

Legalise land leasing

By dilly-dallying on the enactment of laws in tune with the NITI Aayog's model bill, state governments are doing a disservice to the farm community



FARM VIEW

SURINDER SUD

Legalisation of land leasing is no longer a potentially gainful agrarian reform but has become an economic necessity. Unlike the post-independence land reforms, which were required to dismantle the

feudal land ownership regime and reduce the disparity between haves and have-nots, the need now is to facilitate expansion of farm holdings to make them economically viable. It is needed also to put the idle land belonging to absentee landowners to productive use.

Continual division of land owing to inheritance laws has rendered most farm holdings too small to support average farm households. The last agricultural census (2010-11) showed that nearly 85 per cent of the operational land holdings are less than 2 hectares in size, the average being just 1.15 hectares. Worse still, the count of such small and marginal holdings is swelling annually by 1.5 to 2.0 millions. Disquietingly, even these holdings, in most cases, are not in single pieces but are fragmented into tinier parcels of land located wide apart. As

a result, a sizable chunk of them has become economically, as also operationally, unviable. This is one of the reasons for the erosion of profitability of farming and consequential widespread economic distress in the farm sector.

Since the process of land fragmentation is set to persist unless the inheritance laws are amended to check division of property among heirs — which is unlikely — the development of a transparent and legally valid land lease market seems the most practical way to mitigate its ill-effects. Legalised leasing would allow exchange of land among farmers for agricultural use without affecting its ownership. While the holders of small and uncultivated pieces of land would be incentivised to lease them out to their neighbours or others, the small and tiny farmers, in turn, would be

able to lease-in additional land to boost their earnings.

In the absence of legal sanctity, most absentee land owners are wary of letting out their land for fear of losing its control. This is the fallout of the old tenancy laws in some states which grant certain enduring rights over land to tenants. Around 25 million hectares of arable land is estimated to remain fallow (untilled) for this reason. Besides, it results in oral or concealed tenancy deals where neither party enjoys any security.

This apart, informal leaseholders, including sharecroppers, suffer from several other disadvantages as well. The most significant among these is the denial of access to cheaper institutional credit, crop insurance, disaster relief and other benefits and subsidies offered by the government to land-owning farmers. They are left out even from the moves like loan waivers and income support. Besides, they do not have any incentive to invest in measures to boost productivity of land and efficiency of farming.

Most of these handicaps can be addressed by making land leases legally valid. The National Institution for Transforming India Aayog (NITI Aayog) has already drafted a Model

Land Lease Act to serve as a guide for the states to enact their own land leasing laws. Though this draft was circulated to the states in 2016, only a few of them have shown any interest in amending their land-related statutes on these lines. The mooted legislation seeks to safeguard the legitimate interests of both land owners and tenants. While allowing the lease deals to be finalised through mutual consent, it provides for restoration of land to the owners after the termination of the lease. Besides, it specifically gives leaseholders a status equal to that of land-owning farmers to enable them to get all the benefits available to other cultivators. Another notable feature is that it entitles tenants, who invest in land improvement, to get back the unused value of their investment at the expiry of the tenancy. This would spur investment in measures like land levelling, upgradation of soil health and provision of irrigation on the leased lands. Thus, by dilly-dallying on the enactment of laws in tune with the NITI Aayog's model bill, the state governments are doing a disservice to the farm community.

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CHINESE WHISPERS

'Inspiration to society'

Politicians are in the business of self-promotion. But Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) National General Secretary Anil Jain took it to a new level on Monday when his office sent a press release informing that his young daughter Arushi, a first-time voter, was an "inspiration" to society. How? She travelled from the US to her hometown "just" to cast her vote. Laudable yes, but the press release was a tad over the top. "Setting up an example before others, Arushi Jain... has rushed back to her hometown... just to cast her vote and thus strengthen our electoral process," the statement declared. It also quoted Arushi to have said, "You might say that a single vote does not make any difference but you also need to understand that when such tendency prevails across the country, collectively there would be crores of people who would skip the voting; and thus it would increase the chances of the unsuitable candidates winning the polls." The press release also said "youths like her are true aspiration (sic) for our society, who talk and act in national interest".

Puzzled punters



As Mumbai Indians (MI) trumped Chennai Super Kings (CSK) in an edge-of-the-seat Indian Premier League (IPL) final on Sunday, the

betting market rates reflected the sheer uncertainty around the eventual outcome. If sources are to be believed, MI started as favourites with a rate of 88 paise and strengthened its position before wickets fell in the middle overs. To put it simply, these rates fluctuate after every delivery, depending on how the team is playing and are inversely proportional to the odds of a win. Chennai overturned the equation at the halfway stage with a 50-paise rate, which kept lowering as the game progressed. The see-saw battle in the second half of CSK's chase saw Mumbai touching as low as 36 paise and CSK bouncing back to 20 paise when they needed five off three balls. As Lasith Malinga started his run-up for the last ball, CSK still remained the favourite but a well-directed yorker from the veteran dashed the hopes of those betting on Chennai.

Gogoi on vacation Bench

Vacation Benches of the Supreme Court, which has just started its long holiday, traditionally consisted of junior judges. But this time, Chief Justice Ranjan Gogoi himself will sit from May 25 to May 30. The days are ominous because the general election results will come on May 23 and a hung verdict is in the air. Last summer, such a power struggle in Karnataka was resolved in the small hours by two judges who sat in the crowded vacation court till sunrise. Vacation Benches sometimes gain unexpected importance as when Justice Krishna Iyer refused to pass an absolute stay on the Allahabad High Court judgment unseating Indira Gandhi, leading to the 1975 Emergency. Perish the thought that something dramatic would come out of the Supreme Court next week.

The super app conundrum

Everyone wants to be one but it is unclear yet whether they work

PATANJALI PAHWA

A *Business Standard* news report recently stated that Jio is preparing to launch 100 services soon including e-commerce. The report hinted it would be a super app. Meanwhile, PhonePe, for a while, has been talking about the need to be a super app. It wanted to imitate the likes of WeChat in China or rather be an Indian version of the very popular chat and commerce unicorn. So serious was Sameer Nigam, founder of PhonePe, about his vision to create India's first super app that he flew his team to China. They surveyed the market, tried to understand the nuances and will now use those learnings to replicate it in India. PhonePe got in Oyo, Faasos, Gaana, Ola and Flipkart all within the same ecosystem.

Does this sound familiar? In fact, in March this year, Paytm, too, tried to replicate this. Paytm got Zomato and MakeMyTrip as part of its subscription platform. Two different ways to skin the cat. But does the concept of super app work in India?

On paper, yes. The reason a super app works is frequency of using it.

"There is a need for a super app. Think about it, you take cabs twice a day, you order food thrice a week, you order groceries once a week, you shop online once in two weeks, you pay bills and watch movies once a month and you travel once in two months," says K Ganesh, founder, GrowthStory.

All of this changes the way the customer behaves. It also gives the company immense information about the customer. GPS tells it where the cus-

tomers took the cab to, restaurant reservation tells the company where the customer ate. Payment tells it how much it all cost. "Now, at this crucial juncture when the customer is heading home, if there was a notification of the phone, which asked the customer to order groceries because it knows this is idle time, you may be able to convert a purchase," he adds.

Apart from its own services, this fabled super app could also promote out of super app services, which would be extremely local. For example, if the customer went to a restaurant next to a mall. It could give the customer coupons to shop next door.

This locks the customer in the super app universe.

But in reality this doesn't translate. "A better parallel to PhonePe would be Grab," says Ganesh. He explains that Grab started with a big use case in cabs, added new services, new layers and then became a giant in its own right. But, he says, there are nuances that need to be considered in why these companies take off.

"First you need to start with a use case that defines your company, something that is so basic that everyone comes on to that app every day a few times a day," says a senior executive from Tencent who asked not to be identified. This senior executive is talking about WeChat. He explains that WeChat was an instant messaging platform, which evolved into payments and then commerce. "The primary use case is still chat. People want to talk to one another," he adds. This, he says, is missing with PhonePe or Paytm. "Their primary use case is payments and just for the top 50 mil-



STOP-START: ATTEMPTS AT SUPER APP

Paytm

Paytm has been consistently adding services to its wallet such as movie tickets, bus tickets and airline tickets apart from online shopping. It tried to replicate China's WeChat.

NOVEMBER 2017: Paytm launches chat

DECEMBER 2018: Shuts down chat

MARCH 2019: Paytm starts subscription

service, which gives access to Zomato Gold, Uber, Eros Now, Sony Liv. Not a super app in the true sense but tries to create an ecosystem which starts from Paytm.

Hike

2012: Since its launch as a messaging platform, Hike had been aiming to be a super app built along the lines of WeChat

JANUARY 2019: Hike abandons plans for a super app

lion people," he adds. He explains that for PhonePe or Paytm, people get on their apps to pay bills or do mobile top-ups. "Whatever they do, they can't change it. It is a challenge in this market," he says.

Paytm, for example, did try to introduce mobile gaming like ludo and chat to replicate that texture but

abandoned chat in December 2018. But why are payment companies trying to be super apps? "They are taking their cues from banks. Who first sell savings account then insurance and then a demat trading account. These are services that people may find interrelated," adds Ganesh.

Hike, a unicorn run by Kavin

ON THE JOB

Nitin Gadkari's wishes must come true



MAHESH VYAS

Nitin Gadkari made BJP's first tangible forward-looking statement on the unemployment rate of the country. In response to a question by Karan Thapar on his show *UpFront with Karan Thapar* on Monday, May 13, the very business-like minister stated that the unemployment rate would climb down from the current 7.5 per cent to 3-4 per cent within two years.

Mr. Gadkari said this with confidence. Yet, Karan played upon the projection and went ahead to extract a guarantee, a hundred per cent guarantee, as stated by the minister that the unemployment rate would come down to 3-4 per cent in two years.

Television interviews can be treacherous. I don't think Karan forced the minister to make that forecast. It was not necessary for the minister to stick his neck out. But, he did. Unprovoked.

Mr. Gadkari has not been the labour minister or the statistics minister or the finance minister. Yet, he was confident that the unemployment rate would come down to 3-4 per cent in two years. Mr. Gadkari does not make loose statements and he is smart enough to be on extra guard when interviewed by a Tim Sebastian of Indian journalists, like Karan Thapar.

So, I am inclined to take Mr. Gadkari's prediction seriously. I have no intention to hold him to the forecast after two years if his party comes back to power this summer. Forecasts can go wrong. And even if they do go wrong, they are important. What I take away from this television interaction is that Mr. Gadkari has good reason to believe that the unemployment rate will come down to 3-4 per cent. He believes it will come down because the BJP government has been encouraging investments, creating more industries, innovating in infrastructure, etc. While this is debatable, a takeaway can be that he believes that the unemployment rate will come down because of the investments the government envisages.

This makes sense. He did not say that employment/unemployment is not measured correctly in India like many of his cabinet colleagues have been saying. He did not actively dispute that the unemployment rate has indeed risen to 7.5 per cent. That was a relief!

He did not say that the BJP promises to provide a certain number of million jobs. That would have been foolish. Mr. Modi is still asked to account for such a promise he reportedly made before he became the Prime Minister. Targeting a desirable unemployment rate is a good idea. Forecasting it is chivalry but targeting it is certainly sensible. And targeting an unemployment rate of 3-4 per cent is, I'd venture to say, a good target to have.

India is not used to discussing the unemployment rate as a macroeconomic problem. Economists don't debate it, journalists don't discuss it, law makers ignore it as a macro-economic variable of any importance. Its

high time we recognized this elephant in the room before it runs amok.

We have made a fetish of fiscal deficit and inflation targets. It makes sense to bring the unemployment rate to share the same space among macroeconomic indicators.

Educated middle-class Indians began discussing a government's performance on the basis of macroeconomic indicators like the fiscal deficit and core inflation a decade ago. People have started talking in terms of the unemployment rate only recently. The demand for jobs is irrational and not sustainable. It leads to demands for reservations. But, a demand for an acceptable level of unemployment rate should be considered as a reasonable ask.

Mr. Gadkari may be pleased to know that the unemployment rate has declined from the 7.5 per cent Karan Thapar mentioned during the interview to 7.3 per cent as of May 12. In fact, the decline is from 7.6 per cent in April 2019.

There are just of couple of more important metrics we must target besides the unemployment rate. Like the unemployment rate, the employment rate and the labour participation rate are also very important. These have fallen sharply after demonetisation and need to rise even as the unemployment rate should fall. Because, a fall in the unemployment rate with a falling labour participation rate is not at all desirable.

It is not at all easy to raise the labour participation rate and bring down the unemployment rate. But, that's what we would expect from great political leadership. We wish that Mr. Gadkari's projections come true.

The author is the MD & CEO of CMIE

LETTERS

Wrong inference

This refers to "The Next Election" (May 13) by Nitin Desai. While I totally agree with his opinion on the quality and civility of the campaign in this election, I apportion the blame to all and sundry. There is no holy cow in this and there is plague in every house. But what I disagree with is the theory the article has tried to build up around a single party majority and the federal structure. In the bargain, the article almost accuses any political party of winning a majority. The article prays that no single party should get majority and the government at the Centre should be a coalition government making it a model of federalism. Better still if a stalemate throws up the government rather than a pre-election formation. I find this strange.

First, any party that gets majority on its own needs to win seats in all four regions of India. Is it not federalism if a single party wins across India? When most of the states vote for a single party, be it the Congress or the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP), that would tantamount to federalism also. The party with a clear majority has to have MPs from all major states. What the article concludes is that a BJP MP from West Bengal does not represent federalism in case BJP wins a clear majority but the same MP from the Trinamool or the Communist Party of India (Marxist) or the Congress are cases of federalism since no clear majority had evolved! This is a very strange and convoluted logic.

Secondly, a coalition out of helplessness doesn't augur well for a country like India. The post-poll coalition partners would be in a strong position of blackmail and would result in arm twisting of the worst kind. Don't bank on the fact that Jayalithaa is dead and the art of blackmail has also died with her.

Mayawati and Mamata Banerjee are very good at it. So is the Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam. We have seen the cases of helplessness coalitions. The coalition captain Manmohan Singh has a great experience of these arm twisting tactics when he could not act against Shibu Soren or A Raja citing coalition compulsions. Coalitions of helplessness is no good for a country and the article has done no service to the nation by praying for a state of stalemate so that "federalism" could be celebrated. But yes, a coalition of principles is a good idea as we have seen in West Bengal where the Left coalitions survived for 34 years.

Deba Pratim Ghatak Durgapur

Changing times

This refers to "Salesforce eyes financial services market using AI" (May 13). Soon, we will have a customer asking, "Alexa which is the best deposit rate in which bank?" He can ask the Google assistant about mutual funds consistently giving good returns or the updaty value of his SIPs. This out of the world experience awaits the millennial. The artificial intelligence salesforce will be a set of globally competitive, foresighted heroes. It is going to be a step further from mobile banking where chat bots will be offering all kinds of counselling on all kinds of banking products and services on the app itself.



A major churning is on the cards with banks and fin-techs leading from the front and customers can look forward to amazing customer service. Way back in late sixties, my retired father would go to a bank for pension in Bayana in Rajasthan where he had to stand in a queue with a token and wait for his pension payment amount which forced him to return only by the afternoon. We moved to new era in 1994 with ATMs and computerisation making strong presence across India. The reimagining of financial services is sure to charm the way of customers and take breath away.

N K Bakshi Vadodara

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HAMBONE

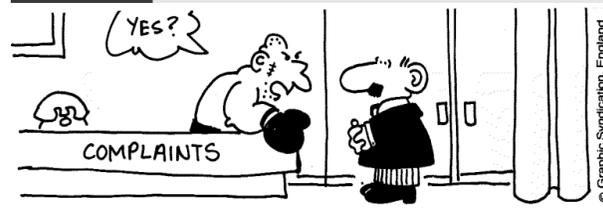
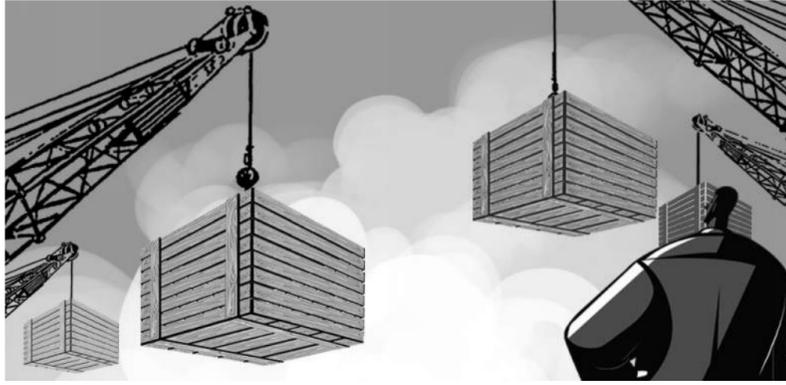


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Smaller peers racing ahead

India must focus on pvt investment, exports for higher growth

A forecast of global growth till 2030 conducted by economists at Standard Chartered Bank has concluded that five economies in Asia and two in Africa will grow at 7 per cent over the period. While the economists conclude that India will be one of these economies, it is useful to note how it performs significantly below some other competitors. The economists predict, for example, that by 2030 Bangladesh will have a per capita income higher than India's. Meanwhile, Vietnam, which has a per capita income of only 30 per cent more than India now, will by then have a per capita income of above \$10,000 a year and be almost twice as rich as India on a per capita basis. Though all such projections are subjective and not to be taken as definitive, the comparison to its peers is not reassuring from an Indian point of view. It is no longer enough to be satisfied that India is beating China or other "large" economies when smaller peers are doing so much better. What can be done to ensure that India manages to outperform its competitor economies over this period?

When considering sustainable routes to growth between now and 2030, the Standard Chartered economists predict that economies that can export commodities or manufactured goods will do well. This is worth considering, given that both Bangladesh and Vietnam have done better than India in terms of exports growth over the past few years. Part of the reason is a lack of competitiveness of Indian manufacturing, including but not limited to the apparel sector. A turn towards protectionism in recent years has not helped, as it minimises the incentive to lock India into global supply chains. Arbitrary behaviour with investors, including those who have made big investments into such infrastructure-creation sectors as e-commerce, can also be considered a disincentive in this respect. The next government will have to reverse this impression, and instead work towards creating the notion that India is a stable environment for foreign investment and foreign trade, and as a location for components of the global supply chain.

The broader question is how growth can recover without an increase in private investment. Investment currently is well below the heights it scaled in past years, and has been relatively stagnant over the past four to five years — albeit with some minor signs of revival in the last few quarters. It is important to try and ensure that investor confidence is revived. It is also important that private corporate savings increase so that companies have more wherewithal to make these investments. Considerable capital is still locked up in the system — the debt overhang from the boom and stimulus years has not been completely worked out, and many balance sheets are still burdened. But the need is to create more investment opportunities and possibilities for earnings, including through exports. New capital expenditure — especially when it's not merely for maintaining existing facilities — will create jobs, thus boosting households' financial savings. This must be priority if India is to be a best-in-class emerging economy. It is also important to ensure that the workforce is prepared for growth and opportunity — in other words, education, skilling and health need to continue to be priorities for the government.

The Facebook question

Breaking it up is likely to spur competition

Should social media giant Facebook (FB) be broken up into multiple companies? One of its co-founders, Chris Hughes, has said it should. He contends that this would not only foster competition but also give social media users a better chance at retaining privacy. The rationale behind the argument is interesting. Facebook is dominant in three social media spaces; it is very profitable and highly valued. The platform itself has 2.5 billion monthly users, most of whom also use FB Messenger service. Its subsidiaries, WhatsApp and Instagram, have around 1.5 billion users each. FB has used its money power to acquire potential rivals, as was the case with WhatsApp and Instagram. It has also leveraged its user-base to launch copycat offers that smothered challenges from potential rivals such as Snapchat and Twitter's Vine feature. This has stifled investment in social media. As of now, a breach of privacy in FB would not necessarily expose a user's WhatsApp number or Instagram account. But FB is said to be considering an integration where users could seamlessly run FB, Instagram and messenger services from a single account. This would break down silos between the separate services and, thus, put more data at risk in breaches.

Facebook has survived multiple scandals involving data breaches and fake news, especially for advancing political agenda in several countries. The network also faces a fine of up to \$5 billion by America's Federal Trade Commission for its poor privacy practices. However, FB is big enough to pay up and shrug. Moreover, Chief Executive Officer Mark Zuckerberg controls 60 per cent of voting stock, which gives him absolute powers in setting the direction on FB's algorithms. And since FB is also the biggest global platform for aggregated news, this level of media control concentrated in one man's hands is unprecedented. Although most users know, and many have misgivings about privacy issues, there are no alternatives due to the monopolistic dominance. Now, suppose FB was broken up into several different companies, and Instagram and WhatsApp were spun off again as separate entities. It's likely that this would foster competition. There would be investment in creating competing social networks. In order to differentiate themselves, these new networks would create models and every player would be more vigilant about privacy. Users would get a better shot at using alternatives, which suited their personal privacy thresholds. There would be more innovation in the wider social media space as smaller companies would not be afraid of being stifled, or getting bought out.

Breaking up companies that dominate highly concentrated markets, or even threatening to break up such companies, can lead to more innovation and competition. This has also created more shareholder value, even for the targeted companies. Standard Oil and AT&T are two often-cited examples of breakups that led to better practices in energy and telecom, as well as more options for users, and higher shareholder returns. Threatening to break up Microsoft, and earlier IBM, sparked innovation in IT. FB does present a unique case due to the added concerns of privacy and its unprecedented grip on news dissemination. But policymakers should certainly consider this option.

Time to re-visit India's trade policy

We need to recognise the importance of aligning with evolving regional trade formations and utilising preferential trade mechanisms

In early May, global trade tensions escalated as the United States increased its tariffs from 10 per cent to 25 per cent on \$200 billion worth of Chinese goods. China retaliated on Monday, with the Chinese finance ministry announcing its plans to hike import tariffs ranging from 5 per cent to 25 per cent on a target list worth \$60 billion of US goods. The renewed US-China trade war and related uncertainty is likely to have a negative impact far beyond the US-China bilateral trade on global growth. The WTO, in its revised estimates last month, has already trimmed world trade growth forecast for 2019 to 2.6 per cent from the earlier forecasted 3.7 per cent. In India, withdrawal of the generalized system of preferences (GSP) by the US, which is likely to commence in early June, end of sanction waivers for crude oil imports from Iran, and severe criticism of India's protectionist tariff regime and complex business environment over this past week by the visiting US Commerce Secretary Wilbur Ross has led to heightened tensions regarding US-India bilateral economic relations and trade diplomacy. The goods trade deficit reached a high of \$176 billion in 2018-19 and at \$331 billion, exports, though the highest since 2013-14, have been well below the target of the Ministry of Commerce (MoC) for the year. There is an urgency, therefore, for India to re-visit its trade policy. While an export push in traditional sectors is being appropriately worked on by a newly set up MoC working group, these challenging circumstances require a deeper understanding of global value chain (GVC)-led trade as it has evolved in recent times and the facilitating role of preferential trading agreements (PTAs) therein. In particular, India needs to recognise the importance of aligning with evolving regional trade for-



AMITA BATRA

mations and utilising PTAs in its global value chain integration strategy.

India's exports continue to be predominantly low skill and labour intensive commodities. Gems and jewels, cotton, articles of apparel and footwear have together accounted for 25-35 per cent of exports for India over a decade and half. Over the same period, the most dynamic sectors globally, with highest production fragmentation based sectoral relocation across borders, which is characteristic of GVC led trade, have been sectors like office machinery, communication equipment and textiles and apparel. Office machinery, with almost 40 per cent of exports relocating across countries, has been the most dynamic sector. However, corresponding sectors of electrical equipment and machinery account for only

4-5 per cent of India's exports, thus, reflecting India's insignificant integration in global GVCs. The only sector where India has been able to share gains of sectoral dynamism is textiles and apparel, though this has been alongside other countries such as China, Bangladesh and Vietnam. Even in this sector, over time, India's share in global exports has declined from a constant of about 5 per cent in 2000-2012 to 4 per cent in 2017.

Over the same period, competing countries like Bangladesh have registered an increase in their share of global exports from 4.5 per cent to 8.1 per cent. China leads with a share of 37 per cent in global exports in textiles and apparel. Other Indian top export sectors like leather goods, chemicals, and motor vehicles have been among the less dynamic sectors with lower relocation shares. India's export basket has not, therefore, evolved in line with the pattern of dynamic GVC-led trade.

The case for climate tariffs

As Australia heads toward a federal election on May 18, the national debate on cutting carbon dioxide emissions is heating up. Yet the discussion highlights the limits of what Australia or any other individual country can do to combat global warming. Rather, the world must step up its collective efforts to tackle climate change. And, strange as it may sound, US President Donald Trump's aggressive trade policies could point to a way forward.

In Australia, the opposition Labor Party wants the country to reduce its greenhouse-gas emissions by 45 per cent relative to their 2005 level by 2030. But achieving this lofty goal would impose high costs on Australians in terms of foregone income and actual taxes — estimated by economist Brian Fischer to be AUD10,000-20,000 (\$7,000-14,000) per capita over a decade. Even if Australia manages to cut emissions by this amount, the overall impact would be small, because the country accounts for less than 2 per cent of the global economy.

The Labor Party's claim that the benefit of the plan would be fewer floods, hurricanes, landslides, and other natural disasters is only half true, because Australian actions alone will not have much effect on the frequency and severity of such events. Enough other countries would have to cut their own greenhouse-gas emissions further to make a difference.

Until recently, the world's best hope for combating global warming was the 2015 Paris climate agreement, which has been signed by 197 parties, including the world's two largest cumulative emitters of greenhouse gases (the United States and the European Union) and the leading current emitter (China). All signatories have pledged to meet numerical targets to lower drastically their own emissions relative to a business-as-usual path.



SHANG-JIN WEI

At the time, many thought that the Paris agreement was the limit of what was politically feasible. Yet most climate-change models predict that even if all countries fulfilled their pledges, their efforts would not keep the increase in global temperature below 2°C above pre-industrial levels — the critical threshold beyond which catastrophic outcomes, including higher sea levels and more frequent natural disasters, would become inevitable.

Worse still, the US under Trump has taken a giant step backward by withdrawing from the Paris agreement and pushing for more coal production and coal-fired power plants without carbon-capture requirements. This is doubly damaging: In addition to increasing America's emissions, Trump has given other countries an excuse to avoid meeting their own Paris commitments.

Leading US progressives such as Democratic Congresswoman Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez have championed a "Green New Deal" based on publicly financed investment. This initiative faces a similar problem to the Australian Labor Party's proposal: It would impose costs on US firms and households, while the benefits of lower emissions would be diffused around the world.

True, a successful Green New Deal would have a bigger global effect, because the US accounts for about one-quarter of the world's economy. But even America cannot save the world if other countries fail to take equally aggressive steps to reduce emissions. In fact, others might even emit more, because US actions could reduce the cost of tradable emissions permits.

Ironically, Trump's own readiness to impose large import tariffs could provide the basis for a new collective approach. Because the US is the world's biggest economy and possesses enormous political and mil-

itary power, most countries have to accommodate America's demands in some way. In that respect, Trump's tariff wars have "worked" (although whether they are good for the US economy is another matter).

A future US government could perhaps use tariffs, or the threat of them, to push other countries to reduce their emissions more aggressively — especially those countries that are, or will be, sizable contributors to global warming. This would be different from a border-adjustment tax based on the carbon content of the imports, but a way to raise the cost of inaction for countries that are not making sufficient contributions to the global effort.

Such measures might run counter to existing global trade rules. But they could be justified on efficiency grounds, because avoiding the destruction of the planet is good for everyone. Moreover, this approach would be fair if it resulted in all countries sharing the costs of combating climate change more evenly (all of them would share the benefits of a healthier planet).

Ideally, such an initiative would also acquire a legal basis through future reforms of World Trade Organization rules. It would be even better if many countries committed to coordinating their tariff policies to help enforce any agreement on further emissions cuts.

Of course, tariffs are not — and should not be — the only tool for combating global warming. Nonetheless, given the lack of a powerful enforcement mechanism in the current climate agreement, they could be a useful and potentially effective complement to the next round of global climate negotiations. This, however, requires that America has a leader who understands the climate-change threat.

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Shang-Jin Wei, former chief economist of the Asian Development Bank, is Professor of Finance and Economics at Columbia University and a visiting professor at the Australian National University. Copyright: Project Syndicate, 2019

Even if it ain't broken, fix it



BOOK REVIEW

SANJAY KUMAR SINGH

A corporation's recruitment, training, evaluation and promotion practices have a far-reaching impact on its employees. Over the years, however, many of them become ossified, as they begin to be treated as settled truths. But examine them closely, say the authors of this insightful book, and you find that they have become divorced from reality. Far from boosting productivity, they have turned into hindrances. The authors examine nine such widespread corporate beliefs and practices, reveal their flaws, and offer alter-

native approaches.

Consider the belief that people care which company they work for. Companies tout their pay packages, perks, facilities, and leave policies to attract talent. In the authors' opinion, these are just plummage. Once in, how long a person stays at a company is far more likely to be determined by the environment within her team. Next time you think of joining a company, make a few discreet enquiries about the team you are likely to join. For team leaders this presents an opportunity. While they cannot influence their company's policies on big issues, it is within their power to create a conducive environment within their team.

The authors then scrutinise the notion that the best plan always wins. The reality, they say, is that in a rapidly-changing world most plans become obsolete by the

time they are ready. Instead of a planning system, they suggest, companies today need to create intelligence systems, which gather the latest and most useful information and disseminate it rapidly and widely to those on the frontlines. Then leave it to the initiative of those in the fray to act on that information.

The authors next train their microscope on the belief that the best people are well-rounded. Well, try telling Lionel Messi that. He is predominantly left-footed. No coach would dream of asking Messi to reduce his dependence on his left foot. But companies demand precisely that of their employees. They use the competency model, which consists of a list of attributes the ideal employee should possess. Each employee is measured against those competencies. Those with a low score on any one of them are asked to shape up.

The underlying belief here is that well-rounded people are better. In the real world, the authors argue, each person is unique. Growth comes from figuring out the areas where your maximum ability lies and harnessing them to create the most impact. That should be a person's priority, instead of spending his energies pulling himself up in all those areas where he is weak. Instead of asking team members to conform to a theoretical ideal, team leaders should assign them tasks that match their strengths.

The book's most inspiring chapter is the one that examines the belief that work-life balance matters the most. The widely-held assumption is that work is toil. It stresses us out. Unless we are careful, it could lead to physical exhaustion, depression, and burnout. Hence, we need life to rejuvenate ourselves.

A survey by the Mayo Clinic found that 52 per cent of physicians are burnt out, and 15 per cent suffer from post-traumatic stress disorder, higher than the level even among war veterans. But then the

authors came across Miles, a UK-based anaesthesiologist who says he absolutely loves the stress of keeping a patient hovering between life and death. A person under anaesthesia is never stable. His consciousness keeps bobbing up and down, and the anaesthetist's job is to keep him as stable as he can. It is like flying a plane—one wrong move could send it into a deathly downward spiral. But Miles says this stress is what gets his adrenaline pumping.

The authors suggest that more than striving for work-life balance, finding love-in-work is what should matter most. The Mayo Clinic study found that physicians who reported spending at least 20 per cent of their time doing things they love had dramatically lower risk of burnout. The authors suggest the following exercise. Take a pad around with you at work for a week. Create a column for "loved it" and another for "loathed it". Once the exercise is over, next week onward try adding more of the activities you love to your workday.

If you can spend more than 20 per cent of your time on such activities, you will feel stronger, perform better, and bounce back faster. For team leaders the opportunity lies in helping team members identify such activities.

Some of what the authors suggest may sound idealistic. The real life work place is cut-throat. Will any of these idealistic nostrums work there? Robert Browning wrote that a man's reach must exceed his grasp. If you are a team leader, read the book and try out what it prescribes. At the worst you will fail and be back to square one. But if you succeed you will gain a reputation for being a benevolent boss whom everyone will compete to work for.

NINE LIES ABOUT WORK

A freethinking leader's guide to the real world
Marcus Buckingham & Ashley Goodall
Harvard Business Review Press
279 pages; ₹999

Opinion

TUESDAY, MAY 14, 2019

Rational Expectations

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Now merit is even less about marks!

SC gets over *Nagaraj's* maintenance-of-efficiency rule by redefining merit as something that delivers 'societal' value

TILL NOW, EVEN those opposing reservations for what they did to merit or efficiency were comforted by the 50% cap put in place by the *Indra Sawhney* ruling, the belief that 'efficiency' would be kept in mind, or that reservation would only be for basic college degrees and entry-level jobs. Over time, much of that has been junked; in January, the government announced a 10% reservation for upper castes, over the 50% already in place for SC/ST/OBCs. How slippery the descent has been is best seen in the latest apex court judgment upholding Karnataka's law to allow reservation in promotions for SC/ST. This was rejected by the same court in 2017 on grounds that no data had been given, required after the *Nagaraj* ruling in 2006, on inadequacy of representation of SC/ST in the civil service and its impact on administrative efficiency.

Given Karnataka has now presented data on inadequacy of representation, the next hurdle, then, related to administrative efficiency. With the judgment viewing merit and efficiency with a totally different prism, the floodgates have been opened for throwing merit out of the window, whether for college admissions, or for jobs, or promotions.

Some part of the descent was obvious when, in 2000, the 82nd amendment added a proviso to Article 335 that dealt with maintaining efficiency while making appointments; the proviso said the government could relax "qualifying marks in any examination or lowering the standards of evaluation" for reservations in promotions.

The latest judgment takes this descent further. So, after invoking the 82nd amendment, it says "efficiency of administration... must be defined in an inclusive sense, where diverse segments of society find representation... Hence, while interpreting Article 335, it is necessary to liberate the concept of efficiency from a one-sided approach which ignores the need for and the positive effects of the inclusion of diverse segments of society on the efficiency of administration of the Union or of a State".

It adds, "administrative efficiency is an outcome of the actions taken by officials after they have been appointed or promoted and is not tied to the selection method itself". Candidates who "score beyond a particular 'cut-off point' are considered 'meritorious' and others are 'non-meritorious'. However, this is a distorted understanding of the function 'merit' plays in society".

So what is merit? As the judges explain, "a meritocratic system is one that rewards actions that result in the outcomes that we as a society value". If that isn't clear enough, the judges elaborate by saying "thus, a 'meritorious' candidate is not merely one who is 'talented' or 'successful' but also one whose appointment fulfils the constitutional goals of uplifting members of the SCs and STs and ensuring a diverse and representative administration". Merit is not about performance, it is about correcting social ills regardless of what that does for performance; indeed, it enhances merit since merit is seen as fixing of societal ills!

This is not the first time the apex court has dismissed merit. In 1994, in *Ajay Kumar Singh versus the State of Bihar*, despite *Indra Sawhney* ruling against reservations at higher levels of education, it said "in *Sawhney*", the Court was speaking of posts in research and development organizations, in specialities and super-specialities in medicines, engineering... The Court was not speaking of admission to specialities and super-specialities. Moreover, M.S. or M.D. are not super-specialities." And, in 1997, in *Post-Graduate Institute of Medical Education and Research versus K.L. Narasimhan*, it said that even if the qualifying marks were lowered for a super-speciality, it didn't really matter since the reserved category doctor had passed the same threshold exam anyway. It added, "Securing marks is not the sure proof of higher proficiency, efficiency or excellence... In that behalf, it is common knowledge that marks would be secured in diverse modes... They are awarded in internal examination on the basis of caste, creed, colour, religion, etc."

Apart from what this does to merit in a competitive world, ironically, all of this assumes that since all SC/ST have suffered centuries of discrimination and prejudice, they have real barriers of access to opportunity. Data from the Price's all-India survey (see graphic) for 2016, however, show no such across-the-board backwardness. At a macro level, the 66 mn SC households in the country have an annual income of ₹180,270 as compared to ₹169,222 for 25 mn ST households, ₹197,419 for 120 mn OBC and ₹242,589 for 69 mn upper-caste (UC) households. This doesn't suggest historical backwardness.

Indeed, there are various UC households that earn less than SC/ST households. A UC household where every member is illiterate, Price's data shows, earns ₹93,756 per annum while an SC household with even primary school education earns ₹138,152; in other words, the issue is not so much of historical backwardness as it is about access to education. Yet, as Price shows, around 18% of all SC households have at least one member who has completed higher secondary education, versus 19% for STs, 23% for OBCs and 25% for UCs. And, as a proportion of households in each caste category, 8.5% of all OBC households earn more than ₹10 lakh per annum, and the number is 7% for SCs and 5.3% for STs. So, historical backwardness is not an issue either. But why worry about facts when the Supreme Court has decided that all SC/ST are backward and that merit is an outdated concept. Now to wait and see how the latest definition of merit and efficiency is extended to OBCs or any other so-called disadvantaged group.

Missing WOMEN

A new book highlights that 21 million eligible women in the country never register to vote, undermining universal suffrage

AN EXCERPT FROM *The Verdict: Decoding India's Elections* by Pranroy Roy and Dorab R Soppariwala, published in *Down to Earth*, highlights the issue of female disenfranchisement—women missing from the electoral rolls. This means far from being universal, adult franchise in India leaves out a vulnerable lot. In 2019, if enfranchisement among Indian men is considered to be at 100%, the corresponding figure for women stands at 92.7%. While the difference may not seem sharp, in absolute numbers, this means 21 million eligible women are not registered as voters. That amounts to an average of 38,000 women voters missing per constituency. Given polls are often lost or won by slimmer margins, the missing women are significant systemic flaw that needs to be rectified.

Disenfranchisement is rooted in a wide array of factors, some of which may be social as well. For instance, the populous, but largely patriarchal states of Uttar Pradesh, Rajasthan and Madhya Pradesh account for 10 million of the missing 21 million. On the other hand, matrilineal states of the North East and Goa have more women voters than men. If election promises have one leitmotif, it is women's empowerment. Every party talks about. Very little gets translated into action. With women voters missing from the rolls, a women-centric agenda is less likely to receive electoral backing. *The Verdict's* authors suggest that every woman above 18 be allowed to vote if she can prove her age irrespective of whether she has a voter ID card or not. While that works as a stop gap solution, given the problem is a systemic one, the treatment has to be systemic too.



WARNING TO CHINA

US president Donald Trump

I say openly to President Xi & all of my many friends in China that China will be hurt very badly if you don't make a deal because companies will be forced to leave China for other countries

BREXIT ZOMBIE

NO DEAL HAS BECOME THE LIGHTENING ROD FOR VOTERS' UNHAPPINESS WITH BRITISH POLITICS AND THOUGH EVERYTHING HAS BEEN DONE TO KILL IT, IT RISES UP AGAIN AND AGAIN

The White Walkers of Brexit ride again

THERESE RAPHAEL

Bloomberg



IT WAS THE moment businesses exhaled and viewers switched the channel. On April 4, the UK parliament voted, by a margin of one, to ensure that the country wouldn't leave the European Union without a deal. Brexit may or may not happen—but there would be no chaotic crashing out because parliament had vetoed it.

Except, like a White Walker, the death-defying creature in *Game of Thrones*, the threat of No Deal keeps coming back. Because it thrives in a leadership vacuum, it is only growing in strength.

Nigel Farage's upstart Brexit Party, which will almost certainly win the most support in the May 23 European parliamentary elections, is campaigning in favour of such an outcome. The former commodities broker has been ubiquitous in the UK media; it's left to trade experts like Peter Ungphakorn to pick through the factual inaccuracies later on Twitter.

Never mind that Farage used to be full of praise for staying in the single market, or a close relationship with the EU like the one Norway enjoys. He has, just as in the 2016 referendum campaign, made a no-deal Brexit a lightning-rod for popular discontent with the entire political establishment. He has even given it an attractive new name: a clean-break Brexit.

His popularity poses, I have argued, a real threat to the Conservative party. Indeed, it is hard to find a Tory Brexit-supporter who plans to vote Conservative rather than for Farage's crew. May's party isn't even bothering to campaign or release a manifesto. What would it say anyhow? We pledge to support a deal most of the party hates, which parliament has refused, the EU won't renegotiate, and to which no alternative has been agreed? Better to hide under a table and hope this goes away.

Prominent Conservatives in the media have also thrown their weight

behind No Deal. Fraser Nelson, editor of the Tory-leaning *Spectator* magazine, argued in a recent column in the *Daily Telegraph* that the "the civil service did wonders with their no-deal planning," so the disaster scenarios of a few months ago are moot.

These arguments have a deeply flawed, but seductive, logic. Their premise—that Theresa May's negotiated deal and pretty much any other potential deal are worse than the status quo—is absolutely correct. The conclusion, that a no-deal exit would be an improvement, could not be more wrong.

While medicine shortages and gargantuan traffic-jams were alarming possibilities, they were never the main reason a no-deal Brexit was a reckless option to be avoided at all cost. Even if the civil service managed to ensure relative calm the immediate aftermath, the real trouble would only come later—a tsunami of regulatory and non-tariff trade barriers that would threaten UK businesses and their suppliers.

When pressed, proponents of No Deal argue that these costs are irrelevant because the EU would quickly move its red lines and negotiations would end up where Brexiters wanted them all along—with a free-trade agreement and the UK at liberty to strike trade deals with other countries, having left the EU's customs union. May's mistake, they argue, was not playing hard-ball.

You have to squint hard (and perhaps have downed a few shots of something strong) to find a glimmer of hope in that. The EU's conditions for starting trade

talks in a No Deal scenario bear a striking resemblance to what is in the divorce deal: payments into the bloc's budget, secured rights for EU citizens and, crucially, a guarantee that the border between Ireland and Northern Ireland will remain open and free from any encumbrances no matter what happens.

Even so, the pathway to a No Deal exit isn't hard to imagine. Talks between the government and Jeremy Corbyn's Labour Party seem to have run aground, not surprisingly given that many Tories say that giving in to the opposition's demands for a permanent customs union would split the Conservative Party.

A breakdown would leave this parliament deadlocked again. May could try to force through another round of voting, or compel MPs to rank their preferred visions of Brexit. But if the cross-party talks fail, it's hard to see lawmakers having any confidence in that process. A resounding defeat for the Tories at the European elections—as the opinion polls suggest is increasingly likely—will just compound calls for the prime minister to go.

So far, the 1922 Committee of backbench Tory MPs has resisted calls to change its rules to allow a second challenge to May within a calendar year of the last attempted patch. It wouldn't take much to change that. Indeed, the prime minister is expected to meet the

group this week. The field of candidates vying to replace her is growing by the day. Alongside Boris Johnson, it includes former Brexit Secretary Dominic Raab, as well as remainers and pragmatists like Rory Stewart. If the parliamentary party can't rally behind a single candidate, two are then put to party members. Given that group is squarely in favor of leaving without a deal, it is clear what faction the likely winner would come from.

So far, the EU has preferred repeated delay to forcing Britain out with no deal. Who knows how long that will remain the case? A strong anti-EU showing at the parliamentary elections, a changing of the guard at the European Commission, and continued pressure from French president Emmanuel Macron to cauterise the Brexit wound could change that when the current extension expires on October 31.

It's possible, as *Bloomberg News's* Robert Hutton lays out, that parliament will accept a second referendum long before that happens. Or else there will be a general election.

But nobody should feel confident that just because it is a horrible idea with grave consequences, a No Deal Brexit will go away. That's not what happens with the White Walkers of populism. You can destroy a flawed premise, shoot holes in all the factual mistakes, vote the thing down (as parliament did), and yet the idea snaps back to life and charges ahead again. No Deal, like Brexit itself in 2016, has become the lightning rod for voters' unhappiness with British politics.

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LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Modi-Mayawati sparring

No doubt the war of words between Prime Minister Narendra Modi and BSP supremo Mayawati has marked an all-time low in political discourse. It has to be decided whether Modi's poser to Behenji why her party has not withdrawn support to the Congress government in Rajasthan to protest the rape of a Dalit girl in Alwar sprang from his genuine concern for Dalits or his political interest in seeing the Gehlot government fall. Significantly, the same Prime Minister was silent when Dalit women were raped in BJP-ruled states. Modi was ambivalent when Dalit youth were publicly flogged by his party supporters and sympathizers in his home state in the name of cow protection. From the difference between what Modi and Mayawati represent, it must be clear who is really opposed to atrocities (hate crimes) against the Dalits. It is transparently obvious that who sides with the upper castes and who sides with the lower castes. As a leader schooled in RSS, it is not easy or possible for Modi to reject the religious texts that 'sanctify' caste and identify himself with the country's 'lowly' impoverished multitudes. In the Indian context, class and caste are synonymous. Modi's claim that he is of 'garib caste' does not alter the fact that his was a 'suit boot ki sarkar'.
— G David Milton, Maruthancode

Kamal Hassan & BJP

The saffron clan is up in arms against actor Kamal Hassan for saying that Mahatma Gandhi's killer Nathuram Godse was the first Hindu terrorist. BJP leaders have rushed to condemn Kamal for his comment. Given the BJP preferred to field Pragya Singh Thakur, a terror-accused in the Malegaon bomb blast case, from Bhopal, and even the PM defended her nomination, BJP has no moral right to criticise Kamal comment.
— Tharcuis S Fernand, Chennai

Write to us at feletters@expressindia.com

Turbocharging India's digital economy

Making data available to entrepreneurs creating useful apps and services would help, though this requires enacting legal provisions for data privacy and consent-based frameworks

ALOK KSHIRSAGAR & ANU MADGAVKAR

Kshirsagar is a senior partner at McKinsey & Company, and Anu Madgavkar is a partner at McKinsey Global Institute

INDIA IS TAKING a great digital leap. Having reaped substantial rewards from building up its core digital sectors, such as information technology and business process management, the country is now seizing new digital opportunities in many more sectors, such as agriculture, education, energy, financial services, health care, and logistics. These opportunities could deliver up to \$500 billion of economic value by 2025.

India's digitisation process has been the second-fastest among the 17 mature and emerging economies we studied. Admittedly, it started from a low base, but in the last five years alone, the number of Internet subscribers has almost doubled, reaching 560 million.

Last year, Indians downloaded 12.3 billion apps, second only to the Chinese, and they spent an average 17 hours per week on social media, more than Americans. As a result, Indians used more than 54 times as much data, on average, in 2018 than in mid-2016.

Both the public and private sectors have played an important role in driving digitization. Many public services are now accessible only when linked to the government's Aadhaar biometric digital-identification program, in which over 1.2 billion people are now enrolled. Aadhaar has thus helped to propel the development of many other digital services. About 80% of Indians now have digital bank accounts, with the vast majority of government benefits paid directly into Aadhaar-linked accounts. The Goods and Services Tax Network—a government platform for taxing wholesale and retail sales—has likewise created a powerful incentive for businesses to digitize their operations. The private sector has facilitated this process, as competition has helped to reduce data costs by 95% from 2013 to 2017 and to make smartphones affordable. Falling costs have fueled rising data use: last year, Indian data subscribers used 8.3 GB of data per month, on average, compared to 5.5 GB used by

Chinese subscribers. Together with rapid growth in telecom infrastructure, lower costs have also helped to reduce the digital divide: in the last four and a half years, India's middle- and low-income states have accounted for 45% of the 293 million new Internet subscribers.

Digital business leaders are now spearheading even more innovative ways to reach and serve customers. New digital ecosystems are springing up across the economy, transforming business models and delivering huge productivity, efficiency, and growth benefits.

Some of the sectors where the most value stands to be created—such as financial services, agriculture, health care, logistics, education, and energy—have not traditionally had technology at their core. We estimate that each of these sectors could create between \$10 billion and \$150 billion of incremental economic value in 2025.

In financial services, the surge in digital payments and related data is already enabling flow-based lending, whereby actual patterns of receipts and payments—rather than loan applications—are used to evaluate potential borrowers. India's largest bank, the State Bank of India, has recorded a 50% increase in lending to small and medium-size enterprises since switching to an automated flow-based system.

In agriculture, farmers are not only seizing the credit opportunities created by digital financial services; they are also using digital applications to gain specialised know-how, say, optimizing fertilizer and pesticide inputs. Moreover, farmers are increasingly selling their produce in online marketplaces, which offer better prices. One such platform, the government's electronic National Agriculture Market (eNAM), is available in 585 locations in 16 states, and could increase the prices realized by farmers by 15%.

In health care, companies like Apollo Hospitals are using telemedicine to improve access in rural areas, where doc-

tors are often few and far between. We estimate that telemedicine could eventually account for half of all outpatient consultations in India, giving rural citizens access to more qualified practitioners than they would be able to reach in person.

In logistics, online freight-forwarding platforms offer services like instant pricing and booking, cargo tracking, and centralized documentation. Such platforms are already reducing costs and boosting efficiency in what has historically been a highly inefficient sector.

The benefits of digitisation may also extend to workers themselves, though this will require retraining, skills upgrading, and redeployment in many cases. We estimate that, by 2025, technology could eliminate between 40-45 million mostly routine jobs in areas such as clerical services and data entry. But it will also help to create some 60-65 million higher-quality jobs. Workers will need to be ready to make the shift.

In facilitating this and other digitisation-related processes, India's government still has plenty of work to do. Among other things, it should continue to use digital technology to improve public services, while working with the private sector to develop further the country's digital infrastructure. Making data available to entrepreneurs creating useful apps and services would also help, though this requires enacting legal provisions for data privacy and consent-based frameworks, which in turn rely on improved consumer literacy regarding the risks and benefits of digital technologies.

When it comes to tapping the full potential of digitisation, the early signs are more than encouraging. Between its huge and growing Internet-consumer base and its eagerness to innovate, India seems well positioned to unleash the dynamism of a truly digital economy.

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"It is easier to build strong children than to repair broken men."—Frederick Douglass.

CHILDREN ARE THE foundation of a vibrant country like India. Despite efforts to improve the nutritional status, malnutrition continues to be a major health concern in our country. It is still the major cause of morbidity and mortality in children. Of all the Indian children under the age of five, about one in three (36%) is underweight (low weight for age), about one in three (38%) is stunted (low height for age), one in five (21%) is wasted (low weight for height), and only every second child exclusively breastfed for the first six months; 3,000 children die every day from poor diet-related illnesses.

According to the 2018 Nutrition Report, India accounts for more than three out of every 10 stunted children globally. The chronic impact of stunting on lifelong learning and adult productivity, in addition to increased disease susceptibility, is well known. Going by the National Family Health Survey-4 results, it appears 40% of our future workforce will be unable to achieve their full physical and cognitive potential. Many children are born to anaemic and malnourished teenage mothers. Indeed, about 34% of Indian women are anaemically undernourished and 55% are chronically undernourished.

Mapping of district-level aggregate data from the National and Family Health Survey 2015-16 showed stunting varies greatly from district to district (12% to 65%), with 239 of 604 districts having levels above 40%. Ironically, it is observed that the topmost milk-producing states of the country also happen to be high at incidence of malnutrition. This information necessitates urgent intervention by central and state governments.

A common cause across all forms of malnutrition is a suboptimal diet. With abundant supply of milk, which will likely to continue in the future, one possible and feasible intervention that can tide over this situation is inclusion of milk in the feeding programmes for children in schools. Nutrient needs increase in adolescences to meet the demands of pubertal growth and brain maturation. Inadequate nutrient intake during childhood leads to undernutrition, which results in growth retardation, reduced work capacity, and poor mental and social development. Addressing nutrition problems and adopting healthy dietary habits during adolescence can be important for potential 'catch up' growth, improved cognition, and reduced risk of both communicable and non-communicable diseases (NCDs) later in life. According to the Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO), "malnutrition is the single largest contributor to disease in the world." Over the last two decades, there has been a growing body of evidence that *in utero*, infant and young child undernutrition is directly linked to vulnerability to adult nutrition-related NCDs.

Studies endorse that a diet containing milk or dairy products provides 25-33% of the protein requirement and may have a positive effect on weight gain and linear growth in malnourished children. Milk is an excellent source of several micronutrients such as calcium, vitamin D, vitamin B12, phosphorus, potassium, etc, which help make bones strong, increase immunity, and improve vision, cognitive and motor functions of the body. Some of these micronutrients are commonly deficient in populations that consume low amounts of animal-sourced foods. Therefore, milk, being a wholesome food, can play an important role in reducing malnutrition, if included in regular diets of the population.

India is the largest producer of milk in the world, but people belonging to lower income groups cannot afford milk due to low purchasing power—even though it has been observed there is an increasing incidence of milk consumption over the years. Thus, children from lower income



Illustration: ROHNIT PHORE

DILIP RATH

The author is chairman, National Dairy Development Board. Views are personal

How milk can address malnutrition in children

In schools where NDDDB-NFN's Giftmilk scheme was run, there was a 7% decrease in the number of stunted children, kids had better BMI for their age and sex compared to control schools, and there was reduced visual impairment among children and marked improvement in IQ levels. In addition, cumulative attendance increased by more than 10% in these intervention schools

strata are deprived of essential nutrients to support their optimal physical and mental growth. Studies on determining association between nutritional statuses with eating habits in schools show a need to increase nutritional counselling regarding healthy eating habits in schools and to conduct appropriate interventions to improve the nutritional status of adolescent girls.

Taking a cue from the benefits of consuming milk, the NDDDB Foundation for Nutrition (NFN), a trust/society created by the National Dairy Development Board, has been facilitating distribution of fortified flavoured milk to children in select government/public schools across the country under its Giftmilk scheme. It runs by channelising CSR allocations of corporates. The NFN strives to provide

pasteurised flavoured fortified (with vitamin A and D) milk under robust cold chain logistics to children. The quality of milk is maintained by creating a cold supply chain till it reaches the end-beneficiary. The NFN follows a robust implementation methodology, maintaining high transparency and accountability. Data is shared and monitoring is done at each level using MIS developed for tracking milk consumption.

The NFN has distributed 60 lakh units of milk to about 44,000 schoolchildren covering 94 schools in seven states till March 2019. The response received from students, teachers and parents has been encouraging. Giftmilk for students, mostly tribal, of government schools in Latehar district of Jharkhand started in November 2017, covering 18,000 students of 43 schools. The Rajendra Institute of Medical Sciences, Ranchi, conducted a scientific study to understand the impact of Giftmilk on children in intervention schools of Latehar.

The study revealed promising findings on the benefits of providing 200 millilitres of fortified, flavoured and pasteurised milk for one year on a daily basis on all working days to children studying in 1 to 10 standards. It found that consumption of milk helped in fighting infections in children. Also, there was a 7% decrease in the number of stunted children. Kids in intervention schools were better nourished as they had better BMI for their age and sex compared to control schools. Fortification also showed its effect in reducing visual impairment among children. The number of anaemic children decreased after regular consumption of milk, which may be attributed to good quality proteins provided by milk. There was a marked improvement in IQ levels, showing a positive impact on cognitive functions of children. Cumulative attendance increased by more than 10% in intervention schools. The impact study thus testified Giftmilk's positive impact in addressing malnutrition through milk and also recommended to continue the programme for a minimum of three years for sustained benefits to children.

Similar school milk programmes have been running in developed and developing countries. In India such schemes are being implemented by states such as Gujarat, Karnataka, Rajasthan, Madhya Pradesh, etc. Most of them provide powder-based milk to children. Reconstitution of milk in schools from milk powder creates an opportunity for quality variations, safety issues and leakages/misuse of resources. The provision of milk reconstituted from powder also leads to distaste amongst children, decreasing their interest for regular consumption.

The NDDDB has been impressing upon state governments of major milk producing states for introduction of school milk programme in their states. The Centre, with the recommendation from the NITI Aayog, may consider announcing a policy and a centrally-sponsored scheme with a fund-sharing system between the Centre and state governments to initiate school milk programmes on a country-wide basis, based on Latehar model. There is a vast network of 214 dairy cooperatives and 31 dairies across India, which can be instrumental in implementing such a scheme. This will have the twin advantages of improving child nutrition on one hand and providing market/livelihood support to dairy farmers, a majority of whom are small/marginal farmers and landless, on the other hand.

With the growing economy and sizeable population below the age of 15 years, we need to ensure that every child is well-nourished. Any initiative in addressing malnutrition through school milk programmes would benefit and transform lives of millions of children and help build a strong India.

"History will judge us by the difference we make in the everyday lives of children."—Nelson Mandela.

Exports key to inclusive growth

JAHANWI

The author is economist, Export-Import Bank of India. Views are personal

Encouraging exports for leveraging the demographic dividend

INDIA HAS A distinct possibility of transitioning to an upper middle-income country in another decade. Key reforms in areas such as regulatory environment, foreign investment and financial sector are unclogging the wheels of growth, making India's growth story look resolutely positive. But notwithstanding this positive outlook, as the economic pie increases, labour cost advantages will eventually erode and manufacturing would steadily trend towards more capital-intensive processes. Developments in the ICT space with the advent of AI and ML are reducing the human interface in hi-tech manufacturing. In such a scenario, the challenge will be in ensuring that higher capital intensity does not worsen labour market conditions, and inequality doesn't become economically inevitable.

India's human capital is touted as her biggest advantage. While the demographic dividend has started tapering in China, India still has a huge window of opportunity. According to estimates, the proportion of working population in the total population of India is expected to remain high until 2055-56. However, this advantage could easily become an Achilles' heel in the absence of an action plan to increase the employment and employability of the population.

India needs 5-9 million jobs every year, making it imperative for the country to look beyond the traditional model of domestic demand-led growth. The slipping of unemployment rate from 5.14% in May 2018 to 7.6% in April 2019, as per the CMIE database on employment statistics, highlights the urgency of identifying new nodes of employment growth, such as export manufacturing.

The quantum of jobs is not the only difficulty. According to International Labour Organisation estimates, the share of informal employment in the total employment is 88.2% in India, far higher than the world average of 60%. Workers in the informal economy face higher risk of poverty than those in the formal economy, and informal economic units face lower productivity and income. There is also a stark disparity in wages across formal and informal sectors, as also across other regional and demographic groups. Therefore, there is an urgent need for reducing informality, improving the quality of jobs, and correcting the relatively unequal income distribution of jobs and earnings across various groups.

As India looks at meeting the enormous demand for employment while also improving labour conditions, the role of exports in employment will be crucial. Recent research bolsters the case that exports can drive both quantum and quality of employment growth.

In case of India, Exim Bank's research indicates \$1 million worth of exports supported 138 jobs during 2012-13, far higher than 5.2 jobs supported in the US during 2014. In fact, exports accounted for 14.5% of the total employment in India during 2012-13. A recent study by the World Bank-ILO corroborates the positive impact of exports on employment, in terms of wages and reduction in informality. According to the study, an increase of \$1,500 in India's exports per worker increases wages per worker by ₹8,000, and reduces informality by around 12.4 million workers.

These estimates highlight that export-led growth strategies can help improve labour market conditions. But export growth is not a panacea for employment growth, and there is a need for complementary policies to resolve the development conundrum of increasing capital intensity of growth process and concomitant labour market improvements.

The focus should be on eliminating distortions in production by reform in labour market regulations, increasing participation of women in workforce, and increasing worker mobility. We need to prepare the workforce to handle the complexities of globalised production systems. Recognising the need for skill development and training, the government started Skill India in 2015. Such training and skill development efforts should not be a prelude, but a permanent motif of inclusive growth strategies. As the economy grows and its driving forces change, training should also be suitably adapted. This will be important to ensure that wage gaps do not widen, and threaten the objectives of inclusive growth.

Research indicates that \$1 million worth of exports supported 138 jobs in India in 2012-13, far higher than 5.2 jobs supported in the US during 2014

HELICOPTER MONEY

Is the Helicopter airborne in India?

It's difficult to segregate economic thinking from politico-social objectives

SHARAD KUMAR

The author is AGM-Economist, SBI. Views are personal

being devised to handle this.

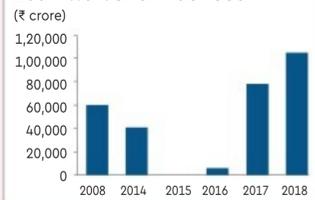
Economists are largely known to coin unorthodox nomenclature for financial and economic events and situations taking place in a not so complex but integrated network of financial system. The colloquy on quantitative easing across the globe as well as in Indian economy reminds one of 'Helicopter Money', an interesting terminology coined by monetarist Milton Friedman way back in 1969. One does not know whether it would be right to use it in the current situation, but the ex-Fed Chairman Ben Bernanke's advocacy of the same in 2002, and having a reference of the same later in his biography 'The Courage to Act', gives courage to use this in the current situation.

India has been grappling with the issue of liquidity. The announcement of increasing the exemption limit for GST and a probable reduction in the GST rates in FY19 and the series of OMOs done by the

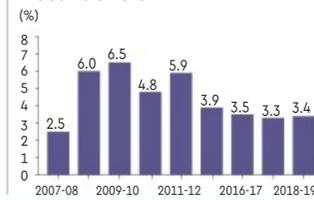
central bank draw parallel to the situation, which led Bernanke to recall Friedman's 'Helicopter Money' in 2002, suggesting a broad-based tax cut accommodated by a programme of open-market purchases.

In India, though the macro numbers seem to provide comfort, liquidity continues to remain an issue. The Indian economy is facing liquidity problems of a different nature, wherein it is needed to bring comfort to banks and the financial sector. The QE in other countries was done with the objective of reviving those economies out of a cycle of depression. In India, the growth numbers are still good and are not yet a major concern, but the regulator's intent is to provide liquidity to the banking system, which is passing through a paradox of lower deposits and higher credit growth. The CD ratio of the banking system indicates liquidity pressure on banks, which, in due course, may stall the growth by restricting credit availability,

Loan waiver announced



Fiscal deficit



especially when the credit flow from the NBFC segment faces immense problems.

RBI is committed upon its twin objectives of managing the short-term liquidity and supplying the long-term durable liquidity in the system. However, as against the past decade, where RBI's liquidity comfort zone was +/-1% of NDTL, RBI now prefers to have a neutral stance.

The economy is in the midst of first quarter, where credit drawdowns are relatively less (*the reason why the CD ratio has eased*). Although the deposit growth has reached double-digit levels, it is not enough to meet the credit demand, which may see pick-up once the election process is over. RBI managed the long-term liquidity issues by OMOs (announced even now in May 2019) and bought securities worth ₹2,985 billion in FY19 to give comfort to the liquidity conditions of the economy. This, however, may not compensate the escalating liquidity requirements, which have breached the erstwhile comfort zone of RBI on numerous occasions in the month of December 2018 and other occasions too. RBI was expected to come

out with other options to improve the liquidity and thus came the forex swap announcement, by which RBI has mopped up \$5 billion in two tranches, on March 26 and April 23, pushing in around ₹70,000 crore of liquidity in the system.

An equilibrium can be achieved with an efficient mix of fiscal and monetary policy. It is quite difficult to keep economic thinking segregated from politico-social objectives. The announcement of income support scheme Pradhan Mantri Kisan Samman Nidhi, or other similar schemes, points towards such objectives. Although from a social perspective the benefits of the scheme deserve applause, a solution with sustained benefit to the farm community is a better option. This could be by way of an effective marketing mechanism, removal of intermediaries in the agri-marketing process, development of warehouse facilities and giving easy access to farmers. But we believe these solutions would also be coming up in the near term.

It leads to a rather intriguing economic situation, where on the one hand the banking system facing liquidity shortfall is

being supported by the regulator adding up systemic liquidity, while politico-economic situation stares towards announcements such as those of tax cuts, farm loan waivers, income support or other ways of providing benefits, which are like double-edged sword, denting the already precarious fiscal situation on one hand and impacting the credit culture on the other.

The accompanying graph gives an idea about the farm loan waiver announced in past few years. Even if no fresh guesswork is done for these farm loan waivers and income support, it would be enough to disturb fiscal arithmetic of the government. It may also be recalled that the debt waiver announcement of 2008 had little impact on the growth but took the fiscal deficit to unsustainable levels as against FRBMA, which in its original form aimed at reducing fiscal deficit to 3% of GDP by 2008.

The elections usually lead to opening of floodgates. If not timely checked, these can lead to doling out of benefits, which though short-term in nature may leave a longer impact on the fiscal discipline of the economy, without accruing a sustained benefit and permanent solution to issues such as farm distress.

While on the monetary front RBI is fulfilling the task of providing liquidity as well as the banker of last resort, the fiscal initiatives are to be keenly watched. It is by no means that the government can avoid these situations in a democratic setup, but the skills of think tanks will come for a test as to how they create a balance between revenue and expenses in this situation and emerge successful, without compromising 'much' on fiscal discipline.



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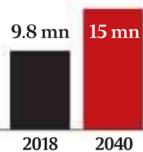
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If there are questions of current or contemporary relevance that you would like explained, please write to explained@expressindia.com

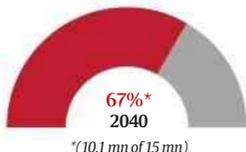
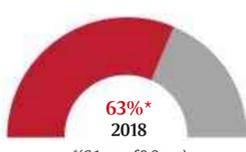
TELLING NUMBERS

By 2040, 15 million will need chemotherapy each year: study

PEOPLE REQUIRING CHEMO EACH YEAR



TWO-THIRDS IN POORER COUNTRIES



PEOPLE REQUIRING CHEMO EACH YEAR



COMMONEST INDICATIONS FOR CHEMO (2040)

Lung cancer	2.45 mn
Breast cancer	1.9 mn
Colorectal cancer	1.68 mn

OVER 15 million people will need chemotherapy globally each year by 2040, a 53% rise from 9.8 million in 2018, according to a study in *The Lancet Oncology*. The modelling study is the first to estimate the scale of chemotherapy provision needed at national, regional, and global scales to respond to the growth of cancer cases.

The estimated proportion of patients needing chemotherapy who reside in low-income or middle-income countries was 63% (6.1 million of 9.8 million) in 2018, and will be 67% (10.1 million of 15 million) in 2040. Of the additional 5.2 million people needing treatment by 2040, an estimated 75% will reside in these countries.

Of the 15 million people who will require chemotherapy in 2040, more than one-third will be living in eastern Asia (5.2 million, 35%), 12% (1.7 million) in south central Asia, 10% (1.4 million) in northern America, 7% (9.8 lakh) in South eastern Asia, 6% (9.2 lakh) in South America, and 5% (8.1 lakh) in western Europe, the study estimates.

Source: *The Lancet Oncology*

THIS WORD MEANS

HERBIVORE CENSUS

Now in progress in Gir, a count of prey that is available for Asiatic lions. Why is it significant this year?

EVERY SUMMER, the Forest Department of Gujarat conducts a Herbivore Census in Gir forest. This year's exercise, which began Monday, is of particular significance because it is the last Herbivore Census ahead of next year's Lion Census, which is a once-in-five-years exercise. The Herbivore Census covers ungulates such as spotted deer, blue bulls (*nilgais*), sambar, Indian gazelles (*chinkaras*), four-horned antelopes (*choshinga*) and wild boars, as well as Indian langurs and peafowl.



Officials depend on direct sighting. Gujarat Forest Department

Why it matters

Wild ungulates and langurs are the main prey of Asiatic lions, the endangered species whose only wild population in the world is surviving in the 22,000 sq km Greater Gir area. A count provides a sense of the available of the prey base for lions as well as other predators like leopards, hyenas and wolves. A strong prey base can reduce depredation of livestock by lions and can reduce man-animal conflict. In 2013-14, the last Herbivore Census before the previous Lion Census, the total count of all herbivores was 1.32 lakh, higher than the about 1.25 lakh counted in 2012-13.

Why it's done in summer

During summer, foliage is reduced to a minimum in dry and deciduous tropical forests, which affords the best visibility for conducting a census. Also, wild animals concentrate around water points, which in Gir include 450 artificial ones filled by the Forest Department. The forest is divided into 19 routes and forest divisions for the census, with teams transacting routes thrice — morning, afternoon and evening — and depending on direct sighting.

GOPAL KATESHIYA

SIMPLY PUT QUESTION & ANSWER

Why govts are wary of Huawei

The Chinese telecom giant is at the centre of yet another controversy, which has cost a UK minister his job. What is it about the company that continues to cause security concerns to countries around the world?

DEBASHISH PACHAL
NEW DELHI, MAY 13

A CONTROVERSY involving the Chinese electronics and telecommunications equipment company Huawei claimed the job of a British cabinet minister this month, the latest of many incidents that reflect the suspicion with which the company is viewed around the world.

Huawei, based in Shenzhen, was founded in 1987 by Ren Zhengfei, an engineer who had served in the Chinese People's Liberation Army (PLA).

What happened in the UK?

Prime Minister Theresa May sacked Defence Secretary Gavin Williamson over information leaked to the press about a top secret government meeting relating to Huawei. Williamson has denied leaking the information. The leaked information was published late last month in *The Telegraph* of London, which reported that May "had given the green light to a Chinese telecoms giant to help build Britain's new 5G network despite warnings from the US and some of her most senior ministers that it poses a risk to national security". The report said that at the UK's National Security Council (NSC), chaired by May, she had overruled concerns expressed by senior cabinet colleagues.

Following the report, May ordered an inquiry into the leak under Cabinet Secretary Sir Mark Sedwill. This was followed by the dismissal of Williamson. MP Jacob Rees-Mogg has been quoted as saying: "The whole story here is not about a leak, it's about whether or not we're getting into bed with the Chinese company Huawei against the advice of the US and Australians who have decided not to."

What are the suspicions about Huawei based on?

These arise from the fact that it was founded by an engineer who has earlier worked in PLA and is also a member of the Communist Party of China. Journalist Richard McGregor, the author of *The Party: The Secret World of China's Communist Rulers*, had claimed that Huawei has received state support at crucial points in its development.

The concerns are over a perceived security risk posed by Huawei to countries it is operating in. For example, as per a report in *Bloomberg* quoting security briefing documents from 2009 and 2011 of Vodafone, which was using Huawei equipment, Vodafone had identified hidden backdoors in the software that could have given Huawei unauthorised access to the carrier's fixed-line network in Italy. According to the report, Vodafone had asked Huawei to remove backdoors in home routers in 2011 and received



NYT photo above shows Wilbur Ross, the United States secretary of commerce, speaking in January about charges against Huawei of bank fraud and stealing trade secrets; (left) file photo of Huawei founder Ren Zhengfei with Chinese President Xi Jinping at the London offices of the tech giant.



assurances that the issues were fixed, but further testing revealed that the security vulnerabilities remained.

What was the advice of the US mentioned by British MP Rees-Mogg?

The US government has banned Huawei from the country's networks and has advised the UK, Australia, New Zealand and Canada to do the same. The US claims that Huawei's close ties with the Chinese government and its army make it a national security risk.

In January this year, the US Department of Justice unveiled two indictments against Huawei. One indictment, unsealed in the Western District of Washington, centre on Huawei's attempted theft of US company T-Mobile's secrets. From 2012 to 2013, Huawei China, with help from employees in the US, allegedly implemented a scheme to steal T-Mobile's phone-testing robot.

The other indictment, unsealed in the Eastern District of New York, focuses on Huawei's alleged attempts to skirt US sanctions on Iran. It accuses Huawei of running a Hong Kong-based company, Skycom, as an "unofficial subsidiary to obtain otherwise prohibited US-origin goods, technology and services, including banking services".

Last week, the US State Department official responsible for 5G, Robert Strayer, was quoted as saying: "Putting Huawei or other

untrustworthy vendors in any part of the 5G telecommunications network is a risk." He added that "if other countries insert and allow untrusted vendors to build out and become the vendors for their 5G networks, we will have to reassess the ability for us to share information and be interconnected with them in the ways that we are today".

Where else has Huawei run into trouble?

Last December, Huawei's chief financial officer Meng Wanzhou was arrested by Canadian authorities at the request of the US, with which it has an extradition treaty. Around a week later, it emerged that an arrest warrant had been issued on August 2018 by US District Court for the Eastern District of New York. The warrant was based on allegations of a conspiracy to defraud banks which had cleared money that was claimed to be for Huawei but was actually for Skycom, described as the "unofficial subsidiary", which allegedly attempted to sell US equipment to Iran despite the US and European Union bans.

Among other countries, New Zealand and Australia have blocked the use of Huawei's equipment in the rollout of 5G networks. In April 2018, US regulations were announced that banned government companies buying from any company deemed a security threat. In July 2018, the US lifted the ban on Chinese company ZTE as a part of a settlement, while

HUAWEI IN INDIA

Huawei set foot in India in 2000, working with telecom operators to provide them with network equipment. Though the segment was crowded with other companies like Ericsson and Nokia Networks, the boom that was about to happen in the Indian telecom sector enabled it to accommodate Huawei too. Huawei's first research and development centre outside China was set up in India, one of its biggest outside its home turf. Ten years after it began network operations in India, Huawei launched its first line of smartphones in 2010. However, its devices, which are now sold under the Honor brand, recorded sluggish sales compared to its Chinese counterparts such as Xiaomi, Oppo and Vivo. The brand broke into the top five rankings in the Indian smartphone market for the first time in the January-March quarter of 2018.

the ban on Huawei equipment continues.

In August 2018, the Australian government banned Huawei and ZTE from supplying telecom equipment for 5G network, citing national security concerns. In November, New Zealand's security services too blocked Huawei from supplying mobile network kit to a local company on concerns of national security. In the UK, telecom service provider BT confirmed last year that it is removing Huawei equipment from key areas of its 4G network, following concerns from MI6.

Where does India stand in this controversy?

In India, there has been confusion among telecom operators on what to do about Huawei when they switch to 5G networks. Huawei network equipment has been used by Vodafone Idea and Airtel in many circles, but the Chinese company has still not got a nod on 5G trials. Huawei and ZTE were barred from taking part in the trials initially.

How big a player is Huawei globally?

Today, it is the world's second-largest smartphone maker, selling more than Apple, and behind only Samsung. It surpassed Apple in the first quarter of 2019, according to research firm Counterpoint, which said Huawei shipped 59.1 million smartphones. Samsung retained the top spot with 72.0 million units.

Can a beluga whale be trained as a military spy?

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
NEW DELHI, MAY 13

OVER THE last few weeks, a beluga whale swimming in the Arctic off Norway has given rise to speculation that it is a spy being used by the Russians. It is tame, allowing humans to pet it, and one video shows it returning a phone to a woman who had accidentally dropped into the ocean. The reason it is being described as a spy is a harness it was wearing, with the words "Equipment St. Petersburg" in English, along with a GoPro camera holder.

Marine mammals in military

Beluga whales generally live in the icy waters around Greenland, Norway and Russia. They can grow up to 6 m long, and are related to dolphins.

Other marine mammals are known to have been used for military use, including bot-



The Beluga whale in Norwegian waters on April 26. Jorgen Ree Wiig, Norwegian Directorate of Fisheries, via Reuters

tlentose dolphins by the US Navy since the 1960s. A dolphin can identify objects underwater that would be invisible to human divers. In a 2017 article, *Live Science* magazine said US Navy dolphins are deployed with teams of human handlers on patrols to look for threats such as marine mines. The magazine cited the Persian Gulf War and the Iraq War as exam-

ples when Navy dolphins helped clear mines. Additionally, *The Conversation* quoted Michael Greenwood, veteran of the Navy dolphin project, as having said in 1976 that the dolphins were equipped with syringes filled with carbon dioxide to kill intruders.

The same US Navy programme also trains sea lions, with their excellent low-light vision and underwater hearing, to locate and mark the locations of marine mines and other threats, the *Live Science* article added.

In a recent report, *Live Science* quoted Pierre Béland, a researcher at the St. Lawrence National Institute of Ecotoxicology in Montreal, as describing beluga whales as intelligent and easily trainable. Béland cited a precedent about a beluga whale found in the Black Sea in the 1990s, apparently having escaped from a Russian military facility.

So, is this one a spy?

While Moscow has not issued any official

reaction, Russian media has quoted Dmitry Glazov, a scientist with the Russian Academy of Sciences, as saying that the Russian Navy does have programmes involving whales. On the other hand, Mikhail Barabanov, a naval analyst at the Moscow-based Center for the Analysis of Strategies and Technologies think tank, was quoted as telling the Associated Press: "Even if there are military programs for using marine animals for navy purposes, they are unlikely to be belugas, and such animals are unlikely to be released into the open ocean."

Another theory is that the "Equipment St. Petersburg", which is written in English, might refer to St. Petersburg in Florida, where there are water parks with beluga whales. Jorgen Ree Wiig, a marine biologist working with the Norwegian Directorate of Fisheries, has been quoted by the portal phys.org as saying that it wouldn't be inconceivable for the whale to have travelled from Florida. Scientists have removed the harness.

Coastal Regulation Zone: How rules for building along coast have evolved

SHAJU PHILIP & AMITABH SINHA
THIRUVANANTHAPURAM, PUNE, MAY 13

THE SUPREME Court last week ordered the demolition, within a month, of five apartment complexes in Maradu municipality in Ernakulam, Kerala, for violating Coastal Regulation Zone (CRZ) norms. The order came on a special leave petition (SLP) filed by the Kerala Coastal Zone Management Authority (KCZMA). While the CRZ Rules are made by the Union Environment Ministry, implementation is supposed to be done by state governments through their Coastal Zone Management Authorities. The states are also supposed to frame their own coastal zone management plans in accordance with the central Rules.

The CRZ Rules

CRZ Rules govern human and industrial activity close to the coastline, in order to

protect the fragile ecosystems near the sea. The Rules, mandated under the Environment Protection Act, 1986, were first framed in 1991. They sought to restrict certain kinds of activities, like large constructions, setting up of new industries, storage or disposal of hazardous material, mining, or reclamation and bunding, within a certain distance from the coastline. The basic idea is: because areas immediately next to the sea are extremely delicate, home to many marine and aquatic life forms, both animals and plants, and are also threatened by climate change, they need to be protected against unregulated development.

In all CRZ Rules, the regulation zone has been defined as the area up to 500 m from the high-tide line. Several kinds of restrictions apply, depending on criteria such as the population of the area, the ecological sensitivity, the distance from the shore, and whether the area had been designated as a natural park or wildlife zone.

Despite several amendments, states found the 1991 Rules to be extremely restrictive. They complained that if applied strictly, the Rules would not allow simple things like building decent homes for people living close to the coast, and carrying out basic developmental works. The 1991 Rules also created hurdles for showpiece industrial and infrastructure projects such as the POSCO steel plant in Odisha and the proposed Navi Mumbai airport in the first decade of the new century.

Evolution of Rules

The Centre notified fresh CRZ Rules in 2011, which addressed some concerns. An exemption was made for the construction of the Navi Mumbai airport. (The POSCO project had failed to take off due to other reasons.) Projects of the Department of Atomic Energy, which plans to set up nuclear power plants near the coast, were exempted.

After even these Rules were found inad-

equated, however, the Environment Ministry in 2014 set up a six-member committee under then Earth Sciences Secretary Shailesh Nayak to give suggestions for a new set of CRZ Rules. The committee submitted its report in 2015. Simultaneously, the Chennai-based National Centre for Sustainable Coastal Management defined a new high-tide line along India's entire coastline to remove ambiguities. Separately, the Survey of India defined a hazard line along the coasts — to be used mainly for disaster management planning.

Based on these and other inputs, the Environment Ministry issued fresh CRZ Rules in December 2018, which removed certain restrictions on building, streamlined the clearance process, and aimed to encourage tourism in coastal areas.

The current situation

The January this year, the government notified new CRZ Rules with the stated ob-

jectives of promoting sustainable development and conserving coastal environments.

For the so-called CRZ-III (Rural) areas, two separate categories have been stipulated. In the densely populated rural areas (CRZ-IIIA) with a population density of 2,161 per sq km as per the 2011 Census, the no-development zone is now 50 m from the high-tide level, as against the 200 m stipulated earlier. In the CRZ-IIIB category (rural areas with population density below 2,161 per sq km) continue to have a no-development zone extending up to 200 m from the high-tide line.

The new Rules have a no-development zone of 20 m for all islands close to the mainland coast, and for all backwater islands in the mainland.

Cases in Kerala

There have been cases of courts in Kerala ordering demolition of resorts or apartments for violating CRZ norms earlier. But stakeholders have either obtained stays, or



The Indian EXPRESS

FOUNDED BY

RAMNATH GOENKA

BECAUSE THE TRUTH INVOLVES US ALL

IF FOOD PRICES RISE

Reversal of low food inflation trend may not be good news for new government. But there are things it must not do

FOR 32 MONTHS running (from September 2016 to April 2019), consumer food inflation has been trailing general retail inflation. To understand its significance, rewind to the preceding 32 months (from January 2014 to August 2019), when in as many as 25 months the annual increase in food prices exceeded overall consumer inflation. Simply put, food prices aren't pinching as before and have also not been a hot-button issue in the current Lok Sabha elections — unlike in 2014, when they were one of the key reasons for the then Congress-led ruling alliance's rout. Bringing down retail food inflation from near double-digit to low single digit levels — even negative in many months — has, indeed, been a signal achievement of the Narendra Modi government. However, it hasn't been an unmixed blessing. While consumers have benefitted, the same cannot be said about farmers, for whom flat or falling prices of food and other agri produce have spelled disaster. Whether and how much that would cost the Modi-led BJP — in terms of rural votes — will be known on May 23, the day of counting.

Meanwhile, there are also signs of a trend reversal. The last couple of months have seen prices of a host of farm commodities — from coarse grains, cattlefeed ingredients and cotton to tomatoes and seasonal vegetables — going up significantly. Even milk and sugar are beginning to shake off a prolonged bear phase. The immediate trigger for this seems to be drought in large parts of Maharashtra, Gujarat, Karnataka, Andhra Pradesh and Telangana. But there could be structural reasons as well. It is not difficult to believe that sustained low produce realisations have broken the backs of many farmers, leading them to cut down crop acreages or underfeed their cattle. These are bound to impact yields and supply at some point. In that case, a normal monsoon alone, as forecast by the Met Department, may not be enough. Farmers aren't going to ramp up output overnight, just as insufficiently nourished bovines will take time to calve and produce close to their genetic potential. If structural supply constraints combine with a not-so-great monsoon, the result may well be a return of food inflation.

That, on the face of it, may not be good news for the next government. The mistake it should avoid is to clamp the usual restrictions on exports, internal trade and stocking, even while allowing unlimited imports at zero duty. On the contrary, this is the time to scrap the Essential Commodities Act and laws allowing agricultural produce trade only in government-controlled wholesale mandis. The current food inflation, if at all, is a necessary price correction that will help restore farmer confidence. Improved price realisations would also create an environment to phase out wasteful government spending, whether through market-distorting minimum support price procurement operations or under-pricing of fertilisers, water and electricity. Farmers deserve remunerative prices, not handouts.

THE GWADAR WARNING

Terror attack in Balochistan highlights how extremism is adding volatility to a restive region

THE TERRORIST ATTACK at a hotel in Gwadar, the Balochistan port city in which China is invested heavily, is sure to have sent tremors in both Pakistan and China. The Gwadar port is a flagship project of the US \$62 billion-China Pakistan Economic Corridor. The hotel is where Chinese visitors and Pakistani officials stay on a regular basis. Five people were killed in the attack, including one Pakistan Navy seaman, a hotel employee and three security guards. Reports point to three or four terrorists gaining entry into the hotel all too easily on May 11, Saturday, and keeping up gunfire and rocket attacks into the early hours of Sunday, until the assailants were themselves killed.

This is the second attack in Gwadar within a month. On April 18, gunmen pulled out 14 passengers from a bus on a highway in the district, and shot them dead. Eleven of them were security personnel. Both attacks were claimed by the Baloch Liberation Army. Last November, the BLA also claimed an attack on the Chinese consulate in Karachi, in which four people were killed. If there was any doubt that the BLA is targeting Pakistani-Chinese interests in the region with a new determination, after the hotel attack, a video claiming to be from the group's "official media channel" accused China of exploiting the Baloch people for its own "evil designs" in the name of the CPEC, and said the "Majeed Group" of the BLA would not allow this to continue.

Questions are being asked in Pakistan about how such a major breach occurred at Gwadar, where the Pakistan security establishment goes all out to guard Chinese interests. What the attack has highlighted once again are long-held grievances among the Baloch which the flurry of infrastructure development in Gwadar, financed by China's deep pockets, has done nothing to allay. Balochistan remains the least developed of Pakistan's provinces even though it is the richest in terms of its natural resources. In recent years, the heavy hand of the Pakistan Army in dealing with the restiveness in the province has led to more alienation. In this period, Islamist extremist groups have set up camp in the province, unleashing sectarian violence and adding to its volatility. Pakistan alleges the BLA is an Indian proxy, but has not provided any evidence to back the claim. Many of Pakistan's systemic problems are blamed routinely on India by the country's security establishment. This can only delay or prevent Pakistan from addressing the causes of its Balochistan problem.

MAKEOVER MAN

Yogi Deveshwar transformed the business he ran, in ways that showed him ahead of his time

IN THE RESHAPING or transformation of a clutch of India's top corporates in the post liberalisation era, two feisty leaders stand out. Strangely, the two have appeared to be connected in the way they steered their groups for decades and re-booted them to emerge as diversified conglomerates, fought bruising takeover battles and kept predators at bay while epitomising professional management. One was Yogi Deveshwar, the non-executive chairman of ITC, who died on Saturday, and the other is A M Naik, the non-executive chairman of L&T. When you think of the ITC now, the image that stands out is more that of its FMCG or packaging, hospitality or agri businesses, rather than a cigarette manufacturing firm with a foreign parentage.

Much of the makeover — or erasing of the perception of the ITC being only a cigarette giant — has to do with Deveshwar. He recognised the need to diversify into areas which promised paybacks over the medium term and to venture into agribusiness, way ahead of his time and backing the e-chaupal model, the company's digital platform for linking farmers and facilitating procurement of their produce. That drive and strategy helped build a company which clocked revenues of Rs 55,000 crore, a market capitalisation of \$50 billion, a large institutional shareholding base and top local brands. The longest serving executive chairman of an Indian firm along with Naik and Deepak Parekh also represented a third kind of entity in India — successful professionally-run firms as distinct from the promoter-driven companies or business houses and state-run firms.

As has been the case in some of India's top professionally-run companies, a quibble about leaders like Deveshwar has been about not letting the grass grow under their feet. The legacy test for the diversified group will now be the target of FMCG revenues of Rs 1 lakh crore by 2030 and motoring on the same model of professional management. India needs that, especially given the experience of two such models, ICICI Bank and Axis Bank.



SOLI J SORABJEE

JUDGES IN INDIA perform important functions. The losing party, not unexpectedly, nurses a grudge against the judge who has decided the case against him or her and at times labours under the mis-impression that the judge is corrupt. Apparently, a judge needs to be insulated from the displeasure and wrath of the losing party.

The Judges Inquiry Act, 1968, has been enacted for that purpose and for the same reason an "in house procedure" has been evolved by the Supreme Court. In India, the removal of a judge of the Supreme Court or a high court can only be by recourse to the procedure prescribed by Article 124(4) of the Constitution, popularly described as impeachment. Experience has shown that this cumbersome procedure has not achieved its intent.

The "in-house procedure" is in reality a peer review wherein the sitting judges will examine the complaint to find out if it has any substance. This envisages an informal procedure of examining the complainant and also the material which may be produced by the complainant. The objective of the "in-house procedure" is to preserve the independence of the judiciary by having the allegations against the concerned judge examined in the first instance by his peers, and not by an outside agency. The nature of inquiry is fact-finding, where the judge would have his say. It is settled law that the inquiry would not be a formal judicial inquiry. It would not involve the examination and cross-examination of witnesses. The committee can devise its own procedure consistent with the principles of natural justice.

If the allegations are found to be substantiated, then further steps will be taken as provided in the Constitution. Otherwise, the matter is closed. Reports of the Peer

Committee are not made public, and are to be kept confidential, as laid down by the Supreme Court in Indira Jaising's case (2003) 5 SCC 494.

In the present case, the Chief Justice authorised the next senior-most judge, Hon'ble Justice S A Bobde, to decide on the steps to be taken in the matter. Accordingly, a committee of three judges was constituted to look into the matter. The committee comprised the senior most puisne judge of the Supreme Court (Hon'ble Mr Justice S A Bobde) and two women judges (Hon'ble Ms Justice Indu Malhotra and Hon'ble Ms Justice Indira Banerjee). The committee duly followed the established in-house procedure, which has existed for the last 20 years, and multiple inquiries have been held under it.

The in-house procedure expressly states that no lawyers shall be permitted to participate and contemplates only sitting judges to be members of the inquiry committee. The committee, therefore, did not accede to the request of the complainant for a lawyer. The complainant appeared and was examined on three separate dates. She was permitted to produce documents and also examine documents. Thereafter, she chose to walk out and withdraw from the proceedings. Therefore, the committee was entitled in law to proceed further in the matter and complete the inquiry. In the present case, the report of the committee was submitted to the next senior-most judge competent to deal with the matter, Justice S A Bobde.

To recapitulate, in the current case, the Peer Committee examined the complainant who, then, chose to walk out. Thereafter, the Chief Justice of India was examined. The committee examined the relevant material produced by either side and thereafter gave

a report holding that the complaint was bereft of substance.

Controversy has arisen about the "secretive" manner in which the Peer Committee performed its functions. The criticism is as follows: The Peer Committee did not allow assistance of a lawyer to the complainant; the report has not been given to the complainant, while it has been given to the Chief Justice of India; the report has not been made public; outsiders should have been associated with the Peer Committee.

In my opinion, the above criticism is untenable. The in-house committee procedure evolved by the Supreme Court in 1999 was followed. The objective is not to protect or absolve any judge of misconduct but to preserve the independence of the judiciary and to ensure fearless discharge of duties by judges. For the same reason, the Peer Committee must comprise only sitting judges. Peers cannot include retired judges, lawyers, politicians or even academics.

It is unfortunate that some, at lavish dinner parties, are raising fingers for untenable reasons against the three judges of the Supreme Court who gave the report, without understanding the genesis and purpose of the in-house procedure. More unfortunate is my good friend Karan Thapar's conclusion that it is a sad day for the judiciary. Let me remind him that the in-house procedure is published on the website of the Supreme Court. It has stood the test of time.

If we do not trust judges of the Supreme Court, then God save the country. We must put a lid upon the unfortunate controversy and save the institution, the office of the Chief Justice of India, from further damage.

The writer is former Attorney General for India

Undue criticism

Court's in-house procedure, by which allegations against CJI were examined, has stood the test of time

The in-house procedure expressly states that no lawyers shall be permitted to participate and contemplates only sitting judges to be members of the inquiry committee. The committee, therefore, did not accede to the request of the complainant for a lawyer. The complainant appeared and was examined on three separate dates. She was permitted to produce documents and also examine documents.



C UDAY BHASKAR

THE NATIONAL capital, which voted on Sunday, has an electoral symbolism that major political parties are keenly aware of. Hence, the no-holds-barred campaign rhetoric, which has set a new low in calumny and coarseness. Prime Minister Narendra Modi, who has targeted the Nehru-Gandhi family over the last year, opened yet another front when he charged late PM Rajiv Gandhi of misusing defence assets.

Addressing a pre-poll rally in Delhi, Modi claimed that in late 1987, Rajiv Gandhi had used *INS Viraat* as "a personal taxi" when "he (Gandhi) went on a 10-day leave with his family and in-laws". The extrapolation was that the Italian relatives of Rajiv Gandhi had been allowed to board the carrier, thereby compromising national security. It was also alleged that *INS Viraat* had been pulled out of its operational deployment and tasked to cater to the extended "holiday" of the Rajiv Gandhi family.

Electioneering in democracies results in politicians taking recourse to a mix of fact, fiction and fantasy. The adage that poll campaigns are often about lies and damned lies has been refined, both in the US and India, the world's oldest and largest democracies.

However, Modi's allegation about *INS Viraat* has been stoutly refuted by the senior officials directly involved in that visit to the island territories. Two facts merit scrutiny for their long term implications. The first is that there were no foreign nationals on board the carrier as Modi had asserted. The second is that *INS Viraat* had not been pulled out of any operational task to be designated as a "taxi" and that the PM of the day was on an official visit to the naval ship. Prime ministers before

IN UNCHARTED WATERS

INS Viraat controversy threatens to disturb equipoise in civil-military relations

Rajiv Gandhi and those who followed him, including Modi, have visited naval platforms and this is a major event for the service.

PM Modi has been accused by his critics of either being selective in recalling facts related to his political opponents or embroidering them to suit the electoral compulsion. Clearly, the *Viraat* episode is part of this pattern and his opponents may have cast the first stone in using the word "chor" (thief) in referring to Modi.

Two questions present themselves. What was the intent of the Modi team in making such a counter-factual assertion? What are the likely repercussions of such mudslinging among the political representatives?

The immediate electoral conjecture is a bogey was created in the Gandhi-*Viraat* recall to influence the Delhi and Punjab polls, but this also had the national media unearthing reports going back by 32 years. While retired senior naval and civilian officials (Admiral I Ramdas, Vice Admiral Vinod Pasricha and Wajahat Habibullah) confirmed that the Modi assertion was counter-factual, it also triggered a debate nationally about past high-level political visits to military units and the degree of transgression. Some junior officers also weighed in with their own versions. 'Vacation Stories' (*IE*, May 13) provides the most authentic recall.

Much of this borders on the irrelevant and inane in relation to the 2019 general election, but the potential for a corrosive fissure in India's already brittle civil-military relations is discernible. The other danger is one of polarising the internal ethos of the Indian military along political-ideological lines.

The Indian military has internalised the

principle of civilian supremacy — the former relating to the elected representative who mediates the allegiance of the soldier to the sanctity of the Constitution. The office of the Prime Minister is seen by the soldier as an exalted one. Thus, lowering the benchmark of uprightness and rectitude for short-term electoral gains over a military issue can damage the complex ozone-layer equivalent that separates the elected civilian apex from the military. Today, social media and cyber connectivity accords an immediacy and extraordinary democratisation of information. The cynical manipulation of this tool and its impact within the confines of the military is yet to be accurately assessed.

The second fissure is the potential for polarising the serving military personnel along nascent divisions already evidenced among the retired veteran community. The BJP as a party has sought to woo the soldier with mixed results. While it is the constitutional right of a retired soldier to engage in legitimate political activity, projecting one political party as being congenitally anti-national in the diversity that is India is to introduce a virus in the military eco-system, one that could become tenacious and cause irreparable damage to the democratic trajectory.

Post 1962 and the China debacle, Indian military personnel were encouraged to keep religion and politics out of their discourse and focus on professional matters while remaining aware of their domestic environment but yet steadfastly apolitical. The equipoise should not be damaged.

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



MAY 14, 1979, FORTY YEARS AGO

ARMY TAKEOVER

THE ARMY TOOK over the armouries of the Punjab Armed Police (PAP) at Patiala and Jalandhar as the six day-old policemen's agitation enveloped some more areas. Fifty policemen have been sacked and more than 20 activists among them arrested so far in connection with the agitation. A significant development of the day was CPM leaders addressing rallies of striking policemen at Amritsar and Hoshiarpur. The CPM, which normally supports the Akali-Janata government in the state, has, for the first time, lent its support to the agitation of policemen, and authorities in Chandigarh wonder whether the action could be a step towards "broader leftist unity" of communists of all shades in

the state on the police agitation, UNI reports.

AMU STUDENTS FLEE

ABOUT 90 PER cent of the students of Aligarh Muslim University have vacated the hostels and gone home through special buses and coaches, according to official information received in Lucknow. Chief Minister Banarasi Das had told newsmen yesterday that the curfew was relaxed for four hours. However, on check it was found that the curfew was not relaxed at all. A total of 83 arrests had been made so far and the death toll remained five.

HEALTH DATA ABSENT

THE EXPANDED IMMUNISATION Programme, aimed to immunise millions of

Indian children against typhoid, polio, smallpox, TB, tetanus and other diseases, is suffering from a major handicap: Data. The programme, which got off the ground in January, does not have proper data on the diseases it is supposed to cover. The data on the EIP diseases at the Central Bureau of Health Intelligence (CBHI) in Delhi is based entirely on hospital statistics. Even this does not include information from many large hospitals. According to the Union Health Ministry, the infrastructure in the states and the union territories is at different levels of development, so the data cannot be compared objectively. There is virtually no information on the disease patterns in the rural areas, where nearly 80 per cent of the people live.

13 THE IDEAS PAGE

WHAT THE OTHERS SAY

"President Trump's new tariffs on Chinese imports are taxes that will be paid by Americans. That is a simple fact, and it remains true no matter how many times Mr. Trump insists the money will come from China." — **THE NEW YORK TIMES**

Seedha vision for Ultra Pradesh

Uttar Pradesh holds huge potential in agriculture — it needs right leadership to forge forward-looking path



HARISH DAMODARAN

EFFORTS TO MARKET it as an Uttar Pradesh notwithstanding, UP or Uttar Pradesh, is for many, an "Ultra Pradesh" — a place where nothing works, except in reverse. Even more disdainful is "UPay" — things can work, provided you grease the right palms.

Whichever way one looks at it, something more than ordinary is needed for a state that houses 16.5 per cent of India's people, and would be the world's fifth-most populous, were it a country. And that's probably best achieved by leveraging possibilities in agriculture and allied activities, which does not require starting from scratch. Instead, one could simply build on what already exists. Consider the following:

The whole of northern UP practically — from Upper Doab, Rohilkhand, Terai and the Awadh region just above Lucknow, to Kushinagar — grows sugarcane. The state has 120-odd operational sugar mills with cane crushing capacity aggregating over 7,80,000 tonnes per day, nearly half of it established in the last 15 years. Given that the country today is producing too much sugar and, simultaneously, importing the bulk of its oil requirements, why not encourage mills to manufacture ethanol fuel directly from cane juice? The Narendra Modi government's National Biofuels Policy permits such direct conversion, as opposed to making ethanol only from the residual molasses after production of sugar. It has also targeted 20 per cent ethanol blending in petrol by 2030, against an actual all-India average of 4.2 per cent for 2017-18 (December-November) and a likely 7.2 per cent this year.

UP has already overtaken Maharashtra as India's top sugar producer. The next goal should be to transform the state's *ganna* belt into an ethanol powerhouse. Give mills the choice whether to crystallise the juice from their cane into sugar, or ferment it straight into alcohol for potable, industrial and fuel blending purposes. At current sugar prices, they would rather produce more ethanol, making it also easier to clear outstanding dues to cane growers (Rs 10,500 crore-plus in UP). It would further help if all taxes on ethanol used for fuel blending are removed; the government's revenue interests can be protected by reserving a certain percentage of mills' alcohol output for potable liquor.

Similar innovating thinking is necessary for UP's potato belt, covering the Middle and Lower Doab regions from Mathura to Kanpur, and even districts such as Allahabad, Jaunpur and Barabanki. Like in *ganna*, there is an existing infrastructure for *aloo* in the form of cold stores. Agra, Hathras, Aligarh and Firozabad together have some 780 cold stores with a combined 65 lakh tonne space, again mostly created after 2000. When such large storage capacity allows freshly-harvested produce to be preserved for 8-9 months, what stops the government from formulating a policy to attract investments in potato processing? Processing needn't just be chips and French fries; it can extend to flakes/powder, starch and even vodka.

In sugar, UP's massive capacity additions during the mid-2000s was mainly driven by the then Samajwadi Party government's pol-



CR Sasikumar

icy of tax exemptions and incentives for both new mills and expansions. In *aloo*, where farmers are suffering low realisations for the last three years, what is required more than sops is firm government commitment not to impose curbs on stocking, processing or exports in the event of price rise. The Centre and state governments must understand the new reality of Indian agriculture — wherein shortages are increasingly episodic, not structural, and the ability of farmers to ramp up output in response to higher prices has vastly improved compared to, say, 20 years ago.

A cluster-based approach to attract agro-processing investments can also be adopted for Bundelkhand, a major pulses bowl. Production of rabi pulses in this parched region has received an added boost through farm ponds that can store rainwater accumulated during the monsoon season, and, use it to provide up to two protective irrigations, just enough for the winter *chana* (chickpea), *matar* (green peas) and *masur* (lentil) crops. In the last three years, more than 10,000 such ponds have been built in the seven Bundelkhand districts by farmers themselves, with the UP government subsidising 50 per cent of the cost. The results are clearly showing on the ground. The logical next step should be to ensure remunerative prices through government procurement and incentives for setting up dal mills and downstream processing units. Such interventions are likely to work better when they are region and crop-specific.

Another industry, whose worth hasn't been appreciated, especially by the present ruling dispensation, is bovine meat. UP has 39 registered abattoirs that account for three-fourths of India's annual \$4 billion buffalo meat exports. Meat apart, a major byproduct of these modern plants, which have all come up in the last two decades, has

UP is truly at the crossroads: The state is uniquely poised to leverage opportunities from agriculture and build on the base laid by entrepreneurs, whether in sugar, potatoes, buffalo meat, leather or mentha oil. But, it is equally in danger of being taken back by decades, courtesy leaders with exclusivist and narrow-minded visions.

been the increased availability of quality hide that is freshly flayed, fleshed, salted and folded for supply to tanneries. The abattoirs sell other byproducts as well — tallow (fat) to soap and lubricant units, bones to manufacturers of gelatin used in drug capsules, etc. Animal tallow is, incidentally, also identified as a raw material for bio-diesel production in the National Biofuels Policy!

However, forget recognising the potential of an industry that provides farmers a market for their spent buffaloes — enabling them to invest in new milk-yielding animals and making dairying viable — the Yogi Adityanath administration in UP has embarked on a path of destruction. What began as a crackdown on so-called illegal slaughterhouses has extended to forced closure of tanneries in Kanpur, ostensibly for the ardh kumbh mela from January 15 to March 4. The mela is over, but the tanneries are yet to reopen. We have a situation now of abattoirs in Aligarh and Unnao holding huge unsold stocks of raw hide, even as Agra's shoemakers have switched to synthetic leather (basically polyurethane foam-coated fabric) imported from China.

UP is truly at the crossroads: The state is uniquely poised to leverage opportunities from agriculture and build on the base laid by entrepreneurs, whether in sugar, potatoes, buffalo meat, leather or mentha oil. But, it is equally in danger of being taken back by decades, courtesy leaders with exclusivist and narrow-minded visions.

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Managing the great power flux

The rejigging of political relations between the US, China and Russia presents Delhi with strategic opportunities



RAJA-MANDALA
BY C. RAJA MOHAN

AN INDIA PREOCCUPIED with a bitter election may have little time for the unfolding movement in the world's two most important strategic relationships. The first is between the world's leading economic powers — the United States and China — that contribute nearly 40 per cent of global GDP. The second is between the world's top military powers — the US and Russia.

Last week saw the collapse of US talks on trade with China, Washington's focus this week is on resuming a productive engagement with Russia. As great power relations enter a period of flux, the first task of the next government in Delhi will be to cope with the volatility in the relations between America, China and Russia. A couple of summit meetings in June — the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation in Bishkek Kyrgyzstan and the G-20 in Osaka, Japan — offer an early opportunity for the Indian leadership to assess, first hand, the nature of the new great power dynamic.

The deep economic interdependence between the US and China, according to the prevailing conventional wisdom, puts a limit on the conflict between Washington and Beijing. Equally powerful has been the proposition that the congealed anti-Russian mood in Washington and Moscow's anti-Western truculence together prevent even a minimal understanding between the two powers.

US President Donald Trump is testing both theses. As US-China trade talks teetered on the brink, Trump raised tariffs on \$200 billion worth of Chinese exports. Trump has also threatened to impose new tariffs on all imports from China, worth \$540 billion in 2018, if a deal is not done in the next few weeks. Trump's confident escalation on trade appears to be driven by two factors. One is the belief that the US can better absorb the pain from the trade war than China. The other is the asymmetric nature of the interdependence between the two nations. China imports a lot less (\$121 billion in 2018) than it exports. That significantly presents China a smaller target on which to impose retaliatory tariffs.

For the US, the problem is no longer just about a massive trade deficit with China. There is a growing sense in Washington that the threat from Beijing is "systemic" and America must respond appropriately. Washington is accusing China of stealing intellectual property from the US. It is lobbying friends and allies against letting Huawei develop the 5G telecom networks. Washington is pushing back against China's assertive policies in the South China Sea and renewing a measure of strategic support to Taiwan.

In a major speech two weeks ago, Kiron Skinner, the chief of policy planning

in the US State Department, insisted that the threat from China was civilisational. "In China we have an economic competitor, we have an ideological competitor, one that really does seek a kind of global reach that many of us didn't expect a couple of decades ago. And I think it's also really striking that it's the first time that we'll have a great power competitor that is not Caucasian."

Although, her racial metaphor got rebuke from across the US, Skinner's idea that China is different and not amenable to mutual accommodation appears to have deep roots in the Trump Administration. In pitching China as an implacable adversary, Skinner also said something about Russia that Delhi must take note of.

The Cold War contestation with the Soviet Union, according to Skinner, "was a fight within the Western family. Karl Marx was a German Jew who developed a philosophy that was within the larger body of political thought". While there was room for at least limited cooperation with the Soviet Union, Skinner said, "that's not really possible with China. This is a fight with a really different civilisation and a different ideology, and the United States hasn't had that before."

There has been persistent view within the Trump Administration that Russia is very much part of the West and must be treated differently than Beijing. The biggest champion of a positive relationship with Russia is none other than Trump. But the president's views have had little resonance with the so-called deep state in Washington. And the allegations of Russian intervention in favour of Trump during the 2016 Presidential elections had put Trump in an awkward position.

With the official investigation deciding not to charge Trump campaign of any collusion with Russia, Trump has been liberated to renew his outreach to President Vladimir Putin. After a long call with Putin a few days ago, Trump has sent his Secretary of State Mike Pompeo to Russia for first substantive consultations this week. The talks are expected to cover a range of issues — from Venezuela to Syria and arms control to North Korea.

If breaking with China is hard for America, making up with Russia might be harder. Any Russian deal — small or big — will meet fierce political resistance in Washington. Few in Moscow are ready to believe that Trump has the political space to move forward with Russia. But then, Trump could well surprise the world on Russia much in the manner that he has on China and on so many other issues.

Whichever way the great power dynamic moves, there will be consequences — some bad and others good — for India. Whether Trump cuts a deal or escalates the economic war with China, Delhi can't continue with its trade policy lassitude. On the other hand, the rejigging of the political relations between America, China and Russia might present Delhi with fleeting strategic opportunities that need to be seized quickly.

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



SANJAY SRIVASTAVA

What the pamphlet says

Misogyny, casteist attacks against Atishi are a product of a silent but salient war

THE MOST REMARKABLE aspect of the pamphlet regarding AAP candidate Atishi was not that it was widely circulated among the voters of East Delhi. Rather, a very large numbers of them might actually find it both credible as well as a perfectly reasonable comment on women and the behaviour expected of them, the nature of caste and the degeneracy of those with non-majoritarian dietary preferences. Over the past half-decade, the country has served to convince large sections of the population that what is now stated as the sign of "goodness" should be taken at face value, rather than questioned.

The pamphlet articulates a series of the vilest of attitudes towards women, minorities and non-upper castes that continue to be part of the Indian mindset. However, in most situations, such attitudes are held in check by a social ambience that inhibits their public articulation. The atmosphere instituted by the deliberate fostering of the culture wars has methodically ripped apart the fragile threads of social civility.

There are two aspects to the wars. First, the idea that we had to have them in order to move towards confident nationhood. And second, that war is politics by other means and that political engagement must utilise the

tools of absolute violence, symbolic and physical. These two aspects have led to a culture that invites and encourages participation in public life as a battle of moralities — anyone who is judged to not measure up to specific norms is fair game for annihilation.

The culture wars of the past five years have been organised precisely around the three key aspects that are highlighted in the Atishi pamphlet. First, in a situation of war, there is the need to crush all signs of dissent that question its masculine nature. Independent-minded women who may put forward alternative visions of the future that clash with those of the war-mongers are to be "taken-down" with the most potent of cultural weapons — feminine purity and modesty.

One of the most pernicious effects of the culture wars has been the trolling of women who are seen as threats to male dominance of public life. The signs of the "unsuitability" of such women are many: There may be no husband in public sight and they may choose not to primarily define their identity in terms of domestic and conjugal life. It is important to remember that these rules of sexual behaviour and a stereotypically stable domestic life don't apply to men. A public woman who does not "act like a woman" arouses deep-seated masculine anxieties and the pamphlet plays upon them in full measure.

Second, there is the idea of purity linked

to caste. The pamphlet suggests that Manish Sisodia is a lesser being for being "lower" caste and that his "suspicious" ancestry is the result of miscegenation — interbreeding of different types of people. Over the past five years, an important aspect of the culture wars relates to how we should think about Indian culture. So, it has become commonplace to suggest that "ancient" Indian knowledge and wisdom should be the touchstone of contemporary procedures of thinking about Indian-ness.

The Indian past, in this view, was invariably pure, inventive and insightful. There has been deliberate action across a number of contexts — schools and universities, textbooks, research funding — where talking about the effects of caste oppression have become a taboo subject. The topic of caste is seen to sully talk of ancient Indian greatness and discussion on caste frequently present it as a neutral (even ingenious) device for organising life and work. Given this, the discourse of the culture wars have ensured that it is reasonable to say that past achievements are linked to upper-caste values and efforts. Those who may disagree with such views are likely to be branded as "low-caste", hence unintelligent, or worse, incapable of meeting any standards of attractiveness.

Finally, there is the perennial issue of "authentic" and "non-authentic" Indian-ness, presented in the pamphlet through ideas of

beef-eating populations. This targets specific communities, both symbolically and physically. Notwithstanding its complex role in ritual and other processes among Hindus of past times, beef-eating has become a potent example of both non and anti-Indian-ness. A variety of populations — Muslims, Christians, "westernised" Indians, etc — have come to be represented as inauthentic Indians. This strikes at the heart of what literally constitutes us — food.

The Atishi pamphlet is an end product of a process of a silent but salient war. When public life is presented as a war between good and evil regarding acceptable behaviour by women, the historically discriminated and minorities, and dissent to norms is seen as an abiding sin, then we are living in an era without the possibility of change. To set a society at war with itself by appealing to its basest instincts and anxieties is not peculiar to the Indian situation. What is specific about it, however, is that there is almost no condemnation from those who purport to provide ethical and moral leadership. The pamphlet and what is written on it will physically disintegrate. But questions may continue to be raised about the moral fibre of those who failed to unequivocally condemn it.

The writer is professor of sociology at the Institute of Economic Growth

LETTER TO THE EDITOR

TIME FOR RELIEF

THIS REFERS TO the editorial, 'After Fani' (IE, May 13). The state government's preparedness, thanks to the accurate prediction made possible through advancements in science, minimised the damage caused by cyclone Fani in Odisha. However, for those affected, especially those living in the coastal areas, it'll take a long time to get back to their routine life. Rehabilitation and relief work now needs to be carried out in mission mode. The state and Centre need to work in tandem.

Vijai Pant, Hempur

DEPTH NEEDED

THIS REFERS TO the interview with Prime Minister Narendra Modi (IE, May 12). I was startled to see the three-page interview on the day Delhi went to the polls. Your questions touch the surface of the reality of these last five years and reveal an inability to probe deeper. The reader is left with little understanding of our prime minister and how he thinks. The last thing we expect is for IE to do a PR job for any political leader. Arm yourself with the facts next time. I hope these comments help in creating "quality in content" in the future.

Valmik Thapar, via email

PM'S HYPOCRISY

THIS REFERS TO the article 'Once upon

LETTER OF THE WEEK AWARD

To encourage quality reader intervention, The Indian Express offers the Letter of the Week award. The letter adjudged the best for the week is published every Saturday. Letters may be e-mailed to editpage@expressindia.com or sent to The Indian Express, B-1/B, Sector 10, Noida-UP 201301. Letter writers should mention their postal address and phone number.

THE WINNER RECEIVES SELECT EXPRESS PUBLICATIONS

a PM's holiday' (IE, May 13). When Narendra Modi was targeting the Congress while campaigning in 2014, he asked the Congress why they did not provide a report card of 10 years government. But the shoe is on the other foot now, so a former prime minister's trip 30 years ago has become the centre of attention.

Chinmay Jain, Delhi



To the final lap

With six phases of elections over, parties are primed for post-poll alliance building

With Sunday's sixth phase of polling, voters in 483 of the 543 Lok Sabha constituencies have voted. The electoral process has been a mirror to both India's failings and its promise as the world's biggest democracy. A reasonably good voter turnout did nothing to dull the effects of a nasty campaign by leaders of most parties, but especially of the Bharatiya Janata Party. All of Delhi and Haryana, and parts of Uttar Pradesh, Madhya Pradesh, Bihar, West Bengal and Jharkhand voted in the sixth phase, a total of 59 constituencies. Turnout varied from place to place, but the sharp decline in Delhi, to 60.50%, from 2014's 65.07% was notable. Widespread violence, including the death of a BJP activist, and the State government's highhanded action against a BJP activist for a social media post ahead of the polling vitiated the atmosphere in West Bengal. An attack on the BJP candidate in Ghatal constituency was unfortunate and condemnable. Meanwhile, the oversight by the Election Commission of India has left a lot to be desired in terms of being demonstrably impartial and swift, through the first six phases. In the last phase of polling on May 19, the remaining 59 constituencies will vote. There is no word on when Vellore, where the election was cancelled because of excessive use of money by the candidate of the DMK, will vote.

There is no let-up in the unusual ferocity among political adversaries that has characterised the campaign in the 17th general election, but political leaders have started preparing for the post-poll scenario. Telangana Chief Minister K. Chandrashekar Rao, whose Telangana Rashtra Samithi is expected to do well, has reached out to leaders in other States. On Monday, he met DMK chief M.K. Stalin in Chennai as part of efforts to put together a Federal Front of parties dissatisfied with both the BJP and the Congress. On the other hand, Andhra Pradesh Chief Minister N. Chandrababu Naidu has been eager to move towards early coordination of regional parties within an anti-BJP formation that would include the Congress. These moves are evidently premature, and West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee has rightly suggested that they must await the final results. The fierce response by Bahujan Samaj Party chief Mayawati to Prime Minister Narendra Modi's suggestion that she withdraw support to the Congress government in Rajasthan has been the clearest indication of her preference in the post-poll scenario. Meanwhile, Congress president Rahul Gandhi has continued to publicly express his admiration for Ms. Mayawati, keeping the possibility of an understanding with her wide open. He had earlier tried to strike a pre-poll alliance with the BSP, but it did not materialise. Prime Minister Modi, while continuing to campaign against alliances, in principle calling them unstable, has over the weekend claimed to know "the art of running coalitions". The calculations are clearly out, but the calculations will have to wait.

Last-ball finish

The 12th IPL season ended on the note its thrills and controversies had promised

An enthralling Indian Premier League season produced a gripping last-ball finish in Hyderabad, with Mumbai Indians securing an unprecedented fourth crown. Sunday's tense, seesawing final ended in heartbreak for Chennai Super Kings and ecstasy for Rohit Sharma's side. This was a clash between the League's two most successful teams, and there was little to separate them in the end. All four of Mumbai's titles have arrived in the last seven seasons, and key to that continued success has been the retention of a strong core of players. Lasith Malinga remains a force to reckon with even at 35, as he proved with his nerveless final over. Jasprit Bumrah, who finished with 19 wickets and an incredible economy rate of 6.63 for the season, is the finest death-over bowler in the world today. Hardik Pandya and Kieron Pollard again made a difference with their lower-order striking. Among Mumbai's newer faces, the leg-spinner Rahul Chahar, who had played only three IPL matches ahead of this season, performed a vital role. CSK should derive encouragement from the manner in which it fought for the trophy, with an ageing squad that clearly had a number of gaps. The batting was a concern throughout, and if not for the efforts of bowlers Deepak Chahar, Imran Tahir, and Ravindra Jadeja, and the astute leadership of M.S. Dhoni, the team may not even have qualified for the playoffs.

The IPL's 12th edition had its share of thrills and controversies. A spirited, young Delhi Capitals side entertained, as did Kolkata Knight Riders' Andre Russell with his ferocious hitting. There were two hat-tricks and six centuries. Australia's David Warner, who with Steve Smith was returning to high-profile cricket since the ban for ball-tampering, was in devastating form, topping the charts with 692 runs. Tahir's 26 wickets, the most for a spinner in one season, made him the leading wicket-taker of the tournament. R. Ashwin's act of 'mankading' Jos Buttler sparked some unnecessary moralising while there were a number of contentious umpiring calls; even the normally composed Dhoni stormed on to the field to protest one decision. It was feared that with the World Cup around the corner, the IPL would be a watered-down affair. English and Australian stars did fly home early to join their national teams, but love for the IPL remained undiminished in India. The country's focus will now shift to the World Cup, with Dhoni, Rohit, Bumrah, Jadeja and Pandya having just a few weeks to recover from the IPL exertions. With England, Australia, Bangladesh, Pakistan and West Indies having begun their preparations already, India will hope its players can quickly switch to the one-day mode.

An eye-opening rap on politics

Why the 'Chaiwala' and 'Chowkidar' myth-making cannot capture the political ferment on the margins



SHIV VISVANATHAN

Politics today is not merely a ritual of decision-making but a dynamics of myth-making. Myths provide the rationale, the ecological perspectives, the tacit frameworks and the symbols within which politics is located. Today one of the great myths and icons of politics is Prime Minister Narendra Modi. The media and the ideological apparatus are focussed on creating new myths around him, while in turn Mr. Modi is re-mythologising politics around proverbs, slogans and fragments of history.

The outsider

He has presented himself as the outsider, the man who stormed Lutyens' Delhi. As an attempt to present himself to the common man as a fellow common man, he has created fictions of himself as "Chaiwala" and "Chowkidar". These two everyday archetypes have worked efficiently for him, banalising his demagoguery and populism. These fictions create for him a groundswell of sympathy, a framework where the Prime Minister is immediately perceived "as one of us".

The communication industry has tried to go one up by devoting TV channels to him, and Vivek Oberoi produced a film, a biopic, which is doggedly waiting for clearance. However there is a snag here. While politics and the politics of democracy create one set of myths, Bollywood is another great myth-maker. In fact, Bollywood has captured the myths, the contradictions of modernity in a spate

of stellar films, from *Deewaar*, *Sholay*, *Mother India* to *Seeta aur Geeta*. Many of the basic tensions between law and family, integrity and loyalty, town and country, foreign and indigenous have been articulated by Bollywood. Bollywood is not only the first great creator of the modern Indian myth but also the finest tuning fork and testing ground for myth.

'Gully Boy' challenge

Given this, one is tempted to ask how Bollywood would respond to Mr. Modi's myth-making in politics. Do the archetypes of chowkidar and chaiwala stand the test of Bollywood? Viewed through the lens of a popular film such as *Gully Boy*, the answer is a definite no. One has to confront why *Gully Boy* is one of the most creative and effortless answers to Mr. Modi's understanding of poverty and the urban margins. It talks of freedom beyond the shakha-imposed panopticons of today, ready to dream even beyond state and market, yet sensitive to the neoliberal dream.

Gully Boy is a story of life, survival and creativity in a slum. It focuses on a set of Muslim families. Yet what is insightful is that while these people are rooted in community, the characters do not stereotype identity. When the hero is asked where he comes from, he replies it could be any of the seven Muslim slums around there. He is conscious of the slum and the limits of poverty. Yet he never gets bogged down in his minoritarian identity or his poverty. The slum in *Gully Boy*, unlike in Mr. Modi's politics, is not over-sociologised. For all its roots in minoritarianism and poverty, the slum is a cosmopolitan creation, open to the world while rooted in the locality. In fact, if one watches closely, its language of politics is remote from

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Mr. Modi's. He repeats the rhetoric of equality and communalism. However, the slum recognises inequality but articulates a language of dignity, of a sense of individuality without being individualistic. The slum is a society where you do not deny what you are, but refuse to be confined or restricted by it.

There is an un-sentimentality about life, which looks pain in the eye, but does not believe in the lottery of luck. The slum citizen wants an open-rule game. They are also on the lookout for perceptions beyond caste and class. When the hero asks his friend where he met his girlfriend, a foreigner, the man answers, "We found each other by looking into each other's eyes. Outside they do it differently, here when we see, we only see caste and class." The message of the slum is clear. Love and life need a freedom beyond the confines of status. *Gully Boy* recognises inequality but spends more time talking about the phenomenology of distance, between two people juxtaposed to each other, but continents apart in mindsets.

Different dialect

The most brilliant and intriguing part of *Gully Boy* is that it is a film that centres around rap, and the radicalism of rap. Rap is a poor man's song and poetry, capturing

a protean sense of the body and an inventive sense of language. The lyrics are built around everyday issues of inequality, poverty, race and the individual's attempt to transcend them. The lyrics in the film become little classics of sociology, parables of the struggles of everyday life. Every performance becomes, in that sense, a choreography of sociology, especially of slum life. This is understandable as rap traces its origins to the housing projects of New York City.

Rap captures the sense of being, the new ontology of slum life. The traditional stereotypes, the conventional language of the first half an hour gets reworked through rap. The film faces up to the violence of patriarchy, the effete nature of fathers who bully their sons and wives but feel powerless against the outside world. The hero's father beats him for dreaming about music. He adds that the slum is not a place for dreams and aspirations. One survives by keeping one's face down and sticking to the ground. The older generation worn down by life becomes a wet blanket to the dreams of the new. But it is this sociology of differing generations that makes the slum as a sociological fragment fascinating. The older generations blend poverty and patriarchy to create the authoritarianism of the slum. Rap provides the language of protest and agency, adding to the new cosmopolitanism of the slum. It emphasises desire, not mere aspiration, freedom and not the civics of success, and is able to clothe it all in irony and humour. It is the new costume ball of sociology for a slum, capturing both the dreams and the rage within.

Rap as dream is a potent alternative to the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh, where dreams have to be collective and march in a shak-

ha. Rap is a battle against jingostan, seeking a cosmopolitanism of friendship and openness. Rap is a dream of freedom, a celebration of language, an invention which sees the slum as a drama of possibilities.

In indigenising rap as language and dialect of the slum, director Zoya Akhtar creates a new piece of political sociology which goes beyond current isms and their faded dreams of liberation. Singing rap is dreaming society afresh and in that sense the film is deeply liberating. In emphasising the power and creativity of art, it shows how great literature and the politics of freedom emerge from great suffering. All one has to do is to listen to the depth of the hunger in you. Without mentioning Mr. Modi or referring to any other ism, *Gully Boy* becomes a dream of alternative possibilities, of dreams beyond the dated aspiration of Chaiwala and Chowkidar. Instead of sticking to the sycophantic mindset of the two, it shows that the margins of India are exploding with creativity beyond the confines of the bureaucratic and the governmental. The city acquires a new poetics without being less grimy or less violent. There is a new creativity, a dream of freedom which goes beyond shakha, the Chaiwala and the Chowkidar, where the city is a form of freedom and the right to be free includes the right to dream beyond status and slum. *Gully Boy* is Bollywood's fable that Mr. Modi has not got India right, that his India is not musical or free enough. In *Gully Boy*, dreams, language and body overleap the Modi world to dream a different India, differently.

Shiv Visvanathan is an academic associated with the Compost Heap, a group in pursuit of alternative ideas and imagination

Redactive pricing audit and the CAG's duties

Parliament is constitutionally privileged to know under what conditions a procurement was decided on



K.P. SHASHIDHARAN

The Supreme Court's observations in connection with the Rafale fighter aircraft deal by citing the Comptroller and Auditor General of India's (CAG's) report on redactive pricing, and subsequent media reports and the controversy over "stolen files" brought back into the spotlight the role of the supreme audit institution of India.

Many questions arise before the stakeholders: What is redactive pricing? Does the constitutional mandate provide redactive pricing to be included in the CAG's audit reports submitted to the President to be placed before Parliament? Do any supreme audit institutions (SAIs) such as the National Audit Office, the Government Accountability Office or Commonwealth countries follow redactive pricing in audit reports?

Redaction is the selection or omission of 'obscuring or removing sensitive information' from a document prior to publication. The CAG is mandated to audit all receipts and expenditures of the three-tier governments in India and report to the legislature judiciously, independently, objectively in compliance with applicable

laws, rules and regulations, without fear and favour. He conducts financial compliance and performance audits and submits his reports to the legislature to help people's representatives in enforcing legislative oversight and public accountability of the executive. Legislative committees such as the Public Accounts Committee and Committee on Public Undertakings examine the CAG's selected reports.

Not transparent

In the preface of the audit report, the CAG stated that redactive pricing was unprecedented but had to be accepted due to the Ministry's insistence citing security concerns. Consequently, the full commercial details were withheld and the figures on the procurement deal were blackened. It was unprecedented that an audit report submitted by the CAG to the President under Article 151 of the Constitution suppressed relevant information. Whether the Ministry's insistence citing security concerns could have been accepted by the CAG can be examined only by the Supreme Court in the light of the constitutional provisions on the CAG's duties and parliamentary privileges and prerogatives.

Redactive pricing is nowhere used in SAI audit reports. It does not seem to have been used in a government audit by any SAI of any country. Redactive pricing in the 'Performance Audit Report of the Comptroller and Auditor Gen-

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eral of India on Capital Acquisition in Indian Air Force (Union Government - Defence Services, Air Force, Report No. 3 of 2019) suppresses more than it reveals. For example, in the Rafale deal, Parliament, its committees, the media and other stakeholders of the CAG's reports cannot obtain complete, accurate and reliable information due to redactive pricing. The reduction in the original requirement, to 36 aircraft, a waiver of the earlier decision to involve Hindustan Aeronautics Limited, observations of the Indian Negotiating Team, cost escalation due to inclusion of bank guarantee and performance guarantee were not compared properly to arrive at the audit conclusion.

Pivotal to procurement

Pricing is the quintessence of any procurement decision. Along with quality and quantitative specifications, comparative merits and demerits are ascertained, and the pricing of comparable products are compared in decision-making. Pricing is an integral part of the procurement decision-making

process of any equipment, product, goods or service. A strategic competitive advantage of a product, how best it should be procured, how many at a time are to be purchased and at what price and under what conditions, terms, instalments, along with after-service conditions, discounts, commissions and other conditions are evaluated to arrive at a purchase decision. Therefore, price integrity and comparative competitiveness are at the heart of any procurement decision.

The CAG is mandated to get into the nitty-gritty of procurement terms, procedures, comparative advantages and disadvantages without fear and favour to form an objective, independent and judicious audit opinion. An audit is expected to analyse the facts and comparative pricing charts to highlight the financial propriety and prudence of the procurement decision. The institution is constitutionally mandated and empowered to do its duties covering all essential factors about the procurement, customised end-to-end pricing assessments, legal requirements, escrow accounting, terms and conditions and arbitration clauses in compliance with legal and other regulations.

The executive procurement decision is expected to be completely analysed in the CAG's audit to pinpoint inaccuracies, non-compliance of essential procurement procedures, conditions and pricing errors which may have a nega-

tive financial impact and cause potential damage to the country's interests.

Complex audit

Given the dynamics of international competition in competitive products and pricing in today's modern market scenario, pricing, delivery and post-delivery service and other conditions are essentially covered in an SAI audit. It is a complex audit, demanding exceptional insight, expertise, knowledge and skills. In case the CAG's office lacks expertise to conduct a performance audit, expertise can be sought from the pool of resources or credible organisations to be coopted in the audit team.

Pricing decisions must be subjected to detailed analysis, without resorting to redactive pricing. Parliament is constitutionally privileged to know what the executive had done and how and under what conditions a procurement was decided. The CAG's audit is expected to highlight value for money in purchase decisions.

A performance audit is done to establish whether the procurement activity was executed keeping in mind economy, efficiency, effectiveness, ethics and equity. Only a thorough pricing audit can bring out the credibility and integrity of a purchase decision, thereby achieving an SAI's constitutionally mandated responsibilities.

K.P. Shashidharan is a former DG, CAG Office. The views expressed are personal

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.

On the warpath

The Donald Trump administration's unprecedented withdrawal from multilateral institutions and agreements that have been built through strenuous negotiations and dialogue is destabilising the world order (Editorial, "Deal in danger", May 13.) The effects are impacting today's interconnected world, ever more porous to international political and economic developments. In the case of Iran, Mr. Trump's actions are antithetical to the expected behaviour of a statesman. This would boost the demands for an alternative to the dollar-based economic and trade mechanisms which is free from American excesses. In the quest to satisfy his

domestic base, Mr. Trump is compromising the American position in the global order. In a scenario where U.S. dominance is being challenged by rising powers such as China, it would be prudent for the Trump administration to think and then act.

PAUL JOM,
New Delhi

Data transparency

The situation that has arisen as a result of non-government non-financial companies in the services sector not being traceable is what we can call the result of 'data pollution' (Editorial page, "Of shells, companies and GDP", May 13). Data are the new currency in today's world, and we have a right to demand that the government's intent must

be legitimate and transparent while making use of the new MCA-21 database in GDP calculation.

AVIK SETHI,
Zirakpur, Mohali, Punjab

Balakot comment

The Prime Minister's remarks in a television interview on the Indian Air Force using clouds as a cover to enter Pakistan airspace for the attack on Balakot is a gaffe, politically and otherwise ("Modi flouted EC curbs on Balakot: CPI(M)", May 13). Further, such statements undermine the credibility and high standing of the IAF. It shouldn't be forgotten that the world is closely watching India's statements on the strikes. While there is still a lack of clarity about India's

version, such statements could prove even more detrimental to our claims.

VIDHYA B. RAGUNATH,
Thanjavur

■ Anyone can make mistakes, including the Prime Minister. But there is no credible reason why he is being hounded. Have we forgotten the more incredulous statements made by other politicians? A few years ago, a prominent leader came up with "political physics" by likening empowerment of the marginalised sections to planetary "escape velocities".

V. SUBRAMANIAM,
Bengaluru

At Uppal and after

It is often the last ball in one-day matches or limited overs matches that decides

the outcome in cricket. No one can forget Javed Miandad's six off the last ball during the Sharjah Austral-Asia Cup final in 1986. Unfortunately, it did not work out this way, on Sunday at Hyderabad, for the Chennai Super Kings (CSK). Back in Chennai, many were left sadly disappointed watching the sloppy finish. The only spark as far as CSK was concerned was the superb batting by Shane Watson, who hit sixes in the Sandeep Sharma over that made it possible for the team

CORRECTIONS & CLARIFICATIONS:

The headline of the front-page report on Vedanta (May 13, 2019) did not accurately reflect the details in the text. It should be recast to read: "Vedanta gets nod to conduct impact assessment for 274 hydrocarbon wells."

It is the policy of The Hindu to correct significant errors as soon as possible. Please specify the edition (place of publication), date and page. The Readers' Editor's office can be contacted by Telephone: +91-44-28418297/28576300 (11 a.m. to 5 p.m., Monday to Friday); Fax: +91-44-28552963; E-mail: readerseditor@thehindu.co.in; Mail: Readers' Editor, The Hindu, Kasturba Buildings, 859 & 860 Anna Salai, Chennai 600 002, India. All communication must carry the full postal address and telephone number. No personal visits. The Terms of Reference for the Readers' Editor are on www.thehindu.com

Private, public and political morality

When people choose a political life, they must follow an ethic distinct from private morality



RAJEEV BHARGAVA

Though related, political, public and private morality are not identical. They may come from the same source, but are distinct. This point has been noted in the Western tradition since at least Machiavelli. But its lineage in India is ancient.

Ethics in three domains

Take, for example, Asoka who spoke of *Dhamma* (ethics) in three distinct domains. First, interpersonal morality. Each of us has special obligations to our children, spouse, parents, teachers and relatives. We have a duty towards those under our special care, including the aged, 'servants', animals and, occasionally, strangers. Asoka distinguished this private ethic from what might be called inter-group morality in public life. Crucial here is harmony between different religious-philosophical groups generated by the exercise of *sayamam* (self-restraint). He particularly emphasised the importance of *vacaguti* — controlling one's tongue to be critical of other groups only if there is good reason to, only on appropriate occasions and always moderately; also, to praise one's own group, only when there is good reason to, only on appropriate occasions and always moderately. Neither hate speech nor speech glorifying oneself was acceptable as part of public morality — a point very relevant in our times.

Asoka then distinguished private and public morality from power-related political morality specifying what rulers and the ruled owe one another. Subjects owe obedience to their king. But the ruler too owed something to his subjects: to ensure *janahita*, the good of all (including all living species), and *janasukham*, happiness not only in this life but also in the afterlife. To achieve this, rulers and their officials must display *damdasamata* and *viyohalasamata* (impartiality in meting out punishment and in politico-legal acts more generally). This sums up the core of Asoka's political morality: a commitment to justice, to impartiality.

What then is the difference between private/public morality and



SHANKER CHAKRAVARTY

political morality? While in one's personal life, in our dealings with those with whom we have close daily encounters such as our family, friends or 'servants', we can't help but be partial, and while in the larger public domain, where we face people with different religio-philosophical sensibilities, we can't entirely escape some degree of partiality to our own world view, the political domain requires the impartial or just use of power for the good of all.

Family, civil society and state

Two thousand years later, the German philosopher Friedrich Hegel made similar points, although in a different way and in an entirely different context. He distinguished three spheres of human life: family, civil society and the state. The family, Hegel claimed, was the smallest community in which its members do not even distinguish themselves from one another. Their identities are fused. A family is bound by emotional ties, by mutual love and affection. Members take pride in each other's achievements and feel a strong sense of shame at the other's wrongdoing. Morality here is guided by unarticulated feelings.

The family is different from another sphere of life that Hegel designated civil society but should more appropriately be called 'market society'. Here, each person acts as an individual with a sharply defined sense of her own interests which are distinct from, compete and may even clash with the interests of others. No one is tied to the other by bonds of love or affection. Since there is no community but only an aggregate of individual interests, there is no commonly held ethic either. Competitive

life is governed by coercive legal rules to regulate the pursuit of self-interest. At best, each individual devises her own personal, subjective moral maxims.

Finally, Hegel spoke of a third domain where people once again see themselves as members of a large political community, as citizens of a state. Citizens in a political community must be bound together neither by feelings nor by self-interest but by a commitment to common values discovered by public reason — values such as political freedom, solidarity, shared traditions and cultural heritage. Morality in this domain requires that we overcome our loyalty to blood relations, not pursue only our private interests, and commit instead to using power grounded in shared principles. Love and hate are largely imposters in this domain where consensus is forged by the use of public reason. Its democratic version requires that, guided by values of openness, equal respect and justice, we deliberate and help each other arrive at impartial laws and public policies, acceptable in principle to everyone in the polity.

Furthermore, those who wield political power must realise that what they do has enduring consequences affecting the lives of an incalculably large number of people. This brings with it enormous public responsibility which derives in no small part from the fact that they have at least temporary legitimacy to use force against ordinary citizens. They have, at their disposal, an apparatus of violence simply unavailable to heads of families or members of civil society. Powerful politicians, therefore, must show great care and sensitivity to the appropriate use of

force and violence.

Private and political morality

One important implication of the difference between private and political morality is this: it is sometimes believed that moral scrupulousness in one's private life automatically guarantees high moral stature in political life. This simply does not follow. Those wielding public power may refuse to enrich themselves, their family or friends, and resist from obtaining sexual favours. But such 'cleanliness' need not entail scrupulous political morality. What use is personal incorruptibility if the politician is partial to or discriminates against one particular community, abandons public reason, smashes dissent to concentrate power in his own hands, makes arbitrary use of force, and lives in the illusion that he is greater than all the institutions that surround him? What if he begins to believe that he alone possesses the truth or knows the good of the entire community? And precisely because of the moral restrictions he has placed on his personal life, feels released from any restriction on the use of power in the political arena? In short, a person who is profoundly moral in his private life may brazenly violate all norms of political morality — undermine justice and public reason. Conversely, it is entirely possible that a person who has morally slipped in his private life (cheated on one's spouse, enriched himself) respects the integrity of public institutions, is acutely sensitive to the moral costs of violence, shows a deep commitment to justice, and upholds reason-based democratic norms.

Don't get me wrong. I am not suggesting that politicians are free to abandon private morality. But we often find comfort in the illusion that there is one simple, seamless morality, reflected equally in private and in public. In fact, most humans are complex moral agents. It would be wonderful if our private and political moralities were perfectly aligned and we achieved the highest moral standards in both. But in a non-ideal world we can only hope that when people choose to lead a life in politics, they will at least follow minimum norms of political morality even as they fail to be scrupulously moral in their private lives.

Rajeev Bhargava is Professor, Centre for the Study of Developing Societies, New Delhi

The Madhava Menon model of legal education

For him law worked best when it worked for the society



SRIRAM PANCHU

Legal education in India can be classified into two categories: the years before and after the advent of N.R. Madhava Menon. Earlier, the study of law was often a default option, when you couldn't get admission to any other course or didn't know what course your life should take. The law degree was a three-year affair following an undergraduate degree. There were a few exceptional teachers and a few exceptional students; for the rest it was pretty much an active engagement with the "guide" books in the run-up to the examinations. Real learning started when you were apprenticed to a senior lawyer.

Menon (1935-2019) shook that up. Responding to an appeal from the Bar Council of India, which was gravely concerned with the steep decline in standards of the profession, Menon accepted the challenge and transformed himself from an academic to an institution-builder. With missionary zeal he established the country's first National Law School in Bangalore in 1987, with an independent university status. He oversaw the building of its campus. He drew in excellent faculty. He carefully designed a five-year law course as the first degree after school, thereby ensuring that only those who were seriously interested in the subject came in, and would emerge well equipped for what the profession needed.

The Menon model

And he succeeded brilliantly. The mix of motivated students and faculty overseen by a Vice Chancellor to whom dedication and discipline came naturally produced results which made the Bar, Bench, law firms and other users sit up and take notice. As his graduates entered the field, it was clear that law had joined the ranks of other professions where much could be expected from an entrant, and the entrant could expect commensurate responsibility, position and compensation. Inevitably this led to the creation of other national law schools which largely followed the Menon model, and whose heads were often Menon trainees.

That one achievement would have been enough to guarantee him a place in any honours listing, but Menon was far from done. Judges too, especially young recruits to the

service, needed training. The National Judicial Academy (NJA) was set up in Bhopal, and the Menon magic of institution-building created another sterling institution from scratch. It became de rigueur to have this on the resume of a judicial officer, and it was a mark of subject expertise to be invited to teach a course. In time this expanded to reach higher levels of the judiciary, especially in new areas of law. Many senior judges received their first exposure to public interest litigation and human rights and environmental issues at the NJA long before these became current coinage — indeed, Menon's endorsement of these outlier subjects was a key reason for sceptics to become adherents. Supreme Court judges also came to teach, learn and, on occasion, receive reprimand for an errant judgment, which took the occupant of the apex court back to his college backbencher days.

The best tribute

More was to come. At the request of the State government, he set up the West Bengal National University of Juridical Sciences, Calcutta, which sought to focus on academics and research. To some extent, this was to alleviate his concern that students from his

first and premier law school had shown a preference for law firms and corporates rather than joining the Bar or NGOs where a rights-based language was at play. For Menon, the law worked best when it worked for society's benefit. True enough, retirement and quieter times did not figure in his list of options. In his sunset years, he created and ran the M.K. Nambar Academy for Continuing Legal Education in Kerala as well as the Menon Institute of Legal Advocacy Training for developing grass-roots capacity to access and use the law for under-privileged sections.

Being the last word on the subject, he was, of course, the first choice when it came to being asked to serve on the Law Commission and other bodies and committees connected with legal education. All these tasks he accepted willingly and gave each one his best. At a personal level he constantly engaged with those working in fields close to his heart. They received his advice, encouragement and valued friendship. He will be missed and mourned by many, especially generations of his students. Perhaps one tribute that would please him would be an introspection if they passed the ultimate Menon test — of using the skills he gave them for the public good, wholly or at least in part.

Sriram Panchu is Senior Advocate, Madras High Court

SINGLE FILE

Living in the panopticon

It's the price we must pay to safely walk on the street, watch a movie in a theatre or shop in the bazaar

UDAY BALAKRISHNAN



China is often pilloried in the West for the deep surveillance of its people. Latest reports indicate that the Chinese state, harnessing artificial intelligence, will soon have enough information to rate all its citizens for good behaviour, making everything from buying a

train ticket to getting a credit card difficult, if not impossible, for those not conforming to rules of conduct set by the state.

It is naive to believe that mass surveillance is special to China or that it is a recent phenomenon. The extent to which the British had spied on Indian society and the systems they developed for that were brought out in detail by the late historian C.A. Bayly in his book, *Empire & Information — Intelligence Gathering and Social Communication in India, 1780-1870*. All countries monitor their citizens. The communist states did it through the 20th century. Anyone sifting through records of Stasi, former East Germany's security agency, would be astonished to note the extent to which the state spied on its citizens.

In the past, surveillance was selective and targeted. India's pre-Independence leaders were relentlessly followed by British intelligence. Little was missed of Subhas Chandra Bose's time in Germany or Mahatma Gandhi's in his ashrams. British agents filed detailed reports on Jawaharlal Nehru's journeys and meetings through Europe.

It is one thing for citizens to be monitored by the state, but it is quite another to be 'spied' upon by the likes of Google, Facebook, Amazon and apps loaded onto cheap Chinese smartphones. Recently I was surprised to read transcripts of every command I had given to my Alexa speaker over the last few years; I am still trying to erase them all.

As one of the largest consumers of data, India is a goldmine for data aggregators. It's the state's duty not to make it easy for aggregators to collect data with impunity. India too needs something as strong as the General Data Protection Regulation, which was adopted by the European Union in 2018, and a willingness to enforce it, to protect the privacy of its citizens.

In the wake of suicide attacks and bombings worldwide, mass surveillance has assumed a new urgency. Almost all countries are going China's way. Today we are all tracked 24x7 across places and devices. Unpleasant as it is, and even as all of us wish to be protected from overzealous governments, we need to get used to living in a global panopticon. It's the price we must pay to safely walk on the street, watch a movie in a theatre or shop in the bazaar.

The writer, a former civil servant, taught public policy and contemporary history at IISc, Bengaluru



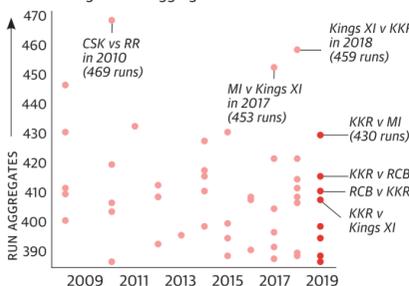
DATA POINT

IPL highlights

How the 2019 Indian Premier League compares with past editions of the T20 tournament. By Vignesh Radhakrishnan

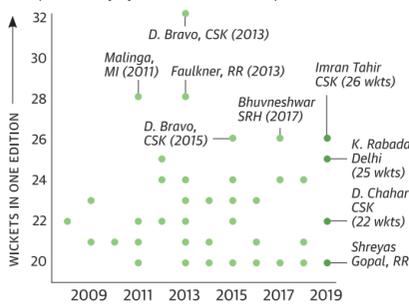
Most high-scoring games

The 2019 season recorded eight new entries in the list of 49 all-time highest run aggregates in the IPL



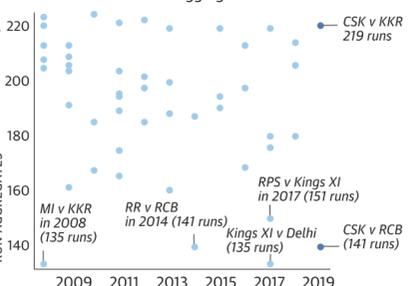
Best bowlers

Imran Tahir's purple cap-winning 26 wicket haul was surpassed only by three bowlers in the past



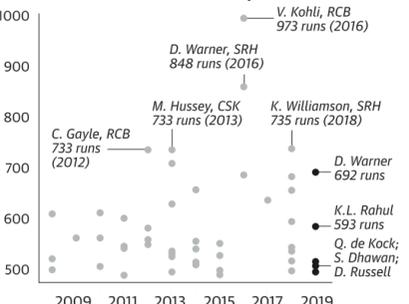
A few low scores

The 2019 season recorded only two new entries into the list of 50 all-time lowest run aggregates in the IPL



Best batsmen

Orange cap winner David Warner's total of 692 runs this season was the sixth best in IPL history



FROM THE HINDU ARCHIVES

FIFTY YEARS AGO MAY 14, 1969

Race riots in Kuala Lumpur

Unconfirmed reports early to-day [May 13] put the death toll in Kuala Lumpur at more than 50 dead and scores injured after sudden, savage racial clashes between Malays and Chinese tore the Malaysian capital apart. Prime Minister Tunku Abdul Rahman declared a State of Emergency over the City of Kuala Lumpur and police said a curfew has been placed over the whole State of Selangor surrounding Kuala Lumpur. The round-the-clock curfew spread to Penang island, nearby province Wellesley and half a dozen areas in Perak State from 1 a.m. The Tunku, seemingly near tears when he appeared on television, blamed opposition groups for the rampage and said he was grieved by what was happening. He suggested the setting up of multi-racial goodwill committees to try to restore order. A Police spokesman said he could not confirm reports that several Europeans were among those believed killed.

A HUNDRED YEARS AGO MAY 14, 1919.

War Pensions.

In the [House of] Commons [in London], the Labour Minister defending the payment of unemployment donation pointed out that there were a million recipients, including three hundred and fifty thousand members of the forces, 108,000 ex-munitioners and 100,000 cotton operatives, who were unemployed owing to the blockade. Abuses were inevitable, but he was confident that half the complaints lacked foundation. Any frauds which were discovered would be prosecuted relentlessly. Since the Armistice, three million out of four million demobilised soldiers and civilians had been absorbed in industry. This was a remarkable achievement, because it took years to get from warwork to peace work.

POLL CALL

Election Commissioners

Election Commissioners are members of the Election Commission (EC), the constitutional body tasked with ensuring the conduct of free and fair elections. They are usually retired civil servants, and are appointed by the President. The EC was helmed by a single Chief Election Commissioner (CEC) since the body was set up in 1950. In 1989, two more Election Commissioners were appointed but their tenure ended in 1990. Thereafter, in 1993, two Election Commissioners were again appointed. Since then the EC has been a three-member panel. The tenure of the CEC and Election Commissioners lasts six years, or up to the time they attain the age of 65, whichever is earlier. They receive the same pay as a judge of the Supreme Court. Their decisions are taken by a majority vote.

MORE ON THE WEB

This TN police constable makes time to teach Silambam to children

<http://bit.ly/SilambamVideo>



बाजार का जादू आंख की राह काम करता है

बाजार में एक जादू है। वह जादू आंख की राह काम करता है। वह रूप का जादू है, पर जैसे चुंबक का जादू लोहे पर ही चलता है, वैसे ही इस जादू की भी मर्यादा है। जब भरी हो और मन खाली हो, ऐसी हालत में जादू का असर खूब होता है। जब खाली पर मन भरा न हो, तो भी जादू चल जाएगा। मन खाली है तो बाजार की अनेकानेक चीजों का निमंत्रण उस तक पहुंच जाएगा। कहीं हुई उस वक्त जब भरी तब तो फिर वह मन किसकी मानने वाला है। मालूम होता है यह भी लू, वह भी लू। सभी सामान जरूरी और आराम को बढ़ाने वाला मालूम होता है। पर यह सब जादू का असर है। जादू की सवारी उतरी कि

पता चलता है कि फैन्सी चीजों की बहुतायत आराम में मदद नहीं देती, बल्कि खलल ही डालती है। थोड़ी देर को स्वाभिमान को जरूर सेंक मिल जाता है। पर इससे अभिमान को गिल्टी को और खुराक ही मिलती है। जकड़ रेशमी डोरी की हो तो रेशम के स्पर्श के मुलायम के कारण क्या वह कम जकड़ होगी? पर उस जादू की जकड़ से बचने का एक सीधा-सा उपाय है। वह यह कि बाजार जाओ तो मन खाली न हो। मन खाली हो, तब बाजार न जाओ। मन लक्ष्य में भरा हो तो बाजार भी फैला-का-फैला ही रह जाएगा। तब वह धाव बिलकुल नहीं दे सकेगा, बल्कि कुछ आनंद ही देगा। तब बाजार तुमसे कृतार्थ होगा, क्योंकि तुम कुछ-न-कुछ सच्चा लाभ उसे दोगे। बाजार की असली कृतार्थता है आवश्यकता के समय काम आना। पड़ोस में एक महानुभाव रहते हैं, जिनको लोग भगत जी कहते हैं। चूरन बेचते हैं। किसी एक भी दिन चूरन से उन्होंने छह आने पैसे से ज्यादा नहीं कमाये। इन चूरन वाले भगत जी पर बाजार का जादू नहीं चल सकता।

-हिंदी के दिग्गज साहित्यकार

प्राकृतिक आपदाओं से होने वाले नुकसान से उबरने के लिए समग्र रूप से सोचने का समय आ गया है। क्या उम्मीद की जाए कि 23 मई के बाद बनने वाली नई सरकार इस पर प्राथमिकता के साथ विचार करेगी?

फैनी का सबक

ओडिशा

ने दो दशक में आए सबसे भीषण तूफान फैनी से जनहानि को काफी हद तक कम करने में सफलता पाई, इसके बावजूद वहां अब तक 64 लोगों की मौत हो चुकी है। तूफान ने जैसा कहर बरपाया उससे राज्य के 14 जिलों में सामान्य जनजीवन बुरी तरह अस्त-व्यस्त हो गया है। 1999 में आए महाचक्रवात के कारण राज्य में दस हजार लोगों की मौत हो गई थी और उसके बाद राज्य ने आपदा प्रबंधन को लेकर जो कदम उठाए थे, उसका असर इस बार दिखा है। इसी वजह से रिकॉर्ड 14 लाख लोगों को समय रहते सुरक्षित जगहों पर पहुंचाया गया था, मगर फैनी के कारण राज्य में आधारभूत संरचना को जो नुकसान हुआ है, उससे उबरने में

लंबा वक्त लगेगा। यह चुनौती कितनी बड़ी है, इसका अंदाजा इस बात से लगाया जा सकता है कि इस तूफान के कारण राज्य की एक तिहाई आबादी, करीब डेढ़ करोड़ लोग बुरी तरह प्रभावित हुए हैं। लाखों मवेशी मारे गए हैं। तूफान के कारण बिजली के हजारों ट्रांसफार्मर, तकरीबन 80 हजार किलोमीटर लंबी बिजली की लाइन, पेयजल और संचार की व्यवस्था टप हो गई। अस्पतालों सहित सैकड़ों सरकारी इमारतों को तो नुकसान पहुंचा ही है, लाखों कच्चे घर तक ढह गए हैं। अभी तो भुवनेश्वर, पुरी और कटक जैसे शहरों में ही व्यवस्था को सामान्य होने में कई हफ्ते लगेगे। राज्य को तूफान के कारण पचास हजार करोड़ रुपये के नुकसान का अनुमान है। मुख्यमंत्री नवीन पटनायक ने केंद्र सरकार से उनके राज्य को विशेष दर्जा देने की

मांग की है, इसके तमाम पहलुओं पर विमर्श किया जा सकता है। हालांकि खुद प्रधानमंत्री मोदी ने पटनायक के साथ हवाई दौरा कर राज्य को एक हजार करोड़ रुपये की फौरी मदद देने की घोषणा की थी, पर वह नाकाफी है। इस आपदा ने पिछले वर्ष केरल और उससे पहले जम्मू-कश्मीर में आई भीषण बाढ़ की याद दिला दी, जिसके कारण उन राज्यों में खासा नुकसान हुआ था। ऐसी भीषण प्राकृतिक आपदा से कोई भी राज्य अकेले नहीं निपट सकता; जाहिर है, ओडिशा को इस समय चोतरफा मदद की जरूरत है। दरअसल प्राकृतिक आपदाओं से होने वाले नुकसान से उबरने के लिए समग्र रूप से सोचने का समय आ गया है। क्या उम्मीद की जाए कि 23 मई के बाद बनने वाली नई सरकार इस पर प्राथमिकता के साथ विचार करेगी?

सूफी पंथ को तालिबान की चुनौती



लाहौर में सूफी संत की दरगाह पर हुआ हमला पाकिस्तान में चल रहे वहाबी तालिबानी वर्चस्व की जंग की ही एक कड़ी है। वहां सूफी शिया मजारों, मस्जिदों में आत्मघाती हमलों का लंबा इतिहास है। हमले और भी हंगे, क्योंकि पाकिस्तान को पूरी तरह कट्टर इस्लामी मुल्क बनाने का लक्ष्य अभी बाकी है। कट्टर वहाबी-सलाफी इस्लाम में पीरों, दरगाहों की जगह नहीं है। इस्लाम के आंतरिक वैचारिक संघर्ष में दरगाहों, मजारों पर मत्था टेकना, जियारत करना इस्लाम से बाहर है और कुफ्र की शकल लिए हुए है। कल वह समय आया, जब तालिबानी सोच सूफियों को भी अहमदियों की तरह इस्लाम से खारिज कर देगी। वहाबी तालिबानी विचारधारा के प्रवर्तकों का उद्देश्य इन्हें इस्लाम से खारिज करना नहीं है। बल्कि वे चाहते हैं कि ये लोग पुनः अपना पंथ बदलते हुए पीरों, फकीरों को छोड़ उनके कट्टर अनुयायी बनने की राह पर चले आएँ।

सूफी पंथ, जिसे भारत, पाकिस्तान और अफगानिस्तान के सांस्कृतिक इस्लाम के नाम से भी जाना जाता है, तलवार के बाद इस्लामी धर्म परिवर्तन का सबसे बड़ा कारक बना। सूफी इस्लाम का एक प्राचीन रहस्यवादी पंथ है, जिसने भारत में इस्लामी विचारों के साथ स्थानीय परंपराओं को समन्वित करते हुए धार्मिक विस्तार का कार्य किया है। बौद्ध-हिंदू परंपराओं के मिश्रण-साधुओं से मुकाबला करने के लिए संतों के स्थान पर पीरों, मठों के स्थान पर खानकाहों और मंदिरों के स्थान पर मजारों के विकल्प दिए। मंदिरों की परंपराओं, भजन, पूजा-पद्धतियों के स्थान पर मजारों को अपनी श्रद्धा के स्थल के रूप में ढाला। इस प्रकार इस्लाम में धर्म परिवर्तन का

काम आसान हुआ। उदाहरण के लिए, कश्मीर में धर्म परिवर्तन की प्रक्रिया सूफी संत बुलबुल शाह के कश्मीरी शासक रिचेन को इस्लाम में दीक्षित करने के साथ प्रारंभ होती है। सूफी पंथ भारत के अन्य बहुत से ग्रामीण क्षेत्रों में इस्लाम के विस्तार का माध्यम बना। शासक वर्ग तो तलवार के दम पर धर्मांतरित हो रहा था। इस तरह पंजाब और बंगाल के गांवों तथा दक्षिण भारत के तटीय प्रदेशों में इस्लाम का क्षेत्र विस्तार होता गया। उस समय



आर विक्रम सिंह, पूर्व सैनिक, पूर्व प्रशासक

इस्लामी शासकों का जोर विस्तार पर था, वैचारिक शुद्धता पर नहीं। 20वीं सदी में आकर सऊदी अरब और ईरान के तेल के धन ने इस वैचारिक शुद्धता के अभियान को हवा दी। अब फौकस उस जगह पर है, जिसे दुनिया इस्लामी आतंकवाद के रूप में जानती है। इस्लाम के विस्तार में अपना प्रारंभिक योगदान दे चुकने के बाद सूफी विचारधारा भी इनके धर्मयुद्ध का लक्ष्य बन चुकी है। यह एक प्रकार से धर्म परिवर्तन का दूसरा

अभियान है। इसके परिणामस्वरूप हम देख रहे हैं कि भारत में वहाबी-सलाफी विचारधारा के समर्थकों की संख्या तेजी से बढ़ रही है। जाकिर नाइक आदि कट्टरवादियों ने सूफियों को अपना विरोधी घोषित किया है। सूफियों का सलाफी हो जाना नए धर्म परिवर्तन जैसा है। सूफी इस्लाम को मानने वालों को आतंकित करते हुए बमों के धमाकों के अभियान से सूफी लश्करी हंगे और उनमें अपने पंथ बदलने का संदेश चला जाएगा। दूसरा, यह कि हिंदुत्व के पुनर्जागरण पर इन आतंकी घटनाओं का ठीकरा फोड़कर इससे पल्ला झाड़ना भी आसान हो जाएगा।

कश्मीर में इस्लाम का विस्तार सुलतानों की तलवार और सूफियों के धर्म प्रचार द्वारा किया गया था। पिछले कश्मीर भ्रमण में एक कश्मीरी बुद्धजीवी ने स्वीकार किया कि सूफी परंपरा के कश्मीर को अब पुनः पंथ परिवर्तन की स्थितियों से गुजरना पड़ रहा है। लाल देव और शेख नरुद्दीन को, जिनकी शिक्षाओं से कश्मीरियत का ताना-बाना बना था, आज कोई पढ़ने वाला नहीं है। मजारों, खानकाहों, पीरों-फकीरों का सूफी संप्रदाय आज रक्षित स्थिति में आ गया है। मजहब की वैचारिक शुद्धता का यह अभियान, मानने वालों को उनकी जमीन से काटकर वैश्विक वर्चस्व और कट्टरवाद की सोच से जोड़ता है। भारतीय मूल के नोबल पुरस्कार प्राप्त प्रसिद्ध लेखक वीएस नायपॉल ने अपनी पुस्तक *बियांड बिलीफ : एमंग कन्वर्टेड पीपल* में कहा है, 'धर्म परिवर्तित व्यक्ति की विश्वदृष्टि बदल जाती है। उनका इतिहास बदल जाता है, वह अपने इतिहास को खुद खारिज कर देता है, उसे वह सब छोड़ना पड़ता है, जो पहले उसका अपना रहा था।' लेकिन भारत में धर्म परिवर्तन के बहुत बाद तक भी भारतीय मुस्लिम समाज अपनी मूल संस्कृति से जुड़ा। जुड़ाव के इसी दर्शन ने इस्लाम को

प्रभावित कर सूफी इस्लाम की सांस्कृतिक विचारधारा को जन्म दिया है, जो हमारे यहां सनातन धर्म और इस्लाम के बीच से गुजरती दिखती है। कट्टरपंथियों का लक्ष्य इस जमीनी जुड़ाव को भी पूरी तरह से खत्म करना है। अतः सूफी पंथ का समापन ही उनका लक्ष्य बन जाता है और सूफी फकीरों के स्थान, मजारों आतंकी हमलों के लक्ष्य बन रहे हैं। वे कट्टरता को उस स्तर तक ले जाना चाहते हैं, जिसमें संपूर्ण विश्व के मुस्लिम समाज को एक खलीफा, एक इंडा एवं एक किताब के नीचे लाया जा सके।

इस देश के नागरिकों को इस्लामी जगत में हो रहे इस वैचारिक परिवर्तन को समझना जरूरी है, जो आतंकवाद में परिणत हो रहा है। विचारों का यह टकराव भारतीय उपमहाद्वीप में विशेष रूप से होगा। गैर-मुस्लिम देशों में भारत में सबसे बड़ी मुस्लिम आबादी का निवास है। यहां का सांस्कृतिक इस्लाम कट्टरवादी वैश्विक इस्लाम की राह में सबसे बड़ी बाधा भी है। हम अपने देश में समानता और सांस्कृतिक तथा सामाजिक समरसता का लक्ष्य लेकर चले हैं। एक इस्लाम है पीरों-फकीरों का और दूसरा है जाकिर नाइक जैसे जेहादियों का। सदियों पहले आक्रांता हाथ में तलवार लेकर आए थे, आज कहीं कोई तलवार नहीं है। हमारे अल्पसंख्यक समाज को अब अपने विवेक से निर्णय लेना है। यह निर्णय भारतीय मुसलमानों को ही नहीं, भारत की सांस्कृतिक समरसता के पक्षधर समस्त नागरिकों को भी लेना है। किसी सूफी का तालिबानी बन जाना इस्लाम का आंतरिक मामला नहीं रहा। भारतीय समाज को इस्लामी जगत में हो रही इस उठापटक से तटस्थ नहीं रहना है, क्योंकि इससे देश के भविष्य का मार्ग प्रभावित होता है। हमें तो उस विचारधारा का साथ देना है, जो सांस्कृतिक और वैचारिक रूप से भारतीय राष्ट्रीय सोच के साथ खड़ी होती हो।

मंजिलें और भी हैं

>> प्रवीण तुलपुने

कैंसर पीड़ित बच्चों को हंसाने का काम करता हूँ

मेरा स्वभाव बचपन से ही हंसी-मजाक वाला है। जब मैं 13-14 साल का था, तभी से मैंने जादू दिखाना शुरू किया। तब यह सब शौकिया तौर पर चल रहा था। मुझे अंदाजा भी नहीं था कि एक दिन इसे पेशेवर तरीके से आयोजित करना, ताकि कैंसर पीड़ित बच्चों के चेहरों पर मुस्कान ला सकूँ। पढ़ाई खत्म करने के बाद मुझे नौसेना में अफसर कैडेट के रूप में तैनाती मिली। मेरे काम के लिए मुझे 1983 में राष्ट्रपति स्वर्ण पदक से सम्मानित किया गया। इन सबके बीच जादू दिखाने की ललक मेरे मन में मौजूद रही। नौसेना के कार्यक्रमों में, सहकर्मियों की पार्टियों में, दोस्तों के घर विभिन्न मौकों पर मैं शौकिया तौर पर कार्यक्रम करता रहा। पर इसे लेकर गंभीर नहीं था। फिर मेरी पोस्टिंग मुंबई हुई, जहां मेरी मुलाकात कई पेशेवर जादूगरों से हुई। तब मुझे लगा कि जादू सिर्फ लोगों को चौकाना नहीं, बल्कि उनके चेहरों पर मुस्कान लाना और खेल-खेल में कुछ सिखाना भी है। एक दिन मेरे दोस्त ने कहा कि बच्चों की एक पार्टी है, वहां जोकर बनकर आ जाना। जोकर बनकर जब मैं वहां गया, तो पता चला कि वे कैंसर पीड़ित बच्चे हैं। उनमें कोई व्हीलचेयर पर था, किसी के चेहरे पर मास्क लगा था, तो किसी के बाल बिल्कुल गायब थे। उन्हें शायद पता भी नहीं था कि उन्हें क्या हुआ है। उनमें सामान्य बच्चों की तरह जीने की ललक थी।



कैंसर पीड़ित बच्चों के चेहरों पर मुस्कान लाने के लिए मैं नियमित अस्पतालों में जाता रहता हूँ।

अपने जोकर वाले रूप का नाम 'हेप्पी दे क्लाउन' रख लिया और तब से मेरा एक ही मकसद बन गया कि लोगों में खुशियां बांटनी है। मेरी नौकरी अच्छी चल रही थी। पर उस घटना के बाद जादू और जोकर को लेकर मेरा जुनून इतना बढ़ा कि मैंने नौकरी छोड़ दी। नौसेना में पेंशन के लिए जितने साल चाहिए होते हैं, उतने अभी पूरे नहीं हुए थे। इसलिए मुझे पेंशन भी नहीं मिलती। इसको लेकर मुझ पर सबसे तंज कसे, कुछ ने मुझे पागल कहा, तो कड़वी ने बेवकूफ समझा। इस कदम के बाद मेरा परिवार बेहद कठिन दौर से गुजरा, पर वक्त के साथ सब कुछ व्यवस्थित होता चला गया। अब मैं पेशेवर जादूगर की तरह कार्यक्रम करता हूँ। अन्य शहरों में भी बुलाने पर जाता हूँ। इसके साथ ही कई गैर-सरकारी संगठनों के लिए मुफ्त में कार्यक्रम करता हूँ। कैंसर पीड़ित बच्चों के चेहरों पर मुस्कान लाने के लिए मैं नियमित मुंबई के टाटा मेमोरियल, वाडिया और केईएम अस्पतालों में जाता रहता हूँ। इसके साथ ही 'मिलाप' नाम की एक वेबसाइट के साथ मिलकर क्राउड फंडिंग के जरिये बच्चों के इलाज के लिए मैं पैसे भी जुटाता हूँ। मेरे प्रयासों से अब तक दो लाख रुपये की मदद आ चुकी है। मुझसे जितना हो सकता है, कैंसर से जूझ रहे बच्चों के इलाज में मदद करने के साथ, उनके चेहरों पर मुस्कान लाने की कोशिश करता हूँ। मुझे लगता है कि यह काम करते हुए मैंने अपने जीवन का सही रास्ता ढूँढ लिया है।

अपनों के हाथों पिटती हिंदी

इन दिनों चुनावों का बोलबाला है। टेलीविजन पर आकर दक्षिण भारत के नेता, तुणमूल के बांग्लाभाषी लोग, ओडिशा, आंध्र प्रदेश यहां तक कि तमिलनाडु के नेता और कुछ पैनालिस्ट हिंदी में भी बोलते नजर आते हैं। हाल ही में सैम पित्रोदा को भी हिंदी में बोलते सुना गया। एक खबर के अनुसार डीएमके ने, जिसकी राजनीति हिंदी विरोध पर ही परवान चढ़ी थी, इस बार चेन्नई में रहने वाले हिंदी भाषियों के लिए अपनी पार्टी की ओर से हिंदी में पर्चे छपाए थे। इसे हिंदी की ताकत ही कहेंगे कि वह बिना किसी आंदोलन और समर्थन के दूर-दराज के उन इलाकों में जा पहुंची है, जहां कुछ दशक पहले तक इसकी कल्पना भी नहीं की जा सकती थी। इसमें हिंदी फिल्मों, मीडिया, इंटरनेट और चौबीस घंटे चलने वाले चैनल्स का बड़ा हाथ है। इन दिनों तो विदेश में रहकर भी बहुत से हिंदी चैनल्स देखे जा सकते हैं। ऑनलाइन अखबार पढ़े जा सकते हैं। खुशी की बात है कि हिंदी ग्लोबल यानी कि भूमंडल में फैली हुई और लोकल यानी कि स्थानीय साथ-साथ है।

कई चैनल्स जो कल तक सिर्फ अंग्रेजी में बातचीत लिखाते थे, वे द्विभाषी हो चले हैं। अंग्रेजी के चैनल्स पर बहुत से पैनालिस्ट धड़ल्ले से हिंदी में बोलते हैं। उत्तर प्रदेश के पूर्व मुख्यमंत्री अखिलेश यादव अंग्रेजी में पूरे हुए सवालों का जवाब हिंदी में देते हैं। एक बार उनसे पूछा भी गया था कि आप अच्छी-खासी अंग्रेजी जानते हैं, फिर अपनी बात हिंदी में ही क्यों कहते हैं। तब उन्होंने कहा था जनता से जुड़ना चाहते हैं, इसीलिए उस भाषा में बोलते हैं, जो लोगों की समझ में आ सके। इसके विपरीत कांग्रेस पार्टी है, जिसने कर्नाटक के



क्षमा शर्मा

चुनावों के दौरान मेट्रो ट्रेन में हिंदी में भी निर्देश लिखने पर हिंदी के विरुद्ध आंदोलन तक चला दिया था। जबकि इसे त्रिभाषा फार्मूला के अंतर्गत ही लिखा गया था। हिंदी के साथ कन्नड़ और अंग्रेजी भी मौजूद थी, लेकिन विरोध का शिकार सिर्फ हिंदी को ही नाना पड़ा। हाल ही में कांग्रेस नेता शशि थरूर ने भी कहा था कि हिंदी लादी जा रही है। हिंदी प्रदेश में कांग्रेस को वोट तो चाहिए, लेकिन दक्षिण में उसे लगता है कि हिंदी को टोककर ही काम चल सकता है, जबकि लोग वहां हिंदी सीख रहे हैं। आखिर इस तरह का दोहरापन क्यों? याद नहीं आता कि हिंदी प्रदेश में भाषा के नाम पर किसी के साथ भेदभाव किया गया है। यहां तो अक्सर सुरु समावेशी रहता है कि हिंदी क्षेत्र में अन्य भाषाएं भी

सीखी जानी चाहिए। तमाम भारतीय भाषाओं के साहित्य का हिंदी में अनुवाद किया जाना चाहिए, जिससे हिंदी भाषी उसे पढ़ सकें, लेकिन नेता, लोगों को भड़काकर वोट बटोरने के लिए जब कब हिंदी के खिलाफ विष वमन करते रहते हैं। आखिर उन्हें हिंदी प्रदेश के पचपन करोड़ लोगों का ध्यान क्यों नहीं आता कि उनकी भाषा का अपमान एक तरह से उनका अपमान भी है।

नेताओं से ज्यादा दुखद यह है कि हिंदी प्रदेशों में हिंदी के अपने ही उसे दुर्गति में डोक रहे हैं। इस साल उत्तर प्रदेश बोर्ड की परीक्षा में दस लाख बच्चे हिंदी में फेल हो गए। आखिर इसकी क्या वजह हो सकती है? क्या अध्यापक हिंदी टीक से नहीं पढ़ाते? या बच्चे हिंदी को इतना मामूली समझते हैं कि बिना पढ़े ही पास होने की सोचते हैं? या कि ध्यान इस बात पर है कि पढ़ने का मतलब सिर्फ और सिर्फ अंग्रेजी सीखना है, क्योंकि कई दशकों से बच्चों और विद्यार्थियों को तमाम माध्यमों द्वारा यह बात लगातार सिखाई गई है कि जीवन में कुछ करना है, तो अंग्रेजी जानो, उसे ही सीखो, उसी पर ध्यान दो। हिंदी का क्या है, आगे चलकर जब करियर की उड़ान भरोगे, तो यह किसी काम नहीं आएगी। अंग्रेजी सीखना अच्छी बात है, लेकिन अपनी ही भाषा, जिसे हिंदी कहते हैं, उसका इतना तिरस्कार कहा तक जायज है!

हरियाली और रास्ता

निशा मैडम, पहाड़ा और बच्चे

एक शिक्षिका की कहानी, जिसने बच्चों को व्यक्तित्व विकास के गुर सिखाए।



निशा मैडम की पांचवीं कक्षा में पहली क्लास थी। पहली बार बच्चे और टीचर मिल रहे थे। वह क्लास में आई और बोर्ड पर नौ का पहाड़ा लिखने लगीं। पर यह क्या, उन्होंने नौ दूनी सोलह लिखा! बच्चे खिलखिलाकर हंसने लगे थे। मैडम ने बच्चों से पूछा, तुम लोग क्यों हंस रहे हो? बच्चों को यकीन हो गया कि नई मैडम को कुछ नहीं आता। पर टीचर को यह बताना कि, आपने गलती की, बिल्ली के गले में घंटी बांधने जैसा था। मॉनिटर वरुण ने हिममत कर टीचर से कहा, मैडम, आपने नौ दूनी सोलह लिखा है, जबकि वह अट्टरहा होना चाहिए। अब क्लास के सभी बच्चे ठहाका मारकर हंसने लगे। निशा मैडम भी हंसने लगीं। फिर बोलीं, मुझे यह जानकर खुशी हुई कि आप सबको नौ का पहाड़ा याद है। पर आपमें से किसी ने क्या यह सोचा कि मैंने नौ का पहाड़ा लिखा है या और कुछ? क्या मुझे यह नहीं पता कि आप सब को नौ का पहाड़ा आता होगा? अब बच्चे खामोश होकर निशा मैडम को सुन रहे थे। मैडम बोलीं, यह आपकी क्लास का पहला सबक है कि बिना जाने-समझे किसी पर हंसना बेवकूफी है। दूसरा सबक, हम अक्सर जिंदगी के नकारात्मक पहलू से इतना जुड़ जाते हैं कि सकारात्मक पहलू दिखना बंद हो जाता है। जैसे आप सबको नौ के इस पहाड़े में सिर्फ एक गलती दिखी, जबकि बाकी पहाड़ा सही था, उस बारे में आपने कुछ नहीं कहा। बोर्ड पर गलती देखकर आप हंस पड़े, पर असल जिंदगी में किसी दूसरे के साथ ऐसा बिल्कुल भी मत कीजिएगा। और आज की क्लास का आखिरी सबक यह है कि मेरी क्लास में हमेशा हंसते रहिए। ठीक वैसे ही, जैसे आप थोड़ी देर पहले हंस रहे थे। आखिर हम दोस्त हैं न? अब बच्चों की जान में जान आई। सभी बच्चे खुश होकर जोर से चिल्लाने लगे, यस मैडम।

बिना जाने-समझे किसी पर हंसना अपनी बेवकूफी का प्रदर्शन करना है।

खुली खिड़की

दुनिया में किताबों की दुकान

वैश्विक स्तर पर बड़ी संख्या में किताबों के शौकीन मौजूद हैं। एक रिपोर्ट के मुताबिक किताब की दुकानों के मामले में मेलबर्न पहले स्थान पर काबिज है।



स्रोत : वर्ल्ड सिटीज कल्चर फोरम

कल किसने देखा है

एक दिन दरबार खत्म होने पर युधिष्ठिर अपने भाइयों तथा पत्नी द्रौपदी के साथ वार्तालाप कर रहे थे कि द्वारपाल ने आकर सूचना दी कि कोई दो अतिथि युधिष्ठिर से मिलना चाहते हैं। युधिष्ठिर ने द्वारपाल से उन्हें दूसरे दिन आने को कहा। यह देख भीम वहां से उठकर चले गए और राजमहल के पास लगा विशाल घंटा बजाने लगे। किसी को कोई आश्चर्यजनक बात दिखाई दे, तभी वह घंटा बजाया जाता था। भीम स्वयं विशाल कार्यावाले और घंटा भी विशाल आकार का था। भीम उसे जोर-जोर से बजा भी रहे थे। कर्कश आवाज से सबके कान दहल गए। युधिष्ठिर ने भीम से घंटा बजाने का कारण पूछा। इस पर भीम वहां मौजूद नागरिकों को संबोधित कर बोले, 'ऐ प्रजाजनों, हमारे राजा तो यमराज से भी श्रेष्ठ हो गए हैं।' 'क्या कह रहे हो? साफ-साफ क्यों नहीं कहते? युधिष्ठिर ने प्रतिप्रश्न किया। भीम ने उत्तर दिया, 'महाराज अभी-अभी आपने दो अतिथियों को कल आने के लिए कहा है। इसका अर्थ हुआ कि आपको पूरा विश्वास है कि आप कल तक जीवित रहेंगे, जबकि वास्तविकता यह है कि मनुष्य को बिल्कुल भी भरोसा नहीं है कि दूसरे दिन क्या होने वाला है। आपका उन्हें कल बुलाना यह सूचित करता है कि आप अवश्य ही कल इस पृथ्वी पर रहेंगे।' धर्मराज को अपनी गलती महसूस हुई। उन्होंने उसी समय उन दोनों अतिथियों को बुलाकर उनसे भेंट की।

-संकलित

बिज़नेस स्टैंडर्ड

वर्ष 12 अंक 74

उच्च वृद्धि पर दें ध्यान

स्टैंडर्ड चार्टर्ड बैंक के अर्थशास्त्रियों ने सन 2030 तक की वैश्विक वृद्धि को लेकर एक अनुमान प्रस्तुत किया है। उसके मुताबिक एशिया की सात अर्थव्यवस्थाएं इस अवधि में 7 फीसदी की दर से बढ़ेंगी। अर्थशास्त्रियों का कहना है कि भारत इनमें से एक होगा लेकिन ध्यान देने वाली बात यह है कि यह कुछ अन्य प्रतिस्पर्धी देशों की तुलना में

धीमी गति से विकसित होगा। उदाहरण के लिए अर्थशास्त्रियों का अनुमान है कि सन 2030 तक बांग्लादेश की प्रति व्यक्ति आय भारत से अधिक होगी। इस बीच वियतनाम, जिसकी प्रति व्यक्ति आय भारत से केवल 30 फीसदी अधिक है, उसकी प्रति व्यक्ति आय सालाना 10,000 डॉलर से अधिक हो जाएगी। इस प्रकार वह प्रति व्यक्ति आय

के मामले में भारत से दोगुनी समृद्धि वाला देश हो जाएगा।

भारत के दृष्टिकोण से देखें तो इन देशों से तुलना बहुत आश्चर्य नहीं करती। ऐसे समय में जबकि छोटे देश कहीं अधिक बेहतर प्रदर्शन कर रहे हैं, चीन को पीछे छोड़ने या अन्य बड़ी अर्थव्यवस्थाओं को पछाड़ने की बात बहुत आश्चर्य नहीं करती। इस अवधि में भारत प्रतिस्पर्धी अर्थव्यवस्थाओं को पीछे छोड़ सके, इसके लिए क्या करना होगा?

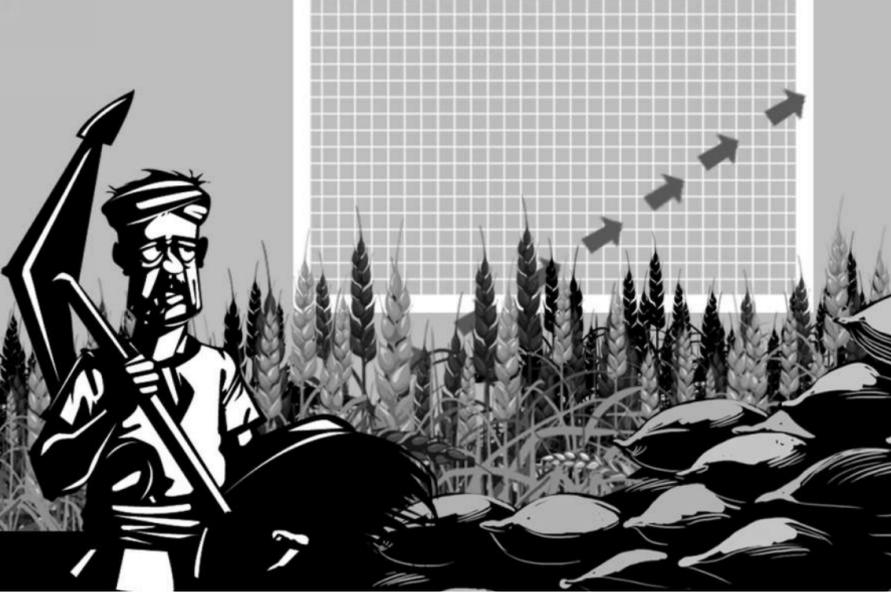
अब से लेकर 2030 तक वृद्धि के लिए स्थायी राह पर विचार करते हुए स्टैंडर्ड चार्टर्ड के अर्थशास्त्री अनुमान जताते हैं कि जो अर्थव्यवस्थाएं जिस या विनिर्मित वस्तुओं का निर्यात कर सकती हैं उनका प्रदर्शन

बेहतर रहेगा। यह बात ध्यान देने वाली है कि बीते वर्षों के दौरान निर्यात के मोर्चे पर बांग्लादेश और वियतनाम दोनों का प्रदर्शन भारत से बेहतर रहा है। इसकी एक वजह भारतीय विनिर्माण का प्रतिस्पर्धी न होना भी है। प्रतिस्पर्धा की यह कमी वस्त्र क्षेत्र के अलावा भी है। हाल के वर्षों में संरक्षणवादी रुख अपनाया गया है लेकिन वह भी मददगार नहीं साबित हुआ क्योंकि इसके कारण देश को वैश्विक आपूर्ति शृंखला का हिस्सा बनाने में दिक्कत आती है। ई-कॉमर्स क्षेत्र में भारी भ्रकम निवेश करने वाले निवेशकों समेत अन्य निवेशकों के साथ मनमाना व्यवहार भी इस क्षेत्र में हमारी पिछड़ने की एक वजह है। अगली सरकार को यह छवि बदलनी होगी और ऐसी धारणा विकसित करने की

दिशा में काम करना होगा कि विदेशी निवेश और विदेशी व्यापार के लिए देश में स्थिर माहौल है। साथ ही यह भी कि वैश्विक आपूर्ति शृंखला के घटकों के केंद्र के रूप में भी भारत सुरक्षित है।

व्यापक प्रश्न यह है कि निजी निवेश में इजाफे के बिना वृद्धि दर में बढ़ोतरी कैसे लाई जा सकती है। फिलहाल निवेश अतीत के वर्षों की ऊंचाई से काफी कम है। बीते चार-पांच वर्ष से इसमें ठहराव भी देखने को मिल रहा है। बीती कुछ तिमाहियों में अवश्य थोड़ा सुधार देखने को मिला है। निवेशकों का यकीन नए सिरे से बहाल करना बहुत अहम है। निजी कारोबारी बचत में इजाफा भी आवश्यक है क्योंकि तभी ऐसा निवेश संभव हो पाएगा। अभी भी

काफी पूंजी तंत्र में फंसी हुई है। तेजी और प्रोत्साहन वाले वर्षों का ऋण अभी तक पूरी तरह निपट नहीं सका है। कई बेलेंसशीट अभी भी कर्ज के बोझ में दबी हैं। परंतु जरूरत यह है कि निर्यात के जरिये निवेश और आय के नए अवसर और संभावनाएं तलाश किए जाएं। नया पूंजीगत व्यय अक्सर रोजगार तैयार करने और आम घरों की वित्तीय बचत बढ़ाने में मदद करता है। अगर भारत को उभरती अर्थव्यवस्थाओं में श्रेष्ठ बनना है तो इन बातों को प्राथमिकता देनी होगी। यह सुनिश्चित करना भी आवश्यक है कि कामगार वृद्धि और अवसरों का लाभ लेने के लिए तैयार हो। दूसरे शब्दों में शिक्षा, कौशल और स्वास्थ्य क्षेत्र को प्राथमिकता में रखना अनिवार्य है।



अजय मोहंती

भारत बन सकता है कृषि क्षेत्र की ताकत

हममें से कई लोगों ने इस बात पर ध्यान नहीं दिया होगा कि कृषि क्षेत्र का निर्यात वाहन क्षेत्र या कपड़ा एवं परिधान क्षेत्र के निर्यात से अधिक है। विस्तार से बता रहे हैं अजय शाह

खाद्यान्न के अभाव की मानसिकता काफी हद तक आधुनिक भारत से मेल नहीं खाती। उपज बढ़ने के साथ स्थानीय कीमती में गिरावट रोकने का एकमात्र तरीका यह है कि इस क्षेत्र को वैश्विक अर्थव्यवस्था से जोड़ दिया जाए। हमारा देश हर वर्ष कृषि क्षेत्र में करीब 4,000 करोड़ डॉलर का निर्यात करता है। यह निर्यात कपड़ा एवं वस्त्र क्षेत्र के कुल निर्यात से भी अधिक है। कृषि क्षेत्र को लेकर हमको अपना वैश्विक नजरिया और अधिक अंतरराष्ट्रीय बनाना होगा।

भारत में खुद ही देश को लेकर ऐसा नजरिया बन चुका है कि यह अत्यधिक आबादी और खाद्यान्न की कमी वाला देश है। कई दशक पहले ऐसा था। लेकिन अब हालात बदल चुके हैं। देश में खेती की जमीन की कमी नहीं है। मौसम भी एक वर्ष में कई फसल लेने में सहायक है। शुरुआत में हमारी उपज बहुत कम थी लेकिन अब उसका स्तर बहुत सुधर चुका है।

उपज में सुधार के साथ ही आबादी का बढ़ना निरंतर धीमा हो रहा है। हमारे लिए यह संभव नहीं है कि जितना अन्न उपज रहा है उसकी खपत कर सकें। शापद धरेलू बाजार में खाद्यान्न कीमती में गिरावट की यह भी

एक वजह है। इन बातों ने कृषि उत्पादों के निर्यात की बुनियाद तैयार की। वर्ष 2013 तक भारत कृषि निर्यात के क्षेत्र में ऑस्ट्रेलिया को पछाड़ चुका था। उसने इस क्षेत्र में बीते दशक के मुकाबले सबसे ऊंची वृद्धि दर हासिल की। कृषि क्षेत्र का व्यापार/जीडीपी अनुपात 2008-09 के 11.8 फीसदी से बढ़कर 2018-19 तक 15.2 फीसदी हो गया। देश के श्रम आधारित निर्यात की चर्चा अक्सर वाहन और वस्त्र उद्योग तक सीमित रहती है। हममें से कई लोगों ने इस बात पर ध्यान नहीं दिया है कि कृषि क्षेत्र का निर्यात अब वाहन, कपड़ा और वस्त्र उद्योग से अधिक है। इसके बावजूद हाल के वर्षों में इसकी वृद्धि में ठहराव देखा गया है। वर्ष 2001-2004 और 2011-2014 के बीच हमने कृषि क्षेत्र के निर्यात में हर साल 3,400 करोड़ डॉलर जोड़े। उसके बाद के वर्षों में वृद्धि देखने को नहीं मिली। यह देश के मौजूदा कृषि संकट का एक तत्व हो सकता है। निरंतर निर्यात बाजार से जुड़ाव हमें एक खास न्यूनतम समर्थन मूल्य मिलना सुनिश्चित करता है।

अन्य देशों के संरक्षणवाद या सब्सिडी से परे एकरफा वैश्विक एकीकरण हमारे लिए अवसर लाया है। ऐसे अंतरराष्ट्रीयकरण को

लेकर कुल चार थीम हैं। इन्हें अन्य उद्योगों के क्षेत्र में समझा जा चुका है और अब कृषि की बारी है।

पहली थीम है विशेषज्ञता की। भारत सॉफ्टवेयर क्षेत्र में बेहतर प्रदर्शन करता रहा है लेकिन हार्डवेयर अथवा डेटा सेंटर चलाने के क्षेत्र में उसका प्रदर्शन उल्लेखनीय नहीं रहा है। ऐसे में भारत के लिए बेहतर यही होगा कि वह सॉफ्टवेयर बनाए और निर्यात करे जबकि डेटा सेंटर दुनिया में अन्य स्थानों पर किराये से ले।

इसी प्रकार विश्व अर्थव्यवस्था में एकीकरण से देश के कृषि क्षेत्र में भी बदलाव आएगा। व्यापारिक शर्तों के अधीन हम उन चीजों के उत्पादन से दूरी बनाएंगे जो अन्य जगह बेहतर उत्पादित हो रही हैं। मिसाल के तौर पर गन्ना और गेहूँ आदि। इसके स्थान पर हम उन चीजों पर ध्यान दे सकते हैं जिनमें हमारी विशेषज्ञता है। उदाहरण के लिए फल और सब्जियां।

दूसरी थीम है राजनीतिक अर्थव्यवस्था। घरेलू नीति प्रक्रिया निष्क्रिय राजनीतिक अर्थव्यवस्था में तब्दील हो रही है जहां विशेष हित वाले समूहों का दबदबा है।

अर्थव्यवस्था के साथ जुड़ाव एक नया परिदृश्य रचने में सहायता करता है। हमारे

देश में गठबंधन करना आसान है। कई विशिष्ट हित समूह मिलकर सफलतापूर्वक निर्यात कर रहे हैं। कृषि क्षेत्र बहुत लंबे समय से नीतिगत प्रगति के क्षेत्र में ठहरा हुआ है। अब जबकि व्यापार और जीडीपी अनुपात 15 फीसदी है और निर्यात 4,000 करोड़ डॉलर हो चुका है तो कृषि नीति को लेकर नई संभावनाएं उत्पन्न हो चुकी हैं।

अंतरराष्ट्रीयकरण कई घरेलू पहलियां हल करता है। उदाहरण के लिए देश में जिस वायदा बाजार का क्रियान्वयन आसान नहीं है लेकिन एक बार अंतरराष्ट्रीयकरण होने के बाद देश के बाहर इन बाजारों में कारोबार किया जा सकेगा। भारत के लोग देश के बाहर वायदा बाजार की कीमत के आधार पर भंडारण या बुआई के निर्णय लेंगे। अंतरराष्ट्रीयकरण घरेलू नीति की समस्याओं को दूर करने में सहायक होता है।

तीसरी थीम है दक्षिण एशिया में व्यापार। भौतिक नजदीकी अंतरराष्ट्रीय कारोबार के लिए अत्यंत आवश्यक है। हमारे लिए सबसे अहम व्यापारिक अवसर आपास के क्षेत्र में ही हैं। कृषि पर यह बात और अधिक लागू होती है क्योंकि इसमें परिवहन लागत की अहम भूमिका है। हमें ऐसा माहौल बनाना होगा ताकि दक्षिण एशिया में सुगमता से व्यापार का लाभ हासिल किया जा सके।

चौथी थीम है निरंतर संबद्धता। कई लोगों ने इस बात पर टिप्पणी की है कि कैसे भारत को अविश्वसनीय विक्रेता माना जाता है क्योंकि समय-समय पर इसके निर्यात पर प्रतिबंध लगते रहे हैं। समस्या कहीं अधिक गहरी है। निर्यात सामान्य मसला नहीं है। इसके लिए जटिल संगठनात्मक पूंजी और कारोबारी रिश्तों की आवश्यकता होती है। अगर वस्त्र या वाहन क्षेत्र के निर्यात पर आए दिन प्रतिबंध लगे तो जाहिर है इसका असर निवेशकों पर पड़ेगा। इसमें सांस्थानिक, प्रक्रिया डिजाइन, कारोबारी रिश्ते आदि सभी क्षेत्रों के निवेश पर जुड़ने वाला असर शामिल है। भारतीय कंपनियों की बात करें तो अंतरराष्ट्रीय गतिविधियों में शामिल होना जटिल नियोजन की मांग करता है। इसके लिए कई वर्षों की तैयारी चाहिए।

यही बात उन विदेशी कंपनियों पर भी लागू होती है जो भारत के साथ कारोबार करना चाहती हैं। ऐसे प्रतिबंध भारत में निवेश की कंपनियों को बाधक प्रभावित कर सकते हैं। इससे भारत की निर्यात क्षमता प्रभावित होती है। हमारा आधा वैश्विक कारोबार बहुराष्ट्रीय निगमों के साथ होता है। निर्यात के लिए हमें ऐसी वैश्विक कंपनियों की आवश्यकता है जो हमारे यहां निवेश की प्रतिबद्धता जताएं।

प्रतिबंध लगाने और उठने का दौर खाद्य असुरक्षा की उपज रहा है। अब हालात बदल चुके हैं। देश की आबादी कुल उत्पादित खाद्यान्न की खपत नहीं कर सकती। भविष्य में उपज में लाभ समस्या को हल करने वाले साबित होंगे। हम कृषि नीति को उपभोक्ताओं और किसानों के बीच एक प्रतिस्पर्धा के रूप में देखते हैं। अगर हम एक बार अपना नजरिया बदलकर वैश्विक कारोबार में शामिल हो गए तो हालात में बदलाव आ जाएगा। अगर हम कृषि जिंसों का आयात बढ़ाने में कामयाब रहे तो इसका लाभ हर भारतीय को मिलेगा। भूमि का इस्तेमाल भी कम मूल्य वाली वस्तुओं से उच्च मूल्य वाली उपज की ओर होगा।

उम्मीदवार का मानसिक संतुलन जांचता है तनावपूर्ण साक्षात्कार

नैशनल एज्युकेशन गिल्ड ने अब बंद हो चुकी एयरलाइन जेट एयरवेज के पायलटों का साक्षात्कार करते समय स्पाइसजेट के कुछ कर्मचारियों की टिप्पणियों पर सख्त एतराज जताया है। साक्षात्कार के दौरान स्पाइसजेट के एक अधिकारी ने कथित तौर पर कहा था कि वह जेट एयरवेज के पायलटों को नौकरी देकर अहसान कर रहे हैं। पायलट यूनिटन ने इसके विरोध में अपना बयान जारी किया है। हालांकि इन आरोपों से स्पाइसजेट के इनकार के बाद उसे संदेह का लाभ मिलना चाहिए लेकिन ऐसे विषाक्त साक्षात्कार असामान्य बात नहीं हैं।

काऊबॉय शैली में किए जाने वाले ऐसे साक्षात्कारों में कर्म के नीचे निशाना साधने वाले सवाल पूछे जाते हैं। अमूमन ऐसी शैली वही कंपनियां अपनाती हैं जिनकी अपनी कार्य-संस्कृति अच्छी नहीं होती है या कुछ घमंडी कॉर्पोरेट दिग्गजों को यह गुमान होता है कि उनके लिए आप करने के वास्ते हर कोई कुछ भी करने को तैयार है। ऐसे लोगों को यह अहसास ही नहीं होता है कि वे उम्मीदवारों को अपने संस्थान के नकारात्मक पहलुओं से रूबरू होने का बहुत ही बढ़िया मौका दे देते हैं और प्रतिभावान कर्मचारियों को साथ जोड़ने की उनकी क्षमता चुरी तरह प्रभावित होती है।

हालांकि एक मुश्किल साक्षात्कार का विषाक्त होना जरूरी भी नहीं है। मसलन, एक महिला उम्मीदवार खुद को काफी असहज महसूस करने लगी जब साक्षात्कार पैनल में मौजूद एक शख्स बोरियत होने का आभास देने लगा और दो बार जम्हाई भी ली। लेकिन वह उम्मीदवार असल में 'तनावपूर्ण साक्षात्कार' के रूप में चर्चित विधा का अनुभव कर रही थी जिसका मकसद ही यह जानना होता है कि अमुक उम्मीदवार असहज एवं अनपेक्षित परिस्थितियों में किस तरह का बर्ताव करता है? उस समय सही या गलत जवाब का कोई मतलब नहीं होता है, साक्षात्कारकर्ता तो यह जानना चाहता है कि उस समय उम्मीदवार का बर्ताव कैसा है? इसके जरिये यह जांचने की कोशिश की जाती है कि इजाजत हालात में कोई उम्मीदवार किस कदर विश्वास एवं अनुकूलता का परिचय देता है।

तनावपूर्ण साक्षात्कार पेचीदे



इंसानी पहलू श्यामल मजूमदार

सवालों की शक्त भी ले सकता है जिनमें से कुछ सवाल सुनने में भले ही आसान लगें लेकिन सारगर्भित जवाब देने के लिहाज से मुश्किल होते हैं। गुगल से ऐसे साक्षात्कार के कई वाक्य सुनने को मिले हैं। करियर वेबसाइट ग्लासडोर ने गुगल में साक्षात्कार के दौरान पूछे गए कई पहलीनुमा सवालों की एक झलक दी है। मसलन, अकाउंट स्टेटेजिस्ट पद के लिए साक्षात्कार देने आए एक उम्मीदवार से पूछा गया, 'आप अपने पालतू कुत्ते को ऑफिस लाना चाहते हैं लेकिन आपकी टीम के एक साथी को कुत्तों से एलर्जी है तो आप क्या करेंगे?' इसी तरह क्वांटिटेटिव एनालिस्ट पद के साक्षात्कार में पूछा गया, 'एक सिक्के को 1,000 बार उछाला गया और 560 बार हेड आया। क्या आपको यह सिक्का पूर्वग्रह से ग्रसित लगता है?' इसी तरह एक इंटरन से एक विमान में समा करने वाली टेनिस बॉल की संख्या के बारे में अंदाजा लगाने को कहा गया था।

ये सवाल तनावपूर्ण साक्षात्कार के क्लासिक उदाहरण हैं जिनके जरिये किसी उम्मीदवार की रचनात्मक सोच और समस्या का संभावित समाधान पेश करने की उसकी क्षमता के बारे में अंदाजा लगाया जाता है।

ऐसे ही एक साक्षात्कार में एक बेहद सफल पेशेवर से पूछे गए पहले सवाल ने ही उसे असहज कर दिया था। उससे 'अपने करियर की विफलताओं के बारे में बताते' को कहा गया था। वह अपने करियर की सफलताओं के बारे में बात करने की सोचकर आया था कि वह किस तरह करोड़ों रुपये का सौदा कराने में सफल रहा था? लेकिन उसका संभावित नियोक्ता तो उसकी नाकामियों के बारे में जानना चाह रहा है। उसने कुछ बातें बताईं लेकिन अगले सवाल ने तो उसे और भी तनाव में ला दिया

'आपको बोरियत कब होती है?' इस सवाल का कोई रोचक जवाब दे पाने में उम्मीदवार को काफी परेशानी हुई लेकिन वह गलत राह पर जा रहा था। मानव संसाधन (एचआर) के प्रमुखों का मानना है कि ऐसी स्थितियों में स्मार्ट एवं ईमानदार जवाब आम तौर पर परिपक्व इंसान को आम लड़कों से अलग कर देते हैं। अगर एक पेशेवर को यह लगता है कि उसे नौकरी नहीं देने या अपमानित करने के लिए ही जानबूझकर ऐसे सवाल पूछे गए हैं तो वह गलत है। ऐसे सवाल इस बात की स्वीकारोक्ति हैं कि कॉर्पोरेट जीवन में परिलोक जैसा कुछ नहीं होता है और नाकामी अपरिहार्य है। इसके पीछे सोच यह जानने की होती है कि किसी पेशेवर ने अपनी नाकामियों से क्या सबक सीखे हैं? कभी-कभी साक्षात्कार देने वाला व्यक्ति अनपेक्षित आचरण से उम्मीदवार का संतुलन बिगाड़ने की कोशिश करते हैं। मसलन, साक्षात्कारकर्ता एक ही तरह का तकनीकी सवाल कई बार पूछ सकता है ताकि यह संदेश दे सके कि उसे जवाब समझने में दिक्कत हो रही है। इस स्थिति में उम्मीदवार साक्षात्कारकर्ता की नासमझी को लेकर बेचैन हो सकता है।

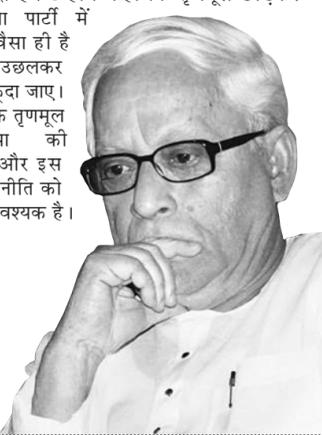
हालांकि कुछ एचआर विशेषज्ञों का यह मानना है कि साक्षात्कार के दौरान तनाव का बखूबी सामना करने वाले पेशेवरों का काम के दौरान भी तनाव से बेहतर ढंग से निपट पाने का यह सिद्धांत गलत है। तनावपूर्ण साक्षात्कार की विवादप्रिय प्रकृति होने से लोग साक्षात्कार और रक्षात्मक रुख अखिरवार कर लेते हैं जिससे साक्षात्कारकर्ता उनके असली व्यक्तित्व एवं क्षमताओं के बारे में नहीं देख पाते हैं। भले ही इस बारे में ज्युरी की राय आ चुकी है लेकिन बढ़िया ढंग से गुजर जाने वाले एक तनावपूर्ण साक्षात्कार का यह एक उदाहरण है। कुछ प्रतिकूल सवालों को संतुलित ढंग से जवाब दे चुकी एक उम्मीदवार से यह पूछा गया कि वह किसी मुश्किल शब्द के साथ काम करने से जुड़ा अनुभव बताए। उस महिला ने मुस्कराते हुए फौरन जवाब दिया, 'पहले मुझे यह बताने की इजाजत दीजिए कि मुझे कब मुश्किल साक्षात्कारकर्ताओं का सामना करना पड़ा है?' उस उम्मीदवार को नौकरी पर खाली गया।

कानाफूसी

रजनीकांत का चुनावी आगाज यह सवाल कई लोगों के मन में है कि सुपरस्टार रजनीकांत आखिर कब चुनावी राजनीति में शामिल होंगे? अगर उनके खेमे से आ रहे संकेतों को समझा जाए तो ऐसा बहुत जल्दी हो सकता है। 68 वर्षीय रजनीकांत हाल के दिनों में अपनी विभिन्न योजनाओं को पूरा करने में अत्यधिक व्यस्त रहे हैं। रजनी मक्कल मंदरम नामक उनका संस्थान पिछले दो वर्ष से चल रहा है हालांकि उन्होंने बार-बार कहा है कि वह 2019 के आम चुनाव में हिस्सा नहीं लेंगे लेकिन तमिलनाडु में अगले विधानसभा चुनावों में वह शिरकात कर सकते हैं। कुछ दिन पहले त्रिची में उनके भाई सत्यनारायण राव गायकवाड़ ने कहा कि रजनीकांत 23 मई के बाद इस संबंध में घोषणा कर सकते हैं। वर्तमान में लोकसभा चुनाव चल रहे हैं तथा सातवें चरण का मतदान 19 मई को होगा तथा मतगणना 23 मई को होगी।

राजनीतिक वापसी?

ऐसा प्रतीत होता है कि पश्चिम बंगाल के पूर्व मुख्यमंत्री बुद्धदेव भट्टाचार्य, जिन्होंने 2011 में ममता बनर्जी के हाथों वाम मोर्चे की पराजय के बाद सक्रिय राजनीति से कमीने का मन बना रहे हैं। माकपा के मुखपत्र गणशक्ति को दिए एक साक्षात्कार में उन्होंने राज्य के माकपा काडर को एक किस्म की चेतावनी दी है। उन्होंने कहा कि तृणमूल भारतीय जनता पार्टी में शामिल होना वैसा ही है जैसे गर्म तवे से उछलकर सीधे आग में कूदा जाए। उन्होंने कहा कि तृणमूल और भाजपा की मिलीभगत है और इस किस्म की राजनीति को खत्म करना आवश्यक है।



आपका पक्ष

डिजिटल गोल्ड संबंधी नियमों की जरूरत

देश में सोना एक अहम तथा कीमती लोकप्रिय धातु के रूप में माना जाता है। लेकिन डिजिटल युग ने इसका भी स्वरूप बदल दिया है। अब डिजिटल सोना भी बाजार में बिकने लगा है। कई बैंक डिजिटल सोना या गोल्ड बॉन्ड बेच रहे हैं। इसमें सोना भौतिक रूप से नहीं मिलता है बल्कि एक दस्तावेज के रूप में खरीदे गए सोने का वजन, कैरट तथा उस दिन का मूल्य लिखा जाता है। विश्व स्वरूप परिषद ने डिजिटल गोल्ड के लिए नए दिशानिर्देश तैयार किए हैं। इसमें निवेशकों के साथ डिजिटल गोल्ड खरीदने से संबंधित सेवाएं देने वाली इकाइयों के लिए नियम तय किए गए हैं। ऑनलाइन सोने की खरीद या डिजिटल सोने की खरीद में फर्जीवाड़ा रोकने के लिए नियम कानून जरूरी थे। कई ई-कॉमर्स कंपनियां ऑनलाइन सोना बेच रही हैं। इसके तय मानक क्या होने चाहिए इसका



मापदंड भी होना चाहिए। वहीं ग्राहकों को ऑनलाइन कंपनियों द्वारा फर्जीवाड़े से बचाने के लिए भी नियम कानून होने चाहिए। अगर कोई 24 कैरट शुद्धता वाले सोने का 10 ग्राम का सिक्का ऑनलाइन कंपनी से खरीदता है तथा ग्राहक के पास नकली सोना पहुंचता है तो ऐसे में ग्राहक विशुद्ध रूप से ठग का शिकार हो

जाता है। अगर ऐसी कोई घटना होती है तो मामला साइबर क्राइम या फिर धोखाधड़ी का बनता है जिसके बाद पुलिस कार्रवाई होती है। डिजिटल फर्जीवाड़े में भी

फ्लैट खरीदार को मिले राहत

रियल एस्टेट की नई परियोजनाएं रैरा द्वारा कवर की गई हैं। मंजूरी या वित्तीय मुद्दों के कारण जो परियोजनाएं चल रही हैं, पूरी हो गई हैं या अटकली हुई हैं, वे इसके अंतर्गत नहीं आती हैं। इसलिए कई फ्लैट खरीदारों को इसका लाभ नहीं मिल पाता है। जिन पश्चिम एशिया तक के बाजारों में हैं। भारत में पिछले दो वर्षों में तीन इकाइयों बाजार में उतर चुकी हैं। यहां करीब 8 करोड़ डिजिटल गोल्ड खते खोले गए हैं। ऐसे में इसकी सुरक्षा संबंधी पहलू अहम हो जाते हैं। इसके लिए नए नियम कानून जरूरी हो जाते हैं। स्वर्ण परिषद की पहल सराहनीय है जिससे किसी फर्जीवाड़े को रोकने में मदद मिल सकती है।

मोहित कुमार, नई दिल्ली

कमलेश शर्मा, नोएडा

विचार



दैनिक जागरण

सहिष्णुता का भाव ही तनाव और क्रोध से बचाता है

अनावश्यक कार्रवाई

यह अच्छा हुआ कि सुप्रीम कोर्ट ने फोटो के जरिये मुख्यमंत्री ममता बनर्जी को अभिनेत्री प्रियंका चोपड़ा की तरह दिखाने वाली हवड़ा को भाजपा कार्यकर्ता प्रियंका शर्मा की याचिका स्वीकार कर ली, लेकिन क्या यह बेहतर नहीं होता कि उसे पश्चिम बंगाल में ही रहत मिल जाती ? प्रियंका शर्मा पर यह आरोप है कि उसने फोटोशाप के जरिये ममता बनर्जी को प्रियंका चोपड़ा जैसे परिधान में दिखा दिया। हालांकि उसका यह कहना है कि उसने ऐसी फोटो सोशल मीडिया में शेयर भर की थी। सच्चाई जो भी हो, यह ऐसा काम नहीं जिस पर किसी को न केवल गिरफ्तार कर लिया जाए, बल्कि न्यायिक हिरासत के तहत जेल भेज दिया जाए और वह भी 14 दिनों के लिए ? क्या किसी लोकतांत्रिक देश में ऐसे किसी कानून के लिए कोई स्थान हो सकता है जिसमें फोटो में मामूली छेड़छाड़ के आरोप में किसी को गिरफ्तार कर 14 दिनों के लिए जेल भेज दिया जाए ? यह समझ आता है कि तृणमूल कार्यकर्ताओं और नेताओं को उन्त फोटो रस न आया हो, लेकिन सोशल मीडिया पर तो इस तरह की फोटो को भरमार है। क्या इन फोटो को अपलोड अथवा उन्हें शेयर करने वाले सभी लोगों को गिरफ्तार कर लिया जाएगा ? तृणमूल कांग्रेस के नेताओं और यहां तक कि पश्चिम बंगाल पुलिस के लिए ममता बनर्जी की उक्त फोटो अरुचिकर तो हो सकती है, लेकिन उसे आपत्तिजनक नहीं कहा जा सकता। यदि राजनीतिक द्वेषवश या फिर अन्य किसी कारण से अरुचिकर और आपत्तिजनक में भेद करने से बाध जाएगा तो फिर अभिव्यक्ति की स्वतंत्रता के लिए गुंजाइश खत्म होने के साथ ही लोगों का उपीड़न भी शुरू हो जाएगा। पश्चिम बंगाल पुलिस को इतना तो पता होना ही चाहिए कि प्रियंका चोपड़ा कोई कुख्यात शरिख़वत नहीं है कि किसी को उनके जैसे परिधान में दिखाना उसका अपमान करना समझ लिया जाए। क्या पश्चिम बंगाल में हंसी-मजाक पर पाबंदी है या फिर इस राज्य में अपने लिए कुछ नए नियम गढ़ लिए हैं ? यह सवाल इसलिए, क्योंकि पश्चिम बंगाल में ममता बनर्जी का कार्टून बनाने के आरोप में एक प्रोफेसर को भी गिरफ्तार किया जा चुका है। नि:संदेह अभिव्यक्ति की स्वतंत्रता असीम नहीं हो सकती और उसके नाम पर लोगों को कुछ भी कहने या करने की इजाजत नहीं दी जा सकती, लेकिन वह काम भी नहीं होना चाहिए जो पश्चिम बंगाल पुलिस ने किया। यह हैशमि की बात है कि बात-बात पर अभिव्यक्ति की स्वतंत्रता के समक्ष खतरे का शोर मचाने वाले पश्चिम बंगाल पुलिस के हाथों एक युवती के उपीड़न पर मौन साधे हैं। यदि बंगाल पुलिस ने अपने अधिकारों का बेजा इस्तेमाल किया तो शासन-प्रशासन के उच्च पदस्थ लोगों की यह जिम्मेदारी बनती थी कि वे भाजपा कार्यकर्ता के उपीड़न को रोकने के लिए आगे आते। दुर्भाग्य से ऐसा नहीं हुआ। यह भी दुर्भाग्यपूर्ण है कि इस युवती को रहत पाने के लिए सुप्रीम कोर्ट का दरवाजा खटखटाने के लिए विवश होना पड़ा। अपेक्षित केवल यही नहीं कि सुप्रीम कोर्ट उसे रहत प्रदान करे, बल्कि यह भी है कि उसकी ओर से ऐसे कुछ दिशा-निर्देश भी जारी किए जाएं जिससे देश में कहीं भी पुलिस अनावश्यक कार्रवाई करने से बाज आए।

मानव-वन्यजीव संघर्ष

लगभग 71 फीसद वन भूभाग वाले उत्तरखंड को यहां के वन्यजीव दुनियाभर में विशिष्ट पहचान भी दिलाते हैं। बाघों व हाथियों के संरक्षण में राज्य उल्लेखनीय भूमिका निभा रहा है। बावजूद इसके तस्वीर का दूसरा पहलू भी है और वह है वन्यजीवों व मनुष्य के बीच छिड़ी जंग। यह अब चिंताजनक स्थिति में पहुंच गई है। मनुष्य और जंगली जानवरों के मध्य छिड़ी जंग में दोनों को ही कीमत चुकानो पड़ रही है। ऐसे में मानव-वन्यजीव संघर्ष को आपदा में शामिल करने के लिए उच्च स्तर पर चल रही कसरत को देर से ही सही, मगर एक सफलीय पहलू माना जा सकता है। उत्तर प्रदेश पिछले साल ही अपने यहां मानव-वन्यजीव संघर्ष को आपदा की श्रेणी में शामिल कर चुका है। इस लिहाज से देखें तो उत्तर प्रदेश के मुकाबले उत्तरखंड में यह संघर्ष अधिक है। खुद विभाग के आंकड़े इसकी तस्दीक करते हैं। सात वर्षों की तस्वीर देखें तो इस अवधि में राज्य में 326 लोगों को वन्यजीवों के हमलों में जान गंवानी पड़ी, जबकि घायलों की संख्या इसकी चार गुना से अधिक है। और तो और, फसलों एवं मवेशियों को भी वन्यजीव निशाना बना रहे हैं। सात साल में जंगली जानवरों ने 31 हजार मवेशियों को निवाला बनाया, जबकि दो हजार हेक्टेयर से अधिक क्षेत्र में फसलें चौपट कर डालीं। ऐसे में क्षतिपूर्ति देने में विभाग को खासी मश्राकत करनी पड़ रही है। अभी तक लगभग 51 करोड़ रुपये बतौर मुआवजा वितरित किए गए हैं, मगर अभी भी तामा मामले लॉबित हैं। इस संघर्ष को थामने के लिए कोई ठोस रणनीति भी धरातल पर नजर नहीं आ रही। ऐसे में मानव-वन्यजीव संघर्ष को आपदा की श्रेणी में शामिल किया जाना समय की मांग है। इस पर कसरत शुरू हो गई है और शासन स्तर पर भी इस संबंध में लगभग इहमति बन चुकी है। चुनाव आचार संहिता खत्म होने के बाद इसका मौसौदा कैबिनेट के समक्ष लाया जाएगा। उम्मीद है कि सरकार इस मामले को गंभीरता से लेते हुए इस पर मुहर लगाएगी। ऐसा होने के बाद जहां इस संघर्ष को थामने के लिए पूरा तंत्र जुटेगा, वहीं बजट की भी कमी नहीं रहेगी।

राष्ट्र हित को मिले वरीयता

विकास सिंह

दुनिया भर में भौगोलिक स्थिति, जलवायु और स्थान विशेष की पौराणिक, सांस्कृतिक परंपराओं के आधार पर तरह-तरह के परिधान पहनने का चलन है। परिधानों द्वारा शरीर को ढकने, उत्पन्न के मौकों पर पहनने के साथ ही अनुष्ठान और सांस्कृतिक कार्यक्रम के दौरान धारण करने की प्रथा है। बदलते वक्त के साथ तन ढकने वाला वस्त्र सामाजिक स्तर की पहचान का परिचायक होने के अलावा अन्न सुरक्षा का मुद्दा भी बन गया है। इतिहासकारों का कहना है कि भारतीय संस्कृति को पर्दा प्रथा इस्लामिक संस्कृति की ही देन है। खैर अब इससे इतर पूरी दुनिया में इस्लामिक संस्कृति से जुड़े परिधान बुके को लेकर सवाल उठ रहा है।

कई देशों ने बुक्रे पर या तो आंशिक रूप से या फिर पूर्ण रूप से पाबंदी लगा दी है। श्रीलंका में हाल में हुए आतंकी हमले के बाद वहां भी इस पर

देश की आंतरिक सुरक्षा की खातिर अगर किसी पारंपरिक लिबास पर प्रतिबंध लगाया जाए तो इसमें कोई बुराई नहीं

हस्तक्षेप मानते हुए विरोध किया है। अब मुद्दा यह है कि क्या बुकों धार्मिक पोशाक है? क्या कोई ऐसा पोशाक जिससे देश की सुरक्षा खतरे में पड़ जाए, उस पर पाबंदी लगनी चाहिए?

इस्लाम से जुड़ी किसी भी धार्मिक रस्म में बुकों पहनने का रिवाज नहीं है। निकाह की रस्मों के दौरान पर्दे का इस्तेमाल होता है। ठीक इसी तरह की बात घूंघट को लेकर है। इसका भी किसी धार्मिक अनुष्ठान से कोई लेना-देना नहीं है। सामाजिक परंपराओं के लिहाज से ही घूंघट का चलन है। वह भी महिला द्वारा ससुराल पक्ष के कुछ नाते-संबंधियों के सामने। घूंघट का चलन अब लगभग सिमट चुका है और जहां है, वहां भी सीमित है। लेकिन इससे इतर बुक्रे को पारंपरिक पोशाक न मानकर धार्मिक लिबास का रूप दे दिया गया है। कई देशों में तो इसे लेकर फतवा तक जारी किया जा चुका है।



शंकर शरमा

यदि उच्चतर न्यायपालिका अपने उतराधिकारी खुद तय कर रही है तो विधायिका और कार्यपालिका भी अपने-अपने उतराधिकारी क्यों न तय करें?

सुप्रीम कोर्ट में दो नए जजों की नियुक्ति पर कार्यपालिका और न्यायपालिका में फिर ठन सी गई है। जिन दो जजों का नाम सुप्रीम कोर्ट के कोलेजियम ने भेजा था उसे कार्यपालिका ने अस्वीकार कर दिया। कारण यह बताया कि चयन में हार्डकोर्ट के जजों की वरिष्ठता का ध्यान नहीं रखा गया और वरिष्ठता क्रम में 12वें और 36वें न्यायाधीश के नाम की अनुशंसा की गई, किंतु सुप्रीम कोर्ट कोलेजियम ने उन्हीं नामों की पुनः अनुशंसा कर कार्यपालिका के पास भेजा दिया। ऐसा करते हुए कोलेजियम ने दलील दी कि सुप्रीम कोर्ट में “न्यायाधीश नियुक्ति का आधार वरिष्ठता नहीं, बल्कि प्रतिभा होना चाहिए।” इस तर्क में बुनियादी अंतर्विरोध है, क्योंकि सुप्रीम कोर्ट में ही वरिष्ठता के आधार पर मुख्य न्यायाधीश की नियुक्ति होती है। जब प्रधानमंत्री इंदिरा गांधी ने 1973 और 1977 में क्रमशः जस्टिस एएन रे और जस्टिस एमएच बेग को मुख्य न्यायाधीश बनाया था तब सीनियर जजों ने सुप्रीम कोर्ट से त्यागपत्र दे दिया था। उच्चतर न्यायपालिका में कहीं वरिष्ठता तो कहीं प्रतिभा की दलील देना ममनाना लगता है। कुछ अन्य सवाल भी उभरते हैं। हार्डकोर्ट के जिन 35 जजों को कोलेजियम ने “कम प्रतिभा” वाला माना उनका हार्डकोर्ट का काम भी कमजोर समझा जाएगा। इससे उनकी सार्वजनिक छवि पर भी असर पड़ेगा। क्या यह उतयुक्त है? कई बार ऐसा भी हुआ है कि कोलेजियम ने बाद में हार्डकोर्ट के ऐसे जज को सुप्रीम कोर्ट में लिया जो सीनियर थे। फलतः हार्डकोर्ट में दूसरे जज

से सीनियर होते हुए भी वे सुप्रीम कोर्ट आकर जुनियर हो गए। इसका व्यावहारिक फल यह होता है कि मूलतः जुनियर जज सुप्रीम कोर्ट का चीफ जस्टिस बन जाता है और सीनियर जज बिना चीफ बने सुप्रीम कोर्ट से रिटायर हो जाता है। यह मानना कठिन है कि यह सब अनायास होता है, क्योंकि कोलेजियम के सामने सारी बातें पहले से स्पष्ट होती हैं।

सुप्रीम कोर्ट में जजों की नियुक्ति का मामला बार-बार विवादित होता रहा है। इस पर कोलेजियम ने कई अंतर्विरोधी और अस्पष्ट तर्क दिए हैं। सबसे हैरत की बात है कि उसने अपनी अनुशंसा का कोई नियत मानदंड ही नहीं बनाया है। इस पर दो साल पहले सुप्रीम कोर्ट की एक पीठ ने भी सवाल उठाए थे। जस्टिस कोलेजियम के कोई मिन्दस् नहीं रखे जाते, जबकि बहुत निचले स्तर की सरकारी बैठकों के मिन्दस् रखे जाते हैं, ताकि निर्णय की प्रामाणिकता, पारदर्शिता दर्ज रहे। आखिर सुप्रीम और हार्डकोर्ट के जजों की नियुक्ति की अनुशंसा के मिन्दस् न रखने का क्या मतलब? ऐसा नहीं कि यह अनजाने हो रहा है। कुछ वर्ष पहले सुप्रीम कोर्ट के एक सीनियर न्यायाधीश ने मिन्दस् रखने की मांग भी की और नहीं माने जाने पर कोलेजियम की बैठक में शामिल होने से इन्कार जो सीनियर थे। फलतः हार्डकोर्ट में दूसरे जज

चिंता बढ़ती बंगाल की चुनावी हिंसा

भाजपा, वामदल एवं कांग्रेस, तीनों दल इस पर एकमत हैं कि पश्चिम बंगाल में राज्य सरकार की सरपस्ती में लोकतंत्र खतरे में है। तृणमूल विरोधी मरदाताओं के लिए निर्भीक होकर मतदान करना कठिन है। चुनाव आयोग के विशेष पर्ववक्षक तो यहां तक कह चुके हैं कि पश्चिम बंगाल की आज वही स्थिति है जो डेढ़ दशक पूर्व बिहार की थी। यहां दूसरे चरण से ही साफ हो गया था कि स्थानीय पुलिस एवं प्रशासन वहां निष्पक्ष मतदान नहीं करा सकते। तृणमूल कार्यकर्ताओं के खोफ से या फिर अंतमत्त में से चुनावी धांधली में सहयोगी की भूमिका में हैं। तृणमूल कार्यकर्ताओं की हिंसा पर वे आंखे मूढ़ लेते हैं। चुनाव आयोग ने विशेष पर्ववक्षक की रिपोर्ट पर प्रदेश का 92 प्रतिशत चुनाव केंद्रीय बलों की निगरानी में कराने का फैसला किया, मगर तीसरे चरण में 50 प्रतिशत ही तैनाती हो सकी। चौथे चरण से शत-प्रतिशत प्रतिशत केंद्रीय बलों की तैनाती का फैसला हुआ जो पांचवें चरण में लागू हो सका। अब पूरा चुनाव केंद्रीय बलों की निगरानी में हो रहा है। आज तक किसी भी राज्य में केंद्रीय बलों की शत-प्रतिशत तैनाती नहीं करनी पड़ी थी। इसी से अनुमान लगा सकते हैं कि वहां स्थिति कितनी डरानी है।

केंद्रीय सुरक्षा बलों की भी एक सीमा है। वे मतदान प्रक्रिया तक तो लोगों को सुरक्षा दे सकते हैं। उसके बाद उन्हें स्थानीय लोगों और प्रशासन के साथे में ही रहना है। राज्य के ग्रामीण और शहरी इलाकों में आपको इस डर का अंदाजा भी लग जाएगा। उन्हें डर है कि केंद्रीय बलों की वापसी के बाद उन्हें निशाना बनाया जाएगा। दो वर्ष पूर्व हुए पंचायत चुनावों में यही हुआ था। तृणमूल के प्रभाव वाले क्षेत्रों में चुनाव लड़ने वालों पर जगह-जगह हमले हुए।

तमाम लोगों को पचा दखिल ही नहीं करने दिया गया। जीते हुए तमाम प्रतिनिधियों को तृणमूल के आतंक से पलायन करने पर मजबूर होना पड़ा था। बंगाल में तृणमूल नेता सीधी धमकी देते हैं कि वोट उनकी पार्टी को ही देना है। अगर नहीं दिया तो खैर नहीं। एक चैनल ने रायगंज क्षेत्र के एक गांव से दिखाया कि किस तरह मतदानियों के पहुंचने के पूर्व ही उनके मत डाले जा चुके थे। वहां एक समुदाय की संख्या उन्मत्त थी। उस समुदाय को दूसरे समुदाय से कहा कि आप लोग मतदान केंद्र पर मत जाना आपका मत डाल दिया जाएगा। साहस करके कुछ लोग आए तो वाकई उनका मत डाला जा चुका था। पता नहीं ऐसी स्थिति कहां-कहां हुई होगी? विपक्षी नेताओं-कार्यकर्ताओं-समर्थकों के घरों पर हमला, आगजनी, उनके साथ मारपीट और झूठे मुकदमों की असंख्य घटनाएं वहां हो रहीं हैं। केंद्रीय सुरक्षा बलों की तैनाती के बावजूद छठे चरण में भी कई क्षेत्रों में पथराव,



अवधेश कुमार



आगजनी और बमबारी को खबरें आईं। मैदिनीपुर जिले के एक मतदान केंद्र पर उपद्रव और पथराव हुआ। घाटल से भाजपा उम्मीदवार भारती घोष पर तृणमूल समर्थकों ने हमला किया। उनकी कार क्षतिग्रस्त कर दी गई। उनकी सुरक्षा में लगे दो जवान घायल हुए। भाजपा के प्रदेश अध्यक्ष दिलीप घोष पर भी हमला हुआ। छठे चरण का मतदान शुरू होने से पहले झारामात्र में भाजपा के बृथ कार्यकर्ता रामेन सिंह का रात दो कार्यकर्ताओं को गोली मार दी गई। यहां मतदान केंद्र पर देसी बम से हमला किया गया।

पांचवें चरण के मतदान के दौरान बैरकपुर से भाजपा के उम्मीदवार अर्जुन सिंह पर हमला हुआ वह तृणमूल के विधावक थे। अब भाजपा में हैं। पहले चरण के मतदान के दिन अलीपुरदुआर और कूचबिहार में जगह-जगह हिंसक झड़पें हो रहीं, जिन्हें नियंत्रित करने में पुलिस नाकाम रही। वाममोर्चा और कांग्रेस तो तृणमूल के सामने नहीं टिक सके, क्योंकि अब उनकी संख्या ज्यादा बची नहीं, किंतु भाजपा समर्थकों ने मोर्चा लिया। वाममोर्चा के उम्मीदवार गाँवदिय राय पर जानलेवा हमला हआ और उनकी गाड़ी की दुर्दशा कर दी गई। रायगंज के इस्लामपुर में माकपा के मोहम्मद सलीम के समर्थकों ने बृथ कब्जे की शिकायत की तो तृणमूल समर्थकों ने उनकी कार पर हमला बोल दिया। एक उम्मीदवार को स्थानीय पुलिस उचित सुरक्षा ही उपलब्ध नहीं करा पाई।

आतंकवाद के विरुद्ध वैश्विक जंग

टला नहीं आइएस के आतंक का खतरा- शीर्षक लेख के तहत ब्रिगेडियर आरपी सिंह ने दुनिया को आइएस के आतंक के खतरे से निपटने के लिए प्रभावी कदम उठाने के लिए सचेत किया। श्रीलंका में हाल ही में जो आतंकी हमले हुए, उसे ध्यान में रखते हुए देश की खुफिया एजेंसियों को सतर्क हो जाना चाहिए, क्योंकि नेशनल तीहीद जमात की जईं तमिलनाडु में भी होने का अंदेशा जाताया गया है। भारत आतंकवाद की समस्या को जितना विश्वमंच पर उठाता आया है, उतना दुनिया का शायद ही कोई दूसरा देश उठाता है, इसके विपरीत कुछ देश आतंकवाद और उसके पालक देश के प्रति दोहरा रवैया अपनाते आए हैं, जबकि आतंकवाद विश्वव्यापी समस्या बन चुकी है। जब भी दुनिया के किसी भी कोने में आतंकी हमला होता है, तो उसके शिकार हर धर्म के लोग होते हैं। श्रीलंका में हुए आतंकवादी हमलों ने दुनिया को नौद से जगा दिया, लेकिन इस कारणांतरण आतंकी हमले ने यह सोचने पर मजबूर कर दिया कि आखिर आतंकीयों पर कब लगाम लगेगी? अब पानी सिर से ऊपर जा चुका है। सभी देशों को एकजुट होकर आतंकवाद के विरुद्ध लड़ाई लड़नी होगी।

राजेश कुमार चौहान, जालंधर

विरोधी दलों पर प्रहार

एक इटालियन पत्रकार ने बालाकोट हमले में 170 आतंकवादियों की मौत की पुष्टि की है। यह रिपोर्ट देश में एयर स्ट्राइक के सबूत मांग रहे दलों पर कड़ा प्रहार है। आज देश का प्रत्येक नागरिक राष्ट्रीय सुरक्षा को सर्वोच्च मानता है, लेकिन अफसोस है कि आज विभिन्न दलों के नेता केवल सत्ता को सर्वोपरि मानते हैं। देश की वे बात नहीं करते क्या

तीसरे चरण के मतदान के दौरान बम फेंकने का दृश्य पूरे देश ने देखा। माकपा, भाजपा एवं कांग्रेस तीनों पार्टियों के लोगों पर हमले हुए। कुछ जगहों पर हिंसा का शिकार तृणमूल के समर्थक भी हुए, लेकिन केवल वहीं जहल उनकी संख्या कम थी और ऐसी घटनाओं की संख्या अत्यंत कम है।

पश्चिम बंगाल में राजनीतिक हिंसा कोई नई बात नहीं। पहले वाममोर्चा के लोग करते थे, उनसे पहले कांग्रेस और अब तृणमूल यही कर रही है। इस हकीकत को झुठलाया नहीं जा सकता। नक्सलवाड़ी आंदोलन को कुचलने के लिए कांग्रेस के सिद्धार्थ शंकर रे ने किस क्रूरता के साथ दमन किया, उसका पूरा चित्र सामने आ चुका है। कई हजार लोग उस समय मारे गए। वाममोर्चा सरकार आई तो उसने प्रतिशोध के भाव में काम किया। राज्य में राजनीतिक हिंसा का लंबा दौर चला, जिसमें करीब 60 हजार लोग मारे गए। तृणमूल कांग्रेस ने सत्ता में आने के बाद वामदलों की कारगुजारियों की पोस खोलते हुए बताया कि कि कैसे 1977 से 2007 तक के कार्यकाल में 28,000 राजनीतिक कत्ल हुए। मगर जो पहले हुआ उसके आधार पर आज की हिंसा को सही नहीं ठहराया जा सकता।

पश्चिम बंगाल की सत्ता संरक्षित और प्रायोजित हिंसा लोकतंत्र के नाम पर सबसे बड़ा धब्बा बन चुकी है। जिस तरह के दृश्य वहां से आ रहे हैं उनका निष्कर्ष यही है कि राजनीतिक दलों ने वहां समाज का चरित्र ही हिंसा का बना दिया है। अगर समाज का पत्रिा ऐसा बना दिया जाए तो उसमें सुधार बहुत मुश्किल हो जाता है। भाजपा वहां पहले केवल नाममात्र की थी, लेकिन उसका जनाधार तेजी से बढ़ा है। पंचायत चुनाव में उसने दूसरा स्थान प्राप्त किया। भाजपा पश्चिम बंगाल में बेहतर करने की उम्मीद कर रही है। इससे तृणमूल के भीतर खलबली है। दोनों विपरीत ध्रुवों पर हैं। भाजपा ने एलान किया है कि सत्ता में आने के बाद घुसपैठियों को बाहर निकालेंगे, नागरिकता कानून बनाएंगे और एनआरसी लागू करेंगे। तृणमूल ने इसे अल्पसंख्यकों के खिलाफ बताया। इस कारण भी वहां माहौल तनावपूर्ण है। मीडिया के वामपंथी रुझान के कारण पहले पश्चिम बंगाल की चुनावी धांधली, हिंसा और राजनीतिक हत्याएं सुर्खियां नहीं बनती थीं। अब चूंकि तृणमूल के लोग मीडिया पर भी हमला करने लगे हैं इसलिए बहुत कुछ सामने आ रहा है। चिंता का विषय यही है कि जो ममता बनर्जी हिंसा के खिलाफ संघर्ष करने आगे आईं वहीं उसे और बढ़ाने का काम करती दिख रही हैं।

(लेखक राजनीतिक विश्लेषक एवं वरिष्ठ पत्रकार हैं)

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अवधेश राजपूत

ओर कार्यपालिका से नियुक्तियों में पारदर्शिता की अपेक्षा है और दूसरी ओर न्यायपालिका अपने द्वारा अनुशंसा की जाने वाली नियुक्तियों का आधार गोपनीय रखती है। यह गोपनीयता इस हद तक रहती है कि सुप्रीम कोर्ट का कोई अमलाल जज भी न जान सके कि पहले किसी की नियुक्ति की अनुशंसा किन आधारों पर किसने की थी। इस पर कई पूर्व और वर्तमान जज तक अंगुली उठा चुके हैं। स्वतंत्र भारत में जजों की नियुक्ति की शक्ति कार्यपालिका के हाथ में थी। यह व्यवस्था करीब चार दशकों तक चलती रही। 1993 में सुप्रीम कोर्ट ने अपने द्वारा अनुशंसा वाली कोलेजियम व्यवस्था अपना ली। इसके परिणाम अच्छे हुए, यह स्वयं सुप्रीम कोर्ट के जज भी नहीं कहते। जस्टिस कर्णन से पहले भी कुछ जज अन्य जजों पर तरह-तरह के आरोप लगा चुके हैं, लेकिन कहीं कोई जांच-पड़ताल नहीं हुई।

न्यायपालिका की अंरूनी गिरावट पर सुप्रीम कोर्ट के पूर्व चीफ जस्टिस सव्यसाची मुखर्जी, जस्टिस रुमा पौल, आदि ने समय-समय पर ऐसे प्रश्न उठाए हैं कि जजों की नियुक्ति की चालू व्यवस्था संतोषजनक और पारदर्शी नहीं है। क्या हमारे सर्वोच्च न्यायालय और उच्च न्यायालयों

में बहुत देर होने पर एक जज ने कहा था कि उन्हें ‘फैसला लिखने की तनखाह नहीं मिलती।’ यह सब दिखाता है कि उच्चतर जजों की नियुक्ति का अधिकार खुद ले लेने का कोई बेहतर परिणाम नहीं मिला है। वैसे भी संघीय लोकतंत्र में सरकार के तीनों अंगों के बीच ‘सेपरेशन ऑफ पावर’ यानी शक्तियों के पृथक्करण का सिद्धांत स्थापित है। संयुक्त राज्य अमेरिका में सुप्रीम कोर्ट के जजों की नियुक्ति के लिए चयन कार्यपालिका का प्रमुख अर्थात राष्ट्रपति स्वयं करता है। उसकी पुष्टि विधायिका करती है। विधायिका की सहमा बिना किसी जज की नियुक्ति नहीं हो सकती। साफ है कि अमेरिका में सुप्रीम कोर्ट के जज खुद अगले जजों की नियुक्ति की अनुशंसा नहीं करते।

सरकार का कोई अंग स्वयं अपने उतराधिकारी नियुक्त न करे, यही उचित है। विधायिका, कार्यपालिका एवं न्यायपालिका, तीनों की नियुक्तियां दूसरे करें, लेकिन नियुक्त हो जाने के बाद उनके कामों में हस्तक्षेप न हो। यही तीनों अंगों की अलग-अलग स्वतंत्रता है। ‘चेक एंड बैलेंस’ की जो व्यवस्था है वह शक्तियों के पृथक्करण का ही एक अंग है। भारत में जो हो रहा है वह न्यायपालिका में आ गई एक विकृति है। सुप्रीम कोर्ट के जजों ने खुद अपने उतराधिकारियों की अनुशंसा करने की शक्ति अपने हाथ में ले ली है। यह मूलतः असंवैधानिक होने के साथ-साथ न्यायिक कार्य को भी प्रभावित करने वाली है। जस्टिस कर्णन ने जजों पर कई आरोप लगाए थे, लेकिन उनकी कभी कोई जांच नहीं हुई। जबकि कार्यपालिका और विधायिका के उच्चाधिकारियों पर ऐसे आरोपों की संदेव जांच-पड़ताल होती है। स्पष्ट है कि नियुक्तियों और आरोपों, दोनों पर हमारे सर्वोच्च न्यायपालकों को कुछ समान और सुनिश्चित मानदंड बनाने ही चाहिए।

(लेखक राजनीति शास्त्री एवं वरिष्ठ स्तंभकार हैं)

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ऊर्जा

विचार

मनुष्य विचारों की कटपुतली है। हमारे मन-मस्तिष्क में जैसे विचार आते और स्थापित होते हैं, हम वैसे व्यवहार करने लगते हैं। आदर्श रूप में हमारे विचारों में शुद्धता या पवित्रता होनी चाहिए। विचार शुद्ध होंगे तो हमारा व्यवहार भी शुद्ध होगा। हमारे मन में अच्छे-उत्तम विचारों के विचार आते रहते हैं। हमारा मन हमें विचारों के मकड़जाल में भटकता रहता है जिस कारण हम अमूमन अच्छे विचारों को त्याग देते हैं और बुरे को ग्रहण कर लेते हैं। जब प्राथमिक स्तर पर हमसे चलती हो जाती है तो हम फिर आगे गलत ही व्यवहार करते हैं। महत्त्वात्ता बुद्ध का कहना है कि सभी गलत कार्य हमारे मन की वजह से ही होते हैं। हमारा मन कभी सही को गलत तो कभी गलत को सही साबित करने में लगन रहता है। इसलिए जो व्यक्ति अपने मन को साध लेता है, वह कभी गलत कार्य नहीं करता है। ऐसे में, मन को साधकर शुद्ध विचारों को आत्मसात करना चाहिए। विचार को यदि सुनिर्वाजित रूप नहीं मिलता तो वह बेकार है। यानी विचार को मूर्त रूप देना बेहद जरूरी है। क्रांति लाने के लिए सिर्फ एक विचार ही काफी होता है। इसलिए हमें मन के झंसे में आने के बजाय शुद्ध और उच्च विचारों को ग्रहण करना चाहिए। गीता में कहा गया है कि जो मनुष्य अपने मन को नियंत्रित नहीं करता है, उसके लिए मन शत्रु के समान कार्य करता है।

प्रत्येक व्यक्ति का व्यक्तित्व उसके विचारों पर ही निर्भर करता है। अच्छे विचार व्यक्ति को विकास के पथ पर अग्रसर करते हैं। मनुष्य का आचरण ही उसे पहचान देता है और ऐसा आचरण सुविचारों से ही संचालित होता है। जिस तरह के विचार हमारे मन-मस्तिष्क में उत्पन्न होते हैं, हमारे कर्म भी उसी के अनुरूप होते हैं। अपने आचार-व्यवहार और व्यवहार को उच्च बनाने के बाद ही मानव को वास्तविकी सुख-शांति प्राप्त होती है। एक बार स्वामी विवेकानंद ने बड़ी विलसात से कहा कि मित्र, ‘आपके देश में चरित्र का निर्माण आचार-विचार और व्यवहार करते हैं।’ आचार्य अनिल वत्स

पीडिता को इंसाफ मिले

सामूहिक दुष्कर्म की घटना पर राजनीति करना ठीक नहीं है। यह राजनीति का विषय नहीं है। समाज में ऐसी घटनाएं हो रही हैं, यह चिंता की बात है। राजनीतिक दलों को इस मामले को लेकर एक दूसरे को नीचा दिखाने के बजाए दोषियों के खिलाफ कड़ी कार्रवाई करंने के लिए प्रयास करना चाहिए और पीडिता को इंसाफ दिलाना चाहिए।

विजय कुमार धनिया, दिल्ली

आंगनवाड़ी कार्यकर्ता

सरकार की तमाम योजनाएं जैसे बीएलओ, जनगणना, स्वास्थ्य, शिक्षा और मानसिक व शैक्षणिक रूप से कमजोर बच्चों को कुपोषित होने से बचाने का काम आंगनवाड़ी कार्यकर्ता व आशा सेविका ही करती हैं, लेकिन सरकार इनको 5600 व 2500 रूपए प्रति महीना देती है जो एक मजदूर की आमदनी से भी कम है। तमाम अंदोलन के बाद भी उनकी सुनवाई नहीं हुई। सरकार को इस पर ध्यान देना चाहिए। sdsarshan676@gmail.com

इस संतंभ में किसी भी विषय पर राय व्यक्त करने अथवा दैनिक जागरण के राष्ट्रीय संस्करण पर प्रतिक्रिया व्यक्त करने के लिए पाठकगण सादर आमंत्रित हैं। आप हमें पत्र भेजने के साथ ई-मेल भी कर सकते हैं।
अपने पत्र इस पते पर भेजें :
दैनिक जागरण, राष्ट्रीय संस्करण, डी-210-211, सेक्टर-63, नोएडा ई-मेल : mailbox@jagran.com

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वोट की कीमत

किसी भी स्वस्थ और परिपक्व लोकतंत्र में होने वाले चुनावों के जरिए सरकार बनाने के लिए राजनीतिक दलों को क्या करना चाहिए? सत्रहवीं लोकसभा के लिए होने वाले चुनावों के दौरान चुनाव आयोग की ओर से हुई कार्रवाई में जिस तरह की चीजें जब्त हो रही हैं, उससे यही लगता है कि उम्मीदवारों ने आम मतदाताओं का वोट हासिल करने के लिए अवैध और अनैतिक रास्ते अख्तियार करने में जरा हिचक नहीं दिखाई। जबकि जरूरत इस बात की है कि मतदाताओं के सामने जरूरी मुद्दों पर अपना पक्ष रखा जाए और उसके आधार पर उनका समर्थन मांगा जाए। मगर विडंबना यह है कि लोगों को उनके वोट के बदले मोबाइल फोन, घड़ी जैसे अन्य इलेक्ट्रॉनिक उपकरण, चांदी की पायल या अन्य जेवर, रसोई के आधुनिक उपकरण, शराब, नशीले पदार्थ और नकदी देने की कोशिशें की गईं। चुनाव आयोग की अब तक की कार्रवाई में इस मकसद से इधर-उधर की जा रही जितनी सामग्री जब्त की गई है, उसकी कीमत तीन हजार चार सौ करोड़ रुपए तक पहुंच गई है। पिछले लोकसभा चुनाव में यह आंकड़ा बारह सौ करोड़ रुपए था।

कोई भी स्वतंत्र या फिर किसी राजनीतिक दल की ओर से चुनाव लड़ रहा उम्मीदवार अगर जनता के सामने अपनी राजनीति के सिद्धांत, लोगों के जीवन से लेकर देश और समाज के विकास से जुड़े मुद्दों के बजाय लालच का विकल्प रखता है तो अंदाजा लगाया जा सकता है कि जीत के बाद उसके काम करने का तरीका कैसा होगा! यानी कोई व्यक्ति अगर खुद ही वोट के बदले एक तरह की रिश्तव के तौर पर नकदी, शराब या कोई अन्य सामान देने जैसे भ्रष्ट आचरण की बुनियाद पर खड़ा होता है तो वह अपने काम में ईमानदारी और पारदर्शिता कैसे ला सकेगा!

खासतौर पर जब देश में भ्रष्टाचार एक बड़ी समस्या हो, तो मतदाताओं को आकर्षित करने के लिए अनैतिक और भ्रष्ट तरीके अपनाने वाले उम्मीदवारों से देश के कैसे भविष्य की उम्मीद की जा सकती है? हैरानी की बात है कि जिस दौर में देश में रोजगार, शिक्षा, स्वास्थ्य, अर्थव्यवस्था से लेकर आम लोगों की रोजमर्रा की जिंदगी से जुड़े तमाम मुद्दे ईमानदारी से संबोधित किए जाने और उन पर वास्तव में अमल होने की बाट जोह रहे हैं, वैसे समय में भी कुछ उम्मीदवार महज चुनाव जीतने के लिए मतदाताओं को परोक्ष रूप से रिश्तव देने की कोशिश करते हैं!

क्या यह इसलिए संभव हो पा रहा है कि आज भी आम जनता के बीच पर्याप्त राजनीतिक जागरूकता का विकास होना कहीं बाकी है? यह हकीकत है कि हमारे देश की एक बड़ी आबादी आज भी अपनी रोजाना की जिंदगी में जद्दोजहद करते हुए कई तरह के अपावों से जूझती है। न्यूनतम सुविधाओं और जरूरत के सामानों से भी वंचित कुछ लोगों को जब कोई मामूली सामान देता है तो वे कुछ वक्त के लिए उसके प्रभाव में आ जाते हैं। शिक्षा और जागरूकता की कमी और अपावों से दो-चार जीवन में राजनीतिक चेतना का विकास होना कई बार जटिल होता है। ऐसे में बहुत सारे लोग एक नानार्तिक के तौर पर अपने अधिकारों को लेकर सजग नहीं हो पाते हैं। इसी का फायदा उठा कर कुछ उम्मीदवार उन्हें कोई सामान या नकदी देकर उनका वोट हासिल करने की कोशिश करते हैं। सवाल है कि मतदाताओं का समर्थन हासिल करने के लिए इस रास्ते को अपनाने वाले उम्मीदवार क्या चुनाव जैसे लोकतांत्रिक प्रक्रिया को बाधित नहीं कर रहे हैं? जाहिर है, देश की जनता के राजनीतिक प्रशिक्षण और जागरूकता के लिए ठोस पहलकदमी की जरूरत है, ताकि भविष्य में मुद्दों के बजाय लालच के आधार पर वोट मांगने वाले उम्मीदवारों को जनता अपने स्तर पर ही सबक सिखा सके।

कारोबारी जंग

चीन और अमेरिका के बीच इन दिनों जो व्यापार युद्ध भड़का हुआ है, उसे सिर्फ दो देशों के बीच कारोबारी लड़ाई या होड़ मान कर खारिज नहीं किया जा सकता। हालात बता रहे हैं कि मामला जल्द नहीं सुलझने वाला, क्योंकि दोनों देशों ने इसे अब नाक का सवाल बना लिया है। अमेरिका के राष्ट्रपति डोनाल्ड ट्रंप के लिए यह ज्यादा महत्वपूर्ण इसलिए है कि उन्हें फिर से राष्ट्रपति का चुनाव लड़ना है। ऐसे में अगर ट्रंप झुक गए तो उन्हें इसका भारी खमियाजा उठाना पड़ सकता है। गौरतलब है कि अमेरिका-चीन के बीच यह कारोबारी जंग अगर लंबी चली तो दुनिया के लिए संकट पैदा करने वाली हो सकती है। पिछले चार दिनों में अमेरिकी राष्ट्रपति ने जिस तरह का रुख दिखाया है और जो बयान दिए हैं वे आसन्न खतरे का संकेत दे रहे हैं। हाल में दोनों देशों के बीच विवाद तब ज्यादा गंभीर हुआ जब अमेरिका ने चीन से होने वाले तीन सौ अरब डॉलर के आयात पर शुल्क दस से बढ़ा कर पचीस फीसद कर दिया और उस पर व्यापार वार्ता को नाकाम करने की तोहमत जड़ दी।

दोनों देशों के बीच व्यापार युद्ध की शुरुआत पिछले साल तब हुई थी जब अमेरिका ने चीन से आयात होने वाले इस्पात और अल्युमीनियम पर भारी आयात शुल्क लगाया था। जवाब में चीन ने भी ऐसा ही कदम उठाने में कोई देर नहीं की। अमेरिकी राष्ट्रपति इस बात पर जोर दे रहे हैं कि चीनी आयात के कारण अमेरिकी कारोबारियों को नुकसान हो रहा है और अमेरिका को पीने चार सौ अरब डॉलर सालाना का नुकसान उठाना पड़ रहा है, इसलिए इसकी भरपाई चीन से ही की जानी चाहिए। जब तक चीन अमेरिकी उत्पादों पर आयात शुल्क नहीं हटाता, तब तक अमेरिका भी नहीं टस से मस नहीं होने वाला। ट्रंप पहले ही कह चुके हैं कि चीन ने यह कदम अगले साल अमेरिकी राष्ट्रपति चुनावों के मद्देनजर उठाया है, क्योंकि उसे लग रहा है कि वे दोबारा राष्ट्रपति नहीं बनने वाले।

चीन और अमेरिका भले अपने कारणों से लड़ रहे हों, लेकिन इस जंग से भारत अछूता नहीं रहने वाला। व्यापार युद्ध से उठने वाली आंच भारत को भी झेलनी पड़ सकती है। अगर दोनों पक्षों के बीच जल्द ही कोई पटरी नहीं बैठी तो अमेरिका में ब्याज दरें बढ़ सकती हैं और इसका पहला असर यह होगा कि भारत से संस्थानत निवेशक निकल सकते हैं और शेयर बाजार लड़खड़ा सकते हैं। इसके अलावा, अगर यूरोपीय संघ (ईयूपू) ने भी अमेरिका के संरक्षणवाद के रास्ते पर चलने का फैसला कर लिया तो भारत से यूरोपीय देशों को होने वाले निर्यात पर असर पड़ सकता है। वैश्विक मंदी जैसे हालात बने तो कच्चा तेल महंगा होगा और सीधा असर पेट्रोल व डीजल के दामों पर पड़ेगा, महंगाई लोगों की कम्मर तोड़ेगी। हालांकि भारत ने हाल में चीन को ऐसे तीन सौ अस्सी उत्पादों की सूची दी है जो चीन खरीद सकता है। लेकिन चीन भारत से उन्हीं उत्पादों को खरीदने की तरजीह देगा जो उसे अमेरिका से नहीं मिल पाएंगे, जैसे दवाइयों और सोयाबीन, अलसी जैसे कृषि उत्पाद। पिछले साल अमेरिका ने भारत से आयात होने वाले इस्पात और अल्युमीनियम पर भारी उत्पाद शुल्क लगा दिया था। इसके जवाब में भारत ने भी अमेरिका से खरीदे जाने वाले उतनीत उत्पादों पर शुल्क लगाया था। अमेरिका और चीन का यह झगड़ा कुल मिला कर वैश्विक कारोबारी स्थिति को प्रभावित करने वाला है। ऐसे में एहतियाती कदम उठाने में देरी भारत को भारी पड़ सकती है।

कल्पमेधा

जब मुझे समझ में नहीं आता है कि कोई काम मैं करूं या न करूं, तो मैं हमेशा करता हूं।

– नेल्सन

जनसत्ता

अंकों के बोझ तले दबती प्रतिभा

आसपास के डीय माध्यमिक शिक्षा बोर्ड (सीबीएससी) के प्रश्नपत्रों का स्वरूप बदला गया था। इससे पूर्व सवालों की प्रकृति विश्लेषणात्मक होती थी। यानी वे प्रश्नपत्र लेखन, चिंतन, सृजनशील और बच्चों के दक्षता व कौशल का भी मूल्यांकन करता था। दीगर बात है कि तब इस प्रकार के प्रश्नपत्र पर देश भर में चर्चा हुई कि बच्चे प्रश्नपत्रों और परीक्षा में फेल होने की वजह से आत्महत्याएं कर रहे हैं। शिक्षाविदों और सीबीएससी को इस गंभीर मसले पर विचार करना चाहिए। बच्चों को परीक्षा और अंक के भय से मुक्ति दिलानी होगी।

इस बाबत सीबीएससी ने राष्ट्रीय पाठ्यचर्या की रूपरेखा 2005 को आधार बिंदु बना कर प्रश्नपत्रों की प्रकृति में परिवर्तन किया। बहु-वैकल्पिक प्रश्नों के चलन के साथ ही बच्चों के अंकों में उछाल आते सभी ने देखा। देखते ही देखते दसवीं और बारहवीं में बच्चों के प्रदर्शन और अंकों की बाढ़ सी आने लगी। तब भी बच्चों में आत्महत्या की घटनाएं रुकी नहीं। फिर भी बच्चे अवसाद और कुंठा में जीने लगे। उनकी निराशा इस बात की थी कि अस्सी, नब्बे तो आए, किंतु पांच या दस अंक कम क्यों रह गए। इस बार तो चार सौ में से चार सौ और पांच सौ में से पांच सौ अंक भी बच्चों ने हासिल किए हैं। उन बच्चों से पूछिए जिनके एक या दो अंक से शत-प्रतिशत अंक आने से चूक गए। वे बच्चे बड़े निराशा में जी रहे हैं। बच्चे तो बच्चे मां-बाप भी मुंह लटकाए घूम रहे हैं। याद कीजिए अस्सी और नब्बे का दशक जब पूरे जिले और राज्य में मुश्किल से दस बीस बच्चों को साठ या सत्तर प्रतिशत अंक आया करते थे। उन बच्चों की तस्वीरें अखबारों में छपा करती थीं। वही 2000 और 2010 के बाद तो नब्बे फीसद लाने वाले बच्चों को भी कोई नहीं पूछता। न आइआइटी, न डीयूपू और न अन्य संस्थान। इन्हें अपने मन मुताबिक पाठ्यक्रमों के साथ संतोष करना पड़ता है। नीट में भी इन्हें लगता है इनका भविष्य अधर में है। नब्बे पार और अस्सी के इस पार अटक हुए बच्चों से पूछिए और उनके मां-बाप से पूछें तो इनसे ज्यादा कोई और दुखी जन नहीं मिलेंगे।

परीक्षा की प्रकृति और उसके चरित्र को तो समझने की आवश्यकता है ही, साथ ही हमें परीक्षा के उद्देश्य को भी रेखांकित करने की जरूरत है, जैसे- हम क्यों बच्चों का मूल्यांकन करते हैं? क्यों हमें परीक्षा लेने की आवश्यकता पड़ती है आदि। इसका सीधा जवाब है कि बिना कारण के कार्य नहीं होते। शिक्षा दी जा

जादार शिक्षाविदों का मानना है कि अंकों की बाढ़ को देखते हुए हमें मूल्यांकन पद्धति का पुनर्मूल्यांकन करना होगा। बच्चों के मूल्यांकन की परीक्षा प्रणाली को विश्वसनीय और वैधता प्रदान करने के लिए हमें प्रयास करने होंगे। सौ फीसद अंक हासिल करने की प्रवृत्ति को समझने की कोशिश करें तो बात यही निकल कर आती है कि हम कैसे प्रश्नपत्र बनाते हैं और किस प्रकार के उत्तरों के मॉडल हमने तैयार किए हैं। इस मॉडल में बच्चे शत-प्रतिशत ऐसे हासिल करते हैं कि वे रटे हुए तथ्यों को याद कर पुनर्प्रस्तुत कर देते हैं और उन्हें परीक्षा में सौ फीसद अंक मिल जाते हैं। इस प्रक्रिया में सृजनशीलता और मौलिक चिंतन कहीं पिछड़ जाता है। जीत उसकी होती है जिसकी रटने की क्षमता और कुशलता ज्यादा है।

इस समस्या से निपटने का एक रास्ता यह हो सकता है कि हम प्रश्नपत्रों के निर्माण और उत्तर के मॉडल को नए सिरे से गढ़ा जाए। वर्ष 2008-09 के

हिमांशी पटवा

आजकल हमारे गांव में भी शादियों का मौसम चल रहा है। फसल कट रही है और जो पैसे इससे आ रहे हैं, वे शादी-व्याह में उपयोग किए जा रहे हैं। इस दौरान कितने ही लोगों के दिल मिल गए होंगे और कितने ही लोग शादी की कतार में लगे होंगे। इनमें कुछ की शादी परिवार की देखरेख में हुई होगी तो कुछ प्रेम के बाद विवाह के बंधन में बंध गए होंगे। यों देखा जाए तो ‘अरेंज मैरिज’ यानी पारंपरिक तौर-तरीकों और रिवाजों के मुताबिक विवाह तो बड़ी आसानी से हो जाती है, लेकिन प्रेम विवाह में बहुत झंझट आते हैं। ज्यादातर प्रेम विवाह मुश्किलों के दौर को झेल कर ही होते हैं, क्योंकि हमारे समाज में प्रेम विवाह की गुनाह माना जाता है। प्रेमी जोड़ों के साथ समाज जिस तरह पेश आता है, उसमें क्या हम मान लें कि जिस व्यक्ति ने प्यार किया है, उससे बड़ा पाप किसी ने नहीं किया है? लेकिन उसके बाद भी सवाल बचा रहेगा, क्या प्यार करना वाकई पाप है! वह कैसा धर्म और सामाजिक धुंधलापते हैं, जो प्रेम को इस नजर देखने की छूट देती है, व्यवस्था करती है?

घटना मतदान

छठे चरण की समाप्ति के बाद मतदान प्रतिशत के आंकड़ों से स्पष्ट हो रहा है कि कुछ राज्यों को छोड़ कर देश का औसत मतदाता उदासीन है। स्वतंत्रता प्राप्ति के बाद 1951-52 में जब चुनावी प्रचार तंत्र शैश्यावस्था में था तो मतदान करीब इकसठ फीसद हुआ था। लेकिन आज असीमित धनराशि, तुफानी और मीडिया की व्यापकता से लैस होने के बावजूद अभी तक 60-65 फीसद का मतदान होना लोक्तान्त्रिक व्यवस्था के लिए चिंताजनक माना जाना चाहिए। जब देश की साक्षरता दर 70-75 फीसद है तो फिर मतदान का प्रतिशत इतना कम होना गंभीर बात है। यह लोकतंत्र की विडंबना है कि अभी तक चुनाव आयोग ने मतदान में हो रहे क्षरण को जरा गंभीरता से नहीं लिया है। राजनीतिक दलों द्वारा इतने धुंधलाधार प्रचार के बाद जब ऐसी विकट स्थिति है तो फिर इस खचिले अभियान को बंद कर जनता के समक्ष मीडिया माध्यम से ही प्रचार के विकल्प पर विचार करना हितकारी होगा। चुनाव आयोग को अर्रिस्टिलिया की मतदान व्यवस्था को लागू करने पर विचार करना चाहिए जहां मतदान अनिवार्य है और जो इसमें भाग नहीं लेते है उन्हें बीस डॉलर आर्थिक दंड सरकार को देना पड़ता है।

● *अशोक कुमार, पटना*
उठता भरोसा
दुनिया के सबसे बड़े लोकतंत्र में छठे चरण में उम्मीद के मुताबिक भी मतदान न होना सत्ताधारियों और राजनेताओं के लिए शर्मनाक और निंदनीय है, क्योंकि इनके झूठे वादों, नारों और जुमलेबाजी से मतदाता उकता चुका है और इसलिए नेताओं पर से भरोसा उठ गया है। छठे चरण में पश्चिम बंगाल को

रही है तो उसका क्या असर हुआ? बच्चे कितना सीख रहे हैं, इसे भी जांचा जाना चाहिए। क्या बच्चों के सीखने-सिखाने में कोई ऐसी बाधा तो नहीं है, जिससे बच्चे सामान्यतौर पर सीख नहीं पा रहे हों। ऐसे में शिक्षा की मूल प्रकृति पर भी विमर्श करने की आवश्यकता पड़ेगी। क्या हम शिक्षा के माध्यम से सिर्फ विषयों की समझ विकसित करना चाहते हैं या फिर उन विषयों का हमारे आम जीवन में कोई उपयोगिता भी है? क्या हम इतिहास, समाज विज्ञान, विज्ञान व भाषा, गणित को अपनी जिंदगी में शामिल कर और बेहतर बना सकते हैं।

शायद सत्तर या अस्सी के दशक में हमारा ध्यान विषयों के साथ ही बच्चों के सर्वांगीण विकास पर केंद्रित था। जबकि 1985 के राष्ट्रीय पाठ्यचर्या की रूपरेखा पुनरीक्षा,1988 के दस्तावेज को देखें तो यह मानता है कि बच्चों को प्राथमिक स्तर पर भाषा, गणित आदि की समझ विकसित करनी चाहिए। खासकर कक्षा एक से पांचवीं तक में भाषा, गणित, विज्ञान और समाज विज्ञान की शिक्षा दी जाए। यह दस्तावेज मानता है कि प्राथमिक और उच्च कक्षाओं में बच्चों को शिक्षा कला के जरिए दी जाए। देश के ऐतिहासिक धरोहरों के बारे में भी बच्चों को जानकारी दी जाए। इस मसले पर दस्तावेज में खासतौर से जोर दिया गया था। इन्हीं चिंताओं को 2005 के राष्ट्रीय पाठ्यचर्या दस्तावेज में भी स्थान दिया गया है। गौरतलब है कि 2008-09 में सीबीएसई ने उक्त दस्तावेज को आधार बना कर परीक्षा के प्रश्नपत्रों के निर्माण संबंधी संस्तुतियों को आधार बनाया था। एनसीएफ-2005 के जुड़े ‘नेशनल फोकस ग्रुप ऑन

गणित आदि की समझ विकसित करनी चाहिए। खासकर कक्षा एक से पांचवीं तक में भाषा, गणित, विज्ञान और समाज विज्ञान की शिक्षा दी जाए। यह दस्तावेज मानता है कि प्राथमिक और उच्च कक्षाओं में बच्चों को शिक्षा कला के जरिए दी जाए। देश के ऐतिहासिक धरोहरों के बारे में भी बच्चों को जानकारी दी जाए। इस मसले पर दस्तावेज में खासतौर से जोर दिया गया था। इन्हीं चिंताओं को 2005 के राष्ट्रीय पाठ्यचर्या दस्तावेज में भी स्थान दिया गया है। गौरतलब है कि 2008-09 में सीबीएसई ने उक्त दस्तावेज को आधार बना कर परीक्षा के प्रश्नपत्रों के निर्माण संबंधी संस्तुतियों को आधार बनाया था। एनसीएफ-2005 के जुड़े ‘नेशनल फोकस ग्रुप ऑन

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परंपरा के विद्रूप

अभी कल ही मेरी एक भैया से बात होने लगी कि आखिर प्रेम-विवाह को लोग गलत क्यों मानते हैं ! मैंने यह सवाल उनसे इसलिए पूछा कि वे एक लड़की से बेहद प्यार करते हैं और मुझे लगा कि वे इसका सटीक जवाब दे पाएंगे। मैंने उनसे पूछा कि जब आपके परिवार को आपके प्रेम-संबंध के बारे में पता चला तो उन्होंने आपको क्या कहा। उन्होंने वही जवाब दिया, जिसकी आशांका हम ऐसे समाजों में करते हैं। वे बोले कि हमारी शादी में सबसे बड़ा रोड़ा हमारी अलग-अलग जाति में पैदा होना है। जब मेरे दो घर वालों को पता चला तो सबने मुझे खूब सुनाया कि हमारे घर में अब तक किसी ने प्यार नहीं किया तो तुम इन सब चक्कर में कैसे पड़ गए ! हमने तुम्हें क्या यही संस्कार दिए थे ? उन्होंने कहा कि सबसे बड़ी बात, वह लड़की दूसरी जाति की है। अगर शादी हो गई तो विरादरी वाले सब जीना मुश्किल कर देंगे। अभी तुम्हारी बहनें भी हैं, उनकी भी शादियां करनी है हमें।

अंदाजा लगाया जा सकता है कि सामाजिक जड़ताओं के मामले में हमारा समाज कहां खड़ा है। देखा जाए तो हर मां-बाप बचपन से अपने बच्चे की शादी का सपना देखते हैं कि जब हमारा बच्चा बड़ा हो जाएगा, तब उसकी शादी किसी ‘सुंदर’ लड़की या लड़के से करेंगे। बहुत से ऐसे परिवार हैं, जिनमें बेटा अगर बारह-पंद्रह साल का हो जाता है, तब घर में जरूरत होने पर भी कुछ सामान जैसे सोफा, वाशिंग मशीन, फ्रिज आदि की खरीदारी टालते रहते हैं। कहते हैं, जहां इतने दिन ऐसे ही रहे, वहां कुछ साल और रह लेंगे। कुछ साल बाद बेटे की शादी तो करनी ही है, तब यह सब तो मिलेगा ही तो अभी क्यों पैसे बर्बाद करें।

मेरा प्रश्न अभी भी वहीं है। अगर हर माता-पिता ऐसा चाहते हैं कि उनके बच्चों की शादी अच्छे घर में हो और वे अपने जीवन-साथी के साथ खुश रहें, तब अगर उनके बेटे या बेटी ने किसी इंसान को पसंद किया है और वह उसके साथ खुश है, तब उन्हें क्या समस्या होती होगी जो वे उनका प्रेम विवाह कराने में कोई रुचि नहीं लेते, न ही ऐसी कोई इच्छा ही प्रकट करते हैं। दूसरी तरफ, जब यही प्यार किसी की बेटी ने किया हो, तब माता-पिता के सपने और चकनाचूर होकर नुकीले हो जाते हैं। घर पर ‘पेशानियों’ का अंबार लग जाता है। दुनिया क्या कहेगी... समाज क्या कहेगा... इस लड़की ने तो मेरी नाक काटा दी... कहीं मुंह दिखाने लायक नहीं छोड़ा... आदि ! मतलब कुल

जिसे बयां करना भी शोभा नहीं देता। जनता के मूल मुद्दों को तो इन्होंने हवा में ही उड़ा दिया और व्यक्तिगत छीटाकशी मानो इनका मुख्य मुद्दा हो गया हो। जिनको जुवान पर लगाम नहीं, जिनके आचार विचार ही ठीक नहीं, जिन पर मुकदमे चल रहे हों और जो करोड़ों खर्च करके चुनाव लड़ रहे हों, मतदाता उनसे क्या उम्मीद करेंगे कि उन्हें सही सुशासन मिलेगा !

● *महेश नेनावा, इंदौर*
मंदी की आहट
चुनाव नतीजों के बाद केंद्र में जो भी सरकार आए, उसके लिए किसी भी मुद्दे या लेख पर अपनी राय हमें भेजें। हमारा पता है : **ए-8, सेक्टर-7, नोएडा 201301, जिला : गौतमबुद्धनगर, उत्तर प्रदेश**

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

चाहिए कि ये सब देश के अशिक्षित, लोकतंत्र के अज्ञानी और लालच में आकर अपने कीमती मत का प्रयोग करने वालों को लोकतंत्र की परिभाषा समझाएं और उन्हें जागरूक करें।

- राजेश कुमार चौहान, जालंधर*

नैतिकता का पतन

पिछले कुछ वर्षों में देश के कर्णधार नेताओं में अनुशासन की कमी के साथ ही नैतिकता में भी गिरावट तेजी से आई है। जनहित व देशहित में यह जरा भी ठीक नहीं है। किसी की जुबान फिसल कर अपभ्रंश फैला रही है तो किसी पर करोड़ों की टिकट बेचने का आरोप लगा रहा है। कोई प्रधानमंत्री में गिरफ्तार से खिलवाड़ कर रहा है तो कोई इतनी निम्नस्तरीय भाषा का उपयोग कर रहा

एक्यामिनेशन’ की संस्तुतियों को आधार बना कर सीबीएससी ने परिवर्तन किए, किंतु यह किस स्तर तक कारगर रहा, इसका विश्लेषण किया जाना चाहिए।

शिक्षाविदों को मानना है कि बहु-वैकल्पिक प्रश्नपत्रों में रटने और स्मृति-आधारित कौशल की ज्यादा आवश्यकता पड़ती है। जिनकी स्मरण शक्ति अच्छी है वे बच्चे अधिकाधिक अंक हासिल कर लेते हैं। इन प्रश्नपत्रों में सृजनात्मकता, स्वतंत्र चिंतन और मौलिक चिंतन की संभावना को कम करती है। यही वजह है कि भाषा के पत्र में भी बच्चे नब्बे पार अंक तो प्राप्त कर लेते हैं, किंतु स्वतंत्र रूप से भाषा के अन्य कौशल जैसे- लेखन, पठन-समझ आदि के स्तर पर पिछड़ते नजर आते हैं। जब हमने भाषा के प्रश्नपत्र को वैकल्पिक बनाया तो वहां चार में से एक सही जवाब छांटना होता है। लेकिन ऐसे में मौलिक चिंतन और लेखन अभिव्यक्ति की क्षमता का विकास नहीं के बराबर हो पाता है। नेशनल एचिवमेंट सर्वे सहित कई रिपोर्ट बताती हैं कि हमारे बच्चे भाषा में लिखना-पढ़ाने कौशल में पीछे रह जाते हैं। जहां एक ओर भाषा स्वंत्रत और मौलिक चिंतन को बढ़ावा देती है, वहीं गणित तर्कपूर्ण चिंतन और मंथन दक्षता का विकास करते हैं।

वर्तमान अंकीय प्रकृति वाली प्रणाली को बढ़ावा देने वाली परीक्षा व्यवस्था कहीं न कहीं बच्चों के स्वतंत्र और मौलिक चिंतन के संवर्द्धन में मददगार साबित होने की बजाय हानिकारक हो साबित हो रही है। सिर्फ अंकों के पहाड़ खड़ा करना हमारा मकसद न हो, बल्कि अंकों को शिक्षा पाने के लिए भागते हैं। दोनों ही कॉलेजों में फीस एक बड़ी चुनौती नजर आती है। जो बच्चे मोटी फीस दे सकते हैं वे वहां दाखिल हो जाते हैं। बाकी बच्चे कहां जाते हैं, किन अंधेरे में रह जाते हैं इस ओर भी हमें सोचना होगा।

है तो हमें उसी के अनुसार प्रश्नपत्रों के निर्माण की रणनीति भी तैयार करनी होगी। एक ओर विषयी समझ और कौशल की आवश्यकता हकीकत है तो दूसरी ओर अंकों की दुनिया भी उतनी साफ और कठोर है। यदि बच्चा कम अंक लाता है (जिसे अस्सी फीसद से नीचे भी मान सकते हैं) तो ऐसे बच्चों को तथाकथित प्रसिद्ध कॉलेजों में दाखिला नहीं मिल पाता। ऐसे बच्चे सरकारी कॉलेजों के समानांतर चल रही निजी कॉलेजों की ओर शिक्षा पाने के लिए भागते हैं। दोनों ही कॉलेजों में फीस एक बड़ी चुनौती नजर आती है। जो बच्चे मोटी फीस दे सकते हैं वे वहां दाखिल हो जाते हैं। बाकी बच्चे कहां जाते हैं, किन अंधेरे में रह जाते हैं इस ओर भी हमें सोचना होगा।

हमारे समाज में लड़कियों को यह अतिरिक्त कार्यभार दिया गया है। उन पर जाति को टूटने से बचाए रखने की जिम्मेदारी है। वह जाति और धर्म के बंधन में बंधी हुई एक गुड़िया मानी जाती है, जिसका काम दूसरों की कही बातों पर सिर्फ अपनी मौन स्वीकृति देनी है, कुछ कहना नहीं है। जाति का ढांचा बना रहे, यह किसके हित में है? मेरा कहना है कि शादी तो आप अपने बच्चे की कहीं न कहीं तो करेंगे ही ! तब वह लड़का या लड़की क्यों नहीं, जिसे वे पसंद करते हैं? आप सिर्फ इसलिए उनकी खुशियां छीन रहे हैं कि वह परिवार हमारी जाति का नहीं है, तो एक बात का जवाब देना चाहिए। क्या गारंटी है कि अपनी जाति में शादी करने से सब ठीक रहेगा, आपके बच्चे की शादीशुदा जिंदगी खुशहाल रहेगी, उनके बीच कभी झगड़े नहीं होंगे? लेकिन अफसोस... हम सब इसमें से किसी की गारंटी नहीं ले पाएंगे !

मिला कर उन्हें अपने बच्चों की खुशियों को छोड़ कर सारी दुनिया, देश और जहान की फिक्र और चिंता खाने लगती है, लेकिन अपनी संतान की तरफ वे देखना भी नहीं चाहते। यह कैसा सामाजिक प्रशिक्षण है जो हमें अपने बच्चों की इच्छा को मारने और कई बार उनकी हत्या तक कर देने की मानसिकता से लैस करता है? हमारे समाज में लड़कियों को यह अतिरिक्त कार्यभार दिया गया है। उन पर जाति को टूटने से बचाए रखने की जिम्मेदारी है। वह जाति और धर्म के बंधन में बंधी हुई एक गुड़िया मानी जाती है, जिसका काम दूसरों की कही बातों पर सिर्फ अपनी मौन स्वीकृति देनी है, कुछ कहना नहीं है। जाति का ढांचा बना रहे, यह किसके हित में है? मेरा कहना है कि शादी तो आप अपने बच्चे की कहीं न कहीं तो करेंगे ही ! तब वह लड़का या लड़की क्यों नहीं, जिसे वे पसंद करते हैं? आप सिर्फ इसलिए उनकी खुशियां छीन रहे हैं कि वह परिवार हमारी जाति का नहीं है, तो एक बात का जवाब देना चाहिए। क्या गारंटी है कि अपनी जाति में शादी करने से सब ठीक रहेगा, आपके बच्चे की शादीशुदा जिंदगी खुशहाल रहेगी, उनके बीच कभी झगड़े नहीं होंगे? लेकिन अफसोस... हम सब इसमें से किसी की गारंटी नहीं ले पाएंगे !

किसानों की आय और मध्यम वर्ग को करों के बोझ से बचाना होगा। वैसे तो आज भारत विश्व की छठी बड़ी अर्थव्यवस्था है, लेकिन देश में गरीबी और धनी व्यक्तिवों के बीच फासला तेजी से बढ़ रहा है। देश की अस्सी फीसद पूजी चंद अमीरों के पास है। देश के लिए यही काफी निराशाजनक स्थिति है।

● *दुर्गेश शर्मा, गोरखपुर*
प्रतिभाओं की बेकद्री
तमिलनाडु के कोयंबटूर स्थित एक मैकेनिकल इंजीनीयर एस कुमारस्वामी ने दस साल की मेहनत को बाद एक ऐसे इंजन का आविष्कार किया है, जो असुत जल (डिस्टिल वाटर) से चल सकेगा। यह अपने में एक अलग तरह का इंजन है, जो पर्यावरण अनुकूल भी है, क्योंकि यह अॉक्सीजन छोड़ता है और फ्यूल यानी ईंधन के तौर पर हाइड्रोजन का इस्तेमाल करता है। मगर अफसोस कि इस इंज्न को भारत के बदले जापान में लांच किया जाएगा। प्रशासनिक उदासीनता की वजह से एस कुमारस्वामी को अपने आविष्कार को जापान में लांच करने को मजबूर होना पड़ा रहा है। कुमारस्वामी ने दावा किया है कि इस इंज्न को विकसित करने में उन्हें दस साल लग गए। ट्रका कहना है- ‘मेरा सपना था कि मैं इस इंज्न को भारत में शुरू करूं, इसलिए मैंने सभी प्रशासनिक दरवाजे खटखटाए, मगर मुझे कोई सकारात्मक जवाब नहीं मिला। इसलिए मैंने जापान के सरकार से संपर्क साधा और मुझे वहां यह अवसर मिला।’ इस नौजवान इंजीनियर ने भारत में इस इंज्न को लांच करने की कोशिशें कीं, लेकिन लालफीताशाही में उलझी नौकरशाही ने इसे होने नहीं दिया। हमारी प्रतिभाओं की इससे ज्यादा बेकद्री और क्या हो सकती है?

- प्रियंवदा, गोरखपुर*

नई दिल्ली