताब्दी एक्सप्रेस में फ्लैक्सी फेयर

> प्रणाली लागू कर दी। इससे इन ट्रेनों में यात्रा करना काफी महंगा हो गया। कई महत्त्वपूर्ण रूटों पर तो हवाई जहाज का किराया इन ट्रेनों के किराए के मुकाबले सस्ता हो गया। पहले, दूसरे और तीसरे दर्जे के वातानुकूलित कोच में सफर करने वाले लोग हवाई जहाज की तरफ रुख कर गए। निजी विमान कंपनियां इसका कितना लाभ उठा पाईं, इसका तो पता नहीं चल पाया। पर राजधानी और शताब्दी एक्सप्रेस ट्रेनों को फ्लैक्सी फेयर के कारण खासा नुकसान हो गया।

हालांकि सरकार नागरिक उड्डयन को और विकसित करने के दावे करती रही है। छोटे-छोटे शहरों को भी हवाई सेवा से जोडने का दावा किया जा रहा है। देश के तमाम हिस्सों में एयरपोर्टीं के विकास के लिए तमाम दावे किए जा रहे हैं। लेकिन सच्चाई यह है कि देश के कई हवाई अड्डों पर भारी कोहरे में विमान उतारने के लिए अत्याधुनिक तकनीक नहीं है, जो पश्चिमी देशों के हवाई अड्डों पर उपलब्ध है। इस कारण कई विदेशी रूटों पर अंतराष्ट्रीय विमान सेवा शुरू करने में दिक्कत में आई है। जबिक सरकार ने कागजों में इन हवाई अड्डों को अंतराष्ट्रीय हवाई अड्डे का दर्जा दे दिया गया है। बताया जाता है कि दिल्ली में सिक्रिय लॉबी देश के दूसरे हवाई अड्डों से अंतराष्ट्रीय विमान सेवाओं को सीधे शुरू किए जाने में लगातार बाधा बनती रही है। इस बाधा के कारण कई एयरपोर्टों को अत्याधृनिक तकनीक से लैस नहीं किया गया है।

तनाव के तार

कौशलेंद्र प्रपन्न

कि भी जाने की न तिथि तय है और न विधि। शायद इसीलिए कहा जाता है हम सब अतिथि हैं। हमारा न आना तय है और न जाना ही। यानी हमें न अपने भविष्य के भूगोल का कुछ अता-पता है और न अतीत पर कोई नियंत्रण। अगर हम कुछ कर सकते हैं तो बस इतना कि वर्तमान को जिएं और बेहतर बनाएं। जब कभी कोई हमारे बीच से असमय चला जाता है तो एक बडी रिक्तता अपने पीछे छोड़ जाता है। एक ऐसी क्षति, जिसे शायद कोई भी भर नहीं सकता। कहने को कह सकते हैं कि कोई भी स्थान खाली नहीं रहता। कोई न कोई उस खालीपन को भर देता है। हमारे जीवन में हमारे बेहद प्रिय जब जाते हैं, तब हम उस क्षति की पूर्ति नहीं कर पाते। उसमें भी जब ऐसा व्यक्ति हो, जिसके जाने की अभी उम्र न हो। हालांकि यह तय करना भी हमारे हिस्से या हाथ में नहीं है कि कौन कब, कहां, कैसे जाएगा। हम जन्म कहीं और लेते हैं, पलते-बढते कहीं और हैं, पढ़ाई-लिखाई और रोजगार कहीं और करते हैं। ऐसे में जहां रोटी मिलती है, वहीं के होकर रह जाते हैं। लेकिन ताउम्र हमें हमारी मिट्टी याद आती

है। हालांकि बहुत कम लोग हैं जिन्हें उनकी इच्छा और चाह के अनुसार अपनी मातृभूमि मिल पाती है। इस दुनिया में आना जितना पीड़ादायी प्रक्रिया से

गुजरना होता है, उसके समांतर तनाव, चिंता, उद्वेलन भी काफी हैं। डॉक्टर बताते हैं कि गर्भ में पल रहा बच्चा तनाव में न हो। प्रसव के वक्त डॉक्टर कहते हैं कि जितनी मेहनत और कष्ट, प्रयास और तनाव मां सह लेती है, बच्चा भी उतनी भी भाव-प्रवणता

के साथ तनाव में जी रहा होता है। अनुमान लगाना कठिन नहीं है इस दुनिया में आना भी

तनावपूर्ण प्रक्रिया से गुजरना होता है। जब हम आ जाते हैं, तब फिर एक दूसरे किस्म की दुश्चिंताओं, तनावों, संघर्षों, संवेदनात्मक द्वंद्व से रोज रूबरू होना होता है। जो लोग विभिन्न तनावों, टकराहटों के बीच सामंजस्य स्थापित करने में कुशल होते हैं, वे काम के दबाव और तनाव से कैसे निकला जाए, इसे तय कर लेते हैं। जो लोग काम और दफ्तर, बॉस और कार्य दबावों को अपनी जिंदगी से विलगाने में सफल नहीं हो पाते, उन्हें अपने दफ्तर की छवियां रात-दिन परेशान करने लगती हैं। उन्हें समझ नहीं आता कि कब और कहां से एक स्पष्ट रेखा खींची जाए, जिसमें दफ्तरी काम और जीवन की अन्य

प्राथमिकताओं को तवज्जो दी जाए। ऐसी ही स्थिति में व्यक्ति धीरे-धीरे चुप होने लगता है। वह अपने करीबी लोगों से भी कटता चला जाता है। एकाकीपन की जिंदगी उसे निराशा और कुंठा की ओर धकेलती चली जाती है। किससे अपनी बात कहे! इस चुनाव में वह और ज्यादा उलझता चला जाता है। एक वक्त ऐसा आता है, जब वह या तो हथियार डाल देता है या फिर उसका स्वास्थ्य उसका साथ छोड़ देता है। हमारी दुनिया में कौन-

कौन साथी हैं। किनसे हम

दुनिया मेरे आगे अपनी बात कह सकते हैं। किन्हें चुन कर कुछ पल के लिए सहज महसूस कर सकते हैं, यह चुनाव करना अपने आप में बेहद कठिन काम है। उस पर दफ्तर में किसे अपनी निजी पीर बताएं, किससे अपने अंतर्जगत की हलचल साझा करें। यह बहुत दुविधापूर्ण होता है। हमेशा डर लगा रहता है कि कोई निजी कमजोरी का लाभ तो नहीं उठा लेगा। इस तरह का डर हमें दफ्तर में संकुचित करता चला जाता है। जहां हम मानते हैं कि अपने जीवन और दिन का एक बड़ा हिस्सा जिया करते हैं। जिनके बीच रहते, खाते-पीते हैं, लड़ते, मुंह फुलाया करते हैं, उन्हीं के बीच अगर तनाव में जी रहे हैं तो ऐसे में हमारी

कार्यशैली और काम, काम को निर्धारित करने वाला व्यक्ति हमारे निजी जीवन को भी प्रभावित करने लगता है। काम का तनाव इस कदर प्रबल हो जाता है कि हम घर पर भी काम और बॉस की भाषा, उसके व्यवहार से परेशान रहते हैं। लक्ष्य और योजना हमारी जिंदगी हो जाती हैं। पीछे छुटती चली जाती है हमारी ख़ुशी और शांति।

पैसे और आर्थिक पक्ष मजबूत करते-करते हम कब संवेदनात्मक तौर पर सतही होते जाते हैं इसका अनुमान ही नहीं होता। काम के बाद भी काम की प्रकृति और कार्य संपन्न कराने वाले के भाव और भाषा हमें कोचने लगती है। कितना मृश्किल होता होगा उनके लिए जो बॉस और दफ्तर के दबाव तले अपनी सांसों का गला घोंट देते हैं। कह सकते हैं कि नौकरी हमारी जिंदगी को खाने लगे तो बेहतर है नौकरी बदल ली जाए। लेकिन सच्चाई से भी मुंह नहीं फेर सकते कि नौकरी पाना कितना कठिन है। प्रबंधन के जानकार मानते हैं कि कई बार लोग सक्षम कर्मी सिर्फ अपने बॉस या मैनेजर की वजह से परेशान होकर नौकरी छोड़ जाता है। इससे न केवल संस्था, कंपनी की हानि होती है, बल्कि हम अपने बीच से एक कुशल, दक्ष और संवेदनशील व्यक्ति को खो देते हैं।

विदेश में ईवीएम

चीएम में खोट निकालने वाले अक्सर तर्क देते हैं 🔫 िक अमेरिका आदि विकसित देशों ने ईवीएम छोड़ कर बैलट से मतदान अपना लिया है और हमें भी ऐसा ही करना चाहिए। यह तर्क केवल एक अर्ध-सत्य है। पहली बात तो यह कि जिस ईवीएम को उन्होंने कुछ सीमा तक त्यागा (अमेरिका के कई राज्यों में अभी भी ईवीएम से ही मतदान होता है), वह भारत की ईवीएम से भिन्न है। वहां की ईवीएम नेटवर्क से जुड़ने योग्य थी, उसमें इंटरनेट से मत डाला जा सकता था, इस कारण उसे हैक किया जा सकता था। भारत की ईवीएम नेटवर्क-इनेबल्ड नहीं है। यह बहुत कुछ कैलकुलेटर जैसी चीज है, इसकी हैिकंग संभव ही नहीं है। यह सुप्रीम कोर्ट तक में सिद्ध हो चुका है। वास्तव में इसी विशेषता के कारण अनेक देश भारत के निर्वाचन आयोग से इन मशीनों के आयात का आदेश दे रहे हैं।

वैसे इंटरनेट लगी हुई ईवीएम भी चलन में हैं। स्विट्जरलैंड, जहां हर वर्ष राष्ट्रपति का चुनाव होता है और मुख्य राजनीतिक-प्रशासनिक मुद्दे जनमत-संग्रह द्वारा तय किए जाते हैं. वहां इंटरनेट वाली ईवीएम ही चलती हैं। लेकिन वहां आज तक कभी हैकिंग नहीं हुई। एस्टोनिया, जो 1991 तक सोवियत संघ का हिस्सा था, वहां भी इसी प्रकार नेट द्वारा मत डाले जाते हैं। अमेरिका के अलास्का प्रांत में फैक्स और वेब वोटिंग की सुविधा है। हवाई में ई-मेल से वोट डाल सकते हैं, इंडाहो और उटाह प्रांतों में ई-मेल और फैक्स द्वारा वोट दिया जा सकता है। जहां केवल बैलट से मतदान होता है, ऐसे 18 राज्यों में गणना के लिए मतपत्र मेल से भेजे जाते हैं, अन्य राज्यों (कोलंबिया डिस्ट्रिक्ट सिहत) में गणना के लिए मतपत्र ई-मेल, फैक्स अथवा वेबसाइट से भेजने का प्रावधान है; अर्थात बैलट प्रत्यक्ष भेजना नहीं पड़ता।

अगर मान लें कि ईवीएम से छेड़छाड़ हो सकती है, तो कड़वी हकीकत है कि बैलट और मतपेटी भी तो लूट लिए जाते थे। उसे कभी रोका नहीं जा सका था। ईवीएम ने ही उस पर विराम लगाया है। इसके अलावा बड़ी मात्रा में कागज और समय की बचत दो ऐसी बातें हैं, जो ईवीएम से ही संभव हैं। पुनम मित्तल, मोहनपुरी, मेरठ

धन प्रतिनिधि

चुनाव में पैसे लेकर टिकट देने का आरोप कई राजनीतिक दलों पर लगता रहा है। हाल ही में एक चुनाव सभा में एक कांग्रेसी नेता ने बसपा पर करोड़ों

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

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

रुपए लेकर टिकट बेचने का आरोप लगाया। ये नेताजी पहले बसपा में ही थे। सवाल है कि इन आरोपों में कितनी सच्चाई है! क्या सच में राजनीतिक दल करोड़ों रुपयों के बदले में टिकट का सौदा करते हैं?

कहावत है कि बिना आग के धुआं नहीं होता है। यदि इसमें थोड़ी भी सच्चाई है तो यह हमारे देश के लिए अत्यंत घातक है। जो दल पैसों के बदले टिकट देने की सोच रखते हैं, क्या उनके हाथों में देश सुरक्षित रह सकेगा? दूसरी बात यह कि जो व्यक्ति करोड़ों रुपए देकर चुनाव लड़ेगा, चुनाव जीतने के बाद उसका सारा ध्यान तो किसी भी तरीके से अपनी तिजोरी भरने में ही लगा रहेगा। ऐसे में वह देश या समाज का कुछ भी भला नहीं कर सकता। हमें ऐसे नेताओं की पहचान कर उन्हें रोकना चाहिए।

• बुजेश श्रीवास्तव, गाजियाबाद

चुनावी वायदा

कांग्रेस अध्यक्ष ने घोषणा की है कि अगर उनकी पार्टी सत्ता में आई तो वे न्यूनतम आय गारंटी योजना के तहत पच्चीस करोड़ लोगों को गरीबी से बाहर निकालने के लिए उन्हें हर वर्ष बहत्तर हजार रुपए देंगे। पहली बात तो यह कि आजादी के सत्तर साल बाद भी देश की एक चौथाई आबादी गरीबी की रेखा से नीचे कैसे रही जबकि कांग्रेस स्वयं पचास साल तक सत्ता पर काबिज रही है? दूसरी बात, कांग्रेस अध्यक्ष की दादीजी ने

1971 में गरीबी हटाओ का नारा

दिया था फिर भी गरीबी क्यों नहीं हटी? तीसरी और अहम बात यह कि जब कांग्रेस अध्यक्ष के पिताजी ने सत्ता संभालते ही देश को इक्कीसवीं शताब्दी में ले जाने और सुपर कंप्यूटर दिलाने की बात की थी,

तब भी क्या उन्हें भारत की गरीबी दिखाई नहीं दी? 2004 से 2014 तक कांग्रेस केंद्र में लगातार दस वर्ष तक सत्ता में थी, तब यह गरीबी हटाने की बात क्यों नहीं सूझी? अब अचानक क्या कारण हुआ कि कांग्रेस अध्यक्ष को गरीबी हटाने की बात याद आ गई? मुद्दों की कंगाली से जूझ रही कांग्रेस पार्टी शायद जनता के टैक्स के पैसों को गरीबों में बांट कर सत्ता हथियाना चाहती है। लेकिन बहत्तर हजार रुपए वार्षिक देने से गरीबों की गरीबी मिट जाएगी ऐसा होना मुमिकन भी नहीं लगता क्योंकि छह हजार

मासिक में गरीब खाएगा क्या और गरीबी दूर करने के उपाय करेगा क्या? देशवासियों की गरीबी दूर करने के लिए उनके लिए शिक्षा और रोजगारोन्मुखी कार्यक्रम पेश करने होंगे न कि मुफ्त में रुपए बांटने से यह होगा। अंत में बात यह कि कांग्रेस अध्यक्ष कहीं किसी की कोई गरीबी दूर करने वाले नहीं। यह महज वोट हासिल करने के लिए चुनावी चाल है। • सतप्रकाश सनोठिया, रोहिणी, दिल्ली

साख का सवाल

विधायिका, कार्यपालिका और न्यायपालिका के कंधों पर इस देश को संविधान सम्मत चलाने का दायित्व है। इन तीनों में से एक पर भी अगर आरोप लगते हैं तो समझिये इस देश में लोकतंत्र कलंकित होता है। सर्वोच्च अदालत में भी कुछ ऐसा ही खेल इस समय चल रहा है। न्यायपालिका के शीर्ष पद पर आसीन व्यक्ति पर एक महिला ने यौन शोषण का आरोप लगाया है। निश्चित रूप में किसी भी महिला का सम्मान सबसे अहम होता है। लिहाजा इस मामले में जांच और कार्रवाई जरूर होनी चाहिए। मगर महिला ने आरोप लगाने का जो तरीका चुना उससे कई सवाल खड़े होते हैं। मसलन, उसने आरोपों वाला शपथ पत्र सभी न्यायाधीशों के साथ-साथ मीडिया को भी जारी किया। इसका मतलब यह हुआ कि इस विषय को सनसनीखेज बनाने की दिलचस्पी ज्यादा दिखाई दे रही है। इससे पूर्व भी दो मुख्य न्यायाधीशें, न्यायमूर्ति जेएस खेहर और दीपक मिश्रा पर भी उंगली उठाने की कोशिश की गई थी। दीपक मिश्रा के मामले में तो महाभियोग चलाने की भी मांग उठी थी। यह साख का संकट है। यहां एक व्यक्ति पर हमला करके इस संस्था की साख को नुकसान पहुंचाया जा रहा है। उम्मीद है कि दो अलग-अलग जांच टीमों के गठन से मामले की तह तक पहुंचने में काबयाबी मिलेगी। जंग बहादुर सिंह, गोलपहाड़ी, जमशेदपुर

नई दिल्ली



पूर्व सांसद फुरकान अंसारी व प्रदीप कुमार बलमुचु, पूर्व मंत्री बंधु तिर्की जैसे महत्वपूर्ण नेताओं की सुरक्षा में लापरवाही बरती गयी .महुआटांड़ में चुनावी सभा के मद्देनजर एक भी पुलिस बल की तैनाती **किशोर शाहदेव**, कांग्रेस.

लोकसभा

चुनाव २०१९

गाण चचा

फोकटे में मिला बुके देकर अपना बोझा उतार लिये नेताजी

एगो प्रत्याशी हैं, धनलक्ष्मी इन पर खासे मेहरबान हैं. अपने ठाट-बाट के लिए जाने जाते हैं. पुराने रईस हैं. इस बार दिल्ली से टिकट का जुगाड़ भी लगा लिया हैं. कई को पटकनिया दे दी है. अब राजधानी से एनएच-33 पर इनकी गाड़ी दौड़ेगी. राजधानी से सटले सीट पर उतरे हैं. गप्प चचा का जाने कैसे जान गये. एक दिन एक इनके पार्टी के कैडर मिलने घर पहुंच गये. इनका घरवा राजधानी का चकाचक आलीशान बंगला है. कैडर तो सुंदर बुके बना कर मिलने पहुंचे, त पता चला कि नेता जी बाथरूम में हैं. बैचारा इंतजार कर थक गया, तो पता चला कि बाथरूम में डेढ़ घंटा रहेंगे. हाथ में बुके का बोझा लेकर इधर-उधर दौड़ते रहे. मन में खुशी था कि नेताजी को टिकटवा भेंटा गया है, तो मिल कर बता ही दें. इसके बाद वह उनसे मिलने उनके होटल पहुंचे. नेताजी को बुके बढ़ाया, तो बोले इधर रख दो. कैडर बेचारा क्या करता, रख दिया. मायूस भी था. इधर-उधर की बात होनी लगी, तो दूसरे नेता पहुंचे बधाई देने. हाथ खाली था, सामने बुके देखे तो मनवा पुलिकत हो गया. इधर-उधर देखा और झट से बुके उठा लिये. फिर प्रत्याशी महोदय को भेंट करने पहुंचे. अंदरे-अंदरे खुश थे कि बुके बनवाया भी नहीं, फोकटे में भेंटा गया. काम भी निकल गया. राजनीति का गजब फेरा है भाई



ई ठीक है



पांच वर्षों में एक भी प्रेस कांफ्रेंस नहीं, पर सितारों के साथ खूब पीआर स्टंट. चुनाव के वक्त नये–नये हँथकंडों से कुछ नहीं बदलने वाला मोदी जी. बदले जायेंगे, तो बस आप और आपकी जुमला पार्टी.

अजयनाथ शाहदेव, कांग्रेस के प्रदेश प्रवक्ता



2019 में भी आप दिल्ली में गंगा–जमुनी तहजीब भारतीय नरेंद्र मोदी के नेतृत्व में मजबूत सरकार बनायें. ऐसी सरकार जो आपकी भावनाओं के हिसाब से फैसले लेने में सक्षम हो . इसलिए, झारखंड की १४ सीट अपने मत से मोदी जी के नाम करें . विकसित झारखंड, विकसित भारत के निर्माण का

अमर कुमार बाउरी, मंत्री

मार्ग प्रशस्त करें.



परंपरा का हिस्सा रही है. पर, भाजपा ने सत्ता में आने के बाद देश को बांटने और नफरत की खाई चौडी करने की राजनीति की . प्रेम, सद्भाव और आपसी भाइचारगी के बीच मिल कर रहनेवालों को लडाने वाली सरकार को सत्ता में रहने का क्या अधिकार है .

सुबोधकांत सहाय, पूर्व सांसद सह रांची से कांगेस प्रत्यार्श



यही है मेरी पसंद

जो जनता के काम को अपना और देश का काम समझे

भारत दुनिया का सबसे बड़ा लोकतांत्रिक देश है. इस बार भी लोकतंत्र के इस महापर्व में विभिन्न पार्टियों के बीच सरकार बनाने की होड़ है.



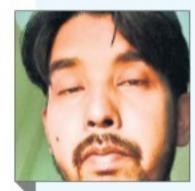
ऐसे में एक होनहार और ईमानदार सांसद कठिन प्रतीत हो सकता है. फिर भी हमें देश के एक जिम्मेदार नागरिक होने के नाते अपने कर्तव्यों से पीछे नहीं हटना चाहिए और मतदान जरूर करना चाहिए. अपने विवेकानुसार अपना सांसद चुनें. वैसा सांसद चुनें जो स्वच्छ छवि वाला हो, जो धर्म जाति और अन्य भेदभाव से ऊपर उठकर विकास के प्रति प्रतिबद्ध हो. जमीनी स्तर

से जुड़ा हो. लोगों की समस्याएं सुनने को तैयार हो. जो जनता की जरूरतों को अपनी और देश की जरुरत समझे.

राहुल राज महली



इनकी भी सुनें



हमारा सांसद आदर्शवादी, समानतावादी, नैतिकतावादी और कर्मयोगी होना चाहिए। वह अपने क्षेत्र में आधारभूत सुविधाओं मुहैया कराने के लिए कृतसंकल्प हो, जो लोगों की समस्याओं को भलीभांति महसूस करे और सरकारी योजनाओं का लाभ दिलाते हुए क्षेत्र की समस्या को दूर कर सके.

मो आरिफ



हमारा सांसद रिमोट कंटोल से चलनेवाला नहीं होना चाहिए वह युवाओं की समस्याओं की ओर ध्यान दे. वह ऐसा हो, जो बिजली, पानी, सड़क, शिक्षा से जुड़ी क्षेत्र के मतदाताओं की जरूरतों को समझे और अपने क्षेत्र को विकास की ओर ले जाये. यहां के युवाओं में जोश भरा है, बस देश के विकास के लिए एक अच्छा सांसद चाहिए.

देश के लोकतंत्र की शक्ति यहां के लोग हैं . आगामी लोकसभा चुनाव के लिए ग्रामीण क्षेत्र की महिलओं से अनुरोध है कि वे मतदान जरूर करें और इस विषय पर दूसरों के बीच भी जागरूकता लायें. अपना वोट देकर देश के लोकतंत्र को एक नयी ऊंचाई तक पहुंचाने का प्रयास करें.

शंभु केसरवानी

हमारे सांसद का व्यक्तित्व अनुकरणीय हो. जिसे देख कर लगे कि वह एक विश्वगुरु देश का सांसद हैं. वह आमलोगों की तकलीफों को



अपनी पीडा समझने वाला हो. पढा लिखा हो अपने क्षेत्र की अधिसंख्य जनता से सीधे संपर्क में हो. जनता को कभी भी उससे मिलने, उसके सामने अपनी बातें रखने के लिए मशक्कत न करनी पड़े. जाति, धर्म, मजहब जैसी संकीर्णता से उपर हो

बिपता गोप

प्रभात रंजन

2014 में झाविमो व झामुमो को मिले संयुक्त वोट भाजपा के वोट से ज्यादा

विद्युत का खूंटा हिलाने के लिए चंपई को चाहिए एकजुट विपक्ष



संजीव भारद्वाज > जमशेदपुर

2014 में लोकसभा चुनाव के सात माह बाद ही झारखंड में विधानसभा चुनाव भी हुए. लोकसभा चुनाव में भाजपा प्रत्याशी विद्युतवरण महतो ने जहां जीत हासिल की थी, वहीं जमशेदपुर लोकसभा के अंतर्गत आनेवाली छह विधानसभा में चार में भाजपा प्रत्याशी, एक में भाजपा की सहयोगी आजस पार्टी के प्रत्याशी और एक सीट पर झामुमो प्रत्याशी को जीत हासिल हुई. बहरागोड़ा घाटशिला, पोटका और जुगसलाई में भाजपा के साथ सीधे मुकाबलें में जहां झामुमो प्रत्याशी थे, वहीं जमशेदपुर पूर्वी और पश्चिमी विधान सभा में भाजपा के साथ सीधे मुकाबले में कांग्रेस प्रत्याशी थे. लोकसभा चुनाव में एक बार फिर अपनी ताकत को दिखाना भाजपा के लिए चुनौती होगी. लोकसभा चुनाव में जहां विद्युतवरण महतो भाजपा के प्रत्याशी हैं, जबिक महागठबंधन की ओर से उन्हें कड़ी टक्कर झामुमो के केंद्रीय उपाध्यक्ष चंपई सोरेन दे रहे हैं. विधानसभा चुनाव में जिस तरह अपना प्रदर्शन भाजपा ने किया, उसे बरकरार रखने में किसी तरह कोई कसर नहीं छोड़ेगा, जबिक चंपई सोरेन के बारे में एक बात सर्वविदित है कि वे अपनी चुनावी रणनीति बेहतर ढंग से बनाते हैं और उसे खुद काफी तरीके से लागू करते हैं. महागठबंधन

2014 लोकसभा चुनाव में विधानसभावार मिले मत 1. विद्युतवरण महतो, भाजपा 2. डॉ अजय कुमार, झाविमो 3. निरूप मोहंती, झामुमो

बहरागोड़ा	घाटशिला	पोटका	जुगसला ई	जमशेदपुर पूर्वी	जमशेदपुर पश्चिम
1.61,648.	1.64,220	1.57,929.	1.93,309	1 . 91,138.	1. 89,021.
2.50,014	2 .33,717.	2 .65,897.	2 .73,411.	2 .64,351.	2 .74,850.
3.27,145	3.37,140	3.33,217	3.25,404	3 . 3699.	3 . 8906.

कांग्रेस, झाविमो, राजद का पूरा समर्थन हासिल रहेगा, जबिक सीपीआइ-सीपीएम ने अभी अपने पत्ते नहीं खोले हैं. भाजपा के साथ आजसू पार्टी रहेगी, जबकि टीएमसी ने अपना प्रत्याशी देने का घोषणा कर दी है. झामुमो प्रत्याशी के समर्थन में अन्य दल अपना कितना वोट टर्न करा पायेंगे, इसके लिए वक्त का इंतजार करना होगा.

राजनीतिक जानकारों की मानें. तो बहरागोड़ा में भाजपा प्रत्याशी को टक्कर देनेवाले समीर महंती इस बार भाजपा में हैं. इसलिए बहरागोड़ा में झामुमो के लिए मुश्किल का सामना करना पड़ेगा. घाटशिला में कांग्रेस के दिग्गज नेता डॉ प्रदीप कुमार बलमुचु ने अपनी परंपरागत सीट से अपनी बेटी सेंड्रिला बलमुचु को मैदान में उतारा था. विधानसभा चुनाव में भाजपा प्रत्याशी को यहां से जीत हासिल हुई थी, जबकि

कांग्रेस तीसरे स्थान पर थी. गठबंधन को वोट टर्न कराना यहां चुनौती भरा काम हो सकता है. पोटका में स्थिति साफ है. यहां भाजपा और झामुमों के बीच सीधा मुकाबला होगा. भाजपा के खिलाफ वाले सभी झाममो प्रत्याशी के समर्थन में वोट करने की स्थिति में रहेंगे. झामुमो को जहां देहात का आसरा है, वहीं भाजपा को शहरी वोटों पर पुरा भरोसा है. जुगसलाई में भाजपा ने अपने सहयोगी आजसू पार्टी के प्रत्याशी के समर्थन में वोट को टर्न कराने का काम किया था, जिसका साफ असर परिणाम में देखने को मिला. गोविंदपुर, जुगसलाई जैसे क्षेत्रों में आजसू पार्टी को बेहतर वोट मिले, जिन्होंने जीत के अंतर को बढ़ा दिया. पूर्वी जमशेदपुर में मुकाबला एकतरफा रहा. भाजपा के कदावर नेता वर्तमान में मुख्यमंत्री रघुवर दास ने एक लाख से अधिक मत हासिल कर अपने

आस-पास भी कांग्रेस और झाविमो को फटकने नहीं दिया. पूर्वी में झामुमो का संगठन काफी कमजोर है. ऐसी स्थिति में प्रत्याशी को खुद यहां दम लगाना होगा. प्रत्याशी को भाजपा के कुछ भितरघातियों का समर्थन जरूर हासिल होगा, लेकिन वोट झामुमो में दर्न होगा, इसको लेकर संशय बना रहेगा, जमशेदपुर पश्चिम की राजनीति साफ-साफ है. अक्सर यह देखा जाता है कि भाजपा के खिलाफ मजबृत प्रत्याशी के समर्थन में लोग गोलबंद होते हैं. यही कारण है कि पिछले चुनाव में झामुमो- झाविमो के प्रत्याशी को महज 8-10 हजार वोट ही मिले. भाजपा प्रत्याशी ने कांग्रेस प्रत्याशी को कडी टक्कर देते हुए मुकाबला 5.5 प्रतिशत अधिक मतों के अंतर से पराजित कर दिया. यहां झामुमो प्रत्याशी के समर्थन में वोट टर्न होना कोई बड़ी चुनौती की बात नहीं दिखती.

कुडलौंगां गांव के वोटर छह किमी दूर जाते हैं वोट देने



प्रतिनिधि ▶ टंडवा

कुडलौंगां गांव(सराढू पंचायत) के वोटर छह किलोमीटर पैदल चल कर वोट देने जाते हैं. यह समस्या ग्रामीण 19 साल से झेल रहे हैं. ग्रामीणों ने पिछले लोकसभा चुनाव में गांव में ही बूथ बनाने की मांग की थी, पर अब तक ग्रामीणों की समस्या पर ध्यान नहीं दिया गया. गांव के 75 वर्षीय जगदेव साव कहते हैं कि पहले विधानसभा या लोकसभा चुनाव में गांव में ही बुथ होता था. वर्ष 2000 के बाद यहाँ से बूथ हटा लिया गया. कुडलौंगां गांव की आबादी करीब 1500 है, जिसमें 600 वोटर हैं. ग्रामीणों ने बताया कि लंबी दूरी होने के कारण कई लोग वोट देने नहीं जाते हैं. सबसे ज्यादा परेशानी बुजुर्गों को होती है. बुजुर्ग मतदाता जयबीर सिंह ने बताया कि माओवादियों के वोट बहिष्कार के कारण वर्ष 2000 में यहां वोट नहीं हुआ था, जिसके बाद से यहां पोलिंग बूथ हटा लिया गया. ग्रामीण पंकज साहू, परमानंद मिश्रा, द्वारिका सिंह, रघुवीर साहू, नरेश साहू, संतु यादव आदि ने कहा कि वोट लोकतंत्र का महान पर्व हैं, इसलिए हमलोग वोट बहिष्कार तो नहीं करेंगे, लेकिन विधानसभा चुनाव में अगर बूथ गांव में नहीं दिया गया तो ग्रामीण वोट बहिष्कार करने के लिए सोचेंगे.

55 बुथों में पड़े थे मात्र 900 वोट

एक वक्त था जब टंडवा प्रखंड में उग्रवाद की तृती बोलती थी. उग्रवादियों के फरमान पर लोग वोट देने तक नहीं जाते थे, पर आज हालात कुछ और है. लोग निर्भीक होकर मतदान कर रहे हैं. 1998 लोकसभा चुनाव में माओवादियों ने वोट बहिष्कार की घोषणा की थी. इसके बावजूद भी लोगों ने वोट दिया था. वोट के बाद उग्रवादियों ने गाडिलौंग के महादेव यादव की अंगुली व नइमुद्दीन अंसारी का हाथ काट दिया था. जिसका असर वर्ष 2000 के विधानसभा चुनाव में पड़ा था. वर्ष 2000 में हुए विधानसभा चुनाव में पुनः माओवादियों ने वोट बहिष्कार की घोषणा की, जिसका व्यापक असर चुनाव पर देखने को मिला. वर्ष 2000 के विधानसभा चुनाव में टंडवा प्रखंड के 55 बूथों में मात्र 800 से 900 मतदान हुआ था. यह मत भी राहम गांव के तीन व नई पारम गांव के एक बुथ पर पड़ा था.

प्रभात चीपाल हजारीबाग संसदीय सीट

के उम्मीदवार झामुमो नेता चंपई सोरेन को

हजारीबाग संसदीय सीट से भाजपा ने वर्तमान सांसद व केंद्रीय मंत्री जयंत सिन्हा को चुनावी मैदान में उतारा है . वहीं महागठबंधन की ओर से कांग्रेस के गोपाल साहू चुनाव लड़ रहे हैं . पूर्व सांसद भुवनेश्वर प्रसाद मेहता सीपीआइ व वाम समर्थक उम्मीदवार हैं. छह मई को पांचवें चरण में हजारीबाग लोकसभा क्षेत्र में मतदान होगा . जनता उम्मीदवारों से अपनी समस्याओं को लेकर उनके विचार जानना चाहती है. चुनावी मैदान में जनता के मुद्दे पर प्रभात चौपाल में हजारीबाग के तीनों प्रत्याशियों से पांच सवाल किये गये हैं . प्रत्याशियों ने सभी सवालों का जवाब खुल कर दिया . वरीय संवाददाता सलाउद्दीन की रिपोर्ट.

जनता आपको 🦳 आप दूसरे प्रत्याशी से 📗 🥥 आपकी प्राथमिकता

ऐसा आप क्या नया करेंगे जो अभी **4** तक आपके क्षेत्र में नहीं हुआ है?

क्यों चुनें? 🗘 ब्रिस मायने अलग हैं? 🔾 क्या होगी?

5 संसद में क्षेत्र के कौन से मुद्दे और अपकी प्राथमिकता में होगी?

25 हजार करोड़ का निवेश हुआ, मेरे पास विजन: जयंत सिन्हा

किया है. जिसको आगे जारी रखने की आवश्यकता है. मैंने भी हजारीबाग में नॉलेज सिटी का निर्माण, हजारीबाग हवाई अड्डा

अपने लोकसभा क्षेत्र में छोटे बड़े बहुत सारे काम किया हूं. पिछले पांच सालों में हजारीबाग में 25 हजार करोड़ का निवेश हुआ है. जिससे यहां अनेकों बड़ी योजनाएं आयी हैं. हजारीबाग देश के उन चुनिंदा संसदीय क्षेत्रों में से एक है, जहां ऐसा विकास हुआ है.

🔼 मैं एक प्रोफेशनल व्यक्ति रहा हूं. कई क्षेत्रों का मुझे अलग से अनुभव रहा है. मैं पढ़ा-लिखा हूं और अपने अनुभव का उपयोग क्षेत्र के विकास के लिए लगातार कर रहा हूं. अपने क्षेत्र के दूर-दराज इलाकों व पंचायतों में एक

टीम बना कर काम किया हूं. दूसरी पार्टियों में सेवा का नहीं सत्ता का लोभ है . मेरे पास विकास का विजन है. 🔼 किसानों की आय दोगुनी करना, युवाओं के लिए कर रोजागार का सृजन, क्षेत्र में धार्मिक एवं प्राकृतिक पर्यटन रोजगार, हर घर में बुनियादी सुविधाएं, सबका साथ सबका

🔼 राष्ट्रीय स्तर पर नरेंद्र मोदी की सरकार ने अभूतपूर्व कार्य 👚 स्वास्थ्य और आदिवासी मूलवासियों के अधिकारों की सुरक्षा, का निर्माण पुरा करना, हजारीबाग मेडिकल

कॉलेज व अस्पताल, अक्षयपात्रा महारसोई घर की शुरुआत कराना, सभी शुरू की गयी योजनाओं को पूरा कराना. हजारीबाग को विकास के मायने में नंबर वन बनाना.

🔼 हजारीबाग लोकसभा का नॉलेज हब बनायेंगे, टेक्साटाइल्स उद्योग, किसानों के लिए कोल्ड स्टोरेज, कृषि सुविधाओं का विस्तार, सिंचाई की सुविधा, कृषि सहकारी समिति का निर्माण, खाद प्रसंस्करण प्लांट की स्थापना, हर पंचायत में एक सामुदायिक केंद्र

का निर्माण और सभी परियोजनाओं से रोजगार सुजन करायेंगे. िशिक्षा का स्तर बेहतर करना, ताकि पलायन रूके, परियोजनाओं के माध्यम से विकास करना, कौशल का विकास को बढ़ावा देना, हर तरह के ट्रांसपोर्ट सिस्टम बेहतर करना.

मैं हवा-हवाई नेता नहीं, मैं लोगों का दिल नहीं तोडुंगा : गोपाल साह्

🔼 मैं झारखंड का पुत्र हूं. हजारीबाग लोकसभा क्षेत्र में उत्पादन को लागत सौ रुपये और बिक्री 50 रुपये में करने मेरा जमीन, मकान व रिश्ता है. हजारीबाग के युवकों को पर विवश हैं, उसे खत्म करूंगा. हजारीबाग गांव से रोजगार दिलाने, विस्थापितों को अधिकार _______ प्लायन को रोक कर रोजगार

व सम्मान दिलाने और सामाजिक समरसता के लिए काम किया हं

मैं हवा-हवाई नेता नहीं हूं. मैंने इंग्लैंड से मास्टर ऑफ मैनेजमेंट किया है. पढ़ा-लिखा हूं. सभी से मिलने जुलनेवाला और समस्याओं से रूबरू हूं.

🔼 हजारीबाग लोकसभा क्षेत्र में पानी की बहुत बड़ी समस्या है. शहर के लोग जार का पानी खरीद कर पीते हैं. सैकड़ों गांव के लोगों को पीने का पानी नहीं मिलता है. मैं हजारीबाग लोगों के दिलों को तोडूंगा नहीं

जोडूंगा. आपसी भाइचारगी बढाऊंगा. विस्थापितों और स्थानीय लोगों को किसी भी कीमत पर रोजगार दिलाऊंगा. युवाओं की क्षमता को सफल बनाने के लिए संसाधन उपलब्ध कराऊंगा. किसानों के खेतों में सिंचाई व अपने



दिलाऊंगा.

🔼 गांव-गांव में शुद्ध पेयजल उपलब्घ करायेंगे. जेपीएससी की परीक्षा राज्य बनने के बाद 18 बार की जगह पांच बार हुई है. इससे जो छात्रों की उम्र सीमा की बाधा आ गयी है. उसके लिए स्थानीय नौकरी में प्राथमिकता दिलाऊंगा. महिलाओं के लिए वर्तमान जरूरत के अनुसार रोजगार दिलाना. पर्यटन स्थल जो हैं, उन्हें विकसिक करूंगा.

🛮 🔼 🗓 कोयलांचल क्षेत्र में विस्थापन, भूमि अधिग्रहण, बेरोजगारी और पानी की समस्या के मुद्दों को उठाऊंगा. जिन गांवों से युवकों का पलायन हो रहा है. उन गांवों के लिए रोजगार से संबंधित बड़ी-बड़ी योजनाओं लाऊंगा.

विस्थापितों और बेरोजगार युवकों को नौकरी दिलाना है : मेहता

🔼 मेरा 51 वर्ष का राजनीतिक जीवन है. महाजनी प्रथा के खिलाफ केरेडारी बडकागांव में आंदोलन किया. विस्थापन की लड़ाई लड़ी. स्थानीय युवकों को तृतीय और चतुर्थ श्रेणी में बहाल कराया. जिलावार स्थानीय लोगों को शिक्षक में बहाली हो, इसके लिए कानूनी लड़ाई लड़ कर जीता. विनोबा भावे विश्वविद्यालय की स्थापना और सांप्रदायिक सौहार्द्र बनाने के क्षेत्र में काम किया हं 🔼 भाजपा और कांग्रेस उम्मीदवार की तुलना में 95 प्रतिशत जनता मुझे पहचानती है. मैंने झूठे आश्वासन देकर जनता को ठगने का काम नहीं किया हूं.अधूरी योजनाओं को पूरी दिखा कर जनता से समर्थन नहीं मांग रहा हं.



🔼 अल, जंगल और जमीन का मालिकाना हक दिलाना, विस्थापितों को सम्मान व नौकरी के साथ भूमि अधिग्रहण कानून 2013 का अक्षरसः पालन कराना है. हजारीबाग में सांप्रदायिक सौहार्द्र बनाना.

🔼 स्थानीय नौजवानों को रोजगार दिलाना. किसानों के खेतों में सिंचाई और ऋण माफी करवाना. पारा शिक्षकों, सेविका, सहायिका, सहिया व अनुबंधकर्मी का स्थायीकरण कराना.

🔼 🕦 हजारीबाग लोकसभा क्षेत्र में विस्थापन, रोजगार, स्थानीय लोगों को नौकरी, कोयला खदान और सभी बड़ी कंपनियों में प्रभावित लोगों को नौकरी दिलाना होगा.

क्या मध्यप्रदेश में अब केवल अपराधी और भ्रष्टाचारी ही रहेंगें? ऐसे शासन पर धिक्कार है.

शिवराज सिंह चौहान, नेता भाजपा

रांची, शनिवार

सच तो यह है प्रियंका की वायरल तस्वीर शहीद के घर की नहीं



प्रियंका गांधी की एक महिला और एक बच्चे के साथ का फोटो वायरल हो रहा है . इसमें राहल टेबल पर रखी प्लेट में से कुछ उठाकर खा रहे हैं . दावा किया जा रहा है कि प्रियंका-

राहल एक शहीद के घर हैं. फोटो के साथ लिखा है, जो शहीद के घर जाकर बच्चे का कुरकुरे भी खा गया, देश को क्या छोड़ेगा .

पड़ताल में दावा गलत पाया गया

शामली के ढाबे की है तस्वीर: यह तस्वीर उप्र के शामली के एक ढाबे की है . 20 फरवरी को राहुल और प्रियंका जब शहीद के परिवार से मिलने गये थे, तब रास्ते में इस ढाबे पर रुके थे. इसी दौरान कुछ लोग उनके पास पहुंच गये थे.

चुनावी रंग

'द ग्रेट खली' ने पीएम मोदी के समर्थन में मांगा वोट



कोलकाता. डब्ल्य डब्ल्य इ फेम द ग्रेट खली उर्फ दिलीप सिंह राणा ने शुक्रवार को जादवपुर लोकसभा क्षेत्र से भाजपा उम्मीदवार अनुपम हाजरा के पक्ष चुनाव प्रचार किया. वह श्री हाजरा के नामांकन दाखिल करने के समय अलीपुर जिला मुख्यालय में उपस्थित थे. उल्लेखनीय है कि श्री हाजरा पहले तृणमूल कांग्रेस के सांसद थे, लेकिन चुनाव के पहले वे तृणमूल से नाता तोड़ कर भाजपा में शामिल हो गये हैं. भाजपा ने उन्हें फिल्म अभिनेत्री तृणमूल कांग्रेस की उम्मीदवार मिमी चक्रवर्ती के खिलाफ उम्मीदवार बनाया है. मिमी चक्रवर्ती ने भी शुक्रवार को नामांकन पत्र दाखिल किया. इस मौके पर खली ने कहा िक अनुपम हाजरा उनका छोटा भाई है, उसे ज्यादा-ज्यादा मत देकर विजयी बनाएं, ताकि वह स्थानीय समस्या को संसद तक पहुंचा सके तथा प्रधानमंत्री नरेंद्र मोदी को फिर से विजयीं बनाएं, क्योंकि उन्होंने विश्व में भारत का नाम ऊंचा किया है. अनुपम हाजरा ने कहा कि खली से उनकी बात हुई थी तथा उन्होंने उन्हें आमंत्रित किया था. उनके मात्र आमंत्रण से ही वह आये और उनका साथ दिया. उन्होंने कहा कि हालांकि ग्रेट खली की रेसलिंग प्रतियोगिता चल रही थी, लेकिन वे प्रतियोगिता छोड़ कर उनके पक्ष में चुनाव प्रचार के लिए कोलकाता आये.

चुनावी किस्सा

जब हमारे राष्ट्र कवि बने राज्यसभा सदस्य



रामधारी सिंह दिनकर

सत्ता के करीब रह कर भी जनता के बीच रहे बेहद लोकप्रिय

१९५२ में राज्यसभा के सदस्य चुने गर्य, १२ साल सांसद रहे

आजादी से पहले विद्रोही कवि और उसके बाद राष्ट्रकवि के रूप में ख्यात रामधारी सिंह दिनकर राजनीतिक में भी रह चुके हैं. हिंदी साहित्य के इतिहास में ऐसे लेखक बहुत कम हुए हैं, जिन्होंने सत्ता के करीब रहने के बाद भी जनता के बीच अपनी लोकप्रियता बनाये रखी. 1952 में जब भारत की प्रथम संसद अस्तित्व में आयी, तो उन्हें राज्यसभा सदस्य चुना गया. वह 12 साल सांसद रहे. वह 1964 से 1965 तक भागलपुर विश्वविद्यालय के कुलपति रहे. 24 अप्रैल, 1974 को उनका निधन हो गया.

कार्टून कोना बीबीसी NEWS Red ब्राम्री..भ्रीर कितना दील चाहिस् ?

'फ्लोटिंग वोटर' ही कम अंतर से जीत-हार के प्रमुख नायक

महेंद्र तिवारी

लोकसभा चुनाव में हार को जीत में बदलने में 'फ्लोटिंग वोटर' अहम भूमिका निभा सकते हैं. कम अंतर यानी 3 से 5 फीसदी फ्लोटिंग वोटर नतीजे में बडा बदलाव कर सकते हैं. पिछले लोकसभा चुनाव में उप्र में आधा दर्जन सीटें ऐसी थीं, जिसे भाजपा पांच प्रतिशत से कम वोटों के अंतर जीती थीं. इसी तरह 10 सीटें ऐसी थीं. जहां जीत-हार का अंतर 10

जानें कौन होते हैं फ्लोटिंग वोटर

वोट किसे देना है, यह तय करने में अंतिम समय तक अनिर्णय की स्थिति में रहने वाले मतदाता इस श्रेणी में आते हैं . इनके लिए पार्टी या विचारधारा अहम नहीं . जिस पार्टी के प्रचार से प्रभावित हो जाएं या जिसे जीतता हुआ आंक लें, उधर चले जाते हैं . पार्टी की लीडरशिप या प्रत्याशी से प्रभावित होकर उसके साथ जा सकते हैं . आसपास के प्रभावशाली लोग जिधर जाते हैं, ये भी वही राह अपना सकते हैं.

प्रतिशत से कम था. विश्लेषक तो पहली बार के वोटर से लेकर निजी लाभ-हानि और सरकारों के परफामैंस का मल्यांकन कर मत देने वालों को भी इसी वर्ग में गिन

फर्स्ट टाइम वोटर पर ज्यादा जोर

पीएम मोदी ने पिछले लोकसभा चुनाव में भी फर्स्ट टाइम वोटर को अपने अभियान के केंद्र में रखा था और इस चुनाव में भी वे यही अपील कर रहे हैं . कांग्रेस अध्यक्ष राहुल गांधी और सपा मुखिया अखिलेश यादव युवाओं को जोड़ने पर लगातार फोकस कर रहे हैं . बसपा सुप्रीमो मायावती ने युवाओं को पार्टी की ओर आकृष्ट करने के लिए अपने युवा भतीजे आकाश आनंद को साथ–साथ मंच पर ले जाना और आगे बढ़ाना शुरू कर दिया है .

> विश्वविद्यालय, लखनऊ के समाजशास्त्री डॉ विवेकानंद नायक कहते हैं, उप्र की सियासत जाति पर केंद्रित नजर आती है. मगर फर्स्ट टाइम वोटर के पैमाने अलग हैं.

6 सीटों पर ५ फीसदी से भी

कम रहा जीत-हार का अंतर				
रामपुर	2.44			
संभल	0 .49			
सीतापुर	4.94			
क्नौज	1.79			
प्रस्ती	3.20			
गाजीपुर	3 .29			

यह व्यक्ति विशेष की ओर जा सकता है. प्रत्याशी यदि फिल्मी दुनिया से है या उसे कोई दुसरा प्रत्याशी पसंद आ गया तो वह

परिवार से अलग अपना वोट दे सकता

6 सीटें ऐसी, जहां जीत-हार का अंतर ५ से १० प्रतिशत

सहारनपुर	5.45
आजमगढ़	6 .58
लालगंज	7.0
कुशीनगर	9.0
कैसरगंज	9.29
इलाहाबाद	6.95

है, वह कहते हैं- पिछली बार फर्स्ट टाइम वोटर का झकाव नरेंद्र मोदी की ओर था. एक ऐसा वर्ग भी है, जो जिसे जीतते देखता है, उसके साथ हो जाता है.

चुनावी प्रतिबद्धता

मतदान के लिए की 360

किमी की साइकिल यात्रा

वोट करने की प्रतिबद्धता व जागरूकता

का असाधारण प्रदर्शन करते हुए 29

वर्षीय अनिकेत ने 360 किमी साइकिल

चलायी. वोटिंग के लिए बेंगलुरु से

मंगलुरु तक 360 किमी साइकिल

चला कर आये अनिकेत पहली बार

वोट कर रहे 15 लाख युवाओं के रोल

मॉडल बन चुके हैं. देश के प्रमुख

एडवटाइजिंग कंपनी एडसिंडिकेट के

कर्मचारी अनिकेत का कहना हैं कि

देश के हर नागरिक को मतदान के

प्रति प्रतिबद्धता दिखानी चाहिए. उनकी

युवाओं से अपील है कि विश्व के सबसे

बड़े लोकतंत्र के नागरिक के रूप में वोट

ग्राउंड रिपोर्ट. झामुमो अध्यक्ष शिबू सोरेन की बेटी अंजनी पहली बार लड़ रहीं चुनाव

रहे हैं, ऐसे मतदाताओं की तादाद लगातार

बदल रही है और राजनीतिशास्त्री इसे

राजनीति के लिए बेहतर संकेत मानते

हैं. बाबा साहब भीमराव आंबेडकर

मयूरभंज : अंजनी सोरेन के मैदान में आने से मुकाबला हुआ त्रिकीणीय



बारिपदा से मोनालिसा पंडा

ओडिशा-झारखंड सीमा पर स्थित मयूरभंज लोकसभा सीट पर इस बार त्रिकोणीय मुकाबला होने जा रहा है. 14.54 लाख मतदाताओं वाली इस सीट पर चुनाव चौथे चरण में 29 को होने वाला है. बीज जनता दल ने इस बार डॉ देवाशीष मार्डी को उतारा है, जबिक भारतीय जनता पार्टी ने इंजीनियर विश्वेश्वर टुडु को प्रत्याशी बनाया है. वहीं, झारखंड मुक्ति मोर्चा ने इस चुनाव में अंजनी सोरेन को उतारा हैं. अंजनी झारखंड के पूर्व मुख्यमंत्री शिबू सोरेन की बेटी हैं . मयुरभंज सीट में कांग्रेस व झामुमो के बीच सीटों का तालमेल है. इस कारण कांग्रेस इस सीट पर अपना प्रत्याशी नहीं दिया है

पिछले एक दशक से बीज जनता दल इस सीट पर सांगठनिक दृष्टि से काफी मजबूत है. बीजद की मजबूती का अंदाजा इस बात से लगाया जा सकता है कि इस लोकसभा सीट के अधीन आने वाली सभी विधानसभा सीटों पर बीजद का कब्जा है.

बीजू जनता दल के निवर्तमान सांसद रामचंद्र हांसदा को चिट फंड धोखाधडी के मामले में काफी समय तक जेल में रहने के कारण पार्टी ने इस बार टिकट नहीं दिया है . उनके स्थान पर बीजद ने झामुमो के टिकट पर पिछली बार लड़े देवाशीष मरांडी को टिकट दिया है.

उम्मीदवार/पार्टी

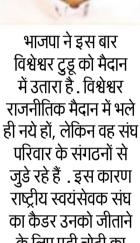
जीत की अंतर

रामचंद्र हांसदा, बीजद

डॉ एनआर मुर्मू, भाजपा

डॉ देवाशीष मरांडी, झामुमो

श्याम सुंदर हांसदा, कांग्रेस



वोट

3,93,779

2,70,913

1,72,984

1,42,165

1,22,866

के लिए एडी चोटी का जोर लगा रहे हैं.

के साथ–साथ कांग्रेस के वोट उनके पक्ष में आने की संभावना के कारण उनकी दाबेदारी को भी मजबूत माना जा रहा है . 2014 के लोकसभा चुनाव के परिणाम वोट% 37.38 25.72

16.42%

13.50%

झामुमो ने अंजनी सोरेन

को मैदान में उतारा है. उन्हें

भी राजनीतिक अनुभव

नहीं रहा है, लेकिन झामुमो

का इस पूरे लोकसभा

क्षेत्र में एक आधार होने

प्रचार में सबने झोंकी ताकत

बीजू जनता दल की ओर से पार्टी के मुखिया तथा मुख्यमंत्री नवीन पटनायक प्रचार अभियान की बागडोर संभाला हुआ है . मुख्यमंत्री इस सीट के विभिन्न स्थानों पर रोड शो व आम सभाओं को संबोधित कर रहे हैं . वे अपने भाषणों में कह रहे हैं कि मयूरभंज के लोगों की हितों की रक्षा केवल बीजद ही कर सकती है. झारखंड के नेता इस सीट पर अपने अपने पार्टी के लिए प्रचार कर चुके हैं . झारखंड के मुख्यमंत्री रघुवर दास तथा पूर्व मुख्यमंत्री हेमंत सोरेन अपने अपने पार्टी के लिए प्रचार कर चुके हैं. केंद्रीय मंत्री धर्मेंद्र प्रधान, जुएल ओराम समेत राज्य भाजपा के अनेक वरिष्ट जनजातीय नेता इस सीट पर पार्टी उम्मीदवार के पक्ष में प्रचार कर रहे हैं.

हेमंत सोरेन बहन अंजली के लिए मांग रहे वोट

उधर, झारखंड के पूर्व मुख्यमंत्री हेमंत सोरेन भी यहां अपनी बहन के लिए प्रचार कर रहे हैं . पिछले दिनों अपने भाषण में सोरेन ने कहा था मयूरभंज में झामुमो का अच्छा आधार है . इस कारण इस चुनाव में झामुमो को सफलता मिलेगी. कांग्रेस-झामुमो गठबंधन

के कारण लड़ाई दिलचस्प

इस लोकसभा सीट पर इस बार मुख्य चुनावी मुकाबला बीजद व भाजपा के बीच होना था, लेकिन झामुमो व कांग्रेस के बीच इस सीट को लेकर गढबंधन होने के कारण मुकाबला दिलचस्प हो गया है . यह मुकाबला कितना कड़ा होगा, यह इस बात पर निर्भर करेगा कि कांग्रेस के वोट कितना झामुमों के उम्मीदवार के पक्ष में ट्रांसफर होता है .

१६ बार आम चुनाव, कौन कितनी बार जीता

झारखंड पार्टी : 2 बार : 1951, 1957	कांग्रेस
एसयूसीआइ : 1 बार : 1962	1991,
स्वतंत्र पार्टी : 1 बार : 1967	भाजपा
प्रजा सोशलिस्ट पार्टी : 1 बार : 1971	झामुमो

जनता पाटी : 1 बार : 1977

: 5 बार : 1980, 1984, 1989, 1996

: 2 बार : 1998, 1999 :1बार:2004 बीजद : 2 बार : 2009,014

करें और देश को सुदृढ़ बनाएं. रोचक जानकारी

दिल्ली : लोस चुनाव लड़ रहे १७३ उम्मीदवारों में से केवल १३ महिलाएं



राजस्थान के पाली में आस्था पर भारी सर्जिकल स्ट्राइक

सीएम के तौर पर गहलोत

तो पीएम के लिए मोदी पसंद

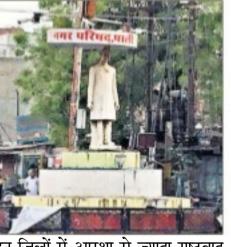
पाली से अंजनी कुमार सिंह

पाली राजस्थान की लोकसभा की ऐसी सीट है, जहां 1989 से (2009 को छोड कर) भाजपा लगातार छह बार चुनाव जीती है. कांग्रेस ने इस सीट से सबसे ज्यादा आठ बार लोकसभा के आम और उपचनाव जीते हैं.

इस लोकसभा क्षेत्र के सूरज पॉल इलाके के प्रसिद्ध चाय दुकानदार भूरा

राम चौधरी दूध में पानी नहीं मिला पाते हैं, कारण यहां दुध से ज्यादा पानी की किल्लत है. तीन दिन में एक बार पानी आता है. सुदूर गांवों की स्थिति तो और भी खराब है. पाली शहर से 20 किलोमीटर दुर सरदार समन गांव के गजे सिंह राठौर कहते हैं, 20 सालों से यहां की मांग रही है कि जोधपुर से आने वाली पानी की पाइप-लाइन को यहां तक लाया जाए, पर किसी सरकार ने इस ओर ध्यान नहीं दिया है. पाली शहर के लिए जवाई डैम (सुमेरपुर) से तीन दिन में एक बार एक से डेढ़ घंटे के लिए पानी आता है. शहर को पानी की आपूर्ति करने वाला पालिका सिटी टैंक पिछले दो साल से सुखा पड़ा है.

पाली, जालोर और सिरोही जिलों में विभिन्न धर्मावलंबियों की तादाद काफी है. जगह-जगह इनके आस्था के केंद्र देखे जा सकते हैं, पर इस बार मोदी सरकार की सर्जिकल और एयर स्ट्राइक के कारण



इन जिलों में आस्था से ज्यादा राष्ट्रवाद हावी है. यही कारण है कि पाली, जालोर और सिरोही को भाजपा सुरक्षित सीट मान रही है. रीतेश अग्रवाल कहते हैं, मोदी की वजह से भाजपा की स्थिति मजबूत है. किसी भी दल के एमपी या एमएलए से हमलोग खश नहीं है, लेकिन राज्य में सीएम और केंद्र में मोदी के काम से हमलोग खुश हैं.

पेयजल सबसे बड़ी समस्या

पाली में पेयजल और औद्योगिक इकाइयों से निकलने वाले पानी से बंजर हो रही खेती की जमीन अहम मुद्दा है . पिछले लोकसभा चुनाव में राज्य की सभी सीटों पर जीत दर्ज करने वाली भाजपा के लिए जहां अपने पुराने प्रदर्शन को दोहराने की चुनौती है, वहीं कांग्रेस के लिए चार माह पहले मिले जनसमर्थन को बरकरार रखने की .

जातीय समीकरण (लाख में) कुल मतदाता : 22.36 जाट : सीरवी मुस्लिम 1.25 एससी-एसटी 6.00

राजपूत, विश्नोई, अन्य पिछड़ा वर्ग

औद्योगिक शहर की आबादी मिश्रित

पाली राजस्थान का औद्योगिक शहर है . यहां की आबादी मिश्रित है . यहां की प्रसिद्ध उम्मेद मिल के कारण इसकी अलग पहचान है . यह जाट, सीरवी, विश्नोई, राजपूत और अनुसूचित जाति-जनजाति बाहुल्य क्षेत्र है.

पाली संसदीय सीट के अंतर्गत विस क्षेत्र : कुल विस सीट : 08 भाजपा : ४, कांग्रेस : २, निर्दलीय : २

नयी दिल्ली. दिल्ली में इस बार के लोस चुनाव में कुल 173 उम्मीदवार मैदान में है उनमें से मात्र 13 ही महिलाएं हैं. सभी बड़ी पार्टियों कांग्रेस, भाजपा और आम आदमी पार्टी ने दिल्ली में केवल एक-एक महिला उम्मीदवार खड़ा किया है. दिल्ली में 12 मई को मतदान होना है. साल 2014 में राष्ट्रीय राजधानी से लोकसभा चुनाव लड़ रहे 150 उम्मीदवारों में से 13 ही महिलाएं थीं. इन 13 में से केवल एक, भाजपा की मीनाक्षी लेखी संसद पहुंचीं थी. साल 2009 में 160 प्रत्याशियों में 18 महिलाएं थी और उनमें से केवल एक निर्वाचित हुई. कांग्रेस ने अपनी वरिष्ठ नेता और दिल्ली की पूर्व मुख्यमंत्री शीला दीक्षित को, भाजपा और आप ने क्रमशः वकील-नेता लेखी और आतिशी मार्लेना को उम्मीदवार बनाया है.

सुरक्षित सीटों से जीते सांसदों में से 40 फीसदी को इस बार मौका नहीं, 27 सीटों पर बदले उम्मीदवार

भाजपा ने अपने 96 सांसदों पर नहीं जताया भरोसा

🗢 पार्टी ने सुरक्षित सीटों के ४०% सांसदों का टिकट काटा

🗢 गुजरात में ४०%, उप्र में ३०% सांसदों का हुआ पत्ता साफ

नयी दिल्ली से हिमांशु मिश्र

सांसदों के खिलाफ नाराजगी का असर चुनाव परिणाम पर नहीं पड़ने देने के लिए भाजपा ने सुरक्षित सीटों पर काबिज सांसदों के खिलाफ बड़ी सर्जिकल स्ट्राइक की है. पार्टी ने बीते चुनाव में

सुरिक्षत सीटों से जीते सांसदों में से 40 फीसदी को इस बार मौका नहीं दिया है. पहली बार सबसे अधिक सीटों (437) पर चुनाव मैदान में उतरने वाली पार्टी ने बागियों-बुजुर्गों समेत 96 सांसदों से दूरी बनायी है. इनमें गुजरात के 25 में से 10, उत्तर प्रदेश के 71 में से 20, छत्तीसगढ़ के 10 में से 10 तो असम के 7 में से 5 सांसद टिकट पाने में नाकाम रहे हैं.

गौरतलब है कि लोकसभा में सुरक्षित सीटों की संख्या 131 (84 अनुसुचित जाति और 47 अनुसुचित जनजाति) है. पिछले चुनाव में भाजपा को इनमें 67 सीटों पर जीत हासिल हुई थी. इस चुनाव में पार्टी ने इनमें से 27 सीटों पर उम्मीदवार बदल दिये हैं.

उत्तर प्रदेश की 13 सुरक्षित सीटों में से 7 पर बदले उम्मीदवार

सुरक्षित सीटों पर सांसदों के खिलाफ सबसे बड़ी सर्जिकल स्ट्राइक यूपी में हुई है . यहां पार्टी ने 13 सुरक्षित सीटों पर से 7 उम्मीदवार बदल दिए हैं. इसी प्रकार महाराष्ट्र में 3, छत्तीसगढ़ और मध्यप्रदेश में 5-5 सुरक्षित सीटों पर सांसदों को टिकट से वंचित किया गया है.

उत्तर प्रदेश में बागियों सहित २१ सांसदों पर गिरी गाज



भाजपा ने यूपी में पिछले चुनाव में 71 सीटों पर जीत हासिल की थी . इस बार दो बागियों सहित पार्टी ने 21 उम्मीदवारों को टिकट से वंचित किया . इनमें संभल से सत्यपाल सैनी, शाहजहांपुर से कृष्णा राज, फतेहपुर सीकरी से बाबूलाल, हरदोई से अंशुल, मिश्रिख से अंजुबाला, संतकबीरनगर से शरद त्रिपाठी, देवरिया से कलराज मिश्र, अंबेडकरनगर से हरिओम पांडे, हाथरस से राजेश दिवाकर, रामपुर से नैपाल सिंह, इटावा से अशोक दोहरे, कानपुर से मुरलीमनोहर जोशी, बाराबंकी से प्रियंका रावत, कुशीनगर से राजेश पांडे, बलिया से भरत सिंह, मछलीशहर से रामचरित्र निषाद, राबर्ट्सगंज से छोटेलाल शामिल हैं. बागियों में शामिल बहराइच से सावित्री फूले, इलाहाबाद से श्यामाचरण शुक्ल और इटावा से अशोक दोहरे दूसरे दल से चुनाव लड़ रहे हैं

सुरक्षित सीटों पर सबसे अधिक गाज क्यों

पार्टी का शुरू से ही सुरक्षित सीटों पर व्यापक प्रभाव रहा है . यह प्रभाव पार्टी की स्थापना के बाद लगातार बढ़ता गया है . पार्टी नहीं चाहती कि सांसदों के प्रति नाराजगी का असर चुनाव के प्रदर्शन पर पड़े . आतंरिक रिपोर्ट में भी सुरक्षित सीटों से जुड़े सांसदों के खिलाफ ही सर्वाधिक नाराजगी की बात सामने आई थी . यही कारण है कि टिकट पाने में नाकाम रहने वालों में सबसे बड़ी संख्या सुरक्षित सीटों से जुड़े सांसदों की हैं.

लोकसभा चुनाव की स्पेशल स्टोरीज और वीडियो के लिए देखें prabhatkhabar.com , अपडेट रहें हमारी सोशल साइट के साथ . लाइक और फॉलो करें

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