

Stress interviews

The idea is to see how candidates deal with the uncomfortable and the unexpected



HUMAN FACTOR
SHYAMAL MAJUMDAR

The National Aviator's Guild has taken strong offence to certain alleged comments made by SpiceJet executives while interviewing pilots of the grounded Jet Airways. The statement from the pilot's union came after an interviewer from

SpiceJet reportedly told some Jet pilots that they were doing a charity by hiring them. Since SpiceJet has denied the charge, it should get the benefit of the doubt, but toxic job interviews are not uncommon.

Such interviewing done cowboy-style, shooting questions from the hip are usually conducted by companies that have a poor work culture or by some arrogant corporate giants that think anybody would like to give their arms and legs to work for them. What these interviewers do not realise is that candidates who go through such interviews are given front-row seats to the ugliest side of the company they are dealing with, damaging its ability to attract talent.

But a difficult interview need not be a toxic one. For example, a candidate was unnerved when one interviewer on the panel just sat there and

acted bored (even yawned a couple of times) when she was answering. But what she was experiencing was a variation of what is known as a "stress interview" where the aim is to trip up the applicants and see how they respond to the uncomfortable and the unexpected. There is obviously no right or wrong answers here — the interviewer is more interested in the candidate's demeanour when she answers. The purpose is to see whether she is able to answer with confidence and coherence under "stress" situations.

Stress interviews can take the form of tricky questions, some of which sound simple but turn out to be difficult to answer in a concise way. There are several such examples from Google. Career website Glassdoor provides a glimpse of the types of brain-stumping puzzles Google has asked in the past. A candidate for the post of account strategist was asked: "If you wanted to bring your dog to work but one of your team members was allergic to dogs, what would you do?"

Another for the post of quantitative analyst was asked the following: "A coin was flipped 1,000 times and there

were 560 heads. Do you think the coin is biased?" And an intern was asked: "Estimate the number of tennis balls that can fit into a plane."

These are classic stress interview questions, the idea being getting candidates to think creatively, to stare at a problem and come up with a potential solution. The first question that once stumped a highly successful professional was: "Talk about the failures in your career". Here he was ready to showcase his success stories, how he cornered the last business deal worth crores, and all that his prospective employer wanted to talk about was his failures? He mumbled something, but the next question was even more stressful: "Tell us when you get bored". The candidate struggled hard for an "interesting" answer, but that's where he faltered. HR heads say a smart and honest answer to such questions usually separates the men from the boys.

If the professional thought the questions were deliberately designed to insult him or not to give him the job, he would have been wrong. Such questions are a recognition of the fact that fairy tales don't exist in corpo-

rate life and failures are inevitable. The idea is to find out the insights people gain from those failures. Sometimes, the interviewer tries to throw you off balance with unexpected behaviours. For example, an interviewer might ask the same technical question several times, pretending not to understand the answer, as the candidate gets more exasperated at the questioner's stupidity.

However, some HR practitioners say the theory that people who can handle stress in an interview can handle stress on the job is wrong. The confrontational nature of a stress interview tends to make people guarded and defensive, and prevents interviewers from seeing the real person and his competencies. While the jury is out on that, here is an example of a stress interview that went off quite well. After a set of "hostile" questions that she handled with poise, a candidate was asked to talk about a time when she had to work with a difficult person. She smiled and her answer was immediate: "Sir, allow me first to talk about a time when I had to face really difficult interviewers".

She was hired.

CHINESE WHISPERS

Palm in glove?



The Madhya Pradesh unit of the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) has approached the Election Commission with an intriguing complaint against the Congress. In its complaint, the BJP has stated the biometric units placed at the reservation counter of Indore railway station are unwittingly helping its rival party. How? People are asked to use their palms to obtain their tokens from these biometric machines. The party said the way the palms must be placed before the machine resembles the election symbol of the Congress. Indore is a BJP stronghold but in this election Sumitra Mahajan (eight-time MP) has been denied the ticket. The party has fielded Shankar Lalwani instead; the Congress' candidate from the seat is Pankaj Sanghvi.

Panneerselvam's pilgrimage

All India Anna Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam (AIADMK) Coordinator and Deputy Chief Minister of Tamil Nadu O Panneerselvam's presence in Varanasi when Prime Minister Narendra Modi submitted his nomination to contest in the Lok Sabha election from the seat unleashed speculation that he might soon join the Bharatiya Janata Party. Pictures in which Panneerselvam, clad in saffron, appeared with his family were bandied about as proof. While Panneerselvam dismissed the rumours, stating that he wanted the AIADMK flag to drape his body after his death, rebel leaders from the TV Dhinakaran-led Anna Makkal Munnetra Katchi said Panneerselvam made the pilgrimage to Varanasi to seek a governor's position and that "the truth" would come out after once the election results were announced.

Jack Ma vs Hansika

Alibaba founder Jack Ma might have prescribed a "996" work schedule for young people but at least one young achiever in India has a different view on continuous working. Hansika Shukla, who emerged top rank-holder in the CBSE Class 12 board results, announced on Thursday, told journalists that she did not believe in keeping a count of the hours she worked on her preparation. She added her preparation pattern was such that she would study for an hour and then rest for another before resuming the cycle. "On some days, I'd even study for seven-eight hours but not at a stretch. All that mattered to me was how much I studied and the quality of learning," she said. Now no one can say that her methods aren't result-oriented!

Hubris comes before an expensive fall

The National Stock Exchange's success bred conceit, culminating in a \$158 million penalty

ANDY MUKHERJEE

The way the cost of financial misconduct has been rising globally, a \$158 million fine may seem like loose change.

However, the Securities & Exchange Board of India has delivered much more than a slap of the wrist with its disgorgement order against the National Stock Exchange of India Ltd over an algorithmic trading scandal.

Including five years of interest at 12 percent, the ₹6.25 billion penalty works out to ₹11 billion or about \$158 million. That's a fraction of the \$110 billion bill Bank of America Corp and JPMorgan Chase & Co have run up between them in fines and settlements since 2008, according to a tally maintained by Bloomberg Intelligence.

Yet that figure is only 5 per cent of the revenue that the banks have garnered in the past 11 years. By contrast, what Sebi is asking the NSE to pay is more than a quarter of its combined overall operating revenue for four years, after the regulator ruled that a high-frequency trading firm benefited from unfair market access. It's also more than whatever money the exchange made from HFT until changing its system in 2014.

This is overkill, especially since the regulator couldn't establish the graver charges of fraud or unfair trade practice. It all boiled down to whether the technology used by the NSE to roll out its high-frequency business provided an equal and fair trading environment to everyone who had opted to place their computers close to the exchange's, hop-

A FINE BUSINESS
The National Stock Exchange must disgorge 36 per cent more than the revenue it garnered from controversial co-location services for high-frequency traders over four years

CO LOCATION REVENUE
₹8bn
FINE, INCLUDING INTEREST
₹11bn

Source: Order by the Securities & Exchange Board of India, April 30, 2019



ing to pare microseconds when executing trades.

When I wrote about the scandal two years ago, the contents of a forensic study by Deloitte Touche Tohmatsu had just leaked. It pointed out that until 2014, when the NSE shifted to broadcasting price information simultaneously to all traders, it was giving those first to log in an advantage without randomizing the benefit. Additionally, there was a lightly used backup server, which OPG

Securities Pvt was consistently connecting to before anyone else between December 2012 and April 2014.

Further analysis failed to unearth a scam of any size, however. In a separate order, Sebi slapped a fine of roughly \$2 million plus interest on OPG, assessing that to be the unlawful profit from unreasonable use of the backup server. As for NSE's failure to ensure an equal and fair trading environment, Sebi has also asked two of the

exchange's previous CEOs — Ravi Narain and Chitra Ramkrishna — to give up a part of the pay they earned in the top job between 2010 and 2014. They won't be able to work for a market intermediary, a stock exchange or a listed company for five years.

Current CEO Vikram Limaye should be reasonably happy, though. The fact that the NSE wasn't found guilty of intentionally running a rigged high-frequency market lifts the cloud hanging

over its credibility. The order paves the way for the exchange's long-delayed IPO after a six-month moratorium during which it won't be allowed to access the securities markets.

Besides, the penalty — harsh as it is — won't have any cash-flow implications. Even as it was taking its time investigating, the regulator had asked the NSE to set aside its co-location revenue. By March 2018, the escrow account had already swelled to about ₹12 billion. After paying the fine, Limaye will have more cash at his disposal. But since the exchange hasn't made any provisions for the fine, it will have to take a charge, perhaps as early as the June quarter.

Internal processes have already become more robust, but the bigger impact of Sebi's order may be on NSE's culture. The company achieved dominance in a short time, leaving its much older rival, the Bombay Stock Exchange, in the dust. The hubris that engendered needs to be tempered with some humility.

Investors like Goldman Sachs Group Inc and Singapore's Temasek Holdings Pte would have been able to exit a lot sooner had the previous management of NSE not been so contemptuous of the idea of listing its shares on the BSE. Or if they had addressed a whistle-blower's complaint against its algorithmic trading system rather than slapping a defamation suit against Moneylife India, the website that reported the allegations of unfair access, in 2015.

That one mistake may have cost the exchange four years, and \$158 million.

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INFRA DIG

Thomason and Roorkee



BIBEK DEBROY

Recently, I went to IIT Roorkee to deliver a couple of talks. The antecedents of IIT Roorkee can be found in Roorkee College. I discovered a monograph printed in 1851, titled, "Account of Roorkee College, Established for the Instruction of Civil Engineers, with a Scheme for its Enlargement". "The necessity has long been felt of some systematic training for Civil Engineers in this country. The Western Jumna Canals were commenced in 1817... The Eastern Jumna Canal was commenced in 1822... In the Dehra Dhoon, in Rohilkund, and on the Nujjufgurh Jheel, near Delhi, works for draining and irrigation have long been maintained by the Government... Within the last 20 or 30 years, several fine roads have been constructed by the Government at public expense... Immediate measures were necessary to meet the emergency, and to provide a constant supply of well-trained, experienced Civil Engineers, who should be able to face all the difficulties which are involved in the management of large undertakings of this nature. Out of this emergency Roorkee College had its rise." Thus, the College was formally established on 25th November 1847. From the Imperial Gazetteer, we learn that informally, "a class started in 1845 to train native youths in engineering". That was the seed. The then Lieutenant Governor of North-

Western Provinces was James Thomason and therefore, after his death, Roorkee College became Thomason College of Civil Engineering. Later, this became IIT Roorkee and the main administrative building of IIT Roorkee is called Thomason Building.

Not surprisingly, I found students who I met didn't know this history. Therefore, they also didn't know the expansion proposed, as mentioned in that 1851 monograph, visualised, "The improvement and superintendence of the Village Schools in a circle of 40 or 50 miles round Roorkee... The plan is to have a few model Village Schools and an establishment of Visitors, whose duty it will be to go round villages in the tract assigned to them, examining the state of the Indigenous Schools, and advising and assisting the School Masters by instruction, books, and rewards." In 1935, Lieutenant Colonel E. W. C. Sandes published a book titled, "The Military Engineer in India". In this, he described Roorkee College as the oldest engineering college in India. "This is the Thomason Civil Engineering College at Roorkee, actually the oldest, and certainly the most celebrated of its kind, in India. The Thomason College owes its birth to the waters of the mighty Ganges. Without that sacred river there would have been no Ganges Canal; and without the canal, no college." Perhaps one can quibble about that. The College of Engineering in Chennai formally became a college in 1859, but the original School of Survey, which predated it, was established in 1794.

But there can be no quibbling about James Thomason being unique. I know of no other individual who has had an educational institution and a locomotive named after him/her. Colonel Proby T. Cautley, engineer who supervised construction of the Ganges Canal, wrote a report on the Ganges Canal works. In that, while describing the Solani

aqueduct, he says, "The introduction of railroads and wagons relieved us from wheelbarrows and baskets, but for a long time kept us with men both for excavation and for propelling the wagons. As time advanced, horses in some measure took the place of men; and on the 22nd December, 1851, we started a locomotive, which I believe to have been the first engine of the sort that was ever used in India." This is indeed true. That imported steam locomotive is the first known instance of a locomotive having been used in India. (There is a working model in Roorkee railway station.) At that time, Jenny Lind was famous as an opera singer. She was at the height of her fame. Therefore, this locomotive was initially known as Jenny Lind and carted construction material between Roorkee and Piran Kaliar. Jenny Lind was famous in London, Thomason was famous in North-Western Provinces. Hence, the locomotive was renamed Thomason. Unfortunately, the boiler exploded in 1852 and Thomason (the locomotive) no longer survives.

Richard Baird Smith was an engineer, in charge of the Ganges Canal works and therefore, in Roorkee. In 1857, he was asked to move to Delhi as Chief Engineer. There is a book by Colonel Vibart describing Richard Baird Smith as "The Leader of the Delhi Heroes in 1857". In that, in Roorkee, before moving to Delhi, "The two companies of Sappers proved an embarrassment rather than a source of strength. They were all natives; there was reason to know that the prevailing spirit of disaffection had in some measure tainted them, and this caused much uneasiness regarding them. Baird Smith put them under command of two officers well known to them, spoke himself to the best men among them, and gave over to their charge the care of all the Thomason College buildings.

The author is chairman, Economic Advisory Council to the Prime Minister. Views are personal.

LETTERS

A major breakthrough



The United Nations' declaration of Jaish-e-Mohammed Chief Masood Azhar (pictured) as a global terrorist is highly significant. One, it marks a major shift in the thinking of the world community — there is realisation of the menace of Pakistan-based terrorism and the need to curb it. Two, the world including China conceded that India was a long-term victim of Pakistan-sponsored terrorism. Three, even China, Pakistan's most trusted friend, was compelled to fall in line. All this has been possible also because of the present government's incessant efforts at every global forum to highlight the need to recognise terrorism as an international threat.

India should await the fallout of this success cautiously and plan accordingly. Now that China has bowed to world pressure in this case, it may try to balance this by giving more benefits and support to Pakistan vis-à-vis India. Its higher vocal support for Pakistan on the Kashmir issue could be one. It is unlikely that it will tilt towards India in this changed scenario — it now sees India as a powerful rival instead of a weak neighbour. Further, Pakistan could intensify its efforts to recruit, train and finance India-based terrorists to make it appear a local problem.

YG Chouksey Pune

Step up debt resolution

This refers to "Corporate lending seems to be back in vogue for the banks" (April

2). The perusal of the statistical table in the article shows very little increase in bank lending in 2019 to agriculture and allied activities and industry as compared to 2018. The government has been talking so much about increased lending to micro, small and medium enterprises (MSMEs), but the proportion of increase in case of MSMEs is abysmal. The increase in bank lending in 2019 as compared to 2018 is mainly driven by lending to non-banking financial corporations and personal loans. In the personal loan segment, it is credit cards outstandings and housing that are the main drivers. The real sectors need to drive the economy and not just the consumption segments.

The banks are still wary of lending to the industry and services sectors. Many of the public sector banks (PSBs) were put under the prompt corrective action framework (PCA) and are slowly coming out of it. They still have a large stock of non-performing assets. Unless lending to the agricultural sector, industry and services is augmented substantially, a real impact on economic growth will not be felt. The debt resolution processes in banks have to be stepped up and substantive reforms have to be carried out in the PSBs to make them efficient financial intermediaries of the 21st century. Without doing this, it will be a little more or a little less of the same and we will be plodding along 6-7 per cent growth and high unemployment.

Arun Pasricha New Delhi

Needed: A bench in south

This refers to "Supreme Court door ast" (May 1). Just as the high courts have



regional benches in large states, the Supreme Court (SC) (pictured) too should have a bench to meet the needs of southern India and Northeast India. The SC, located in New Delhi, is at a considerable distance from the south and north-eastern parts of India. Due to this, poor and aged clients find it difficult to travel to Delhi. Affordability, increasing cost of transportation lodging expenses, and high legal expenses is another factor. Parliamentarians have raised this issue on the need to have a southern bench of the SC to expedite long pending appeals. As the population of the country is growing, so are litigation and its costs. Establishing a bench in the south is a practical and viable solution.

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HAMBONE



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Terror firma

Past sanctions did not cramp the freedom of terror groups

The United Nations' (UN) sanctions under the Security Council Resolution 1267, designating Masood Azhar and his three colleagues global terrorists, are undoubtedly a cause for celebration, as much for the action itself as the diplomatic signalling following China's acquiescence after almost a decade of stalling. Azhar and his organisation, Jaish-e-Mohammad (JeM), have been responsible for an escalating level of terrorist attacks on Indian territory — from the attack on the Indian Parliament in 2001 to the ambush at Pulwama in February 2019. Given Pakistan's status as an acknowledged Chinese client, the Security Council resolution is no small gain for India, and the Narendra Modi-led government deserves some credit for pursuing the issue energetically. That said, it is an open question whether Mr Modi and his party's high-pitched triumphalism on the campaign trail is warranted.

The prime minister's claim that the Congress did nothing to curb cross-border terrorism, for example, is manifestly incorrect. UN sanctions against Hafeez Saeed followed less than a month after India provided incontrovertible evidence that he and his organisation, Lashkar-e-Taiba, were behind the multiple attacks in Mumbai in November 2008 (the UN recently turned down an appeal from Saeed to be taken off this list). Besides, it is no secret that sanctions do not appear to cramp the style and freedom of these terror groups and their leaders. Indeed, after India's airstrikes at Balakot across the Line of Control, for instance, the Pakistani authorities openly demonstrated to the international community the flourishing camp run by the JeM, though the group was officially designated a terror outfit some years ago.

There are several reasons for the Indian political and security establishment to remain on high alert in spite of this latest UN move. Sanctions formally entail an asset freeze, a travel ban, and arms embargo. Azhar would be well aware of this sanctions playbook so he is unlikely to hold assets or bank accounts in his own name. There are plenty of *benami* routes, including those facilitated by the Pakistani military-intelligence complex, which have nurtured these terror organisations for use in Kashmir. In any case, past experience shows by the time the sanctions take effect, all the money in the bank accounts of these organisations would be transferred to a new one. Travel bans anyway don't mean much as these people don't undertake much international travel.

Second, these groups are fluid in nature so they easily find ways around embargoes by changing their names as the JeM has frequently done in the past. Third, Saeed and the LeT's own post-sanctions activities suggest no diminution of fortunes. Saeed suffered, at best, periodic bouts of house arrest, and the LeT's functions have been co-opted by supposed charitable front organisations, one of whom even launched a radical political party.

The real gain would be when this listing is taken to the next stage where the Financial Action Task Force is persuaded to push Pakistan from the current grey list to the black list. Also, this could be used to influence the International Monetary Fund to deny Pakistan the bailout loan it is seeking. There have been some signs that the Pakistan government is making moves towards burnishing its anti-terror credentials. But with the snows melting fast and the start of a new fighting season around the corner, the efficacy of the latest UN sanctions will face its first reality test.

Protecting limited liability

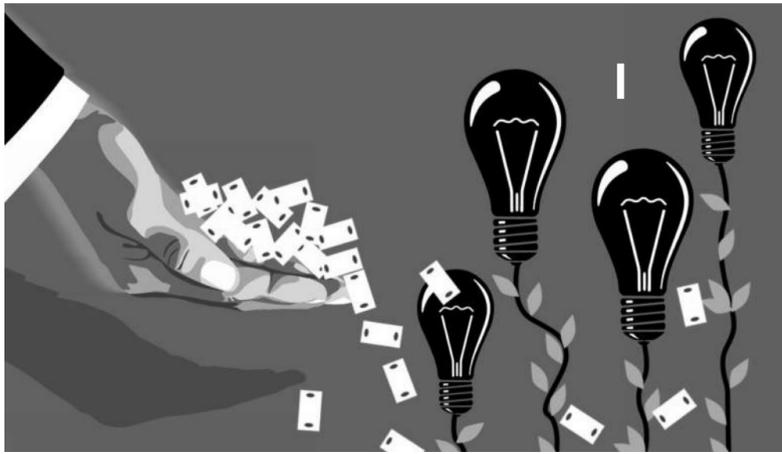
Apex court's ruling on NSEL should be welcomed

In an important judgment, the Supreme Court has struck down the enforced merger of the National Spot Exchange Ltd (NSEL) with 63 Moons Technologies (the erstwhile Financial Technologies India, or FTIL). This has important implications for corporate governance and also articulates the apex court's understanding of "public interest" in detail. The merger had been enforced by the Central government in February 2016, after a scam led to defaults, and closure of the NSEL in 2013. The NSEL is a subsidiary of 63 Moons, and the merger would have meant that the liabilities of the NSEL would impinge upon 63 Moons. The Centre had invoked Section 396 of the Companies Act, which allows for compulsory mergers in the "public interest". But 63 Moons, founded and promoted by Jignesh Shah, appealed against the order. The merger was upheld by the Bombay High Court in December 2017, after which there was an appeal in the apex court. The decision has now been overturned on the grounds that the merger doesn't satisfy the criteria of the public interest. The court also said the merger was done without application of mind and violated Article 14 of the Constitution, which guaranteed "equality before law".

NSEL was incorporated in 2005 as an electronic trading platform for commodity trading, with compulsory delivery of goods traded. While trading started in 2008, there was a scandal when it was discovered that the NSEL had allowed trading of contracts that were not backed by real goods. It was also alleged that fake contracts with manipulated prices were used as a mechanism for generating loans. Trading was halted in July 2013, when the NSEL defaulted on payments worth ₹5,600 crore to about 13,000 traders. So far, claims for ₹620 crore by 4,697 entities have been cleared by a court-appointed panel that is investigating these defaults. Mr Shah was arrested and ordered to divest all holdings in financial exchanges, including in the NSEL and the MCX, which was also promoted by Mr Shah and FTIL. The scam also triggered a reorganisation of the regulatory system with the Forward Markets Commission (FMC) being merged into the Securities and Exchange Board of India (Sebi), which took over the FMC's functions as a regulator of the commodity markets.

The Supreme Court judgment indicates, however, that 63 Moons cannot be forced to take over the NSEL's liabilities. The judgment establishes a clear boundary with respect to the foundational concept of limited liability. Indeed, this merger could have set a dangerous precedent if it had been upheld as it would have made nonsense of the concept of limited liability, and make doing business in India extremely risky. It could have been cited by creditors in other cases to demand the merger of defaulting subsidiaries, with profitable parent companies. Given that 63 Moons is a listed company with over 60,000 minority shareholders, it would have been unfair to force them to bear the burden of NSEL defaults. This case and the judgment will also lend clarity to efforts to revive the spot trading of commodities. The NSEL was the only exchange that enabled this important market segment. Entrepreneurs looking to set up new exchanges for this purpose, or existing exchanges looking to enter this space, will have a clearer blueprint.

ILLUSTRATION BY BINAY SINHA



Giving wings to startups

A recipe for creating 100,000 plus angel investors in India

Civil servants and politicians in India fervently murmur the word "startups", just as they once used to murmur "Ram, Ram", a signal of personal good-intentions as well as a symbol of fervent hope that some wished-for event would come true. They hope that somehow, that deity that they pray to, Lord Startup, will make young people its followers and take their attention away from looking for jobs and blaming them for not creating enough jobs.

Maybe it is time we paused a little from this fervent praying and examined what the startup game is all about. To start with, is it just a fancy new word for any newly founded small business? Is the term "startup" used to describe only new businesses in the computer-related industries and not, for example, a new restaurant or a new *kirana* shop or a new real estate agent? When a business family puts in the money for their son or daughter to set up a new business, does that amount to a startup? Does starting a machine shop, which does machining on a contract basis, amount to a startup? In other words, does the word startup mean only some specific types of new businesses and not all new businesses? To even start to answer such questions, we have

to ask some more fundamental ones: Are entrepreneurs (the ones who launch startups) born or made? Are the successful ones mostly in their 20s? Does a higher education degree help or hinder a startup entrepreneur? Vivek Wadhwa, an NRI entrepreneur who has spent some years studying and reflecting about some issues has this to say about entrepreneurs in America: The majority, 52 per cent, of Silicon Valley entrepreneurs were the first in their immediate families to start a business. He further points to cases of Mark Zuckerberg, Steve Jobs, Bill Gates, Jeff Bezos, Larry Page, Sergey Brin, and Jan Koum and says that "they didn't come from entrepreneurial families. Their parents were dentists, academics, lawyers, factory workers, or priests". And contrary to the impression that people in their 20s are the ones who do successful startups, he points out that Marc Benioff was 35 when he founded Salesforce.com, Reid Hoffman was 36 when he founded LinkedIn. Steve Jobs's most significant innovations at Apple — the iMac, iTunes, iPod, iPhone, and iPad — came after he was 45.

The biggest obstacle that a startup entrepreneur faces in India is the drought in early stage capital providers or angel investors as they are called in the trade — the ones who can provide the first ₹50 lakh



AJIT BALAKRISHNAN

ments were dentists, academics, lawyers, factory workers, or priests". And contrary to the impression that people in their 20s are the ones who do successful startups, he points out that Marc Benioff was 35 when he founded Salesforce.com, Reid Hoffman was 36 when he founded LinkedIn. Steve Jobs's most significant innovations at Apple — the iMac, iTunes, iPod, iPhone, and iPad — came after he was 45.

A common economic programme for India

Development transformation involves progress on many fronts, but there can be no transformation without high, stable, and inclusive economic growth. The economic programme of any party or coalition that is serious about transforming India must be underpinned by four economic objectives. In this sense, here I offer a common economic programme.

Structural shift in GDP composition.

As I have argued in previous columns, India is headed towards a middle income trap. So far, growth has been spurred by catering to the demands of the top hundred million, which is why Bombay's indicators of economic performance are about sales of cars, two-wheelers, air conditioners, and upmarket housing. The goods that are consumed by all 1.2 billion Indians — nutritious food, affordable clothing, affordable housing and education — do not figure. If the share of these goods in the composition of GDP growth does not increase, we will be in a middle income trap. These areas of economic activity, that touch the lives of every Indian, should be the leading indicators of economic progress on which the government should focus.

It is neither possible nor sustainable to increase such consumption for a billion people through subsidies and income support. At least half the population should earn incomes that enable them to buy these goods at affordable prices, so that a maximum 500 million can be subsidised to improve their welfare. This is the key that will open the door to jobs, inclusion, and sustained, stable growth

Structural shift in growth location.

Apart from the NCR region and a few other pockets, quality economic growth has occurred in the south and west of India. The major benefit to north and east India has been remittance incomes from migration to the south and west. While some migration has taken advantage of economic opportunities (IT, auto-

mobile manufacturing, diamond cutting etc.) the vast bulk of such migrants are in low paid, insecure, jobs. They are the construction workers, domestic servants, and security guards of the rich.

It is vital that activities that provide quality jobs in north and east India be fostered. Given technology and legacy disadvantages, this requires economic policy to deliver such jobs using existing, or slowly improving, capabilities. This further underlines the importance of giving priority to the five sectors I mentioned above.

Credible macroeconomic policy

The credibility of macroeconomic policy in India has no doubt improved over the past 30 years but its hallmarks continue to be short-termism and defensiveness. A medium-term macroeconomic framework is, I think, the most important enabling factor that we lack, possibly because the discipline it imposes will reduce discretion and undermine the culture of ad-hoc short-termism that those in senior positions are used to, and are comfortable with.

Successful governments promised to deliver fiscal discipline. They have shown capacity to do so but, equally, a casual attitude when there are slippages and a disconcerting willingness to play silly accounting games. Tax policy needs to be based on forecasts for which policy-makers are accountable, rather than on estimates and targets and tinkering with tax rates, to macroeconomic detriment. Disinvestment cannot continue in an ad-hoc fashion just to meet fiscal gaps. Budgetary and financial sector policies cannot be such that the authorities manipulate the public sector for short-term gain. With monetary policy, there is an opportunity to improve the quality of the monetary policy framework by making the underlying theory and analytics explicit, specifying the stance on inflation and the trade-offs involved.

Better government, less discretion, more rules

The productivity of public spending in India is low even as fiscal space is constrained. Arguments

for more public spending carry limited weight because of the demonstrated inefficiency and low effectiveness of public spending. Attempts to use technology to bypass this have met with limited success, since the root cause has not been addressed.

The machinery of government is antiquated. In the feudal and colonial tradition, policy interventions continue to leave huge scope for bureaucratic discretion, which signals that considerations other than public interest drive such interventions. With a few exceptions, the civil service is not able to deliver timely policy and rapidly correct policy failures. Media and event management can be used to cover this up and escape accountability, but this does not solve the productivity problem.

It is essential that government commits to implementing a rule-based system of economic administration. Governance credibility is low, but fear of individual retribution by a weak state that is, nevertheless, capable of inflicting individual malevolence mutes public criticism. There are also socio-economic movements that force government to adopt rule-based economic governance. Hence, the impulse can only come from political statesmanship — the courage to give up short-term gains for the long-term reward of being judged by history as a government that transformed the Indian economy by transforming economic governance.

In my view, reform of government economic administration must take priority. As things stand, it is a prerequisite for the success of any other reform. A weak state cannot deliver anything other than grandiloquent statements of intention. This must change. Without a capable State, there can be no transformation.

A government that adopts an economic programme to transform India would take these objectives as priorities for the future, and not just compensate for failures of the past.

A second aspect about startups that is ignored by our policymakers is that a startup by definition has to work in an emerging technology area, not a technology area which has been around for so long that it has become commoditised. Yet, if you see the list of skills being promoted by the central government and the many state governments, it is clear that none of those skills can be the foundation for a startup today. Any startup concept today has to have a heavy dose of Data Science and Machine Learning.

To answer a question we posed in the beginning, yes, doing a startup is different from starting a restaurant, a *kirana* shop or a real-estate business. The term startup means an entrepreneur who has a business idea which involves use of advanced technology, which in our current age means some combination of computer/ internet/data science/ machine learning/ bio technologies, and who is setting out to create entirely new ways of solving problems which the common man in India faces in his daily life.

Such startup entrepreneurs most likely will be in their 30s or early 40s, may possibly have parents who are doctors, lawyers, academics and not themselves businessmen.

And the capital to start such enterprises has to come as no-strings-attached risk capital from angel investors; that in turn will happen only if we make it tax-efficient for angel investors with domain expertise to make such investments. Just imagine an India with a hundred thousand angel investors on the hunt for startup entrepreneurs!

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Society's acid tests



BOOK REVIEW

VEENU SANDHU

What is it like when acid is poured on the human body? First, the clothes melt off. Then comes the smell of burning flesh. So hotly does the acid burn that the mind becomes delirious. For 17-year-old Reshma Qureshi the initial sensation was like drowning in ice, rapidly followed by a feeling of burning in hellfire, of being shredded alive as the acid ate through the layers of her skin and seeped towards her bones.

Screaming and slithering on the ground, she clawed at her niqab as it melt-

ed off her face, while her attackers — her brother-in-law, his cousin and nephew — fled the scene. "Even if I practised hard, I could never again scream the way I did that day," she writes in this horribly disturbing account of her life.

Ms Qureshi was on her way to take an exam when she was attacked in August 2014 — 10 months after the Supreme Court of India ordered complete ban of over-the-counter sale of acid to check such attacks on women. The court had also said that anyone buying acid needed to furnish government-approved identity proof and state the reason for the purchase. And, it made it mandatory for the seller to record the name, telephone number and address of the buyer. That Ms Qureshi was attacked — as were several other women before and after her — despite the top court's order is proof of how callous and casual the system is in matters of women's safety.

Being Reshma is an extraordinary story of a young woman who was subjected to an evil and inhuman act and who went on to become the first acid attack survivor to walk the runway at the New York Fashion Week. But a fairy tale it is not. This is a horror story and Ms Qureshi tells it as it is. It shocks you; it makes you stop reading to step out for air or reach for a glass of water; it sucks you into the trauma, the pain and the hopelessness an acid attack victim suffers day in and day out — and in the end, it makes you want to make a difference, in whatever little way possible.

Ms Qureshi begins her story with her childhood in a slum in Mumbai where her family — mother, father and older brothers and sisters — live in a one-room tenement. Life isn't easy but the family is close knit. One gets a sense early in the book that the father is particularly indulgent of his youngest daughter. This is a

family that has its problems but stands by its members.

She is still young when Ms Qureshi moves to Mau Aima, a village in Allahabad, Uttar Pradesh, with her mother and sisters after her mother has been treated for a cancerous tumour. It is here that she starts becoming aware of a woman's secondary position in Indian society. Ms Qureshi is attacked by her sister's abusive husband and his relatives who want to teach her family a lesson for standing up to them. And they do so in full public view, on a busy morning, with zero fear of the law.

The book takes the reader through the cruelty and the appalling insensitivity an acid attack victim suffers every step of the way, especially if she is from a poor family. The damage can be controlled if water is thrown on a person within three seconds of exposure to acid. Ms Qureshi doesn't get any treat-

ment for two hours. The hospital demands a copy of the first information report (FIR) of the crime, even though the law says the victim ought to be treated first; the police dilly-dally on the FIR and wonder what she might have done to

bring this on herself; a doctor holds her family responsible for her condition. The filthy hospitals, the rude nurses, the deep-seated biases — Ms Qureshi makes you see them afresh in all their unacceptable ugliness.

She takes you through her state of mind over weeks and months after the attack: the horror she experiences the first time she sees herself in the mirror; the silence that conceals boiling emotions when people tell her it will be all right; her depression and attempts of suicide; her outbursts against her family that refuses to give up on her; the financial burden of her treatment... If, despite all of this, her

words don't shake you, the pictures of her before and after the attack will.

I would perhaps not be holding this book in my hand today had help not come Ms Qureshi's way in the form of an organisation called Make Love Not Scars, which works with and for acid attack victims. Or, had advertising agency Ogilvy and Mather not decided to do a pro bono campaign around acid attack survivors with her as its face. Through initiatives such as these, Ms Qureshi's story has travelled to the world. But there are hundreds of similar such stories of horror that make no news.

Being Reshma is a story of all such women. It is a fervent appeal for help — and for change.

BEING RESHMA
The Extraordinary Story of an Acid Attack Survivor Who Took the World by Storm
Reshma Qureshi (with Tania Singh)

Macmillan
Pages 230; price ₹599

Opinion

FRIDAY, MAY 3, 2019

NBFCs were too loosely regulated for too long

With ₹1.3 lakh crore of NBFC borrowings from mutual funds matures over the next 3 months, rolling over won't be automatic

THE PROPOSED TIGHTENING of rules for non-banking financial companies (NBFCs) are very late in coming, and going by the problems the sector is facing, it is surprising the regulators haven't been more concerned. To be sure, the liquidity mismatches were exacerbated by the IL&FS crisis, which surfaced last August, but the fact is NBFCs have been over-dependent on mutual funds and on short-term borrowings for a long time now. The same is true for some home finance companies (HFCs). Consequently, the rules need to be tightened for HFCs also, with these intermediaries being fully under the oversight of RBI. Should some players need to down the shutters or be merged with bigger companies, to ensure the system isn't at risk, so be it.

Worryingly, going by the downgrades and caution from ratings agencies, there appears to be more trouble in the works. In late April, CARE Ratings downgraded the instruments of two ADAG companies, pointing out the liquidity profile of the group continues to be under stress on account of delays in raising funds from the asset monetisation plans and impending debt payments.

The point is that financial players, whether banks, NBFCs or HFCs, must have access to resources for tenures that match the tenures of their assets. The abundance of liquidity with mutual funds—partly the result of demonetisation—resulted in NBFCs borrowing from them for short tenures while creating assets that were of a longer duration. The weaker players are now not able to raise funds so easily from the wholesale markets since, post the events at DHFL, lenders to NBFCs are now becoming far more discerning. While, this time around, banks have had adequate liquidity to be able to pick up assets from NBFCs—partly because there is very limited demand for corporate loans—NBFCs should never have been allowed to over-extend themselves in the first place. The pace of growth of NBFC and HFC assets has been way too rapid in the last few years, and while some players have done exceedingly well to ensure the quality of assets is good, others may be in trouble. Indeed, industry experts point out that loans to builders and products such as loans against property are not always in the best interests of the financial system.

For their part, mutual funds should have been far more circumspect while lending to NBFCs. This exposure has been pared to 27% of the assets under management (AUM) from 34% in August last year. However, the concern is that between 4% and 15% of the AUM comprises exposure to stressed players, including IL&FS and Essel Group. Credit Suisse estimates that, of the exposure to four stressed groups that AMCs have, 11% or roughly ₹2,200 crore is through close-ended plans aggregating ₹18,000 crore. Around 56% of this is up for maturity in Q1FY19. Recently, some asset management companies (AMCs) tweaked the maturity dates for some Fixed Maturity Plans, following the delay in repayments by the Essel Group. Should there be any more repayment delays, they would once again be caught on the wrong foot. There is no doubt that NBFCs play a big role, and painting all of them with the same brush would be wrong. However, the regulators need to watch them much more closely because some promoters are not prudent enough.

Ganga tum behti ho kyun?

Namami Gange is still far from its touted goals

EVEN THOUGH OTHER major Indian rivers suffer far worse pollution—the Yamuna, the Godavari and the Kaveri, for instance—Ganga has historically received disproportionate attention from policymakers because the lives of nearly 400 million on its banks are tied to its fate and it is the holiest of holies as far as rivers in Hinduism are concerned. The NDA II, thus, made a high-decibel campaign of setting up a separate department under the water resources ministry for Ganga rejuvenation and earmarking ₹20,000 crore for Namami Gange, touted as a conservation effort far larger in scale and vision than those that preceded it. Now, a *Mint* analysis shows, despite all the talk, Ganga flows just as *maili* (dirty) as before. Three rounds of testing in four states—Uttarakhand, Uttar Pradesh, Bihar and West Bengal—showed no material improvement in the state of the river between 2014 and 2018. Its waters were safe for bathing at just 13 points out of 61 live monitoring stations, with faecal bacteria above the acceptable level—this, after the government claimed that 4,465 villages along the Ganga were now open-defecation free. In 2018, as per Central Pollution Control Board data, 211 of 961 industrial units along the river were violating effluent disposal norms. Of the 304 projects that were to be undertaken under the National Mission for Clean Ganga (NMCG), as of March 2019, only 85 have been completed. Against a 3,730 million litres/day target for development of sewage treatment capacity—the volume of sewage dumped in to the Ganga—the existing capacity is of just 2,350 MLD, with 413 MLD added under the NMCG. Also, an estimated 11,729 tonnes per day of municipal solid waste is generated by the 97 towns along the river, while the existing processing capacity is of just 3,786 tonnes, and a further capacity of just 3,058 tonnes has been approved so far.

The problem is perhaps rooted in the many slips between the cup and the lip. Against Namami Gange's ₹20,000 crore over five years, the water resources ministry admits, just ₹5,448.99 crore has been spent from the ₹6,819.27 crore released between FY12 and November 30, 2018. Continued industrial pollution is evidence of how the government has failed to balance industry's concerns against those of the river and the environment. Ganga clean-up minister Nitin Gadkari has talked of 254 projects sanctioned at a cost of ₹24,000 crore that will clean up the river by March 2020 (the original deadline was March 2019). The expenditure will be on 133 sewerage management projects, 11 bioremediation projects, a modular Sewerage Treatment Plant, a rural sanitation project, 64 ghat and crematoria, six bio-diversity and 16 afforestation projects. While that seems quite comprehensive an action plan, the pace so far doesn't encourage much faith. Indeed, even though the water quality of the Ganga at Prayagraj deteriorated between 2014-15 and 2017-18, the Ardh Kumbh earlier this year, on which the government spent over ₹4,000 crore, generated 18,000 metric tonnes (mt) of the 60,000 mt of solid waste lying untreated at the Baswar Solid Waste Treatment Plant. The National Green Tribunal made particular note of this in its censure of the Uttar Pradesh government, and also pointed out that the Rajapur Sewage Treatment Plant was swamped with sewage beyond its installed capacity during the mega-pilgrimage, and only 50% of the sewage in the Rajapur was being treated through geo-tube technology while the remaining was flowing in to the Ganga untreated.

CasterQUANDARY

How to preserve the integrity of female athletics while ensuring DSD athletes like Caster Semanya don't suffer?

SOUTH AFRICAN RUNNER Caster Semanya poses a dilemma for the sports world, and faces on herself after Wednesday's ruling by the Court of Arbitration for Sports (CAS), which calls for her to bring her blood testosterone levels below 5 nanomoles (nmol)/litre. The scientific community agrees that elevated blood testosterone, even when naturally-occurring in athletes with differences in sexual development (DSD) like Semanya, put them at an unfair advantage. Gender and rights activists, on the other hand, believe banning a Semanya from contesting if she doesn't undergo a demanding form of treatment to bring her blood testosterone levels within the specified cap is highly discriminatory and is akin to policing her body. Therein lies the rub. While the International Association of Athletics Federations hyperandrogenism guidelines had been challenged by Semanya, the guidelines themselves seem arbitrary. IAAF holds that the female level for blood testosterone is 0.12 nmol/litre to 1.79 nmol/litre while the male range is 7.7-29.4 nmol/litre. So, it is not clear why the IAAF then believes the 5 nmol/litre cap is the right one. Also, while the cap applies to 400-metres to 1-mile races, it doesn't to shorter or longer ones.

The dilemma Semanya faces is a far graver one. Failing appeal, it will boil down to a gut-wrenching choice for the athlete: Does she submit to the IAAF standards and undergo either invasive or life-long treatment to bring down testosterone levels, risking known and unknown side-effects? Or, does she give up the sport that she has dedicated her life so far to? The CAS, even as it maintained the validity of IAAF's guidelines for DSD athletes, acknowledged that the policy was discriminatory to DSD athletes. Yet, it said, the discrimination was "necessary" to preserve the integrity of female athletics. The IAAF clearly must walk the fine line between ensuring that the integrity of female athletics is preserved while DSD athletes don't end up being discriminated against.

MEASURING PROGRESS

PEOPLE SEEM TO RELIABLY SEEK OUT A FEW THINGS THAT MAKE THEM UNHAPPY; A BASIC PRINCIPLE OF ECONOMICS KEEPS GETTING TURNED ON ITS HEAD

The pursuit of happiness

NOAH SMITH

Bloomberg



MUCH OF MODERN economic theory is based around a simple idea: Human beings maximise utility. But what is utility? Many people think of it as happiness or pleasure; British philosopher Jeremy Bentham, the inventor of utilitarianism, conceived of it this way. But this isn't how modern economists think of the concept. To an economist, utility simply means how much people want something. If an economist observes people working hard and making sacrifices to buy houses, then the conclusion is that houses must have lots of utility to those people.

Modern economists tend to assume that utility is good—that people should get what they want. When economists talk about the notion of consumer surplus, they just mean the utility that consumers derive from getting a good deal on consumer goods. Welfare economics, which deals with the question of how much the economy benefits humanity, often conceives of social welfare as a function of the extent to which people satisfy their wants. More egalitarian economists will tend to value the utility of the poor and disadvantaged more than the utility of the wealthy, but fundamentally it's still about giving people what they desire.

There are certainly reasons to criticise this philosophical approach. First of all, people sometimes make choices they come to regret. Smokers know they should quit now, but they put it off and years later end up wishing they had shown a little more fortitude. So should society care about people's present selves, or their future selves? This question is very important when discussing whether to ban electronic cigarettes, as the city of San Francisco is now considering. If Juul Labs and other vape makers get

young people hooked on nicotine in ways that they'll later wish they hadn't, it might make sense for government to bar those people from satisfying their wants.

But there are deeper reasons to question whether society should just feed human desires all the time. Bentham's utilitarianism conceived of a good society as one that makes its people happy. But what if the things people desire don't bring them happiness? There's no clear consensus on how to measure happiness. Some neuroscientists have tried to link it to various measures of brain activity. But economists tend to use a method that's a lot cheaper and quicker—they send out surveys and questionnaires asking people how happy they are.

Happiness research has led to some surprising and troubling discoveries. People seem to reliably seek out a few things that make them unhappy.

One of these things is Facebook, by far the world's largest social-networking site. In a recent paper, economists Hunt Allcott, Luca Braghieri, Sarah Eichmeyer and Matthew Gentzkow investigated how much money they had to pay Facebook users in order to get them to deactivate the Facebook app for one or two months. They found that the median amount was \$100, and the average was \$180 (the latter being larger because a few users really loved Facebook).

This suggests that Facebook, which is free to use, generates a huge amount of utility—more than \$370 billion a year in consumer surplus in the US

alone. This bolsters the argument of those who believe that free digital services have added a lot of unmeasured output to the global economy.

But Allcott et al. also found that the people who deactivated Facebook as part of the experiment were happier afterward, reporting higher levels of life satisfaction and lower levels of depression and anxiety. The change was modest but significant—equal to about 25-40% of the beneficial effect typically reported for psychotherapy.

Why are people willing to pay so much money for something that reduces their happiness? One possibility is that social media acts like an addictive drug—in fact, the people Allcott et al. paid to deactivate Facebook ended up using it less after the experiment was over. But another possibility is that people use services like Facebook because they're compelled by motivations other than the pursuit of happiness.

Another example of the disconnect between happiness and utility might be commuting time. Economists and other happiness researchers consistently find that longer commutes are associated with unhappiness. Yet people still pay quite a lot to live in far-flung exurbs. Economist Robert H. Frank has found

that the larger houses that come with exurban life don't compensate for the longer commute times in terms of happiness. House size and commute time aren't the only factor in the choice of what neighborhood to live in, but this might be another case like Facebook where things that bring utility don't bring happiness.

There may be a number of such cases. A paper by economists Daniel J. Benjamin, Ori Heffetz, Miles S. Kimball, and Alex Rees-Jones found that on surveys, people usually predict that the things they say they'd pay money for would also boost their happiness—but not always.

So what should society do about the disconnect between utility and happiness? The question raises

the thorny issue of paternalism and whether it's government's role to push people to do things they don't want to do, simply because they might be happier as a result. Basing policy on happiness surveys might also be a mistake if these surveys aren't good measures of true happiness. Such surveys might reflect cultural expectations of what people think they ought to say, or people could gradually lose their ability to gauge how much happier or sadder they are now than they were in the past. But it also seems unwise to simply dismiss the disconnect between happiness and utility simply because happiness is hard to measure. If people are consistently making mistakes that lead to a less happy society, it's a problem that should be addressed. Bentham and the original utilitarians would demand no less.

der they are now than they were in the past. But it also seems unwise to simply dismiss the disconnect between happiness and utility simply because happiness is hard to measure. If people are consistently making mistakes that lead to a less happy society, it's a problem that should be addressed. Bentham and the original utilitarians would demand no less.

This column does not necessarily reflect the opinion of the editorial board or Bloomberg LP and its owners

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

UNSC on Azhar a big win for India

The United Nations designating Pakistan-based Jaish-e-Mohammed chief Masood Azhar as a "global terrorist" after China lifted a technical hold on a proposal to blacklist him—after holding on to this technical hold for quite some time—must cheer all those who abhor terrorism. Though the UNSC listing refers to Azhar's various terror roles, there is no mention of the Pulwama attack of February 14, for which the JeM had claimed responsibility. Nevertheless, the listing is a huge diplomatic win for India which had all along been pressing hard for Azhar's inclusion in the global terror list.

— NJ Ravi Chander, Hyderabad

Pepsi, potatoes and politics

PepsiCo's suit against the farmers in Gujarat for allegedly growing the FC5 variety potatoes without its authorisation is very unfortunate and is against the principle of natural justice. One is astonished to witness such multi-national giants' monopolistic hegemony over the seeds of the crops like potatoes which are necessary to be produced on large scale to fight against hunger and malnutrition in many parts of the world. The snack food of potato chips of PepsiCo, which is only good for junk-munching, is not going to solve the problem of hunger. Sad that commercial interests like Pepsico are outweighing the farming community and the common man and concerns of food security. It is better that the Union government step in to help farmers in their predicament before it is too late, since, in a country like ours, politics over potatoes can spill over to streets and take an unhealthy turn.

— Brij B Goyal, Ludhiana

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RBI's sandbox rules need more clarity

The joining criteria for financial services and the evaluation process for the sandbox need to be made explicit

SAON RAY

Senior Fellow, Icrier
Views are personal



The Reserve Bank of India has come up with draft guidelines on "Enabling Framework for Regulatory Sandbox" for the financial sector. The sandbox approach is currently the most favoured mechanism globally to promote and facilitate fintech innovation. This article discusses the joining criteria, boundary condition and evaluation criteria for sandboxes in India with respect to the draft by RBI.

Regulatory sandbox refers to live-testing of new products and services in a controlled environment with active cooperation of the supervisor. This allows companies to experiment with their products and improve their viability in the existing market. The handholding by the supervisor can help the fresh entrants better address barriers to entry and information asymmetries in the market that would have otherwise limited their growth and development. From the regulator's perspective, the sandbox allows it to gain insights into potential risks and benefits arising out of innovative products and business models, and facilitate innovation.

In a sandbox setup, generally, there is a prior application process and selection by supervisor before it engages with the firm which may or may not be currently regulated. A sandbox would also have a given eligibility criteria, a well-defined space and duration for testing of the product and appropriate boundary conditions to ensure protection of interests of all parties involved, including consumers and rest of the industry.

Prior application is necessary in case of a sandbox, unlike innovation hubs that provide regulatory advice on request. Hence, the joining criteria become important in the case of a regulatory sandbox. RBI, in its draft guidelines, has listed the eligibility criteria for participating in the sand-

box. It has listed certain innovative products, services and technologies that could be tested in the sandbox. It has also listed what may be excluded from the sandbox. It has also spelled out the criteria for selection of participants in the sandbox.

The criteria suggested by the Bank for International Settlements (BIS) include 'genuine innovation, with a consumer benefit, not fitting easily into an existing regulatory framework and being ready for market.' The idea of the regulatory sandbox is to encourage innovation in financial products and is similar to the requirements of a patent-filing: novelty, non-obviousness and capable of industrial application. How do the RBI guidelines compare with the BIS criteria? While the draft guidelines seem to be emphasising the first and third point, there seems to be less emphasis on the second: not fitting easily into a regulatory framework. Most novel innovations should fit into this category, and the list of exclusion in the draft guidelines does mention a few. Does this mean barring these, all innovations could

potentially be tested in the sandbox?

With respect to the joining criteria, there is a difference between the UK and Australia models. The Australian model does not require companies to obtain individual approval where as the UK model, which has an application process where applicants are tested against a set of criteria, including the ingenuity of the innovation, benefit to consumers, readiness of the product to be tested, and need of guidance for the testing process, does. In the UK, the Financial Conduct Authority (FCA) operates on a cohort basis with two six-month test periods per year, where the selected firms are provided with 'sandbox tools' to conduct the test within a regulatory framework. The Australian model on the other hand uses a *white list* approach, where companies meeting the criteria are allowed to test their concepts without the requirement of a licence.

The Indian approach spelt out in the draft guidelines, is silent on this aspect, too, though some media articles have pointed out that the UK approach may be adopted.

Boundary conditions for the regulatory sandbox refer to the space and duration of the proposed financial services to be tested in the sandbox. The draft guidelines have specified the start and end date of the regulatory sandbox, target customer type, limit on the number of customers involved, the transaction ceiling and cash-holding limits, and cap on customer losses.

The draft guidelines do not say anything about the evaluation criteria for sandboxes in India. To conclude, while the draft guidelines are indeed a logical step forward in the process of setting up a sandbox in India, clarity on some of the aspects outlined above is needed.

While the BIS's guidelines emphasise that, to be eligible for the sandbox, a product or service must satisfy three conditions—'genuine innovation, with a consumer benefit, not fitting easily into an existing regulatory framework and being ready for market—RBI's focus only on innovation and market-readiness



The People's Liberation Army Navy's Huang Shan Jiang Kai II-Class ship (right), in this file photo

TOOLING UP

Military spending around the world is booming

America and China are committing vast sums to their armed forces. And in response to China, regional rivals have opened their purses, too. India now outspends every European country. South Korea's annual increase in 2018 was the highest since 2005. And Japanese spending is set to surge in the next five years, with new offensive weapons breaking old pacifist taboos. All in all, Asian military spending makes up 28% of the world's total, up from 9% in 1988

THE WORLD IS ARMING itself to the teeth. That is the conclusion of a new report published on April 29 by the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (SIPRI), a think tank. Global military spending last year rose to \$1.8 trillion, says SIPRI—the highest level in real terms since reliable records began in 1988, during the Cold War, and 76% higher than in 1998, when the world was enjoying its “peace dividend”. Military spending as a share of global GDP has fallen in recent years, but that offers little reassurance in a world of rising geopolitical tension.

The spending boom is driven, above all, by the contest between America and China for primacy in Asia. Start with America. In 2018, it raised its already-gargantuan defence budget for the first time in seven years, ending an era of belt-tightening imposed by Congress. The boost reflected the Donald Trump administration's embrace of what it calls “great power competition” with Russia and China—requiring fancier, pricier weapons—in place of the inconclusive guerilla wars it had fought since 2001.

America's military heft has no equal. Its outlay of \$649 billion (in 2017 dollars) was almost as large as the next eight countries combined, by SIPRI's reckoning. Even that did not satiate the Pentagon's appetite. It got \$716 billion this year (in current dollars, as counted by the Department of Defence) and hopes for a staggering \$750 billion in 2020—an annual increase larger than the defence budgets of almost all of its NATO allies. That includes nearly \$10 billion for cyber operations, a 10% year-on-year boost; over \$14 billion for space, a 15% jump; and the biggest budget request for shipbuilding in two decades.

China is far behind. It spends somewhere between a quarter and two-fifths of what America does (the precise amount is unclear, say experts, because Chinese spending is so opaque). Nor is its military expenditure growing at a 10% clip, as it did on average in the years between 2000 and 2016. But it has risen relentlessly for a quarter-century, completely changing the balance of power in Asia.

Between 2009 and 2018, America's defence spending fell by 17% in real terms, whereas China's grew by 83%—accelerating under President Xi Jinping and outpacing every other big power. “No one has ever presided over anywhere

close to this level of Chinese military development in Chinese history before Xi,” notes Andrew Erickson, a professor at the US Naval War College. Its navy has been a particular beneficiary. Between 2014 and 2018, China launched naval vessels with a total tonnage exceeding that of the entire Indian or French navies, notes IISS, another think-tank. Even so, the country's defence spending is still smaller as a proportion of GDP than that of any other top-five country: 1.9% to America's 3.2%. That means it has room to grow, should the geopolitical mood darken.

Military reforms that Mr Xi introduced in 2015, including a slimming down of the army and reorganisation of the command structure along American lines, are also likely to have given China more bang for its yuan.

In response, China's regional rivals have opened their purses, too. India now outspends every European country. South Korea's annual increase in 2018 was the highest since 2005. And Japanese spending is set to surge in the next five years, with new offensive weapons breaking old pacifist taboos. All in all, Asian military spending makes up 28% of the world's total, up from 9% in 1988.

Meanwhile, Europeans, having followed out their armed forces after the Cold War, are getting their act together. In 2018, NATO's European allies raised military spending by 4.2% in real terms, according to IISS. Poland, which is particularly anxious about next-door Russia, boosted spending by 8.9%.

Were European spending to be lumped together, the continent would be the world's second-largest military power, outspending Russia in 2018. In practice, Europe's hodgepodge of duplicated, mismatched equipment (Europeans use 17 types of tanks to America's one) and continued dependence on America in key areas—such as moving troops and refuelling warplanes—mean that its armed forces are far less than the sum of their parts.

Yet not everywhere is piling up arms. Military spending in Africa shrank for a fourth consecutive year in 2018, by 8.4%, driven by big falls in Angola, Algeria and Sudan, says SIPRI. Protests in the latter two countries, with armies under pressure to hand over power to civilians, might cause bloated military budgets to be squeezed further.

The Middle East also seems to be cooling off after years of frenzied arms-buying. Though SIPRI lacks data for Qatar and the United Arab Emirates (UAE), two of the biggest customers for Western arms companies, and for war-torn Yemen and Syria, spending in the rest of the region fell by 1.9% in 2018.

That trend seems likely to continue. Saudi Arabia, the region's biggest fish, which sets aside a huge 8.8% of GDP for defence, will slash its military spending by 9.1% this year. Iran, its rival, plans even bigger cuts of its own—though the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC), which has done most of the recent fighting in places like Syria, got a hefty raise, as did the intelligence ministry, which has been bumping off dissidents abroad.

The most interesting contraction is, however, in Russia. “Can they count?” President Vladimir Putin asked of his Western rivals in February. “I'm sure they can. Let them count the speed and the range of the weapons systems we are developing.” But despite the theatrical flaunting of new missiles, and NATO's impressive rearmament to the west, SIPRI calculates that Russia's defence budget actually shrank by 3.5% in 2018—putting it outside the top five for the first time in over a decade. This may be the result of a weakening rouble. But Russia's long military spending spree seems to be drawing to a close. That is a sobering thought for Mr Putin.

THE ECONOMIST

LENDING AND INVESTMENT

Why have two separate divisions?

SUNIL KANORIA

The author is vice-chairman, Srei Infrastructure Finance Limited



Merging the commercial and treasury operations in banks would give them greater flexibility in financing decisions

IN THE INDIAN BANKING system, at present there exists a clear demarcation of roles when it comes to lending and investment operations. The “commercial” division carries out the lending operations, while the “treasury” division conducts the investment operations. However, the treasury division mostly invests in government bonds, and not corporate bonds. Therefore, given the low yields of government bonds, banks essentially have to depend on the interest earnings from the loans given out for a healthy bottom-line growth. However, Indian banks today are among the least profitable in the world. The bad loans problem in our banking system, especially in the public sector banks, has severely dented profitability through greater recognition of bad assets and rising write-offs.

Although gross non-performing assets (NPAs) as a percentage of gross advances are expected to marginally improve to 10.3% in March 2019 (from 10.8% in September 2018), Indian banks' return on assets (RoA), the common measure for bank profitability, stood at (-0.1%) in 2018.

The recapitalisation programme undertaken by the government, the Insolvency and Bankruptcy Code (IBC), and the deferment of the adoption of Ind AS accounting standards are providing banks some relief. Lending activity has started picking up, but banks are much more cautious now. What is needed for the banking sector at this stage is structural reforms—be these on empowerment of bank boards, risk mitigation practices, talent recruitment, retention and compensation, manpower training, induction of technology, or even ownership structure. Many of these have already been highlighted in the PJ Nayak committee recommendations. Perhaps it is the right time to revisit the committee's findings.

Talking about structural reforms brings me back to the point where I started from—the parallel existence of commercial and treasury divisions within the banking set-up. This is something worth a relook. After all, the end-objective of both giving out a loan and making an investment is the returns that accrue to the bank. Then why have two separate divisions? Just imagine what can happen if the lending and investing activities are brought at par. There will be no need for two separate divisions. The two would become one and that would allow banks greater flexibility in terms of their financing decisions. In fact, this is now the global practice.

With our banking sector getting ready to embrace Ind AS norms, it is high time for our banks to embrace this practice of merging the commercial and treasury divisions. Imagine a scenario where a project SPV approaches a bank for funds. It is now up to the bank to decide whether to provide a loan to the SPV, or to purchase bonds of that SPV. The bank, while taking the decision, would need to factor in a future possibility of the project running into some trouble or getting halted. In such a scenario, if the bank has given a loan, recovering that loan can become a headache. But if the bank has purchased bonds from that SPV, all it needs to do is just sell off the bonds in the market. With this, the decision making at banks can get much more professionalised. A move like this will go a long way in infusing life into the corporate bond market as well.

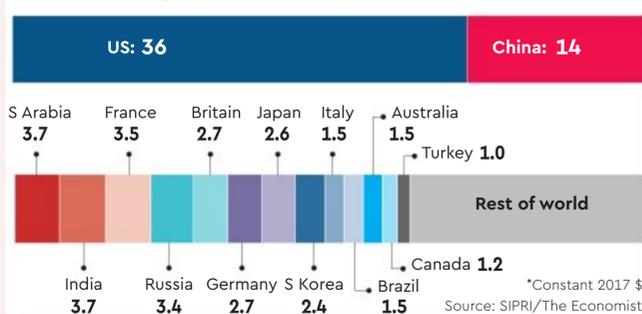
In fact, a recent diktat by SEBI mandates listed companies with AA rating and above and with outstanding loan of a minimum of ₹100 crore to tap the bond market for 25% of their incremental long-term funding needs. While this diktat may have been a cause of anxiety for some, the move to merge the commercial and treasury divisions in banks can address, to a large extent, these concerns.

In fact, SEBI should consider allowing companies with ratings less than AA to be included in this as well. Companies with AA rating and above would anyway be able to raise funds from the market. Only by including companies with ratings less than AA can the bond market be expanded.

Banking sector needs reforms—empowerment of bank boards, risk mitigation, talent recruitment, retention and compensation, manpower training

Changing world

Worldwide military expenditure*, 2018, as % of total



SOLAR AGRI-FEEDERS

Farmers' place in the sun

How solar energy can catalyse India's agricultural energy transition

VENKATESH DWIVEDI

The author is director (Projects), EESL



THE CURRENT ENERGY consumption pattern of India's agricultural sector is mired in inefficiency. Despite farmers being dependent on the sun for most farming activities, irrigation usually happens quite late at night. This is due to the practice of supplying subsidised electricity to farmers during the midnight hours. Done with the intent of reducing the strain on the grid, owing to the daytime loads, the practice inadvertently leads to increased water and energy wastage, as the pumps run throughout the night. Therefore, the energy wastage is compounded further, with disruption in farm yields and significant delays in irrigation of farms. To put things in perspective, an area that could be irrigated in 24 hours, ends up taking almost 4-5 nights to irrigate completely.

India's agricultural sector is responsible for the consumption of over 18% of overall national electricity usage. However, its contribution to the GDP is just over 5%. This discrepancy has been prevalent since the 1970s, when the Green Revolution was on. Well-intentioned reforms like subsidised electricity supply have had the adverse effect of increasing the energy strain even further. Meant to alleviate the stress on farmers, low-tariffed or free-of-cost electricity has instead led to mounting losses for the distribution companies

(discoms), exacerbated further due to high transmission losses. Electricity theft has emerged as another area of concern and has been on the rise due to non-metered electricity usage in the agricultural sector.

The solution, however, is not to curtail the power access to the agricultural sector, as it employs a large part of the population and is a key cog in India's growth engine. We need to provide the requisite energy to the sector, albeit in a more sustained manner. With the agricultural sector's electricity demand set to double over the next decade owing to rising irrigation demand for larger cropped areas, newer crop varieties and rising mechanisation, there is a need for introducing focused measures. The continued agricultural subsidies will lead to piling losses for discoms, along with disruption of the entire energy value chain.

The challenge here is two-pronged. First, we must ensure farms receive uninterrupted electricity supply during daytime. Second, we need to prevent the rising electricity demand from the agricultural sector to bleed discoms further. Solar energy has long been the beacon of India's energy transition and can provide a greener energy avenue for the agricultural sector.

The first step towards the adoption of

solar energy is solar agri-feeders installed by discoms to transmit energy to farms. A solar agri-feeder is a 1-10 MW community-scale solar power plant and is linked to a substation. The plant requires around five acres of land and a single 1 MW plant can power around 350, 5-HP pumps. These agri-feeders can provide largely uninterrupted and sustainable 8-10 hours of electricity during the day. It also obviates installation, maintenance and operation costs for farmers. Additionally, discoms can support farms when the power supply from the feeders is low due to sporadic sunlight, and can even use excess electricity produced by the feeders in case of low

irrigation demand. Thus, solar agri-feeders have unparalleled utility for the agricultural sector. A shining example is the solar substations of the Maharashtra State Electricity Distribution Company Limited (MSEDCL), which are pegged to generate 200 MW of clean energy in a year, which can then be infused into the grid at attractive tariffs via long-term power purchase agreements.

There are many advantages of solar agri-feeders. These enable reduction of agricultural subsidy and do not require capital subsidies of their own, from the government. These also offer remarkable scalability, as a large number of small solar

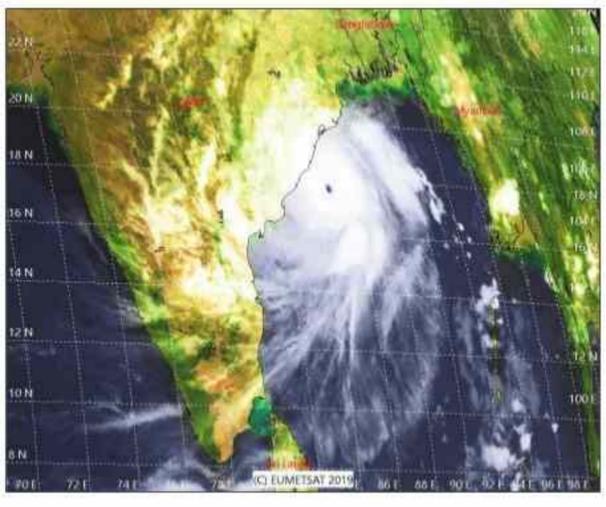
power plants can be swiftly installed in the open or unused land of substations across the country. These feeders also eliminate the need for significant infrastructural costs, due to new large transmission lines, which is a challenge faced by large-scale wind and solar deployments. This results in affordable and sustained power supply for the agricultural sector during the day, aided by an easy-to-implement design for setting up the feeders.

Discoms benefit immensely from this approach, as the mounting losses from agri-electricity subsidies are mitigated to an extent, which enables in reducing overall losses. Lower agricultural demands from discoms also have the domino effect of enhancing energy access and affordability for industrial and commercial use. This is due to decreased dependence of discoms on the higher tariffs imposed on the industrial sector. India's 2 crore electric and 75 lakh diesel irrigation pumps contribute 26 million metric tonnes of greenhouse gas, which is 5% of the nation's total emissions. Solar agri-feeders can help alleviate this considerably.

The remarkable utility and viability of solar farm feeders is undeniable and has definite relevance in the government's roster of energy sector interventions such as smart metering, renewables proliferation, energy-efficient pumps, and pan-India energy access.

FACT CHECK, GROUND REALITY

HOW CYCLONE FANI GOT ITS NAME, WHY THE NEXT ONE WILL BE VAYU



Satellite image shows Cyclone Fani approaching the Indian coast at 12 noon on May 2. The dot is the eye of the cyclone. Joint Typhoon Warning Center, US Navy

THE NEWEST cyclone to emerge out of the Bay of Bengal has been named Fani. Before that, there were cyclones Hudhud in 2014, Ockhi in 2017 and Titli and Gaja in 2018. How are these cyclones named? Each Tropical Cyclone basin in the world has its own rotating list of names. For cyclones in the Bay of Bengal and Arabian Sea, the naming system was agreed by eight member countries of a group called WMO/ESCAP and took effect in 2004. These countries submitted eight names each, which are arranged in an 8x8 table (see below). The first cyclone after the list was adopted was given the name in the first row of the first column — Onil, proposed by Bangladesh. Subsequent cyclones are being named sequentially, column-wise, with each cyclone given the name immediately below that of the previous cyclone. Once the bottom of the column is reached, the sequence moves to the top of the next column. So far, the first seven columns have been exhausted, and Fani (again proposed by Bangladesh) is the top name in the last column. The next cyclone will be named Vayu. The lists will wind up with Cyclone Amphan, whenever it comes.

names. For cyclones from the Bay of Bengal and Arabian Sea, these lists are not rotated every few years, as explained by the India Meteorological Department's Regional Specialized Meteorological Centre (RSMC) for Tropical Cyclones over the Northern Indian Ocean.

The lists for storms in the Atlantic and Eastern Pacific basins are, however, rotated. Exception are, however, made in certain cases — if a storm causes excessive death and destruction, its name is considered for retirement and is not repeated; it is replaced with another name.

Why name cyclones?

It is generally agreed that appending names to cyclones makes it easier for the media to report on these cyclones, heightens interest in warnings, and increases community preparedness. Names are presumed to be easier to remember than numbers and technical terms. If public wants to suggest the name of a cyclone to be included in the list, the proposed name must meet some fundamental criteria, the RSMC website says. The name should be short and readily understood when broadcast. Further, the names must not be culturally sensitive and should not convey any unintended and potentially inflammatory meaning.

When the lists end

After the 64 names are exhausted, the eight countries will propose fresh lists of

NORTHERN INDIAN OCEAN CYCLONE NAMES

Contributors	List 1	List 2	List 3	List 4	List 5	List 6	List 7	List 8
Bangladesh	Onil	Ogni	Nisha	Giri	Helen	Chapala	Ockhi	Fani
India	Agni	Akash	Bijli	Jal	Lehar	Megh	Sagar	Vayu
Maldives	Hibaru	Gonu	Ailla	Keila	Madi	Roanu	Mekunu	Hikaa
Myanmar	Pyarr	Yemyin	Phyan	Thane	Nanauk	Kyant	Daye	Kyarr
Oman	Baaz	Sidr	Ward	Murjan	Hudhud	Nada	Luban	Maha
Pakistan	Fanoos	Nargis	Laila	Nilam	Nilofar	Vardah	Titli	Bulbul
Sri Lanka	Mala	Rashmi	Bandu	Viyaru	Ashobaa	Maarutha	Gaja	Pawan
Thailand	Mukda	Khai Muk	Phet	Phailin	Komen	Mora	Phethai	Amphan

SIMPLY PUT

Understanding Azhar's listing

Multilateral negotiations frequently involve complex quid pro quos, and China is known to wait and play the long game. Why has it chosen to allow the global terrorist listing of Masood Azhar at this juncture?

SHUBHAJIT ROY
 NEW DELHI, MAY 2

ON WEDNESDAY, a committee of the United Nations Security Council added Jaish-e-Mohammad chief Masood Azhar to its ISIL (Da'esh) and Al-Qaida Sanctions List of Individuals and Entities after China lifted its technical hold on listing the Pakistan-based terrorist. Beijing's turnaround after 10 years of blocking the move has implications for both the South Asian region and the world. Multilateral negotiations frequently involve complex quid pro quos, and China is known to wait and play the long game — why has it chosen to relent at this moment?

Relationship challenges

While the border dispute has been the most protracted challenge, Beijing's lack of support to New Delhi's bid for permanent membership of the United Nations Security Council has been a longstanding sore point. China has also opposed India's entry into the elite Nuclear Suppliers Group (NSG) since 2016.

China signed off on the NSG waiver granted to India in September 2008 after the George W Bush administration did some heavy lifting. But it refused to budge when India sought membership of the NSG, which would enable it to access high-end, critical and dual-use technology.

In June 2016, Foreign Secretary S Jaishankar went to Seoul and presented India's case to members, including China, attending the NSG plenary. Before that, Prime Minister Narendra Modi had met President Xi Jinping at the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation summit in Tashkent and asked him to "make a fair and objective assessment of India's application and judge it on its own merit". But Xi did not yield.

Thwarted listing efforts

India first attempted to have Azhar listed by the UNSC Resolution 1267 Sanctions Committee in 2009, after the 26/11 Mumbai terrorist attacks, but China put a technical hold on the proposal. India made a much more serious attempt after the January 2016 Pathankot terrorist attack. Diplomatic efforts were made through that year, and Modi raised the issue with Xi on the sidelines of the BRICS Summit in Goa in October 2016 —



Jaish-e-Mohammad chief Masood Azhar in Islamabad in January 2000. AP File

to be rebuffed. Fresh efforts to list Azhar were made in 2017 — this time, in a break from the past, the proposal was moved by the US, the UK, and France. It was signal that New Delhi was acting as part of a global effort, not pushing an India-Pakistan bilateral issue onto a multilateral forum.

The June-August 2017 Doklam standoff raised tensions, but when the two leaders met in Xiamen in September, they decided to work towards ensuring that "differences do not become disputes". This formulation, which began during the leaders' meeting in Astana in June 2017, led to their informal summit in Wuhan in April 2018, where the two sides agreed to be sensitive to each other's concerns.

After the February 14 Pulwama terrorist attack, as India pressed to have Azhar listed, it invoked the Wuhan spirit. But on March 13, barely an hour before the deadline ran out, China blocked again — for the fourth time in 10 years.

The situation now

With its action on Wednesday, China has taken a major contentious issue off the table, and given itself space for positive manoeu-

ring with India. It has eased the atmosphere before the next informal summit, which is likely to take place in India later this year, and created goodwill for the two sides to work on their differences, and build on their convergences. While several issues still remain, India and China have a chance to use the political capital from the Azhar listing to work together on projects, and to collaborate and cooperate in multiple areas of convergence.

It is not that China has not taken care of Pakistan's sensitivities. Prime Minister Imran Khan was in Beijing for the Belt and Road Forum Summit on April 25, and over the past two months, the close allies have deliberated on the pros and cons of the decision.

China has huge geostrategic and economic stakes in Pakistan, and is heavily invested in the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC), part of Xi's Belt and Road Initiative. It worries about terrorist threats to its workers and assets in Pakistan, and wants that country's strategic establishment to keep the terrorists on a leash. Pakistan does not have the luxury of being annoyed with China's decision to allow Azhar's listing.

At the same time, Pakistan's strategic and political establishment has now got some space to ward off immediate international

pressure for not acting against terrorism and terrorist financing. Azhar's listing gives Pakistan a window to claim that it has "zero tolerance" for terrorism before the Financial Action Task Force (FATF), which is meeting to assess its actions against terrorism and terrorist financing.

As China takes over the FATF presidency from the US on July 1, Pakistan will be on a stronger footing — and may have a reasonably good chance of avoiding blacklisting. The US, the UK, France, and India, along with other countries, will, however, take a hard look at Pakistan's record since last year when it made certain commitments to the FATF.

China and Pakistan proclaim they are "all-weather friends" and "iron brothers", and attempts will likely be made to leverage the Azhar decision to procure better international credit terms for Imran's cash-trapped government.

View from Islamabad...

It would also appear that for Pakistan, Azhar — who some reports suggest is now bedridden with spinal ailments — has outlived his utility. While Jaish remains a strategic asset for Pakistan's security establishment, defending Azhar was probably proving too costly for Pakistan, which, under Imran and Army chief General Qamar Javed Bajwa, is trying very hard to improve its badly-tarnished global image. China's cooperation with the global community could present it with a breather; however, a country that has sheltered Osama bin Laden, Mullah Omar, and Hafiz Saeed — the last of whom roams around freely spewing venom against India and even putting up candidates in elections — has a long way to go before anyone believes it.

...And from Beijing

A key Chinese concern was to minimize its perceived reputational costs before the international community. For a country aspiring for global leadership, it is bad optics to be seen as protecting, in defiance of a global consensus, a single individual who is responsible for so many terrorist actions. Beijing, which is frequently assailed for violating global rules, would like to project an image of responsibility and leadership. The Azhar listing could be indication that it has finally decided that the time has come to play a new move.

Pepsi vs Gujarat farmers: case, its withdrawal

SOHINI GHOSH
 AHMEDABAD, MAY 2

ON THURSDAY, PepsiCo India Holdings (PIH) announced it is withdrawing lawsuits against nine farmers in north Gujarat, after having sued 11 farmers for "illegally" growing and selling a potato variety registered in the company's name. What were these cases about?

The variety

The patent is for the potato plant variety FL-2027 (commercial name FC-5). Pepsi's North America subsidiary Frito-Lay has the patent until October 2023. For India, PIH has patented FC-5 until January 2031 under the Protection of Plant Varieties and Farmers' Rights (PPV&FR) Act, 2001.

The allegation & defence

PIH, which has a buyback agreement

with Gujarat farmers, accused the 11 farmers — three of whom earlier had contracts with the company — of illegally growing, producing and selling the variety "without permission of PIH".

Speaking to *The Indian Express* before the cases were withdrawn, one of the accused farmers had said the agreement was that PIH would collect potatoes of diameter greater than 45 mm, and that farmers had been storing smaller potatoes for sowing next year. Four other farmers, who were slapped with Rs 1.05 crore lawsuits, said they got registered seeds from known groups and farmer communities and had been sowing these for the last four years or so, and had no contractual agreement with anyone. They said they learnt they were growing a registered variety only when they got a court notice on April 11.

Activists' view

In the days that followed the lawsuits, ac-

tivists, farmer unions and other organisations cited Section 39(1)(iv) of the PPV&FR Act in defence of the farmers. The section states: "Notwithstanding Anything contained in this Act — a farmer shall be deemed to be entitled to save, use, sow, resow, exchange, share or sell his farm produce including seed of a variety protected under this Act in the same manner as he was entitled before the coming into the force of this Act, provided that the farmer shall not be entitled to sell branded seed of a variety protected under this Act."

Organisations said the Act was tailored to give farmers free access to seeds. Kavitha Kuruganti of Alliance for Sustainable and Holistic Agriculture, a nationwide network of more than 400 organisations, said the rights on a patented seed differ from country to country. "In the US, if someone has patented a seed, no other farmer can grow it. If PepsiCo is looking at enjoying similar rights in this country, it does not hold," she said (this was

before the PIH announcement on Thursday).

Cases & announcement

A court in Deesa, Banaskantha, had appointed court commissioners to investigate the premises of two farmers as well as two cold storages. In Aravalli, a court had issued a summons notice to five farmers. In Ahmedabad, the commercial court had extended an *ex-parte ad-interim* injunction on four Sabarkantha farmers until June 12, barring them from growing or selling FC-5.

The Gujarat government, meanwhile, announced it would become a party to all the suits and back the farmers. On Wednesday, the government reportedly held out-of-court settlement talks with the company, which eventually announced the withdrawal of cases. It has withdrawn six cases against nine of the farmers, and its officials will meet state government authorities Friday to discuss an arrangement.

What the discharge of two police officers means for Ishrat Jahan case

SOHINI GHOSH
 AHMEDABAD, MAY 2

FIFTEEN YEARS after teenager Ishrat Jahan was killed along with three others in an alleged fake encounter, a special CBI court in Ahmedabad Thursday discharged former police officers D G Vanzara and N K Amin. Prime accused in the alleged encounter that took place on Ahmedabad's outskirts on June 15, 2004, Vanzara was then Deputy Commissioner of Police in the Detection of Crime Branch, Ahmedabad, while Amin was Assistant Commissioner of Police in the DCB.

Why have the two been discharged?

This was because the Gujarat government refused to sanction their prosecution under CrPC Section 197, required for taking cognisance of an offence alleged to have been committed by a government servant while acting or purporting to act in discharge of official duty. In 2018, the Home Ministry had refused sanction for prosecution of four Intelligence Bureau (IB) officers who were accused in the case. They too have sought discharge and the case is with the chief judicial magistrate.

What happened in the alleged

encounter and its aftermath?

At dawn, the Detection of Crime Branch led by Vanzara gunned down Ishrat and three men in an alleged encounter. Gujarat Police claimed to have acted on an intelligence input that the three men, including two Pakistani nationals, were travelling to kill then Chief Minister Narendra Modi. The FIR of the Ahmedabad City Crime Branch filed that day did not identify Ishrat, describing her as "one woman terrorist seated on the seat adjacent to the driver's seat".

In 2006, Ishrat's mother, Shamima Kauser, filed a petition in Gujarat High Court, seeking a CBI investigation into the alleged fake encounter. A year later, Vanzara and two other IPS officers were arrested in another encounter case, in which Sohrabuddin Sheikh had been killed.

How did the investigation, and the case in court, progress over the last 15 years?

A High Court-appointed special investigation team and the CBI found the Ishrat Jahan encounter to be "fake". The CBI implicated the Gujarat Police as well as the IB in the alleged murders.

The first doubts were raised in a 2009, when an inquiry by metropolitan magistrate S P Tamang concluded the encounter

to be fake and said that it was carried out only for rewards and promotions.

In August 2009, the Centre filed an affidavit in which it indicated Ishrat was an LeT member, citing a purported LeT mouth-piece report that had acknowledged her membership. The Centre, however retracted the claim within a month saying that these links were "needlessly misinterpreted". But in 2016, a Home Ministry official claimed he was forced to file the second affidavit that removed references to the alleged LeT links, and that he had been tortured by an officer (Satish Verma, IPS) who was part of the HC-appointed SIT.

The CBI FIR booked 20 police officers including former Gujarat DGP K R Kaushik on charges of murder and criminal conspiracy and under sections of Arms Act. Chargesheets were filed against eight Gujarat police officers. Besides Vanzara and Amin, the others were P P Pandey (who retired as Gujarat police chief), G L Singhal, Tarun Barot, Anaju Chaudhary, J G Parmar and Mohan Kalasava (who died in 2007) for murder, abduction, destruction of evidence and other charges. Also chargesheeted were four IB officials — retired Special Director Rajinder Kumar who was Joint Director of the Subsidiary Intelligence Bureau (SIB) in Gujarat at the time



D G Vanzara (left); N K Amin

of the encounter, besides T Mittal, M K Sinha and Rajiv Wankhede — for criminal conspiracy to abduct and illegally confine four people killed in a fake encounter. The chargesheet against them did not stand when the MHA refused to clear their prosecution.

On what grounds has the prosecution faced criticism?

Questions have been raised by Shamima Kauser's counsel on the prosecution seeking sanction for prosecuting Vanzara and Amin when the court had already refused to discharge them in August 2018 saying their role was "greater" than that of former DGP P P Pandey, who was the first to be discharged in February 2018. Kauser's counsel

also argued against defining the carrying out of police encounters as "part of official duty".

Pandey was discharged on the grounds that key witnesses had made contradictory statements and that the CBI had not sought prior sanction to prosecute him. In the case of Vanzara and Amin, however, the court while refusing to discharge them also asked the CBI whether it would seek sanction for their prosecution, which the agency did.

Discharge is dealt with under Section 227 of CrPC: "If, upon consideration of the record of the case and the documents submitted therewith, and after hearing the submissions of the accused and the prosecution in this behalf, the judge considers that there is not sufficient ground for proceeding against the accused, he shall discharge the accused and record his reasons for so doing." Given that there remains no new evidence to be presented, if either CBI or the victim chooses to approach a higher court, the case would largely rely on how the higher court exercises Section 227.

What about the other accused policemen?

Four other policemen are out on bail and were reinstated, some of them having retired. They are Singhal, Parmar, Barot and



THE EDITORIAL PAGE

WORDLY WISE

TERROR AS WE KNOW IT TODAY STRIKES WITHOUT PROVOCATION.
— HANNAH ARENDT

The Indian EXPRESS

FOUNDED BY
RAMNATH GOENKA

BECAUSE THE TRUTH INVOLVES US ALL

Wuhan spirit needs a body

The listing of Masood Azhar as a global terrorist can open a new phase in India-China relations



SANJAYA BARU

THERE COULD NOT have been a better way for China to mark the first anniversary of the Wuhan Summit between President Xi Jinping and Prime Minister Narendra Modi than for it to have altered its stance on declaring Jaish-e-Mohammad chief Masood Azhar a terrorist with a global footprint. News reports suggest that American arm-twisting forced China to fall in line with all the other members of the United Nations Security Council. However, it is best to leave such claims to the US and China to make and denounce. As far as India is concerned, the final outcome is a welcome one. For Prime Minister Modi, it is yet another foreign policy prize secured during the election season. President Xi may not have intended to make a gesture to India that would help PM Modi bang in the middle of a contentious national elections, but in the end he did.

In the ever changing trilateral dance between India, China and the United States, it remains to be seen if President Donald Trump would make his own gesture to Modi by offering India a waiver on his decision on imposing economic sanctions on Iran. If President Trump remains rigid and pushes India into a corner, many Indians will begin to take a more favourable view of China than has been the case since the worst days of the Doklam standoff along the China-India border. President Trump may well emerge as China's most valuable foreign policy asset in India.

From Italy to Malaysia, heads of government have recently been rethinking relations with China in the face of Trump's shortsighted antics and Xi's changing tactics. Is it merely tactics or is there a change in China's strategy, with the pause button being hit on the Xi Jinping policy of assertiveness and greater regard being shown to neighbours' concerns? Have developments in China as well as Trump's "trade war" challenge encouraged the Xi regime to soften its stance, even if China is now too big and powerful to return to the pretence of Deng's "peaceful

rise"? These questions will engage China watchers for some time. India's own relations with the US and China will have to take account of its relations with both. It is a triangular equation and will remain so for a long time.

Many factors would have shaped China's decision on Masood Azhar, including developments within China, in Pakistan and across Asia. Radical Islam keeps raising its head in newer places across Asia, as it recently did in Sri Lanka, and now poses as much a challenge to China's rise as it does to India's. Both countries must work together towards a win-win strategy on over-powering radical Islam in Asia. Both the US and China have pursued strategies that have not yielded benefits for Asia as a whole. If China's policy towards Pakistan has been unhelpful, so has US policy towards Iran. By seeking to protect Pakistan and isolate Iran, China and the US, respectively, will only further destabilise Asia.

The removal of the Masood Azhar thorn can open a new phase in India-China relations if the second informal summit to be held later in the year in India can take the bilateral relationship to a new level. That new level would be defined by a serious conversation between India and China on Asian security.

The Masood Azhar vote at the UNSC 1267 sanctions committee has brought another issue to the fore. In response to China's stance at the February meeting of the committee, where it refused to vote along with the other 14 members, a call was given in India for the boycott of Chinese goods. The call went largely unheeded drawing attention to the depth of the China-India economic relationship. There is a fundamental change in popular opinion in India about China. Most Indians neither view China through the hackneyed "Hindi-China bhai bhai" lens nor do they view it through the "1962 war" lens. China is increasingly viewed as a successful Asian power that has worked hard to get where it has. Aspirational India respects that.

where it has. Aspirational India respects that. Aspirational India is also visiting China in increasing numbers and returning with a new regard for modern China. The popularity of Chinese telecom goods in India and of Bollywood movies in China shows that both countries have been able to utilise soft power to build bridges. Of course, the trade imbalance remains an issue despite rhetoric to the contrary. The Wuhan Spirit is yet to find genuine expression in the realm of trade relations. Though China ostensibly acted to reduce its trade surplus with India, in the net there has been no improvement in the trade equation.

According to reports quoting Indian government sources, what China has managed to do is to show its exports to India as emanating from Hong Kong. For the purposes of global trade statistics Hong Kong remains an independent entity even though China conducts a considerable part of its trade with the rest of the world through Hong Kong. Consequently, the combined trade balance between India, on the one side, and China and Hong Kong taken together, on the other side, has in fact increased from \$55.4 billion in 2017 to \$60.1 billion in 2018.

There is, at the moment, an interesting parallel in India-US and India-China relations. On the security and terrorism front both are willing to assuage Indian concerns but on the trade front neither is willing to address India's interests. Can friendship be built on political gestures alone while India's economic interests are ignored? India's options on the trade policy front are limited by the pace of its development and the competitiveness of its industry. As another developing country that has raised its game, China may have little regard for India's woes and many Indians may understand that. But, the trade tantrums of super rich America will find few takers in India.

Baru is distinguished fellow, Institute for Defence Studies & Analysis, New Delhi

TAGGING AZHAR

Forging a consensus on designating the Jaish leader as a global terrorist is a victory for Indian diplomacy

THE DESIGNATION of Masood Azhar, the leader of the Jaish-e-Mohammad (JeM), the group behind most of the recent big attacks in India from Pathankot to Uri and the February 15 bombing in Kashmir that killed 40 CRPF jawans, is a diplomatic victory for India. Efforts to have him listed by the UN Security Council ISIL (Da'esh) and Al Qaeda Sanctions Committee set up under resolution 1267 began 10 years ago after the Mumbai attacks, at the same time Hafiz Saeed and other members of Lashkar e Toiba were included in the list. India later made attempts to tag him in 2016 after the Pathankot attack, and in 2017, months after the Uri attack. Though JeM itself had been designated as early as 2001, Azhar managed to escape the global terrorist tag mainly due to China's "technical hold" against such listing, including earlier this year, when France moved a resolution in early March, with the US and UK as co-sponsors, after the Pulwama attack. But with several shifts in world politics, and despite its own determination to stand by Pakistan in this matter, Beijing had clearly begun to realise the diminishing returns of shielding Azhar, especially as he was fast becoming known as "China's favourite terrorist". After the failure of the France-UK-US proposal, the US took the lead in forcing Beijing's hand with a resolution in the Security Council. Secretary of State Mike Pompeo has claimed Azhar's designation "a victory for American diplomacy and the international community against terrorism, and an important step towards peace in South Asia".

For India, the inclusion of Azhar in the UNSC 1267 list by itself does not bring closure on a chapter that began in 1994 with Azhar's arrest in Kashmir, the hijack of IC 814 to Kandahar, his release in exchange for the passengers, and his setting up a terrorist shop in Pakistan, which then went on to plan and carry out the 2001 attack on Parliament. Pakistan has to take the next steps required under UNSC 1267, which means it must freeze Azhar's assets, impose a travel ban on him, and put in place an arms embargo against him. Such measures have not proved to hinder Hafiz Saeed, founder leader of LeT/Jamat ud dawa. Despite being listed as a global terrorist organisation, the JeM has flourished. Only when the Pakistan security establishment takes steps to shut down the group, in a manner that will convince the world, will this chapter come to an end.

The designation is another reiteration that Pakistan houses many of the listed global terrorists in the world. But Islamabad's search for a face-saver in the omission of "political references" to the Pulwama attack and "maligning the legitimate struggle of the Kashmiris" in the reasoning for the designation shows that the road ahead is long when it comes to convincing Pakistan that terrorist groups cannot be used as instruments of state policy.

THE MAOIST CHALLENGE

A focussed and coordinated push by state agencies could end the violent run of the ultra-Left political movement

THE IED BLAST that claimed the lives of 15 security personnel and their driver in Gadchiroli, Maharashtra on Wednesday is a grim reminder of the challenge the Maoist movement continues to pose to the country's internal security. The dead men belong to the C-60 force, an elite commando group of Maharashtra police, modelled on the Greyhounds of Andhra Pradesh. The attack comes a year after Maharashtra police gunned down 40 suspected Maoists in the same region. Clearly, the Maoists want to send out a message that they still possess the firepower to take on the security forces and establish territorial dominance.

The geographical location and forested terrain has enabled the Maoists to establish a base in Gadchiroli, a tri-junction of Maharashtra, Andhra Pradesh and Chhattisgarh. However, the state police reportedly has infiltrated the Maoist organisation in the region and created its own network of informers. Maoist actions in the region has drastically come down unlike in neighbouring Chhattisgarh, where in April an MLA was killed along with four security personnel. In fact, the success in containing Maoist activities may have given a false sense of security to the commandos, who ignored the standard operating procedure when they drove out, all of them in a single vehicle, to confront the ultras who had torched the vehicles of a road construction contractor in the area. That they didn't suspect any possible ambush on the way also points to intelligence failure. The Maoists have always shown a remarkable capacity to regroup and strike back even in places they have faced severe crackdown: For instance, they had killed an MLA and a former legislator in Araku Valley last year, when it was believed that the movement had been crushed in Andhra Pradesh. It could also be that the state had failed to address the deprivation and underdevelopment that in the first place created an enabling climate for the Maoists to build a base.

The Maoist movement or CPI (Maoist), born out of splits in the communist movement in the 1960s, has reinvented itself many times to become an influential militarist political group. Its cadre base too has shifted from peasants in the 1960s to tribals in the 1990s and thereafter. However, a decade since the then prime minister, Manmohan Singh, described them as the gravest internal security threat, the ultra-left political movement is now restricted to pockets of Central India. A focussed and co-ordinated effort by security agencies could further limit its footprint and finally end its violent run. That's both a political and administrative challenge.

COVER GIRL

Halima Aden is first Muslim model to appear in 'Sports Illustrated' swimsuit edition, wearing both hijab and burkini

IN SWAHILI, "KAKUMA" means nowhere. It is also the name of a small East African town in Kenya, where one can come across the Kakuma refugee camp. "Home" to thousands of refugees, this place and the camp have now been propelled into the orbit of international recognition and fame. And the woman who's helped shape this journey of a people and its history from "nowhere" to somewhere big is Halima Aden, the first Muslim model to appear in *Sports Illustrated* magazine's Swimsuit edition, wearing a hijab and a burkini.

Aden, born at the Kakuma camp, has been a global model of repute already. What is remarkable is the significance of her sartorial choice and tenacity with which she has stuck to it. Hijabs, burkinis or any other item of clothing, where the head or parts of the female body are covered — something that supposedly conforms to notions of modesty in Islam according to many religious authorities — have not been the most popular dress code in many countries. The niqab (full veil that covers the face) is banned in France and Belgium, Austria and Denmark, for instance. After the Easter Sunday bombings, Sri Lanka has also banned the niqab. In the context of such steady strangling of personal value systems, even within democratic spaces, this move by *Sports Illustrated* seems exceptional. In the glitzy world of international modelling, the grime of racism and stereotypes is often ignored, at best. By putting Aden on the cover, the magazine has taken a step towards "normalising" a visual that our society — buffeted by negative cultural biases — is wont to find "conservative", and even regressive.

That *SI* operates within a market economy driven by business sense, not merely a moral compass, needs mention. "Muslim fashion", after all, is an industry worth billions. However, in a world where nothing — not even the monies — seems enough incentive to trump cultural otherisation, perhaps a fashion spread might be an eye-opener.



AYAN GUHA

IT IS GENERALLY believed that unlike other states of India, caste and religion don't play a significant role in West Bengal's electoral politics. Academic literature often articulates this as West Bengal's "exceptionalism". As a result of the electoral decline of the Left Front and some limited attempts by the Trinamool Congress at community-based mobilisation, the so-called exceptionalism thesis has come under some critique. Even then, it is largely acknowledged that identity issues have so far not made any remarkable impact on the mainstream electoral politics in the state.

In this context, the upcoming electoral battle in West Bengal assumes special significance. It seems to have brought identity related concerns to the centre stage of mainstream politics. It is interesting that such concerns are not being conveyed in the language of caste or religion but in the apparently secular idiom of citizenship. The BJP is promising the revival of the recently lapsed Citizenship Amendment Bill, 2016, despite the massive backlash it faced in the Northeast. The Bill proposes to confer citizenship upon all Hindus, Jains, Sikhs, Christians, Buddhists and Parsis who have migrated to India from Bangladesh, Pakistan and Afghanistan as refugees.

Politically, this Bill is directed at wooing the powerful Namasudra caste group who mostly belong to the Matua sect, originally hailing from Bangladesh. The single point demand of their organisation, Matua Mahasangha, is the repeal of the 2003 Citizenship Amendment Act, which denies citizenship to those who have migrated after March 25, 1971 — a large number of them are

There is a fundamental change in popular opinion in India about China. Most Indians neither view China through the hackneyed 'Hindi-China bhai bhai' lens nor do they view it through the '1962 war' lens. China is increasingly viewed as a successful Asian power that has worked hard to get where it has. Aspirational India respects that.

CASTE POLITICS, SECULAR IDIOM

BJP is attempting to use citizenship issue to woo Namasudra community in Bengal

Namasudras. The family of the founder of the Matua sect, Harichand Thakur, enjoys religious authority over the community as well as control over the Matua Mahasangha. In the 2009 Lok Sabha elections and the 2011 assembly elections, the TMC gained the tacit backing of the Mahasangha then led by the spiritual head of the community, Boroma Binapani Devi, who passed away a few months ago. Thereafter a bitter feud within the first family of the Matuas broke out, which has now turned political. Currently, one section of the Mahasangha led by Mamtabala Thakur, the daughter-in-law of Boroma, has aligned with the TMC while other section is led by Shantanu Thakur, the grandson of Boroma. In the upcoming elections, Mamtabala, the current TMC MP from Bongoan constituency will fight against her nephew Shantanu, a BJP candidate.

Since 2014, the BJP has been trying to gain political mileage by making a distinction between refugee and infiltrator. This involves a political strategy to exhibit favourable disposition to Hindu migrants, mostly Namasudras, by treating them as persecuted refugees. This strategy helped the party to win the Namasudra dominated Basirhat (south) constituency in 2014. But the party's Namasudra outreach hit a roadblock when lakhs of Bengali Hindus, many of whom Namasudras, got excluded from the draft list of the NRC in Assam. The Matua Mahasangha organised massive demonstrations against the NRC.

The Namasudras, who constitute the second-largest Scheduled Caste group in Bengal are crucial to the electoral calculus in Nadia and North 24 Parganas, where half of the

community is concentrated. Prime Minister Narendra Modi chose Thakurnagar, the headquarters of Matua Mahasangha, to start BJP's campaign in Bengal and made a strong pitch in favour of the citizenship bill. He also paid a visit to Baroma and touched her feet, a hugely significant symbolic gesture, which did not go unnoticed. In his address he urged Mamata Banerjee to back the Bill for the sake of the Matuas. This has created an enormous dilemma for the TMC. While support for the Bill will antagonise the Muslims, a vital support base of the party, opposition to the Bill may push the Namasudras towards the BJP. What has made the situation trickier for the TMC is the recent surfacing of a letter purportedly written by Baroma which appeals to Banerjee for her support for the Bill. But the TMC has challenged the authenticity of the letter. Its opposition to the Bill is attributed to an attempt to consolidate the Muslim support. In this backdrop, the controversial use by the party of Bangladeshi actors in poll campaign has been interpreted by its opponents as Muslim appeasement and infiltration-friendly attitude. This has again given ammunition to the BJP to consolidate the support of the majority community particularly in the border districts.

In the long run, such politics may have unanticipated dynamics. Political lexicons and patterns of mobilisation, that accommodate communitarian concerns, could gain currency.

The writer is assistant professor of political science at Hamdard Institute of Legal Studies and Research, Jamia Hamdard, New Delhi



MAY 3, 1979, FORTY YEARS AGO

BOMB CONFIRMED
IT IS NOW fairly clear that the Indian Airlines Boeing 737, which crashed at Meenambakkam airport in Madras on April 26 was brought down by a bomb. Much of the evidence collected so far indicates the presence of a bomb either in the toilet behind the cockpit, or in the baggage hold under it.

JANATA FISSURES
DESPITE PROTESTS FROM Charan Singh, the Janata Parliamentary Board decided to ask Haryana Chief Minister Devi Lal and state Janata Party president Chandrawati to explain why they had worked against the

party's candidate in the Narnaul Assembly by-election. The Board's decision has pushed Charan Singh's two BLD associates in the dock.

SANJAY'S NIGHT IN
SANJAY GANDHI REFUSED to leave Tihar jail on the night of May 2 despite the fact that the Metropolitan Magistrate, Brajesh Kumar, had ordered his release following the furnishing of bail bonds. RK Trikha, a local businessman, had stood surety for Sanjay Gandhi, who was arrested along with 300 other Youth Congress-I workers on charges of rioting, attempted murder, assaulting public officers and damaging public property.

According to jail authorities, Sanjay Gandhi refused to sign a personal bond, without which he cannot be released.

RAJYA SABHA TUMULT
UPROAR, TUMULT, PANDEMONIUM — think of all the words for a noisy session and the Rajya Sabha was all that after question hour. The storm began when opposition members protested against the home minister's statement in the House on April 30, announcing the government's decision to refer the allegations, made against the families of the PM and the deputy PM during the debate on the Kanti Desai issue in August, to a retired judge of the Supreme Court.

13 THE IDEAS PAGE

Making every vote count

All arrangements for democratic representation come with some inadequacies. The debate should be on seeking a balance between the need for legislator-constituency connect and proportional representation



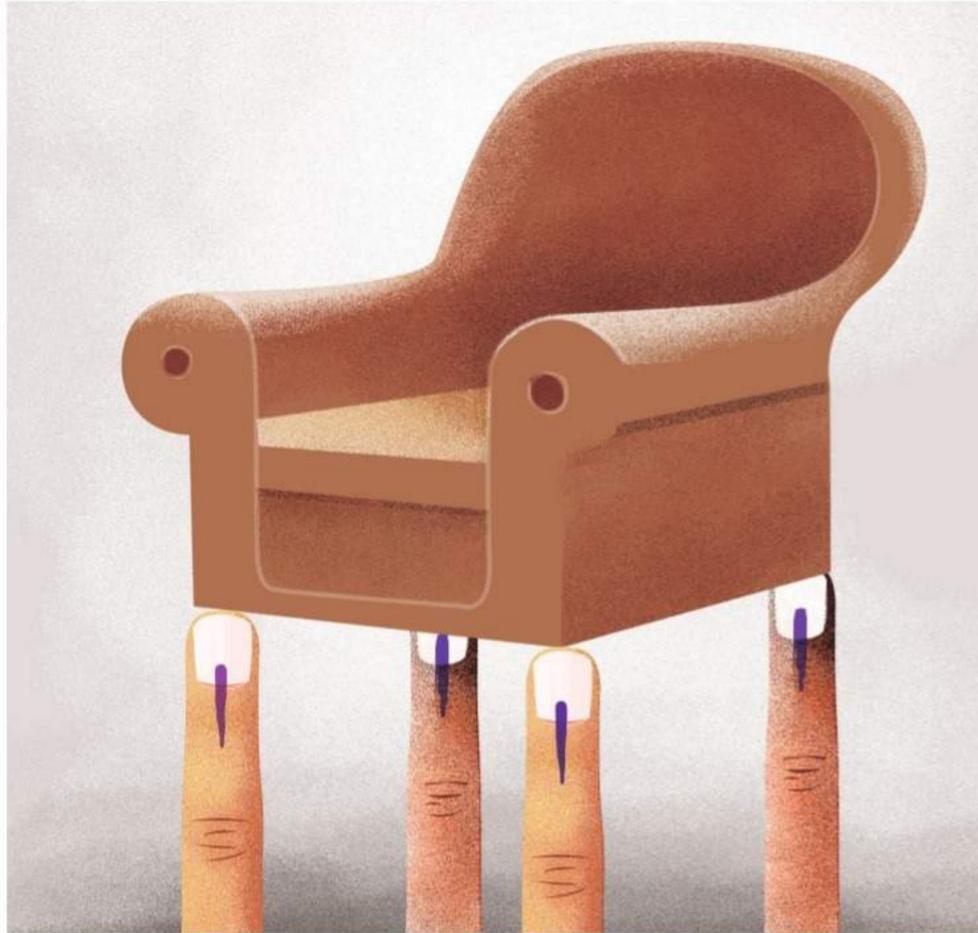
R PARASURAM

IN 'HALF MPS, half votes' (IE, April 20) Nalini Singh makes a compelling case for switching over from the first-past-the-post system (FPPS) to an alternative, which instead rewards a political party with seats in proportion to the number of total votes polled by it. A large number of people share the view that what was at the time of Independence copied from a largely two-party model for elections to the House of Commons has proved increasingly inadequate for capturing the true character of the electorate's verdict in the multi-party context of Indian democracy.

Singh illustrates her point by analysing the voter turnout percentages of various parties in the 2014 elections. The BJP, the winner in 2014, was rewarded, as indeed were other such winners of the past, with seats much larger than it would have secured in an alternative system. This happened at the cost of parties such as the BSP polling 2.03 crore and the DMK polling 96 lakh votes, respectively. Neither won a single seat in the Lok Sabha. Here, I would like to draw attention to some other aspects, which need to be examined and also try and show how rewarding a party with seats proportionate to the votes it captures is not really the solution it might appear to be in the first instance.

First, what goes in favour of a constituency-wise winner is that it allows voters to choose their representative out of those on offer on the ballot. It presupposes a connect between a representative and her constituents. Already much compromised, even this connect will not remain if a party were allowed to "pre-announce a list of potential members" as suggested by Nalini Singh. Ideally, in a representative democracy, it should be the local unit of a party that selects its candidate for a constituency. However, in the absence of any compelling provisions in the People's Representation Act, political parties in India have given a complete go-by to inner party democracy. What actually happens is that the returning officer puts on the ballot the name of the person whom a party authorises him to. So, barring independents, the voter actually chooses one of the many candidates put up by the party headquarters in Delhi or the state capitals, so to speak.

But, at least as of now, some local considerations do go into the decision a political party makes in deciding who its candidate from a particular constituency shall be. At times these are tactical, as when taking into account the caste group a candidate belongs to, or strategic as in when a leader decides to offer himself as a candidate in a constituency far and away from his traditional or home base to send down a message to the electorate, a la Varanasi or Wayanad. Then there are others who go seeking safe havens. Any list-system, unhindered by guarantees for local representation, would only make leaders even more powerful than now. There is every likelihood of a party leadership wanting to pack its list of likely winners top down as per its own preferences rather than as per local aspirations and considerations. A completely unintended consequence arising from a switchover to seats-in-proportion-to-the-votes-poll arrangement, if you like. Look at what has happened in another much-admired piece of legislation, the anti-defection



Suvajit Dey

law. Despite it having helped put an end to the Aya Ram-Gaya Ram era, it has led to party leaderships growing stronger and powerful at the expense of an ordinary member's right to debate and dissent.

Second, the federal character of the Indian Constitution cannot be ignored. A proportionate system of determining the number of seats in the Lok Sabha would in effect repeat what is already in place for the Rajya Sabha, albeit through indirect elections. Every political party has the opportunity of securing for itself seats in the upper house, in proportion to the members it has got in the state assembly. Its also worth noting that if we were to repeat the seats-in-proportion-to-the-votes-poll arrangement for the Vidhan Sabhas as well, inadequacies cited in the previous paragraph shall kick-in in equal measure. As for Parliament, we will have MPs, sitting in either house, without having faced the electorate directly. Here again it will be the leadership of political parties who stand to gain. Theirs will be the only recognisable faces campaigning for votes; not a very healthy prospect for a country as large and diverse as ours!

All alternative arrangements for representation in a democracy shall come with some inherent inadequacies. The debate, therefore, should ideally be on how to seek a balance. Three possible options can be examined. The first, and in my view the most balanced, is a mix of directly elected representatives with a given number of seats secured on the basis of percentage votes polled by a political party. This arrangement shall not entirely take away the representative-constituent connect. It will also respect people's choice of a particular political party, an attribute to capture ideologi-

cal and social considerations. One moot point, which will be considered, is whether to count the percentage of votes for a party nationally or state-wise. Both will throw up totally different outcomes.

The second option is for allowing a runoff between the top two candidates, in case the first round winner polls less than 50 per cent of votes polled. This will, however, add to both the already long period of actual polling and to costs incurred for holding the elections.

A third option is to go for preferential transferable votes, with voters marking their second and third and subsequent choice from amongst the list of candidates contesting from a particular constituency. This again shall entail a total re-haul of the election procedures and technology in place, including the present generation of EVMs and VVPATs and the required support infrastructure.

Most importantly, what needs to be factored into the debate is that the first-past-the-post system evolved presupposing a two-party system and a measure of inner party democracy, with local units and their registered members guaranteed a role in selection of candidates. As both these are absent in the Indian context it remains to be seen if political parties, in power at the Centre and in the states at any given time, as direct beneficiaries of the latest outcomes from an election shall want to develop a consensus for any change in the manner we elect our MPs and MLAs.

What goes in favour of a constituency wise winner is that it allows voters to choose their representative out of those on offer on the ballot. It presupposes a connect between a representative and her constituents. Already much compromised, even this connect will not remain if a party were allowed to 'pre-announce a list of potential members'.

The writer is a former chief secretary, Madhya Pradesh and former state election commissioner of Madhya Pradesh

WHAT THE OTHERS SAY

"Careful international engagement rather than reckless ideological intervention is required, to protect the lives and prospects of ordinary Venezuelans, and convince them they have a future in their own country." — THE GUARDIAN

A false discourse

Emotive national security issues are being raked up in the face of the government's failures on the development front



KAPIL SIBAL

THE 2019 LOK Sabha election is bereft of basic issues faced by the common man. The nature of political discourse engineered by the BJP has been given credibility by some key players in the electronic media.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi's thematic refrain is to use India's alleged muscular response in Balakot for electoral gains. The reasons, including the attendant intelligence failure, for the tragic death of over 40 CRPF jawans at Pulwama can await electoral outcomes. Those questioning Balakot and requiring proof of downing an F-16 have been denounced as anti-national. Anyone seeking answers has been called "pro-Pakistan". All outlandish statements on Balakot must be accepted and supported. We all must cheer Modi for having taught Pakistan a lesson.

The "godi" media feeds into this campaign. Pakistan is being used as a punching bag for Modi to retain power. Attempts are afoot to make the Balakot strike a symbol of national pride. All other issues of national concern are brushed aside. This emotive issue cuts across castes. It might help Modi reach out to those for whom caste and other forms of identity matter. But when it comes to the security of the state and national pride, such equations do not matter. The response to Pakistan in Balakot is intended for domestic political dividends. The first-time voters are prime targets of this campaign.

The same strategy was used by the BJP in Assam and the Northeast. The talk of infiltrators is equally emotive. The constant use of the NRC by Amit Shah seeks to create a divide between "us" and "them". Shah's statement that the NRC will be applied throughout the country targets those elements who are considered outsiders. Such statements have a dual impact. One, they breathe hatred and division and two, instill fear in the minds of those targeted.

In fact, this concept of infiltrators is also being applied in states. Given this, alleged infiltrators in Maharashtra are obliged to learn Marathi. Those depriving local residents of jobs are also perceived to be infiltrators. Outsiders become infiltrators. This disturbs the peace. Identity politics becomes the norm and tears asunder the constitutional values we have cherished for years. Demographic changes should help foster societal amalgamation. Societal segregation and ghettoisation, in fact, feed into identity politics. These dangerous trends make people insecure. Ghettoisation of communities builds permanent walls within society. It will take years to break them down.

The BJP's electoral strategy in Kashmir can be viewed through the same prism.

Those seeking to maintain the special status of Kashmir are seen to be opposing national integration. The battle between "us" and the "rest" is now raging. The "us" is a huge majority and the "rest" find themselves confined. The pelting of stones by children is not seen as a breakdown of confidence in the state but as something that is remote-control operated. The hidden hand from outside is allegedly disturbing peace and the strong man is seeking to secure it.

All this suggests that the 2019 Lok Sabha election is without a rational discourse. The only feel good factor is the strike at Balakot. It is in this sense that the election has become a conflict between Modi and others. Modi no longer represents one who promised to transform India. He no longer talks about the change that has been brought about in the last five years because he has nothing to show for it. The achievements of scientists — of sending a mission to the moon, the anti-satellite missile tests, the levels of excellence achieved in certain quarters — are all achievements of Modi. Modi appropriates successes of Indians as his own. He is all pervasive. The Election Commission dares not question his conduct and that of Amit Shah. Almost all other institutions do his bidding.

He has sought to use both the state machinery and enormous money power to infiltrate the minds of all Indians. There is no visual space in this country which does not showcase him. The headlines and ads in newspapers, his omnipresence in the electronic media, his nauseating interviews, and his jibes at opposition leaders are seen as highlights of this national discourse.

The poor must rise above the state of their hopelessly mundane existence. They must laud Modi for having saved India by striking at Balakot. Those running small businesses must rise above their declining fortunes and associate themselves with a leader who all the world leaders hug and who dared Pakistan. No one can question the failings of this government in the last five years. It seems that Balakot has more symbolic relevance than Pokhara-I and Pokhara-II. It seems to have done India proud, much more than the breakup of Pakistan in 1971. All of India must be thankful to a man who taught Pakistan a lesson. Yet terror rages on and our jawans continue to die. Balakot has changed nothing on the ground.

The issue of "Hindu terror" raised in the course of this election is again fed into this campaign. The candidature of Sadhvi Pragna and its justification contains the message that anyone who alleges a terrorist act must associate it only with the "other". This communal tinge to the discourse is the running thread throughout this election.

Democratic India deserves better. Balakot is projected as a metaphor for triumph. What we need and need desperately is the triumph of democracy in which false discourses do not matter, but people do.

The writer, a former Union minister, is a senior Congress leader

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

WEST ASIA DEMANDS

THIS REFERS TO the article, 'The Iran conundrum,' (IE, May 2). By pleasing its West Asian allies including Saudi Arabia and Israel, the US administration is displaying a myopic vision. Iran can retaliate by withdrawing from the Nuclear accord, it could ratchet up tensions through the use of its proxies in West Asia, and in the most trying situations can enforce a blockade of the Strait of Hormuz, which will lead to a sudden spike in oil prices. Having said that, India must tread carefully. New Delhi has to keep in mind its interest in the Chabahar port as well as trade relationship with the US. It should stand up to the sanctions imposed by the US.

Pranay Shome, Kolkata

COURT'S CRISIS

THIS REFERS TO the article, 'Listen to her' (IE, May 2). The Supreme Court is facing an unprecedented crisis. When the three-member panel, with two women, was appointed, it looked like the complainant will receive a fair hearing. But her walking out of the process due to the fear of not getting justice has raised a few questions. The panel has requested the CJ to appear before it. But the complainant's exit casts a shadow over the process. The sooner the full court intervenes, the better it would be for this sensitive case. The truth should be out in open and the guilty should be punished.

Bal Govind Noida

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

EVM AGAIN

THIS REFERS TO your editorial, 'Pushing buttons' (IE, May 1). The authenticity of electoral results depend upon the accurate working of Electronic Voting Machines (EVM). The complaints against working of EVMs should be dealt with seriousness by the Election Commission. If there is defect in the EVM in any part of country, it should be probed thoroughly and a re-election held there.

Sanjay Chawla, Amritsar

A dangerous sophistry

Equating restriction on highway in Kashmir with Centre's excess is illogical



UDAYAN MUKERJI

THE ARTICLE BY Waheed ur Rahman Para ('Democracy vs militarisation', IE, April 22) appears to lack direction. Linking restrictions on the use of the national highway with the alienation and exclusion of Kashmiris is disingenuous. Branding a single measure to secure convoy movements as a "total siege" of Kashmir is not only hobbled logic but also borders on dangerous sophistry.

Para is equating a restriction of just two days in a week (now done away with entirely) on general movement, to prevent a recurrence of the Pulwama tragedy, with the "unfreedom" that has bolstered the azadi movement.

Para jumps nimbly between the government and "Hindutva" groups, an agility which he apparently shuns when speaking of mainstream Kashmiri parties to the exclusion of secessionists and terrorists. Having used the restrictions on the highway to protect convoy movement as a launching point, the author extrapolates this to purported Hindutva designs towards "dismantling the minority character of J&K". He fails to explain how the movement of forces to fight Pakistan-based, trained and funded terrorists has any connection with demographic changes in Kashmir. While quite a few of the

Hindutva groups are certainly expansionists in saffron clothing, the author possibly forgets that the current demography of J&K is the outcome of terrorism, coercion and blatant threats by separatists and terror groups that caused Kashmiri Pandits to leave their homes and hearths.

Para then turns to television anchors who "misrepresent and spread venom against Muslims". Thereby he makes the third facile transition in his postulates. The first postulate began with describing the government reserving the national highway for two (now none) days a week for troop movement as "unfreedom". He then transitioned to the broad postulate of demographic undermining of Kashmiri Muslims and he now moves on to speaking for the entire Indian Muslim community. Perhaps the author overlooks that for every freak publication accused of spewing distrust there are scores of others which hold, cherish and propagate liberal ideals.

Para describes the restriction, by the Centre on the use of the national highway as "hegemonic". How can a step taken by the Centre to preserve the lives and limbs of security personnel be interpreted as the domi-

nance of the state? Then the author broadens this cautionary measure to reflect "the deprivation of Kashmiris at the hands of jingoistic decrees". He does not explain why he regards a purely defensive security protocol as a deprivation of Kashmiris or how this administrative step can be construed as jingoistic.

Para attributes the genesis of "the current phase of conflict" in Kashmir to the Amarnath crisis of 2008, which arose from the transfer of a 0.40 sq km of land to the Shri Amarnathji Shrine Board (SASB) sparking huge protests and withdrawal of PDP support to the then Congress-led government. A solution was devised involving the then NSA (M K Narayanan), whereby the SASB would temporarily use this kerchief of land during the Yatra period. Para's diatribe omits the fact that the protests, orchestrated by the Hurriyat, richly served Pakistan's anti-India Goebbelsian propaganda.

The author contradicts himself by saying "India that places Jammu & Kashmir, its only Muslim majority state, as an emblem of its secular credentials". A secular state cannot, by definition, have provinces defined and their legitimacy based on religious grounds. It is only the post-independence democratic

India that bows to the will of such a majority. Before then, Kashmir was ruled by the Sikhs, the British and the Dogras, without much fuss over the religious persuasion of the populace.

Thereupon Para dilates liberally on the excesses suffered by Muslims countrywide. It goes without saying that Muslims in India and globally are often at the receiving end of harsh and patently cruel prejudices. But then, is he trying to say that if the "senas" are subdued, the seditious groups in Kashmir will reconcile to the idea of India?

Like a smorgasbord of complaints laid out before him, the author picks up one, savours it and then moves on to another. Thus, having sampled restrictions on the national highway, secularism in peril, apprehensions and depredations suffered by the minorities and India and the Amarnath crisis, Para moves on to lifting of the security cover hitherto afforded to "mainstream politicians" in Kashmir. It is baffling that Para fails to differentiate between genuine mainstream politicians and separatists like Hashim Qureshi, Mirwaiz Umar Farooq, Abdul Ghani Bhat and Shabir Shah.

The writer is a retired IPS officer



A global label

With Masood Azhar listed as a terrorist, India must work to ensure the mandated sanctions

Masood Azhar's listing as a designated terrorist by the UN Security Council at long last closes an important chapter in India's quest to bring the Jaish-e-Mohammad chief to justice. He eluded the designation for 20 years, despite his release in 1999 in exchange for hostages after the IC-814 hijack, and his leadership of the JeM as it carried out dozens of deadly attacks in India, including the Parliament attack of 2001, and more recent ones like the Pathankot airbase attack in 2016 and the Pulwama police convoy bombing this year. China's opposition to the listing has long been a thorn in India's side, given the toll Azhar and the JeM have exacted, and Beijing's veto of the listing three times between 2009 and 2017 had driven a wedge in India-China relations. Despite the frustration over China's last hold on a proposal moved by the U.S., the U.K., and France just weeks after Pulwama, the government has done well to approach Beijing with what the Ministry of External Affairs called "patience and persistence". There is much disappointment, however, over the final listing released by the Security Council, with no mention of Mr. Azhar's role in any of the attacks against India, or directing the insurgency in Jammu and Kashmir. A specific reference to Pulwama, which was in the original proposal, was also dropped, presumably to effect China's change of mind on the issue. Pakistan's claims of a victory in this are hardly credible; Masood Azhar is one of about twenty 1267-sanctioned terrorists who have Pakistani nationality, and more are based there, which is hardly a situation that gives it cause for pride. It is necessary to recognise that India's efforts and those of its partners in the Security Council have been rewarded with a UNSC designation at its 1267 ISIL and Al-Qaeda Sanctions Committee. The focus must now move to ensuring its full implementation in Pakistan.

But this is easier said than done. Pakistan's actions against others on the 1267 list have been far from effective, and in many cases obstructionist. Hafiz Saeed, the 26/11 mastermind and Lashkar-e-Toiba chief, roams free, addresses rallies, and runs a political party and several NGOs without any government restrictions. LeT's operations commander Zaki Ur Rahman Lakhvi was granted bail some years ago despite the UNSC sanctions mandating that funds and assets to the sanctioned individuals must be frozen. It will take constant focus from New Delhi, and a push from the global community, to ensure that Masood Azhar is not just starved of funds, arms and ammunition as mandated, but that he is prosecuted in Pakistan for the acts of terror he is responsible for. Azhar and his JeM must lose all capacity to carry out attacks, particularly across the border. Global terror financing watchdog Financial Action Task Force will also be watching Pakistan's next moves closely, ahead of a decision, that could come as early as in June, on whether to "blacklist" Pakistan or keep it on the "greylist". Both financial and political pressure should be maintained on Islamabad to bring the hard-fought designation of Masood Azhar to its logical conclusion.

Lost lives

India must meet the Maoist challenge in a holistic manner

The death of 15 security personnel in a landmine attack in Gadchiroli on Wednesday is another grim reminder of the Indian state's continued failure to crush naxalism. Less than a month ago, a legislator and some security personnel lost their lives in a similar attack in the neighbouring State of Chhattisgarh ahead of polling. That this attack should occur despite the deployment of 30 companies of the Central Reserve Police Force – a company comprises 135 personnel – and 13 companies of the State Reserve Police Force as well as 5,500 personnel of the local police in Gadchiroli and neighbouring Chandrapur district shows not only the audacity of the perpetrators but also the unpreparedness of the security forces. A Quick Response Team was going down the road to Dadpur in Kurkheda where extremists had set fire to three dozen vehicles of a road construction company earlier in the day when the explosion blasted the team to smithereens. The ease with which the extremists were able to torch so many vehicles is alarming, and the manner in which the response team blithely drove into an ambush is a shocking example of poor planning. The naxals set the bait and the security forces blindly took it. In the process, standard operating procedures, including letting a road-opening team lead the way, seem to have been ignored. Yet, the authorities still remain in a state of denial.

It is no coincidence either that the perpetrators chose the Maharashtra Foundation Day, after the polling in the district, to send this violent message. That the naxals should be able to control the narrative, remain on top of the intelligence, stay nimble and several steps ahead of the security planners should be a matter of deep concern. It is some comfort that the polling percentages in both Gadchiroli and neighbouring Chandrapur have risen, compared to the 2014 Lok Sabha election, from 70.04% to 71.98% and from 63.29% to 64.65%, respectively. But the path of the voter to the polling booth in the naxal-dominated districts is still paved with disincentives. And, the security forces deployed in the region have not been able to instil in them a greater level of confidence. On top of everything else, most of the police personnel who perished in this latest attack seem to have been local citizens. What effect could this have on the larger process of weaning away the populace from the naxalites? Reality beckons. Even in the prevailing circumstances of a hostile external environment, India cannot afford to take the challenges of internal security lightly.

Don't give in to polarisation

In Sri Lanka, the challenge is to turn national mourning into a call for coexistence and democracy



AHILAN KADIRGAMAR

As reports about those behind the Easter Sunday attacks in Sri Lanka emerge, many questions remain about the motives of the extremists. The full picture of the formation of this extremist force and the objectives behind their heinous crimes may take time. However, they have succeeded in creating a spectacle of death, mayhem and fear.

I focus here on the historical backdrop and the broader consequences of these attacks. In the months ahead, the climate of fear is going to drastically shape the workings of the state, the political character of future regimes and relations between communities.

The political leadership in the country has descended into a blame game with this being an election year. The progressive forces committed to a plural and democratic society have a historical challenge before them, as Sri Lanka is on the verge of falling into the abyss of polarisation.

Historical turn

The Easter attacks have implanted horrendous images in the minds of Sri Lankans. The fallout can tear apart the body politic of Sri Lanka with political shifts similar to the U.S. after September 11, 2001 and the July 1983 pogrom in Sri Lanka.

The "war on terror" in the U.S. after 2001 led to the draconian USA PATRIOT Act, the detention and surveillance of Muslims and the institution of Homeland Security, undermining the democratic and liberal structures within the U.S. With many other countries

sucked into the "war on terror" coupled with the Bush regime's military adventures in Afghanistan and Iraq, great social and political turmoil was created in West and South Asia, and fuelled extremist Islamist forces.

In Sri Lanka, the "war on terror" manoeuvred an internationalised peace process between the government and the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE), by pushing for a deal between a so-called "failed state" and a "terrorist organisation". Eventually, as the peace process failed with heightened international engagement, Sri Lanka's version of a brutal "war on terror" cataclysmically ended the civil war with tens of thousands of lives lost in May 2009.

On the other hand, the armed conflict itself escalated following the government-orchestrated July 1983 pogroms where over 2,000 Tamil civilians were massacred. That pogrom over-determined the political economy of the country with an ethnic conflict over the next two and a half decades. Indeed, the Easter massacre leading to hundreds of casualties is loaded with dangers of religious forces entering the mix of a country historically fraught with ethno-nationalist tensions and conflicts.

Polarised politics

Some actors are drawing parallels between the perpetrators of the Easter attacks and the LTTE. However, the similarities are limited to the LTTE's use of suicide bombings and targeting of civilians. The LTTE had a clear agenda of creating a separate state and worked to build a base within the Tamil community through a combination of separatist nationalist mobilisations, totalitarian control and ruthless elimination of dissent.

The extremist Muslim youth behind the Easter attacks are a fringe group and their nihilist politics



without a social base is one of divisiveness and isolation. They have drawn as much on globally circulating contemporary technologies of terror as on the alienation of Muslim youth with rising global Islamophobia, but their politics are eschewed by the Muslim communities in Sri Lanka.

In this context, even though the attacks were mainly against Christian churches, the fallout may take unpredictable forms. Thus far, the Christian communities' response has been restrained. However, chauvinist Sinhala Buddhist forces see these attacks as targeting state sovereignty and feel vindicated in their distrust of Muslims. Their anti-Muslim campaigns have greatly influenced the Sinhala population's prejudices against Muslims over the last decade; the Mahinda Rajapaksa regime stoked anti-Muslim violence and the Sirisena-Wickremesinghe government hardly addressed its continuation.

Even as reports of the perpetrators behind these harrowing attacks unfold, many international and national actors are projecting narratives to suit their geopolitical and power seeking agendas. The number of international actors now providing assistance to confront "terrorism" does not bode well given the disastrous history of internationalised engagement in Sri Lanka.

There are social and political dangers in projecting hasty solu-

tions either removed from or with limited understanding of problems. While security in the aftermath of the attacks is a real concern, a solution solely focussed on militarised policing and surveillance is worrying. For close to a decade, progressives have called for demilitarisation. However, the current state of Emergency with militarised check points and surveillance are further militarising the country. In weeks before the Easter attacks there was much discussion of repealing the draconian Prevention of Terrorism Act enacted in 1979, which in no small measure was linked to torturing and alienating Tamil youth during the war and Sinhala youth during the Janatha Vimukthi Peramuna insurrection. We are now looking into the black hole of a far severe legal and surveillance regime, with little discussion of its long-term impact on democratic freedoms.

Political ramifications

In the panic and clamour for a security response, the ideological, economic and political ramifications of the current crisis are missed. Drawing on Islamophobic discourse, Muslims characterised as the "other" are called to explain and take responsibility for the Easter attacks. There are escalating demands to ban madrasas and Muslim women's attire without extensively consulting the Muslim community. Furthermore, as with the previous riots that targeted Muslim businesses, scapegoating Muslims for future economic problems is a real fear.

The fragile national economy is bound to decline with a major hit on the significant tourist industry. The July 1983 pogrom and the armed conflict brought tremendous disorder and isolated Sri Lanka at a time when its peers such as Malaysia and Thailand gained economically from major foreign investments. In these times of pro-

tectionism, an economic shock affecting international investment, capital flows and trade with Sri Lanka can lead to a national economic crisis.

Even more dangerously, an authoritarian anti-terrorist leadership is now the kneejerk call for the upcoming presidential elections. Predictably, the Rajapaksa camp gaining ground over the last year capitalising on mounting economic problems, is seeking further political gain out of this disaster. They claim only a strongman leader can redeem the country. They are projecting their role in decimating the LTTE as the solution for the current crisis. However, the defeat of the LTTE was about taking on a totalitarian organisation with a pyramidal military structure, where the decapitation of the leadership led to its end.

The challenge now beyond the immediate security concerns is mainly of social and political proportions. The attacks by extremist Islamist forces on the Christian churches can shift into conflicts that involve chauvinist Buddhist and for that matter Hindu reactionary forces. Hindutva in India, Buddhist extremism in Myanmar and the circulation of their ideologies and practices are imminent dangers for an already fraught Sri Lankan polity.

The liberal and left forces in the country, and the Sinhala intelligentsia in particular, have to find the courage and discourse to take on the chauvinist anti-Muslim rhetorical barrage. A likely casualty of the Easter attacks is going to be the rights of Muslim youth and the broader freedoms of the citizenry. The challenge before the country is to turn national mourning and grief into a call for coexistence and democracy.

Ahilan Kadirgamar is a Senior Lecturer, University of Jaffna

The gender ladder to socio-economic transformation

More than a 'more jobs' approach, addressing structural issues which keep women away from the workforce is a must



DIVITA SHANDILYA

India is in the middle of a historical election which is noteworthy in many respects, one of them being the unprecedented focus on women's employment. The major national parties, the Bharatiya Janata Party and the Congress, have reached out to women, and their respective manifestos talk of measures to create more livelihood opportunities in rural and urban areas, which include incentives to businesses for employing more women.

What data show

Currently, the participation of women in the workforce in India is one of the lowest globally. The female labour force participation rate (LFPR) in India fell from 31.2% in 2011-2012 to 23.3% in 2017-2018. This decline has been sharper in rural areas, where the female LFPR fell by more than 11 percentage points in 2017-2018. Social scientists have long tried to explain this phenomenon, more so in the context of rising levels of education for women.

The answers can be found in a complex set of factors including low social acceptability of women working outside the household,

lack of access to safe and secure workspaces, widespread prevalence of poor and unequal wages, and a dearth of decent and suitable jobs. Most women in India are engaged in subsistence-level work in agriculture in rural areas, and in low-paying jobs such as domestic service and petty home-based manufacturing in urban areas. But with better education, women are refusing to do casual wage labour or work in family farms and enterprises.

Education and work

A recent study observed a strong negative relationship between a woman's education level and her participation in agricultural and non-agricultural wage work and in family farms. Essentially, women with moderately high levels of education do not want to do manual labour outside the household which would be perceived to be below their educational qualifications. The study also showed a preference among women for salaried jobs as their educational attainment increases; but such jobs remain extremely limited for women. It is estimated that among people (25 to 59 years) working as farmers, farm labourers and service workers, nearly a third are women, while the proportion of women among professionals, managers and clerical workers is only about 15% (NSSO, 2011-2012).

However, it is not the case that women are simply retreating from the world of work. On the con-



trary, time-use surveys have found that they devote a substantial amount of their time to work which is not considered as work, but an extension of their duties, and is largely unpaid. The incidence and drudgery of this unpaid labour is growing. This includes unpaid care work such as childcare, elderly care, and household work such as collecting water. The burden of these activities falls disproportionately on women, especially in the absence of adequately available or accessible public services. It also encompasses significant chunks of women's contribution to agriculture, animal husbandry, and non-timber forest produce on which most of the household production and consumption is based.

Any government which is serious about ensuring women's economic empowerment and equal access to livelihoods must address the numerous challenges that exist along this highly gendered continuum of unpaid, underpaid and paid work. A two-pronged approach must entail facilitating women's access to

decent work by providing public services, eliminating discrimination in hiring, ensuring equal and decent wages, and improving women's security in public spaces. It must also recognise, reduce, redistribute, and remunerate women's unpaid work.

An ActionAid document, which has compiled a people's agenda through extensive discussions across States, provides critical recommendations to policymakers on issues of concern to Dalits, tribal people, Muslims and other marginalised communities with a focus on the needs of women. On the question of work, women's demands include gender-responsive public services such as free and accessible public toilets, household water connections, safe and secure public transport, and adequate lighting and CCTV cameras to prevent violence against women in public spaces and to increase their mobility. Furthermore, they want fair and decent living wages and appropriate social security including maternity benefit, sickness benefit, provident fund, and pension.

Women have also expressed the need for policies which ensure safe and dignified working and living conditions for migrant workers. For example, in cities, governments must set up migration facilitation and crisis centres (temporary shelter facility, helpline, legal aid, and medical and counselling facilities). They must also allocate social housing spaces for

women workers, which include rental housing and hostels. They must ensure spaces for women shopkeepers and hawkers in all markets and vending zones.

Recognition as farmers

In addition, women have strongly articulated the need to enumerate and remunerate the unpaid and underpaid work they undertake in sectors such as agriculture and fisheries. Their fundamental demand is that women must be recognised as farmers in accordance with the National Policy for Farmers; this should include cultivators, agricultural labourers, pastoralists, livestock rearers, forest workers, fish-workers, and salt pan workers. Thereafter, their equal rights and entitlements over land and access to inputs, credit, markets, and extension services must be ensured.

Women also reiterate the need to recognise and redistribute their unpaid work in the household. For this, the government must collect sex-disaggregated household level data with suitable parameters. Unless policymakers correctly assess and address the structural issues which keep women from entering and staying in the workforce, promising more jobs – while a welcome step – is unlikely to lead to the socio-economic transformation India needs.

Divita Shandilya works at ActionAid India as Programme Manager- Policy and Research

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.

Azhar listing

The UN Security Council has finally designated Masood Azhar as a global terrorist and it is a symbolic win for India (Page 1, "UN Security Council designates Masood Azhar as global terrorist", May 2). Now, how much of terrorism pursued by this man in India can be arrested remains to be seen. The common man also needs to know the exact details about the behind-the-scenes diplomatic activities. The role of certain countries in West Asia in supporting terrorism needs to be exposed which could be difficult as the U.S. supports some of these regimes.

A. BHUYAN,
Nagaon, Assam

In reality, it is the European countries and the U.S. and the U.K. that played pivotal roles in pressuring China to toe the line. But there is no denying the fact that the UNSC's action will be extremely beneficial for India which has also been working hard to ensure that Pakistan is forced to initiate action against Azhar. India should now mount pressure on the UN and the clutch of nations that are on the same page as India as far as fighting terrorism is concerned to ensure that India's most wanted are extradited to face trial in Indian courts.

C.V. ARAVIND,
Bengaluru

Election 2019

The general election in 2019 is a historic one as its results

will affect Indians for many years. The narrative this time is mostly on race and religion rather than an evaluation of progress made from 2014. The discerning public would like to know the truth about demonisation, two crore new jobs and steps to recover black money. This election is very much about the role of the Election Commission of India, which is supposed to monitor all candidates and ensure that the rules are followed. However, the EC is either too timid or biased against the Opposition. Most candidates in the ruling party are polarising the electorate. The worst part is the Indian media which is not being objective. An independent media is the backbone of India's democracy and if it is

being strangled, democracy and freedom will be impacted.

ZEN BHATIA,
Ontario, Canada

Against natural justice

It is unfortunate that the former Supreme Court staffer, who has alleged sexual harassment by the Chief Justice of India has been denied even the basic opportunity of being assisted by a lawyer which goes against the principles of natural justice (Page 1, "ESC staffer walks out of Bobde panel hearing", May 1). In such a situation, the judges concerned on seeing the woman's plight, helplessness and inexperience, should have come forward to help her. The obstacles she faced (listed in the report) give the

impression that the inquiry is a mere procedural formality. If this facility had been given, nothing would have been lost. For example, in *Board of Trustees of the Port of Bombay vs. D.R. Nadkarni*, the Supreme Court held that when an employee is pitted against trained prosecutors, it would amount to denying the principle of equality when an employee is denied permission to engage a legal practitioner to defend themselves. Such an inference can be drawn when a helpless employee is

pitted in an inquiry conducted by Supreme Court judges. The committee has to remind itself that the preamble to the Constitution, which is part of the basic structure, begins with the words 'We the people'. The committee has to ensure that the inquiry should satisfy the people of India that it has been more than fair.

N.G.R. PRASAD,
RAM SIDDHARTHA,
Chennai

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CORRECTIONS & CLARIFICATIONS:

In the report, "CJI appears before panel probing sexual harassment charge" (May 2, 2019), there was a reference in the penultimate paragraph to the crisis in the Supreme Court when a clutch of websites published allegations against the CJI on Easter Day morning. It should have been April 20 morning.

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Is India doing enough to combat climate change?

PARLEY

The challenges in tackling a problem that requires a global collective effort

In the run-up to the UN Climate Action Summit in New York in September, in a discussion moderated by G. Ananthakrishnan, T. Jayaraman and Navroz Dubash talk about the fairness of the global climate regime, and what India could do to green its growth. Edited excerpts:

How serious is climate change as an issue today?

T. Jayaraman: Climate change is certainly the most serious global environmental crisis that we face. It is not the only environmental problem, but it is unique in its multi-scalar characteristic, from the global to the local. And in many ways, it is arguably the most immediate. But there is also a substantial section of the world that does not see it in the same terms. That is perhaps one of the most serious aspects of dealing with this problem.

Navroz Dubash: I think climate change has been with us for 25 years at least. At one level, for many people climate change has become an existential problem that risks undermining the conditions for productive life and therefore a problem that does not override but certainly permeates all kinds of other issues. For many others, it is a distant problem that is overwhelmed by more immediate issues. But this ignores the linkage between current issues and climate change. We don't have the option in India of thinking about anything that is innocent of climate change any more.

Global warming has touched about 1°C above pre-industrial levels. India is not responsible for the stock of CO2 in the atmosphere, but can it afford to wait for developed countries to make their move or should it aggressively pursue its own measures?

TJ: I don't think there is an either/or about this. We must recognise climate change as a global collective action problem. If one country cuts its emissions to the bone, that is going to be of little use if the others do not follow suit. That country will suffer the consequences of climate

change despite the extent of its sacrifice. Equally, waiting for others to do something and not doing something oneself is also not an option, especially in terms of adaptation.

If India does more mitigation, that doesn't reduce the risk in India. It is not a local exchange. We have to have good intent, show it in action, but on the other hand, we must do far more than we are doing today to call the developed countries to account. They are nowhere near meeting their Nationally Determined Contributions (NDC) targets. And some countries we don't even have on board, like the U.S. We need to move climate change to the top of our foreign policy agenda. This is a critical move we need to make.

ND: I agree that the performance of the developed world has been very poor compared to their capacities, wealth and promises.

The extent to which we have to turn around globally is dramatic. Rapidly emerging countries are part of the story, but that does not mean countries that have already emitted a lot and have built their infrastructure shouldn't actually be creating space for countries like India. So where does that leave India? It is a bit of a dilemma. We are also one of the most vulnerable countries.

I view it in the following way. One, there are a number of things that India could do that will bring development gains and also lead to mitigation benefits. For example, how we design our cities: we want more sustainable cities, cities with less congestion and with more public transport because we want cities that are more liveable. Those kinds of cities will also be low carbon cities. Two, more mitigation in India does not mean India gets to keep those benefits. Because at the end of the day, we are only 6% or 7% of global emissions. But what we are recognising is that the global carbon system is an interlocked system. So, what we have to think about is the global transition to low carbon systems and there are spillover effects there, from changes in one economy to changes in another economy, changes in politics in one place to changes in politics in another place.

TJ: The very form of your question is problematic. You can do whatever you want with your NDC. It doesn't matter. The question is, as a developing country, in the matrix of all other NDCs, where does India fit and what are other NDCs like? In the scheme of things as they are, what are we doing? I think within that we are doing pretty well. I think the problem for India is hedging its future, not simply what we consume now or what we expect to gain in immediate terms. What is it that we want as our long-term future and how much of it in terms of carbon space do we need to hedge? But I repeat, with our NDC, though our performance is good, we cannot respond with more commitments in our NDC until we see serious action at the international level.

ND: The Paris Agreement basically said, every country, please tell us what you can feasibly do within your country. It was always therefore going to be a relatively low set of pledges, and in that context India's doesn't push the envelope very



In its Paris Agreement commitments, India had pledged to reduce its intensity of GDP emissions by 33-35% over 2005 levels by 2030, and at Copenhagen, by 20-25% by 2020. Are we in sync with what is needed from us? With the goal of keeping temperature rise to 2°C or below 2°C or 1.5°C, how does India's NDC fit in?

TJ: The very form of your question is problematic. You can do whatever you want with your NDC. It doesn't matter. The question is, as a developing country, in the matrix of all other NDCs, where does India fit and what are other NDCs like? In the scheme of things as they are, what are we doing? I think within that we are doing pretty well. I think the problem for India is hedging its future, not simply what we consume now or what we expect to gain in immediate terms. What is it that we want as our long-term future and how much of it in terms of carbon space do we need to hedge? But I repeat, with our NDC, though our performance is good, we cannot respond with more commitments in our NDC until we see serious action at the international level.

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Everybody says electric mobility is a good thing. But what that does is to make the users of public transport pay for the well-being of the people still driving cars.

far, doesn't do minimal stuff. So, how do we know whether the pledge is ambitious or not? There's no good way to know.

The idea of the Paris Agreement is to get countries moving towards a low carbon economy, with the idea that each country will see that it is not too costly and not so hard and there are developmental benefits.

The pledges in an ideal world are setting the floor not the ceiling – countries will fulfil and hopefully exceed those pledges. And in India's case, we will probably exceed the pledges, because for reasons like urban congestion and air pollution, we will want to move in the direction of low carbon anyway, quite apart from climate change.

Now, in terms of what the politics of it are, we can try and arm-twist the rich countries. They have definitely been recalcitrant, they have dropped their responsibilities. But at the end of the day, India is a deeply vulnerable country. What we have learned in the last 20 years is that countries don't move further because of international pressure. Certainly not the rich and industrial countries. They move further because they found ways, in their enlightened self-interest, to do so.

If you look at the manifestos of the two national parties, climate change ekes in a small mention at the end, but it is really not thought through. In my informal conversa-

tions, they are still stuck in the language of saying we still need to have a lot more fossil fuels for more growth, when that is an open question in an era when the price of solar power is coming down and the price of storage is coming down. It is not a settled debate by any means, but we need to engage in that debate much more vigorously.

TJ: With regard to NDCs, I think we are risking a great deal if we take the current numbers in India in terms of consumption, energy as the benchmark for what we need. India still has huge development deficits. Unfortunately, the intersection between erasing development deficits and genuine adaptation has been poorly explored. So, every time there is a drought, some go around chanting 'climate change' when indeed it is regular climate variability. And we have always left our farmers at the mercy of the drought.

So, I think in adaptation, our focus should be understanding what our development deficits are. At the same time, a whole new diversionary argument is emerging. There is this recent paper from the U.S. that has appeared saying that India lost 31% of its potential GDP growth due to global warming between the 1960s and 2011. I don't buy that. Without accounting most importantly for institutions, if you simply examine temperature and GDP, you will get all kinds of correlations. What we really need to invest in is our conceptual agenda. Take electric vehicle mobility. Everybody says electric mobility is a good thing, and cheaper than conventional transport, by factoring in the cost of fossil fuels in terms of health, etc., using the Disability-Adjusted Life Years concept. But what that does is to make the users of public transport pay for the well-being of all the people still driving cars. So, arguing that electric mobility is cheaper really does not fly. Electric mobility is actually more expensive, in immediate terms, in terms of cost per vehicle kilometre.

ND: I agree that the entry point for this conversation should be the development deficits. For example, to say that we need to find a way for cleaner transportation shouldn't actually lead to a conclusion that it should lead to more electric vehicles – the first priority has to be im-

proved, more accessible public transport.

What could be the feasible climate diplomacy or politics for India under the UN framework or outside?

ND: The climate game has now firmly moved to a series of multiple national conversations. The Paris Agreement process is an iterative process where countries put something on the table, they try to implement it, they see if they could do it more easily than they thought, and they come back to the global level. It is a two-level game but the driving force is at the national level. Countries are not going to be arm-twisted by international pressure. We can try, but what will drive them is enlightened self-interest. Where the global role is going to be important is in technological cooperation, in spill-over effects. One of the big success stories is the fall in renewable energy prices, driven by Germany's domestic programme that supported global prices for renewables.

India has to play a role diplomatically, but our diplomatic game has to construct a development model that takes into account all our needs, including climate change, and keeps the pressure on the West on issues like finance and technology.

TJ: All that we do domestically should be framed in the context of development deficits. Within that context, whatever we can explore or do, we should. For instance, how do we ensure that we double the productivity of our main food crops? If we do something that is concrete, we will see the nexus between agricultural productivity and climate and climate variability, and learn something for the future.

My great disappointment is with the Indian private sector. They are willing to donate, willing to tell farmers how to be sustainable, invest in such kinds of activities outside their firms. But making their own firms models of sustainability, sustainability within the plant boundary, drivers of innovation, they still have to measure up. I think part of the reason for our not-so-coherent engagement with the international process is perhaps that we are not defining our own local priorities as clearly as we could and should have.



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Navroz Dubash is Professor at the Centre for Policy Research and coordinator of the Initiative on Climate, Energy, and Environment



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SINGLE FILE

Priyanka's U-turn in U.P.

Keeping her out of the Varanasi contest has sent the message that the only challenger to the BJP is the gathbandhan

SANJAY KUMAR



There is no doubt that by declaring that Congress leader Priyanka Gandhi Vadra will not be contesting against Prime Minister Narendra Modi from the Varanasi Lok Sabha constituency, the Congress has lost this round of public perception to the BJP. There is hardly any doubt that this has demoralised the party's local leaders, workers, and supporters. While this decision of the Congress might be viewed as the party fleeing from a "serious" race in Uttar Pradesh, it has nevertheless made the BJP's task slightly more difficult in the State now. Keeping Ms. Gandhi out of the contest has sent a silent message – that the only challenger to the BJP in U.P. is the gathbandhan (SP-BSP alliance), not the Congress. This might help consolidate the anti-BJP votes behind the gathbandhan candidates.

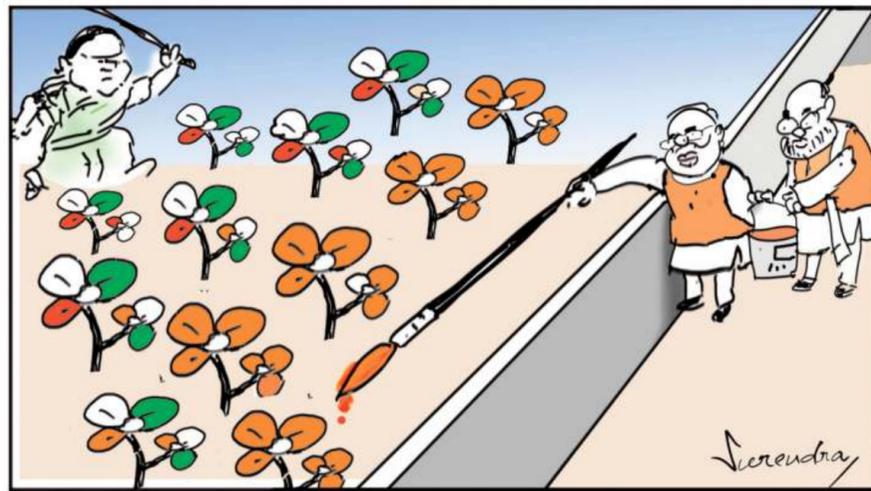
After it failed to form an alliance with the SP and the BSP, the Congress's decision to contest elections alone raised speculation on how much it could damage the electoral prospects of the BJP by cutting into its upper caste – mainly Brahmin – support base. There was also speculation on what impact it might have on the prospects of the SP-BSP alliance, especially if there is a shift amongst the Muslim voters towards the Congress.

In many constituencies, Muslims would like to vote for candidates who are best placed to defeat the BJP, but the complexities of making this strategy succeed are sure to result in the split of the Muslim votes between the Congress candidates and gathbandhan candidates. Studies conducted when the campaign had just begun indicated a significant possibility of a split in the Muslim vote, while they also indicated the Congress' inability to make inroads into the Brahmin vote. The Congress's announcement has given a clear signal to the Muslim voters: the real contest in U.P. is between the BJP and the gathbandhan. This will help consolidate the Muslim vote in favour of the gathbandhan.

Half of U.P. has already voted, but there are still numerous constituencies that head to the polls in the remaining phases, where Muslim votes matter. In constituencies such as Amethi, Lucknow, Barabanki, Faizabad, Sitapur, Bahraich, Kaiserganj, Shravasti, Gonda, Domariaganj, Sant Kabir Nagar, Maharaganj, Kushinagar, Varanasi and Ghosi, Muslims constitute more than 20% of the total voters. Their consolidation behind the gathbandhan candidate could pose considerable challenges to the BJP.

Further, there was no way Ms. Vadra could have defeated Mr. Modi in Varanasi, even if her candidature against him might have enthused the Congress workers. Nevertheless there are enough signals that the weeks of suspense and hype around her candidature may have anyway helped generate an atmosphere favouring the Congress in the constituencies going to polls in the coming phases.

The writer is a Professor and currently the Director of Centre for the Study of Developing Societies, Delhi



NOTEBOOK

Reconnecting with a messenger's messenger in Bihar

Pushpraj has many causes to fight for but few platforms to articulate them

VARGHESE K. GEORGE

In the nearly 16 years since I met him last, nothing much has changed about Pushpraj. His beard is now salt and pepper and his *jhola* has now been replaced with a backpack. He now has a motorbike to move around, a sign of some marginal material improvement. Pushpraj lives between Begusarai and Patna in Bihar, and travels all around the country to any place where he finds a sub-altern political cause to fight for.

I first met him in 2003 when I was the only reporter for Bihar for a national newspaper, and he, a man for all seasons. He introduced me to some intricacies of Bihar's rural politics, and became a companion in many of my travels around the State during my two-year stint there then. If journalists are messengers, Pushpraj is a messenger's messenger.

He would land up at my office quite often with some lead to a story. Though not a full-time journalist, he has been a writer-activist, getting a national perspective on all issues while sitting in a village in Begusarai.

When I dialled his old number, Pushpraj was predictably campaigning for Kanhaiya Kumar, former JNU Students Union president and CPI candidate for Begusarai. Pushpraj does not have a surname – his grandfather, a freedom fighter who burned his sacred thread and gave up his caste surname, bequeathed that legacy to the grandson. Pushpraj's revolutionary quest has taken him to Narmada Valley, Bhatta Parsaul, Nandigram and, in recent times, the JNU student agitation and the protests triggered by PhD student Rohit Vemula's death.

Pushpraj says he has no material ambitions, and his

life is witness to that. He has been offered a golden handshake to back off from the several agitations that he has taken part in Bihar. His book, *Nandigram Diary*, was published by Penguin. He has a few acres of ancestral land, which he wishes to sell to fund a Che Guevara centre. "There is no centre for Che in India," he says. That could be a fast route to martyrdom, I warn him, among his land-loving Bhumihar brethren. He is always there to help journalists from all over who land in Bihar any time, but rues the fact that most Hindi publications, which until recent years were keen to publish stories of local struggles, are no longer doing so. Pushpraj is an unsung hero, and I was happy to connect with him after many years.

Patna gave me the best bottom-up perspective on capitalist democracy during the first two years of my career, and my recent stint

for *The Hindu* in Washington, DC for three years gave me the best top-down perspective of it. Hence, returning to Patna after several years was an opportunity to refresh memories that I could process in a more holistic fashion.

It is not only that Pushpraj now has fewer platforms to publish his ground reports; even the building that used to house several outstation newspaper offices in Patna – Ojha's Mansion – now wears a deserted look. Most newspapers have shut down their Patna offices due to the severe business pressure on the media industry. Pushpraj used to be a regular visitor to Ojha's Mansion, recounting stories from the hinterland that he had come across and providing story ideas.

He has not run out of causes to fight for, but the platforms to articulate those causes have sadly shrunk.

FROM The Hindu ARCHIVES

FIFTY YEARS AGO MAY 3, 1969

P.M. invites 15 Telangana leaders for talks

The Prime Minister, Mrs. Indira Gandhi, has invited Mr. A. Madan Mohan, Chairman of the Telangana Praja Samithi, Mr. S. Venkatarama Reddi, Secretary, and 13 others to meet her in New Delhi on May 6 for discussions on the Telangana issue. The invitations were conveyed to them through the Andhra Pradesh Government. The Prime Minister had already completed a round of talks with the Telangana leaders in pursuance of her statement to the Lok Sabha. The 13 others who have been invited to meet the Prime Minister are: Messrs. S.B. Giri, Hind Mazdoor Sabha leader, K. Achuta Reddy, M.L.A. (Congress), Badri Vishal Pitti, M.L.A. (S.S.P.), Purushottam Rao, M.L.A. (Ind.), Ch. Venkateswara Rao, Sreedhar Reddy, Pulla Reddy, Mallikarjuna, Gopal and Wazahat Qadri, student leaders, P. Venkateswara Rao and Raghuvver Rao, journalists and G. Narayan Rao, advocate. Complete hartal was observed today [May 2] in Hyderabad and Secunderabad in response to the call given by the Praja Samithi to protest against the Police firing and "police excesses" in the city yesterday and to mourn the death of those who died in yesterday's Police firing.

A HUNDRED YEARS AGO MAY 3, 1919.

'Independent' Security Case.

In connection with Rs. 2000 security demanded from the 'Independent', the Hon'ble Pandit Motilal Nehru, who represented Pandit Shamlal Nehru, keeper accompanied by Mr. Syed Hussain, editor, attended the court of the District Magistrate (in Allahabad) and presented a petition praying for the withdrawal of the order. The Hon'ble Pandit argued at length that the Court had no jurisdiction to pass the order. The Magistrate in rejecting the application said: If we turn to the plain meaning of the words of the section there is not the slightest reason for supposing that the words "may from time to time vary any order under section" refer only to the orders calling for security and not the orders dispensing for special reasons with security.

POLL CALL

Lottery

What happens when two candidates in a constituency poll the same number of votes? According to Section 102 of the Representation of the People Act, if there is equality of votes and if one additional vote would entitle either of them to win, and if no decision has been made by the Returning Officer under the provisions of the Act, then the High Court decides by a lot. The candidate who wins the lottery wins the election. In 2017, for instance, in the election to ward number 220 of the Brihanmumbai Municipal Corporation, Shiv Sena's Surendra Bagalkar and the BJP's Atul Shah got the same number of votes. The result was decided by lottery, and Mr. Shah won.

MORE ON THE WEB

Denisovans lived in Tibetan Plateau, fossil evidence shows

<http://bit.ly/DenisovansVideo>



पुराने मकान का छंद आंगन और ओसारे से समृद्ध होता था

मेरे ग्रामांचल में इधर निर्माण-कार्य बड़ी तेजी से चल रहा है। जिस तेज रफ्तार से मेरे ग्रामांचल की रूचि बदल रही है, लगता है नीम-पाकड़ को काटकर हर दरवाजे पर अब जुही-कामिनी रोपी जाएगी, बबूल-बांस को वन में खदे दिया जाएगा। नागर रूचि की गिरफ्त में उलझते, गर्वई आदमी में प्रकृति-परिहर के प्रति अरुचि बढ़ती जाएगी। अपने नफीस घरों की हिफाजत में लोग अपने-अपने घरों में सिमट जाएंगे। बिजली की सुविधा चोपल-अलाव की सामाजिकता को मार देगी, अपने-अपने टीवी सेट से लोग बंध जाएंगे। लोगों की प्रखर स्पर्धा के दो ही बिंदु हैं-दहेज और मकान। मकान के लिए दहेज का स्तर ऊंचा हो रहा है, और दहेज का भाव बढ़ाने के लिए नई डिजाइन के मकान उठ रहे हैं। नागर तहजीब से उसे अलंकृत किया जा रहा है। संतति को शहरी मुहल्ले बलात रटाए जा रहे हैं ताकि सभ्यता की दौड़ में वह पिछड़ न जाए। ग्राम्य सजता की धुरी को क्षत करने का कारोबार बड़े जोर से चल रहा है। भौतिक वैभव अर्जित करने की क्याकुल स्यूहा बड़ों को इतना भी विचार नहीं करने देती कि बच्चों की रूचि और निजी क्षमता क्या है। पॉलीटेक्निक स्कूल में भर्ती होने और पुलिस की नौकरी पाने पर समान उल्लास से गाजे-बाजे के साथ देवता पूजे जाते हैं, कीर्तन-अनुष्ठान आयोजित होते हैं। गाव-गाव में अंग्रेजी माध्यम के स्कूल, उच्चतर विद्यालय और महाविद्यालय खुल रहे हैं। भोजपुरी किसान भी अपने घर के दूल्हे को अंग्रेजी पोशाक से सज्जित करना जरूरी मानने लगा है। नागर शिल्पवाले मकान में आंगन सिकुड़ गया है और लंबे ओसारे को खुशनुमा ड्रॉइंग रूप में रूपांतरित कर दिया गया है। नए उठनेवाले मकान का शिल्प अशुभ संकेत दे रहा है। पुराने मकान का छंद आंगन और ओसारे से समृद्ध होता था। अब 'ड्रॉइंग रूम' का कपाट खस के लिए खुलता है।

चर्चित लेखक।

हरियाली और रास्ता

रीमा, राहुल और मदद

रीमा की कहानी, जिसकी सोच एक अनजान युवा राहुल ने बदल दी।



रात का समय था और सड़क सुनसान। डर के मारे रीमा की हालत खराब थी। गाड़ी का टायर पंचर हो गया था। वह गाड़ी से निकल कर बाहर खड़ी हो गई, ताकि किसी से मदद मांग सके। दूर से उसे एक मोटरसाइकिल आती दिखी। मोटरसाइकिल वाला खुद ही रुक गया। उसने रीमा से कहा, मेरा नाम राहुल शर्मा है। आप चिंता न कीजिए। गाड़ी में बैठीए, मैं टायर बदल देता हूँ। रीमा गाड़ी में बैठ गई। कुछ ही देर में राहुल ने टायर बदल दिया। रीमा बोली, बताइए, मैं आपको कितने पैसे दे दूँ। राहुल ने कहा, मैंने यह काम पैसे के लिए नहीं, आपकी मदद के लिए किया है। जब मैं कभी मुसीबत में था, तब मेरी भी किसी ने मदद की थी। आप भी अगर किसी जरूरतमंद को देखें, तो उसकी मदद जरूर कीजिएगा। यह कहकर वह वहां से चला गया। रीमा भी आगे बढ़ गई। थोड़ी दूर पर पेट्रोल पंप के पास रीमा को एक छोटी-सी चाय की दुकान दिखी। वह चाय पीने उतरी, तो देखा कि पच्चीस-छब्बीस साल की एक युवती दुकान संभाल रही थी। वह गर्भवती थी और उसे देखकर लग रहा था कि उसके परिवार की माली हालत ठीक नहीं थी। रीमा ने उसे सौ रुपये का नोट दिया, और जब तक वह उसके छुट्टे वापस लाती, रीमा वहां से चली गई। उस युवती ने देखा, काजज के एक टुकड़े पर रीमा कुछ लिखकर पांच सौ रुपये के चार और नोट छोड़ गई थी। उस पर लिखा था, जब मैं मुसीबत में थी, तब मेरी भी किसी ने मदद की थी। यह मेरी मदद समझना। वह लड़की जानती थी कि उसका उरुका पति दिन-रात काम करके अपने बच्चे के भविष्य के लिए पैसे जमा कर रहा था। वह जब दुकान से घर लौटी तो देखा कि दुकान पति राहुल सो रहा था। उसने उसके कानों में धीरे से कहा, आज मेरा दिन बहुत अच्छा बीता।

हम जैसा बर्ताव दूसरों के साथ करेंगे, वैसा ही बर्ताव हमारे साथ भी होगा।

गढ़चिरौली में हुआ हमला बताता है कि माओवादी अपने कथित 'एमएमसी जोन' में गतिविधियां बढ़ा रहे हैं, लिहाजा इस क्षेत्र के तीन राज्यों महाराष्ट्र, मध्य प्रदेश और छत्तीसगढ़ में बेहतर समन्वय स्थापित किए जाने की जरूरत है।

एक और नक्सली हमला

महाराष्ट्र

के गढ़चिरौली जिले में पुलिस के एक दल पर बारूदी विस्फोट के जरिये हमला कर नक्सलियों ने अपनी मौजूदगी का एक बार फिर एहसास कराया है। इस हमले में महाराष्ट्र पुलिस के त्वरित कार्रवाई बल के 15 जवान और उनके वाहन के ड्राइवर की मौत हो गई। गढ़चिरौली में एक दशक के बाद सुरक्षा बलों पर यह सबसे बड़ा हमला है। इस हमले ने फिर दिखाया है कि सुरक्षा बल माओवादी प्रभावित इलाकों में स्टैंडर्ड ऑपरेंटिंग प्रोसिजर (एसओपी) को अपनाने में कहीं न कहीं चूक कर जाते हैं। हालांकि महाराष्ट्र के पुलिस प्रमुख ने आईईडी विस्फोट के जरिये किए गए इस हमले में किसी तरह की खुफिया चूक से इनकार किया है। मगर इस

हमले से कुछ घंटे पहले ही नक्सलियों ने छत्तीसगढ़ के राजनांदगांव जिले से सटे गढ़चिरौली के कुरुखेड़ा में राष्ट्रीय राजमार्ग में सड़क निर्माण में लगी एक निजी कंपनी के तीस से अधिक वाहनों को फूंक दिया था। ये जवान इस घटना की जानकारी के बाद ही वहां के लिए रवाना हुए थे और फिर घात लगाकर बैठे नक्सलियों द्वारा किए गए बारूदी विस्फोट का निशाना बन गए। यह सूचना थी कि नक्सली पिछले वर्ष 22 अप्रैल को गढ़चिरौली में पुलिस मुठभेड़ में हुई अपने चालीस साथियों की मौत की बरसी मना रहे हैं, लिहाजा यहां अतिरिक्त सावधानी बरतने की जरूरत थी। माओवादियों ने यह हमला ऐसे समय किया है, जब राज्य में लोकसभा चुनाव में सर्वाधिक मतदान गढ़चिरौली-घिमुर संसदीय क्षेत्र में ही दर्ज किया गया।

माओवादी किसी भी तरह से निर्वाचन प्रक्रिया को चुनौती देने की कोशिश करते हैं, जिससे वे अपनी ओर ध्यान खींच सकें। इससे पहले नौ अप्रैल को माओवादियों के हमले में दंतेवाड़ा के विधायक और सुरक्षा बलों के चार जवानों की मौत हो गई थी। गढ़चिरौली के हमले ने माओवादियों की रणनीति में आए बदलाव की ओर भी इशारा किया है, जिस पर गौर करने की जरूरत है। जानकारों का कहना है कि बस्तर में सुरक्षा बलों का दबाव पड़ने के कारण माओवादी अपने कथित 'एमएमसी जोन' यानी महाराष्ट्र, मध्य प्रदेश और छत्तीसगढ़ इन तीनों राज्यों को जोड़ने वाले जंगलों से घिरे गलियारे में अपनी गतिविधियां बढ़ा रहे हैं। जाहिर है, माओवादियों से निपटने के लिए इन तीनों राज्यों में बेहतर समन्वय स्थापित करने की जरूरत है।

काम आई हमारी कूटनीति



मसूद अजहर के वैश्विक आतंकी घोषित हो जाने भर से हमारी लड़ाई खत्म नहीं हुई है। अब पाकिस्तान पर दबाव डालने की जरूरत है कि वह उसे अंतरराष्ट्रीय ट्रिब्यूनल को सौंपे या फिर भारत के हवाले करे।



मारुफ राजा, सामरिक विश्लेषक

मामले में भारत इसलिए भी फायदे में रहा, क्योंकि ये सभी देश पाकिस्तान की हरकतों से थक चुके हैं। इनमें अमेरिका सबसे आगे है। अमेरिकी राष्ट्रपति डोनाल्ड ट्रंप ने तो कहा भी है कि 'पाकिस्तान हमारे साथ धोखा करता आया है, इसी धोखे में उसने हमसे 30 से 35 अरब डॉलर खाए हैं'। इसकी हरकतों पर हम भरपूर नहीं कर सकते। अमेरिका ने ही बाकी देशों पर भी दबाव डाला। संयुक्त राष्ट्र सुरक्षा परिषद में 15 सदस्य देश हैं,

जिनमें पांच स्थायी देश हैं, जबकि दस अस्थायी। अभी जो सदस्य देश हैं, उनके साथ अमेरिका ने अंदरूनी कूटनीतिक पहल की होगी, जिससे 14 देश मसूद अजहर को वैश्विक आतंकवादी घोषित करने के पक्ष में खड़े हो गए। चीन पर यह दबाव पड़ा कि अब आप यह साबित कीजिए कि किन कारणों से आप मसूद को आतंकवादी नहीं मानते। ऐसे में चीफ उसे दुनिया के सामने नीचा होना पड़ता, इस कारण वह हिल

गया। इसके अलावा भारत की कूटनीतिक पहल भी मजबूत थी। विदेश सचिव विजय गोखले हाल ही में बीजिंग गए थे। उनकी वह यात्रा दुनिया को यह दिखाने की कोशिश थी कि हम मसूद के मसले पर चीन को समझाने की कोशिश कर रहे हैं। हमारे विदेश मंत्रालय को यह विश्वास हो गया था कि इस बार चीन इस मसले पर रुकावट नहीं डालेगा। चीन के पास हालांकि वोटो करने का एक और मौका था। लेकिन उसने आतंरिक स्तर पर मूल्यांकन किया होगा कि दोकलम व कुछ अन्य मुद्दों पर शी जिनिंग और नरेंद्र मोदी के बीच जो खाई पैदा हुई, उसे पाटने का यह एक मौका है। हालांकि कुछ लोगों का यह कहना है कि मसूद अजहर के खिलाफ संयुक्त राष्ट्र की सूची में पुलवामा हमले व कश्मीर में जैश प्रयोजित आतंकवाद को शामिल नहीं किया गया। हमें समझना होगा कि किसी एक मामले के लिए किसी को वैश्विक आतंकी घोषित नहीं किया जा सकता। संयुक्त राष्ट्र में मसूद अजहर का मामला 2009 से था। उसने हमारी संसद पर हमला करवाया, पठानकोट और अफगानिस्तान में भारतीय दूतावास पर हमले करवाए। बीच में उससे पाकिस्तान ने किनारा कर लिया था, पर दोनों में कुछ समझौता हुआ। कुछ लोग यह भी कह रहे हैं कि मसूद अजहर को वैश्विक आतंकवादी घोषित किए जाने का प्रतीकात्मक मतलब ही है और इससे कुछ खास हासिल नहीं होने वाला। यह कदम प्रतीकात्मक जरूर है, पर इस मामले को यहां से आगे बढ़ाना अब आने वाली सरकार की जिम्मेदारी है। इसके बाद भी मसूद अजहर लंबे समय तक रावलपिंडी स्थित सैनिक अस्पताल में रहा, तो अब भारत को दुनिया को यह दिखाना होगा कि जिसे वैश्विक आतंकी घोषित किया गया, वह तो पाक सेना की गोद में खेल रहा है। पाक सेना के प्रवक्ता जनरल गफूर ने कहा है कि उन्होंने

आतंकवादियों के खिलाफ बहुत सख्त कदम उठाए हैं। पर जो बड़े आतंकवादी समूह हैं, उन्हें अभी तक न तो प्रतिबंधित किया गया और न ही उनके खिलाफ कोई कार्रवाई की गई। उनसे लड़ने से पाक सेना अब डरती है, क्योंकि उनके पास अत्याधुनिक हथियार और आत्मघाती आतंकी हैं, जो उनका जीना हराकर देंगे। ऐसे में अब भारत को विश्व विरादरी से पाकिस्तान पर अंकुश लगाने की मांग करनी चाहिए, क्योंकि यह साबित हो गया है कि मसूद पाक सेना के संरक्षण में है। पहला काम तो यह होना चाहिए कि पाक सेनाधिकारियों के परिजनों को अमेरिकी वीजा न मिले, क्योंकि अधिकतर सेनाधिकारियों के बच्चे वहीं पढ़ते हैं। इसके अलावा पाकिस्तान पर दबाव डालना चाहिए जब तक वह आतंकियों को अंतरराष्ट्रीय अदालत में ले जाकर अंतरराष्ट्रीय अपराध कानून के तहत सजा न दिलावाए, तब तक उसे आईएमएफ से कर्ज नहीं मिलेगा। चीन को भी यह समझाने की जरूरत है कि वह भले संयुक्त राष्ट्र की सुरक्षा परिषद का स्थायी सदस्य हो, पर अगर वह पाकिस्तान का इसी तरह सहयोग करता रहा, तो भारत में उसके सभी निवेशों को रोक दिया जाएगा और चीन से आयातित वस्तुओं पर रोक लगाई जाएगी। साथ ही, भारत-पाक या कश्मीर मसले पर चीन दखल देगा, तो भारत चीन से रूठे देशों को रक्षा तकनीक उपलब्ध कराने में देर नहीं करेगा। भारत को चीन के खिलाफ माहौल बनाने की जरूरत है। मसूद अजहर के वैश्विक आतंकी घोषित हो जाने भर से आतंकवाद के खिलाफ भारत की लड़ाई खत्म नहीं हुई है। हमें दुनिया के देशों को बताना होगा कि संयुक्त रूप से पाकिस्तान पर दबाव डाला जाए कि या तो वह मसूद अजहर को अंतरराष्ट्रीय ट्रिब्यूनल सौंपे या फिर भारत के हवाले करे, ताकि उसे सजा दी जा सके।

आचार संहिता की वैधानिकता

सुप्रीम कोर्ट की मान्यता मिलने मात्र से इसे वैधानिक दर्जा नहीं मिल जाता। कोई दल या प्रत्याशी आचार संहिता को तोड़ता है, तो उसके खिलाफ कानूनी कार्रवाई का कोई आधार नहीं है। इसी कारण पार्टी और प्रत्याशी धड़ल्ले से इसका उल्लंघन करते हैं।



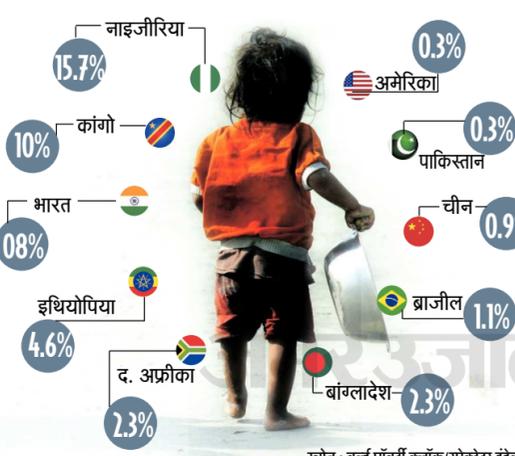
राजेश बादल

सोवियत संघ के मॉस्को रेडियो ने दी थी। जब दो चुनाव हो गए और राजनीतिक दलों के बीच कड़वाहट पनपने लगी, तो जवाहर लाल नेहरू की पहल पर 1960 में सभी पार्टियों ने मिलकर एक आदर्श आचार संहिता को अंतिम रूप दिया। केरल के विधानसभा चुनाव में इसे पहली बार अमल में लाया गया। जब 1962 के लोकसभा चुनाव आए, तो आयोग ने इस आचार संहिता को परिकृत रूप में सभी दलों को वितरित किया। लोकसभा और विधानसभाओं के 1967 में चुनाव हुए, तो एक तरह से पहली बार यह आचार संहिता अमल में लाई गई। जब 1979 में मध्यावधि चुनाव हुए, तो राजनीतिक माहौल बदला हुआ था। मुख्य चुनाव आयुक्त एन एल शकधर की

खुली खिड़की

विश्व में गरीबी का हाल

तमाम योजनाओं व कार्यक्रमों के बावजूद गरीबी को पूरी तरह से खत्म नहीं किया जा सका है। एक रिपोर्ट के मुताबिक दुनिया के विभिन्न देशों में अत्यधिक गरीबी में रहने वाले लोग मौजूद हैं। सबसे ज्यादा गरीब नाइजीरिया में मौजूद हैं।



स्रोत : वर्ल्ड पोवर्टी क्लॉक/स्पेक्ट्रम इंडेक्स

ईसा की सोख

महात्मा ईसा कहीं जा रहे थे कि रास्ते में उन्हें अपना शिष्य मैथ्यू दिखाई पड़ा। मैथ्यू के पिता की मृत्यु हो गई थी और वह उसे रो-रोकर दफन कर रहा था। मैथ्यू ने जैसे ही ईसा को देखा, वैसे ही दौड़कर उनके पास आ गया और ईसा की आसतीन चूमकर तुरंत दौड़ते हुए पिता के शव के पास चला गया। ईसा ने मैथ्यू को अपने पास बुलाया और कहने लगा, जिसकी मृत्यु हो गई, वह भूत का साथी हुआ। तू उसकी लाश से मांह कर वर्तमान से दूर होना क्यों चाहता है? जब तक मैथ्यू कुछ समझता, ईसा बोल पड़े, समय बड़ा बलवान है। इसने अनेक लाशों को यत्नपूर्वक दफना दिया है। उसके लिए तेरे पिता की लाश दफनाना कोई कठिन काम नहीं है। वे आगे चले, तो ईसा को अपना एक और शिष्य दिखा। संयोग से वह भी अपने पिता का अंतिम संस्कार कर रहा था। वह ईसा को देखते हुए उनके पास चला आया और उनके साथ-साथ चलने लगा। ईसा ने थोड़ी देर उससे बातें कीं, फिर कहा, जाओ, पिता का अंतिम संस्कार करके फिर मेरे पास आना। मैथ्यू को बड़ा आश्चर्य हुआ। उसने ईसा से पूछा, आपने मुझे तो पिता का अंतिम संस्कार नहीं करने दिया, लेकिन इसे जाने दिया। ऐसा क्यों? ईसा बोले, तुम अभी तक मोह में पड़े हो, इसलिए तुम्हें बताना पड़ा। लेकिन मेरा दूसरा शिष्य मोह में नहीं पड़ा है। जो मोह-माया से मुक्त है, उसे क्या सिखाना।

-संकलित

निया के शांतिशाली देशों अमेरिका, ब्रिटेन और फ्रांस ने चीन पर बहुत दबाव डाला, जिसका नतीजा है कि चीन ने अपना रवैया बदला और संयुक्त राष्ट्र सुरक्षा परिषद ने जैश सरगना मसूद अजहर को वैश्विक आतंकवादी घोषित कर दिया। हालांकि फ्रांस ने यह प्रस्ताव रखा था कि चीन या जो भी देश मसूद को वैश्विक आतंकी मानने के खिलाफ हैं, वे इसकी वजह दुनिया के सामने रखें। इन दबावों की वजह से चीन थोड़ा दब गया। जबकि अब तक चीन का मानना था कि भारत जिस तरह दलाई लामा को अपने यहां शरण देता है, उसी तरह पाकिस्तान भी मसूद अजहर को अपने यहां रखकर कोई गलत काम नहीं कर रहा। पर सबको यह पता है कि दलाई लामा एक नेक व्यक्ति हैं, जबकि मसूद अजहर आतंकवादी है।

चीन चीफ अपनी आर्थिक ताकत की वजह से दुनिया में मजबूत हो गया है, इसलिए हर जगह वह अपना कानून लागू करने की कोशिश करता है। लेकिन दबाव के सामने उसके झुक जाने से साबित हो गया है कि चीन से अगर आप टक्कर लेने की कोशिश कर और हिम्मत करके खड़े रहें, तो वह धीरे-धीरे पीछे हट जाता है, जैसे दोकलम के मसले पर हुआ था। आतंकवाद के मुद्दे पर दुनिया के अन्य देशों का भारत के साथ खड़े होने का कारण यह भी है कि हमने इस मुद्दे पर होसला दिखाया और बालाकोट में हवाई हमले जैसी कार्रवाई की।

मसूद अजहर के मसले पर भारत की इस कामयाब कोशिश के पीछे पिछले तीन-चार साल में कूटनीतिक स्तर पर मोदी सरकार की पहल रही है। इससे पाक प्रयोजित आतंकवाद को लेकर दुनिया के ताकतवर देशों की राय बदली है। इस

मंजिलें और भी हैं

>> एलिजाबेथ याम्बेन

लंदन की नौकरी छोड़ हर्बल टी बेचती हूँ

मैं मणिपुर की राजधानी इंफाल में पैदा हुई। चूंकि मणिपुर समेत पूर्वोत्तर में उग्रवादी गतिविधियां हमेशा होती रहती हैं, इसलिए मेरे पिता ने पढ़ाई के लिए मुझे लंदन भेज दिया। वहां अपनी शिक्षा पूरी करने के बाद मैं फाइनेंशियल एनालिस्ट की नौकरी करने लगी। लेकिन थोड़े समय के बाद मोटा वेतन और ऐश-ओ-आराम की जिंदगी मुझे खलने लगी थी। मैं बारह साल की उम्र में इंफाल से निकल गई थी। लेकिन लंदन में रहते हुए मुझे बार-बार इंफाल की याद आती थी। लंदन की तुलना में इंफाल मुझे अचानक ज्यादा अच्छा लगने लगा था, क्योंकि वहां की प्रकृति साफ थी और विविध प्रकार की वनस्पतियां वहां थीं। वचपन में कोई भी घर में बीमार पड़ता था, तो दादी दवा के बदले किन्हीं खास पौधों के पत्ते उबालकर या उनका रस निकालकर पिलाती थी, तो वह स्वस्थ हो जाता था। मणिपुर दो चीजों के कारण प्रसिद्ध है-फुटबॉल और चाय। मेरे दिमाग में आइडिया आया कि स्थानीय वनस्पतियों की अगर दंग से मार्केटिंग की जाए, तो इसका बहुत लाभ होगा। लेकिन मेरे माता-पिता मेरे आइडिया से खुश नहीं थे। उनको डर था कि लंदन की बनी-बनाई नौकरी छोड़कर मणिपुर लौटना बहुत गलत फैसला होगा। इसी बीच मेरा तबादला सिंगापुर हो गया। वहां मेरा मन और भी नहीं लगा और कुछ महीने नौकरी करने के बाद मैं इंफाल लौट आई।

घर लौटकर कुछ महीने तक मैंने मणिपुर की विशेषता के बारे में जानकारी इकट्ठा की। फिर मैंने फैसला लिया कि मैं स्थानीय औषधियों की बेहतरीन मार्केटिंग करूंगी। इसी के तहत मैंने इंफाल शहर के चर्चित मंदरस मार्केट में, जहां सिर्फ महिलाएं ही दुकान चलाती हैं, इवेलर टी नाम से एक दुकान खोली। यहां अलग-अलग औषधियों और फलों का रस मिलाकर चाय तैयार की जाती है, जो स्वास्थ्य के लिए बेहद

लाभदायक है। इसके अलावा जड़ी-बूटी युक्त चाय पैकेटों में बाहर भी बेजी जाती है। दुकान में नौ और महिलाएं मेरे साथ सुबह से रात तक काम करती हैं। लेकिन मेरे इस स्टार्ट अप से लाभान्वित होने वाली महिलाओं की संख्या बहुत अधिक है। मैं महिलाओं को कुछ खास वनस्पति अपने खेतों में उगाने के लिए कहती हूँ, फिर उसे उनसे खरीद लेती हूँ। ऐसे ही स्वास्थ्य के लिए लाभदायक अनेक तरह के फल, जो यों ही पड़े रहते हैं, मैं किसानों से खरीद लेती हूँ। और फिर इनका अपनी हर्बल टी में इस्तेमाल करती हूँ। बाजार में जड़ी-बूटी बेचने आने वालों से भी मैं जड़ी-बूटियां खरीदती हूँ। मणिपुर में भारतीय जैतून और लैमनग्रास का उत्पादन बहुत होता है, लेकिन इनकी मांग नहीं है। जबकि ये औषधीय गुणों से भरपूर हैं। लिहाजा मैं इन्हें खरीदती हूँ और चाय में इस्तेमाल करती हूँ। औषधीय वनस्पतियों और फलों के अलावा मैं कुछ सॉजियों का रस निकालकर भी चाय में इस्तेमाल करती हूँ। मेरी चाय की मांग पूरे देश में है। पिछले साल से मैंने पैकेटबंद हर्बल टी की ऑनलाइन बिक्री भी शुरू कर दी है। जल्दी ही मैं इंफाल शहर में ऐसी चार और दुकानें खोलूंगी, क्योंकि इस चाय की भारी मांग है। मुझे खुशी है कि मणिपुर लौटकर मैं अपने लोगों की सेवा कर पा रही हूँ। मेरे माता-पिता भी बहुत खुश हैं और वे इस काम में मेरी पूरी मदद करते हैं।

-विभिन्न साक्षात्कारों पर आधारित।



दैनिक जागरण

श्रम किए बिना प्राप्त संपदा फलीभूत नहीं होती

आसानी से नहीं मानेगा पाक

पाकिस्तान में पल रहे आतंकी संगठन जैश ए मुहम्मद के सरगना मसूद अजहर पर अंतरराष्ट्रीय पाबंदी लगना भारत की एक बड़ी कूटनीतिक कामयाबी है। यह कामयाबी हासिल करने में एक दशक इसीलिए लग गए, क्योंकि चीन इस आतंकी सरगना की ढाल बना हुआ था। उसने अपना अडिडवल रखाे तब छोड़ा जब उसके सामने यह स्पष्ट हो गया कि भारत इस मामले को छोड़ने वाला नहीं और अमेरिका, ब्रिटेन, फ्रांस आदि देशों के चलते उसकी अंतरराष्ट्रीय स्तर पर फजीहत हो सकती है। इसमें दोगय नहीं कि भारत ने एक बड़ी कूटनीतिक कामयाबी हासिल की, लेकिन यह भी स्पष्ट है कि पाकिस्तान तमाम शर्मिंदगी उठाने के बावजूद अपनी हरकतों से बाज आने वाला नहीं। संसद और पठानकोट एयरबेस समेत पुलवामा में आतंकी हमलों के लिए जिम्मेदार मसूद अजहर पर संयुक्त राष्ट्र सुरक्षा परिषद की पाबंदी लगने के बावजूद आसार इसी के हैं कि पाकिस्तान भारत के लिए खतरा बने आतंक्रियों को पालने-पोसने की अपनी नीति का परिचयान न करे। अंदेशा इसका भी है कि वह मसूद अजहर पर उसी तरह की दिखावटी सख्ती करे जैसे उसने एक अन्य आतंकी सरगना हाफिज सईद के खिलाफ कथित तौर पर कर रही है। आखिर यह एक तथ्य है कि पाकिस्तान सरकार और खासकर उसकी सेना एवं खुफिया एजेंसी आइएसआइ अपने वहां फल-फूल रहे आतंक्रियों के खिलाफ कुछ न करने और दबाव पड़ने पर कार्रवाई का दिखावा कर अंतरराष्ट्रीय समुदाय की आंखों में धूल झाँकने में माहिर है। हेरत नहीं कि पाकिस्तानी सेना मसूद अजहर को और संरक्षित करने का काम करे।

पाकिस्तान पर इसलिए भरोसा नहीं किया जा सकता, क्योंकि उसने यह कहकर अपनी झोंप मिटाने और साथ ही अपनी जनता को भ्रमाने की कोशिश की है कि मसूद अजहर पर पाबंदी के बावजूद उसकी जीत हुई, क्योंकि सुरक्षा परिषद के फंसले में पुलवामा हमले का जिम्न नहीं है। पाकिस्तान के ऐसे रवैये को देखते हुए यह जरूरी है कि भारत और अमेरिका इसके लिए अतिरिक्त कोशिश करें कि पाकिस्तान वास्तव में मसूद अजहर पर लगाम लगाए। अगर वह ऐसा नहीं करता तो फिर उसकी चालबाजी के पुख्ता सुबूत एकत्र करके उन्हें एफएटीएफ के समक्ष रखने चाहिए। इस अंतरराष्ट्रीय संस्था की अगली बैठक में इस पर विचार होना है कि पाकिस्तान को आतंकी संगठनों को पालने के लिए काली सूची में रखा जाए या नहीं? पाकिस्तान पिछली बैठक में काली सूची में जाने से बच गया था। अगली बार भी चीन उसके बचाव में आ सकता है। यदि पाकिस्तान काली सूची में दर्ज होने से फिर बच जाता है तो वह आतंकी संगठनों को संरक्षण देने का काम तेज कर सकता है। चूंकि पाकिस्तान के रंग-ढंग बदलने की ज्यादा उम्मीद नहीं इसलिए भारत को उसकी हकतों को लेकर न केवल सतर्क रहना होगा, बल्कि उस पर यह दबाव भी बढ़ाना होगा कि वह आतंकवाद का सहारा लेना छोड़े। निःसंदेह इसी के साथ ऐसे भी उपाय करने होंगे जिससे पाकिस्तान कश्मीर में दखल देने में सक्षम न रहे। यह ठीक है कि पुलवामा हमले के बाद कश्मीर के हालात ठीक करने के लिए कई कदम उठाए गए हैं, लेकिन यह भी साफ है कि अभी बहुत कुछ किए जाने की जरूरत है।

आय में इजाफा

उत्तराखंड सरकार अपनी आय के संसाधन बढ़ाने को हाथ-पांव मार रही है। मुख्यमंत्री त्रिवेद्र सिंह रावत ने राज्य में आमदनी के स्रोत बढ़ाने और राजस्व प्राप्ति से जुड़े मुहकमों के लिए महीनेवार राजस्व का लक्ष्य निर्धारित करने को कहा है। आमदनी बढ़ाने का उद्देश्य राज्यद के मर्ज से जुड़ा रही सरकार को चालू वित्तीय वर्ष के पहले महीने में ही बाजार से कर्ज उठाने को मजबूर होना पड़ा है। राज्य के कुल सालाना बजट का बड़ा हिस्सा सिर्फ वेतन-भत्तों, मानदेय, पेंशन आदि पर खर्च हो रहा है। हालत यह है कि विकास संबंधी अपनी जरूरतों को पूरा करने के लिए कुल बजट का महज 13 फीसद भी नसीब नहीं हो पा रहा है। यही वजह है कि विषम भौगोलिक क्षेत्रों में जहां विकास कार्यों पर तुलनात्मक रूप से ज्यादा धनराशि खर्च होती हे, वहां विकास की रफ्तार बेहद धीमी है। ढांचगत सुविधाओं के विस्तार और इन सुविधाओं की गुणवत्ता में सुधार अथवा प्रति व्यक्ति आय एवं सकल घरेलू उत्पाद जैसे आर्थिकी के आंकड़े पवर्तीय क्षेत्र में फिसट्डी बने हुए हैं। ये क्षेत्र सामाजिक-आर्थिक विषमता की खाई चौड़ी हो रही है। समान रूप से विकास की अवधारणा पर आगे बढ़ने के लिए राज्य सरकार को वित्तीय संसाधनों में वृद्धि की दस्कार है, लेकिन हालत उलट है। अपने संसाधनों में इजाफा करने के बजाय सरकार सिर्फ केंद्रीय योजनाओं में मिलने वाली मदद के भरोसे है। साल-दर-साल केंद्रीय योजनाओं पर निर्भरता बढ़ रही हे, जबकि खुद के संसाधन बढ़ाने में इच्छाशक्ति की कमी बड़ा गंड़ा बनी है। राज्य सरकार अपने संसाधन बढ़ाकर केंद्रीय योजनाओं के दायरे से बाहर रहने वाले क्षेत्रों में भी विकास की प्रतिपूर्ति कर सकती है। उत्तराखंड में कुटीर उद्योग-धंधों, पर्यटन के साथ ही सहकारिता एवं खेती आधारित उद्योगों के विकास की व्यापक संभावनाएं हैं। ये क्षेत्र आमदनी के साथ ही आजीविका और रोजगार के लिहाज से भी अहम हैं। इसके लिए मजबूत इच्छाशक्ति के साथ आगे कदम बढ़ाने की जरूरत है।

लोकतंत्र का प्रतीक

एक जमाना था जब अंगुली पर स्याही का निशान लगने पर मिटाने की जल्दी रहती थी, लेकिन एक जमाना यह भी है कि अंगुली मचल रही हे, चुनावी स्याही का निशान लगाने को। देश में लोकतंत्र हे, इसी बात का तो सुबूत हे यह निशान। सदियों से मानवता लोकतंत्र के लिए तड़प रही हे, कभी राजशाही तो कभी तानाशाही और कभी गुलामी। अब जाकर कहीं लोकतंत्र आया है। विवाहित महिलाओं के पास सिंदूर होता हे, बताने को की हम विवाहित हैं और अंगुली की स्याही बतानी है कि हम न केवल स्वतंत्र हैं, अपितु हमारे देश में लोकतंत्र हे। हमारे पास भी वे सारे ही अधिकार हैं जो कभी एक राज के पास हुआ करते थे। जब भगवान के मंदिर जाते हैं तो माथे पर कुमकुम जरूर लगाते हैं, बाहर निकलकर हमारा कुमकुम ही इतराकर बता देता है कि हम मंदिर गए हैं। बस ऐसी ही चुनाव की स्याही हे, जो हमारे हाथ में लगती हे और इतराती हे। कभी मंदिर जाने का अधिकार छीनकर देख लो, मन केसे छुटपटाता है? राजा रवि वर्मा बहुत बड़े चित्रकार हुए, उन्होंने अपने चित्रों की छायाई करा दी। करोड़ों ऐसे लोग थे जिन्हें मंदिर में प्रवेश नहीं मिला था। उन लोगों ने पहली बार उस चित्र के माध्यम से भगवान को देखा और अपने घर में लगाकर पूजा की।



विवेक काटजू

भले ही पाकिस्तान मसूद अजहर के खिलाफ कोई कार्रवाई न करे जैसा कि उसने हाफिज सईद के मामले में दिखाया तब भी उस पर पाबंदी भारत की बड़ी कामयाबी हे

मसूद अजहर के अंतरराष्ट्रीय आतंकी घोषित होने के साथ ही यह तय हो गया कि चीन जैश ए मुहम्मद के इस सरगना की ढाल नहीं बनेगा। चीन कई वर्षों से उसे बचाता आ रहा था, मगर आखिरकार उसने अपना रवैया बदला। संयुक्त राष्ट्र सुरक्षा परिषद के बाकी सदस्य देशों की मसूद अजहर को अंतरराष्ट्रीय आतंकी घोषित करने की मुहिम में चीन ने अतीत में कई बार अड़गे लगाए। अजहर पर बदला रख चीन की नीति में बड़ा बदलाव हे, क्योंकि हाल में और यहां तक कि पुलवामा आतंकी हमले के बाद भी उसने मसूद अजहर का बचाव किया था। पुलवामा हमले के बाद अमेरिका द्वारा प्रवर्तित और फ्रांस एवं ब्रिटेन द्वारा समर्थित संयुक्त राष्ट्र के प्रस्ताव पर चीन ने अवरोध पैदा किया। इस प्रस्ताव का मकसद मसूद अजहर को अंतरराष्ट्रीय आतंकी घोषित करना था। मार्च के मध्य में उसने अमेरिकी प्रस्ताव में तकनीकी पंच फंसाकर इस प्रक्रिया को टाल दिया। ऐसा करते हुए चीन 2009 से चली आ रही अपनी नीति पर कायम था। यह समझना होगा कि चीन ने अपने दृष्टिकोण को आखिर क्यों बदला और भारत एवं मोदी सरकार के लिए इसके क्या मायने हैं?

पुलवामा हमले की जिम्मेदारी खुद जैश ए मुहम्मद ने ली थी। वह भारतीय सुरक्षा बलों पर सबसे जघन्य हमला था जिसने पूरे देश की चेतना पर करारी चोटी की थी। समूचा देश इससे आक्रोशित था। 2016 में उड़ी हमले के बाद भारत द्वारा की गई सर्जिकल स्ट्राइक से प्रधानमंत्री मोदी ने स्पष्ट कर दिया था कि पाकिस्तान की

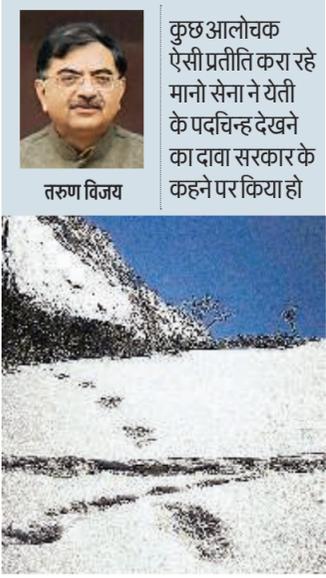
ओर से होने वाले आतंकी हमले का भारत केवल रजनैतिक एवं कूटनीतिक दायरे में रहकर ही जवाब नहीं देगा। बालाकोट हमले के साथ अंतरराष्ट्रीय जगत को भी स्पष्ट रूप से यह संकेत दे दिया गया कि आतंकवाद के खिलाफ भारत की नीति बदल गई है और अब उसका रणनीतिक धैर्य जवाब देता जा रहा है। बालाकोट हमले के बाद संयुक्त राष्ट्र में मसूद अजहर को घेरने का अमेरिकी प्रस्ताव इसका परिचायक था कि भारत का आक्रोश वाजिब है। अनौपचारिक रूप से उसने स्वीकार भी किया कि भारत को अपनी आत्मरक्षा का पूरा अधिकार है। अमेरिका और अन्य पश्चिमी देश पाकिस्तान को यह संदेश देना चाहते थे कि वह अब आतंकी खेल खेलाव बंद करे, क्योंकि भारत अब उसके खिलाफ सैन्य कार्रवाई करने से नहीं हिचकेंगा।

इससे यही जाहिर होता है कि पहले जहां भारत पर आतंकी हमले के बाद धैर्य बनाए रखने का दबाव होता था वहीं अब उस पर आतंकी हमले करने के लिए दबाव बढ़ गया है। पाकिस्तान के साथ अपने हितों को देखते हुए चीन संयुक्त राष्ट्र सुरक्षा परिषद में अमेरिका के प्रस्ताव का समर्थन करने का अनिच्छुक था। पुलवामा हमले के तुरंत बाद अमेरिका ने सुरक्षा परिषद में हमले की निंदा करने वाला प्रस्ताव पारित कराने का भी प्रयास किया। तब भी चीन ने उसमें अड़ंगा लगाया। चीन के अह्दियुल रवैये से आजिज आकर इस प्रस्ताव का समर्थन करने वाले अमेरिका सहित अन्य देश मसूद अजहर को अंतरराष्ट्रीय आतंकी घोषित करने का प्रस्ताव सुरक्षा परिषद की समिति में ले

येती के बहाने सेना पर निशाना

खुद को लिबरल और सेक्युलर बताने वाले लोग कोई ऐसा मौका और मुद्दा नहीं छोड़ते जिसका सहारा लेकर वे आग्रही भारतनिष्ठों पर आक्रमण न करें। इन्हें कभी हमने नक्सली हिंसा में शहीद होने वाले जवानों को श्रद्धांजलि देते हुए अफस नक्सली और जिहादी हिंसा का निषेध करते हुए मुश्किल से देखा होगा। महाराष्ट्र से लेकर छत्तीसगढ़ तक नक्सली आतंकी सुरक्षा बलों के जवानों और नागरिकों की हत्याएं करते हैं, लेकिन तथाकथित सेक्युलर लोग नक्सलियों को गरीबों के हक में लड़ने वाले क्रांतिकारी बताते नहीं थकते। ऐसे लोग भारतीय सेना के एक दल द्वारा हिमालय की उंचाइयों पर येती के पदचिन्ह देखने के दावे पर उसका मजाक उड़ाने से भी नहीं चूके। इस बहाने वे प्रधानमंत्री नरेंद्र मोदी पर चोट करते हुए एक तरह की गुंति और आनंद महसूस करते दिखे। ऐसा लगा कि मानों सेना ने येती के पदचिन्ह देखने का दावा प्रधानमंत्रियों के कहने पर किया हो।

आज तक किसी झोलाछाप क्रांतिकारी और जंतर मंतर पर हर रोज डेरा लगाए रहने वाले बयान बहादुरों को हमने नक्सली आतंकवादियों, पुलवामा हमले के अपराधी जिहादियों या पूर्वोत्तर के अलगाववादियों के खिलाफ न तो प्रदर्शन करते हुए देखा और न ही जैश और लश्कर जैसे आतंकी संगठनों के विरोध में एक शब्द भी लिखते या बोलते देखा। खुद को सेक्युलर बताने वाले इन लोगों की आवाज उठती है तो केवल उन आग्रही भारतनिष्ठों के विरुद्ध जो तिरों की शान और संविधान के मान के लिए जान कुर्बान करने को तैयार रहते हैं। हाल तक इन सेक्युलर तत्वों का आधिपत्य हर बौद्धिक एवं अकादमिक संस्थानों, मंत्रालय, हर फेलोशिप और सरकारी अनुदानों के स्रोत पर छाया हुआ आ। एक समय तक नियम यह था कि जिस सामान्य कर्मचारी तक की पृष्ठभूमि में भगवा दिखे उसे प्रताड़ित कर या तो हटा दिया जाए या नियुक्ति के समय ही उसे खारिज कर दिया जाए। नरुल हसन से अर्जुन सिंह तक यही चला। इस विशेषाधिकार संपन्न गिरोह में शामिल होने के लिए जरूरी था कि आप रोहिता थापर और इरफान हबीब पढ़ें और उनके लेखन से सहमत भी हों। इसी के साथ यह भी जरूरी है कि आप भगवा के खिलाफ बोलें और बहुमुखकों पर हमले के लिए शब्द हिंसा का सहारा ही न लें, बल्कि उन वाम विचारों को महत्व दें जो भारत से तो गांभवं रहे हों और अब जिनके खंडहर भी जाते को नहीं मिलते। इसके विपरीत यह भी अपेक्षा की जाती है कि आग्रही भारतनिष्ठों के विचार प्रतिबंधित ही रखे जाएं, भले ही संपूर्ण भारत में उनका समर्थन एवं उनके विचारों को पढ़ने वालों की संख्या बढ़ रही हो। ऐसा वैचारिक नाजीवाद सोवियत रूस या कम्युनिस्ट चीन में हो



तो समझ आता है, पर भारत में लोकतंत्र का ही सहारा लेकर भिन्न विचारों को प्रतिबंधित करना वह सेक्युलर नाजीवाद का भारतीय संस्करण ही कहा जा सकता है।

बीते दिनों सेना के एक पर्वतारोही दल ने अपने खोजी अभियान में बर्फ पर बड़े-बड़े पैरों के निशान देखे तो स्वाभाविक ही था कि वे वैज्ञानिकों के सामने इस तथ्य को रखते हुए पूछते कि क्या ये पदचिन्ह येती के हो सकते हैं? येती के विषय में मेरा कॉलेज के समय से अध्ययन रहा है। तिब्बत के गवर्नर से कहकर मैं दो बार दक्षिण पश्चिम तिब्बत के क्षेत्र में विश्व के महान चमत्कारी बौद्ध योगी मिलारेपा की गुफा तक पहुंचा और वहां श्वेत तारा, नील तारा और डकिनी देवियों के क्षेत्र में येती के संबंध में व्याप्त विचारां और कथा सूत्रों का संग्रह किया। येती के विषय में प्रचुर साहित्य उपलब्ध है। यह मानना बहुत पुरानी है कि हिम मानव यानी येती हिमालय की ऊंची बर्फाली चोटियों के बीच कहीं रहते हैं। कलिंगपोंग में 1940 और 1950 के दशक में वहां के समाचार पत्रों में येती के बारे में अनेक लेख-समाचार

प्रकाशित हुए। 1960 में एक्वेस्ट विजंता सर एडमंड हिलेरी ने येती के एक कपाल को लेकर खुमजुंग बौद्ध मठ के प्रमुख लामा के साथ येती की खोज का अभियान छेड़ा था और बाद में उस कपाल को लंदन ले जाकर उसकी वैज्ञानिक जांच कराई थी। कलिंगपोंग से प्रकाशित 8 और 15 फरवरी 1959 के हिमालयन टाइम्स समाचार पत्र में येती के करीब रहकर आए लोगों और येती द्वारा गांव से उठकर ले जाए गए लोगों के अनुभव प्रकाशित हुए। ज्यादातर पटेंट ब्रिटेन और अमेरिका में रहने वाले पश्चिमी शिक्षा पाए यात्रियों ने लिखीं। रूसी अखबार इजेविरस्तिया ने येती के माध्यम से नेपाल-तिब्बत सीमा पर अभियान कर रहे टाम सलिक पर अमेरिकी जासूस होने का आरोप लगाया जो 12 मई 1957 के हिमालयन टाइम्स में छपा। येती अभियान के बहाने जासूसी के इतने अधिक आरोप लगे कि जून 1957 में नेपाल सरकार ने येती अभियान के तौर-तरीकों के बारे में एक विस्तृत नियमावली जारी की। 1960 में सर एडमंड हिलेरी द्वारा नारायण हेटौटी महल में तत्कालीन महाराजाधिराज महेंद्र वीर विक्रम शाहदेव को येती का सिर भेंट किए जाने का समाचार भी प्रकाशित हुआ था। स्विस्, जर्मन और स्थानीय शेरपाओं के हजारों वृत्तों में येती का वर्णन मिलता है, लेकिन भारतीय सेना के पर्वतारोही दल ने जब येती का जिक्र किया तो कई सेक्युलर बुद्धिजीवियों ने चीन के उन समाचार पत्रों को प्रमुखता से उद्धृत किया जिनमें भारतीय सैन्य दल का मखौल उड़ गया था। परअसल ये वे लोग हैं जो विदेशी अखबारों में भारतीय सेना पर अनुचित टिप्पणी को महत्व देने का कोई मौका नहीं छोड़ते। वे इन टिप्पणियों को ऐसे लपक लेते हैं मानो वह ईश्वरीय प्रसाद हो। सोशल मीडिया पर इन सेक्युलर तत्वों ने येती का सहारा लेकर मोदी और सेना पर हमलें शुरू कर दिए। किसी ने लिखा कि मोदी येती का मंदिर बनाएंगे तो किसी अन्य ने लिखा कि यह बेहद शर्मनाक है कि भारतीय सेना अफवाहें फैला रही है। एक ने यह भी लिखा कि भारतीय सेना को विज्ञान की नवीनतम खोजों की कोई जानकारी ही नहीं होती।

भारतीय सेना अगर दुश्मन के घर में घुसकर हमला करे तो यही लोग उस पर चक्र करते हैं। वह कोई विशेष खोज करे तो उसका मजाक उड़ाते हैं और सेना के बहाने प्रधानमंत्री पर ताने मारने का भी काम करते हैं। इस पर बसस हो सकता है कि सेना के दावे का क्या आधार है और वह कैसे इस नतीजे पर पहुंची कि पदचिन्ह येती के हैं, लेकिन आखिर उसका मजाक उड़ाना कहां तक उचित है? (लेखक रज्यसभा के पूर्व सदस्य एवं वरिष्ठ स्तंभकार हैं)

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अबधेश राजपूत

आए। इस प्रस्ताव पर चीन और ज्यादा कुपित हो गया। ऐसा इसलिए, क्योंकि सुरक्षा परिषद की समिति में जब किसी आतंकी का मसला उठता है तो उस आतंकी को केवल तकनीकी आधार पर ही नहीं बचाया जा सकता। उस देश को सार्वजनिक रूप से उस आतंकी की करतूतों का भी बचाव करना पड़ता है। इससे अलग-थलग पड़ने के साथ ही अंतरराष्ट्रीय शर्मिंदगी झेलने का जोखिम भी बढ़ जाता है।

भारत ने संयुक्त राष्ट्र में अपने क्राबिल विशेष दूत सैयद अबकरबद्दीन की अगुआई में खामोशी के साथ, लेकिन सही कूटनीतिक ढंग के साथ वाक, लेकिन सही कूटनीतिक ढंग के साथ अपनी चाल चली। इस बीच चीन ने अमेरिका के प्रस्ताव को मार्च तक किसी तरह लटका दिया। बाद में यह मामला अमेरिका और चीन के बीच फंस गया। चीन ऐसे संकेत दे रहा है कि वह दुनिया की महाशक्ति के रूप में अमेरिका को चुनौती देना चाहता है। वहीं टूट् इस चुनौती की हवा निकालने को आतुर है। अमेरिका और

आए बदलाव से पाकिस्तानी जनता में उपजे आक्रोश को कुछ हद तक शांत करने में मदद मिलेगी। पाकिस्तान में तमाम लोग यही सोचते रहे कि पाक के साथ अपने रिश्तों को देखते हुए मसूद अजहर के मामले में चीन कभी भी पाकिस्तान को अंतरराष्ट्रीय स्तर पर शर्मसार नहीं होने देगा। हालांकि पाकिस्तानी नीति निर्माता चीन से अभी भी इसी अपेक्षा में लगे थे कि वह भारत में चल रहे चुनावों के बाद ही यह कदम उठाए, क्योंकि अभी ऐसा करने से भाजपा चुनावों में इस मुद्दे को भुना सकती है। ऐसा लगा भी कि चीन इसी रा पर है, लेकिन अमेरिकी दबाव और भारत में मोदी की वापसी की संभावना को देखते हुए उसे अपना रख बदलना पड़ा।

चीन के रुख में बदलाव भारत के लिए निश्चित रूप से एक बड़ी कूटनीतिक कामयाबी है, क्योंकि वह बीते कई वर्षों से मसूद अजहर को अंतरराष्ट्रीय आतंकी घोषित करने के लिए प्रयास कर रहा था। भले ही पाकिस्तान अजहर के खिलाफ कोई कार्रवाई न करे जैसा कि उसने हाफिज सईद जैसे आतंकी के मामले में किया, तब भी इस आतंकी सरगना पर पाबंदी भारत के लिए एक बड़ी सफलता है। मसूद अजहर के अंतरराष्ट्रीय आतंकी घोषित होने से भाजपा को स्वाभाविक रूप से एक मुद्दा मिल जाएगा जिसका वह चुनाव अभियान में भरपूर लाभ उठाना चाहेगी। अजहर का मामला भारत-चीन संबंधों के लिए भी एक सबक है। चीन तब तक भारत की चिंताओं पर गौर नहीं करता जब तक कि बड़ी शक्तियां उस पर इसके लिए दबाव नहीं डालतीं। वर्ष 2008 में परमाणु आपूर्तिकर्ता देशों के समूह में भी ऐसा ही हुआ था। तब अमेरिकी राष्ट्रपति बुश द्वारा भारत के मुखर समर्थन के बाद ही चीन के तैयार ढीले पड़े थे। इस मामले में भी यही देखने को मिला। स्पष्ट है कि वृहान जैसी भावना से ज्यादा अंतरराष्ट्रीय हितों के साथ संयोजन अधिक आवश्यक है।

(लेखक विदेश मंत्रालय में सचिव रहे हैं)

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समन्वय

समन्वय

समन्वय आत्मा की भाषा है। आज मनुष्य अंतरात्मा की आवाज सुनने को तैयार नहीं है। वह भीतर से टूट रहा है और बाहर से बिखर रहा है। मानव के अस्तित्व की समस्याएं सार रूप में सर्वांग समन्वय से संबंधित समस्याएं हैं। समन्वय की पहली समस्या स्वतंत्रता के भौत ज्ञान, भाव और कर्म के मध्य संतुलन स्थापित करने से संबंधित है। न तो ज्ञान के अनुकूल भाव है और न ही भाव के अनुकूल कर्म। कोरा ज्ञान पांडित्य प्रदर्शन है, कोरी भावुकता मूर्खता है और कोरा कर्मकांड पाखंड है। ज्ञान का जीवन में उतरना ही सदाचार है। बार-बार सत्कर्म करना ही चरित्र है।

समन्वय की दूसरी समस्या व्यक्ति-व्यक्ति के बीच तालमेल कायम करने से संबंधित है। इस समस्या का समाधान वेदांत के इस तत्वज्ञान में है कि सब अत्मवत् हैं। जब एक ही आत्मा सब के भीतर है तो परस्पर द्वेष क्यों? ऊंच-नीच या झुआधूत का भेदभाव क्यों? जब सब एक ही आत्मा के प्रसार हैं, तब जगत में किसी को तुच्छ नहीं कहा जा सकता। तीसरी समस्या समष्टि के साथ समन्वय की समस्या है। इस समस्या का हल तभी निकलेगा, जब हर व्यक्ति स्वार्थ और वासना के घेरे से ऊपर उठकर समाज की धरोहर बन जाएगा। आशय यह है कि उसके 'स्व' का समाजीकरण हो जाएगा। वह समाज के लिए जाएगा और समाज के लिए रहेगा।

समन्वय से संबंधित चौथी समस्या विभिन्न समूहों के मध्य संतुलन स्थापित करने से जुड़ी है। मजबूती उन्माद, जातीय विद्वेष और वर्ग संघर्ष विभिन्न वर्गों के बीच संतुलन स्थापित न होने के दुष्परिणाम हैं। इस समस्या का समाधान वेदांत के इस सूत्र में तलाशना है कि 'एकं सद्रिपा बहुधा वर्दति।' यानी सभी धर्म एक ही सत्य के रंग-बिरंगे फूल हैं। पांचवीं समस्या समष्टि के साथ ईश्वर के समन्वय से संबंधित है। सत्य को ही ईश्वर मान लेने से यह समस्या निपट जाती है। आखिर सत्य का अर्थ ही सत्य है। चाहे राम कहे या रहीम मतलब तो खुदा की चाह से है। जब सृष्टि के कण-कण में एक ही ईश्वर रम रहा है तो कोई भी पंथ निकट नहीं है। अपनी हृदय-दृष्टि खोलो, सब में ईश्वर की छवि दिखाई देती है, लेकिन आखिर उसका का यह पहला आधार है। हृदय के चक्षु खोलें बिना परमपिता का आभास होना असंभव है।

डॉ. दुर्गादत्त पांडेय

देश को सुरक्षित जीवन और विकास चाहिए

एक ही मुद्दा-एक ही नाम शीर्षक से लिखे अपने लेख में प्रो. निरंजन कुमार का भारत की राष्ट्रीय राजनीति में धूमकेतु की तरह उभरने वाले नरेंद्र मोदी की लोकप्रियता को उनका 'पर्सनैलिटी कल्ट' बताना बिल्कुल सही है। 2014 का आम चुनाव मोदी के इसी 'पर्सनैलिटी कल्ट' की अग्नि परीक्षा था, जिस पर वह खड़े उतरे, लेकिन अब 2019 में देश की जनता मोदी के पांच वर्षीय कृतित्व को सामने रखकर अपना फैसला देगी। ऐसे में धरातल पर दिखने वाली लोकहितैषी विकास योजनाएं मोदी शासन को परखने का पैमाना बन रही हैं। ठीक इसके विपरीत 60 वर्षों तक देश को शासित करने वाली कांग्रेस और उसी सोच की राजनीति करने वाले सपा, बसपा, राजद, टीएमपी जैसे अनेक क्षेत्रीय राजनीतिक दल केवल पांच वर्षों के अल्पकाल में हुए विकास कार्यों और वैश्विक स्तर पर बढ़ती भारत की साख से हतप्रभ होकर 'मोदी दिग्दर्श' के एकसूत्रीय कार्यक्रम के तहत अपनी एकजुटता का प्रदर्शन करते दिखाई दे रहे हैं। लेकिन देश की जनता इन सबकी 'अपनी-अपनी ढाली, अपना-अपना राग' की स्वार्थपरक राजनीति को बखूबी समझ रही है। इस दृष्टि से विषय की यह खोखली एकजुटता 2019 के आम चुनाव को प्रभावित कर पाएगी, इसमें संदेह है। आज मोदी शासन की वैश्विक कूटनीति का ही सुपरिणाम है कि संयुक्त राष्ट्र ने कुख्यात आतंकवादी मसूद अजहर को अंतरराष्ट्रीय आतंकवादी घोषित कर उस पर विश्वव्यापी प्रतिबंध लगा दिए हैं। अमानवीय और हिंसक आतंकवाद पर मोदी सरकार की जीरो टॉलरेंस की नीति के चलते आम नागरिकों का जीवन आतंकी हमलों से सुरक्षित हुआ है। उड़ी और पुलवामा आतंकी हमले के बाद भारत की ओर से की जाने वाली सर्जिकल

मेलबाक्स

स्ट्राइक ने पाकिस्तान को बिना युद्ध किए परास्त कर दिया है। मोदी शासन को ये उपलब्धियां आज विपक्ष का पसीना निकाल रही हैं। अल्पसंख्यक गुट्टीकरण, भ्रष्टाचार और पाक समर्थित आतंकवाद को नजरंदाज करने वाली राष्ट्रघाती नीतियों की जगह अब इस देश को सुरक्षित जीवन और विकास चाहिए, इस तरह की परिवर्तित सोच मोदी सरकार की राष्ट्रहितैषी नीतियों का ही सुफल है। शायद इसीलिए मोदी इस आम चुनाव के केंद्र में हैं।

डॉ. वीपी पाण्डेय, अलीगढ़

नक्सलवाद का खौफ

पहले छत्तीसगढ़ और अब एक महीने में दूसरी बार महाराष्ट्र के गढ़चिरोली में नक्सलवादी हमला होना दुःख है। इसमें कोई दो राय नहीं कि यह एक सुनिश्चित हमला था, क्योंकि सुरक्षा के तहत नक्सल प्रभावित क्षेत्र में पेट्रोलिंग के लिए सभी जुवाना सरकारी वाहन के बजाय निजी वाहन में सवार होकर गए थे और केवल एक पट्टेल पंप से ही ईंधन इलवाया था। उसके बावजूद नक्सली हमला होना यही दर्शाता है कि इस मुखबरी में अज्ञेन नक्सलियों का भी हाथ है। उनका मकसद चुनावी माहौल को बिगाड़ना रहा होगा। सरकार को शीघ्र इस नक्सलवाद को कठोरतम कार्रवाई करनी चाहिए। आजलेखनीय है कि सरकार की कई कार्रवाई के कारण ही उन नक्सलवाद 161 जिलों से सिमट कर केवल 90 जिलों में रह गया है। लेकिन यह भी समझ से परे है कि इन नक्सलवादियों के पास पैसा, गोला बारूद और अत्याधुनिक हथियार कैसे आ जाते हैं? कौन इनकी वित्तीय मदद करता है? और कौन इनके लिए मुखबरी से सरकारी को अपने खुफिया तंत्र को और मजबूत

कर नक्सलियों की गतिविधियों पर नजर रखने की जरूरत है। उनसे सीधी लड़ाई के बजाय उनके संसाधनों को कमजोर किया जाना चाहिए। इससे वे खुद कमजोर हो जाएंगे। ऐसे में कोई हमला करने में खुद ही असमर्थ पाएंगे। तब सुरक्षा बलों को उन पर काबू पाना आसान हो जाएगा।

दीपक मजूम, सोनीपत

संविधान की मूलभावा

चुनाव में लगभग सभी दल सांप्रदायिक एवं जातिवाद पर आधारित राजनीति को प्रश्रय देते हैं। प्रत्येक दल किसी भी व्यक्ति को टिकट देने के पूर्व उस क्षेत्र विशेष में कितने हिंदू हैं, कितने मुस्लिम हैं, कितने पिछड़े हैं, कितने दलित हैं, कितने ब्राह्मण, ठाकुर, कायस्थ या वैश्य हैं, आदि की संख्या पता करता है और उसमें गुणा भाग कर जीतने की संभावना वाले जाति समीकरण के अनुकूल टिकट वितरण करता है। यह संविधान की मूल भावना के विपरीत है। किसी भी क्षेत्र की जनसंख्या का विवरण या जाति के आधार पर किसी को उपलब्ध नहीं करगया जाना चाहिए।

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

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नफरत का दायरा

उम्मीद की गई थी कि दुनिया में जैसे-जैसे विज्ञान और तकनीक के साथ-साथ आधुनिक वैज्ञानिक सोच का विकास और विस्तार होगा, वैसे-वैसे अलग-अलग मत को मानने वालों के बीच पसरी संकीर्णताओं की दीवारें टूटेंगी और इंसानी समाज ज्यादा सभ्य और संवेदनशील बनेगा। लेकिन इससे बड़ी विडंबना क्या होगी कि एक ओर दुनिया की उत्पत्ति के रहस्यों की खोज में बड़ी कामयाबियां दर्ज की जा रही हैं, विज्ञान नई ऊंचाइयों हासिल कर रहा है और दूसरी ओर विश्व भर में समाज का एक बड़ा हिस्सा प्रतिगामी दिख रहा है। हर अगले दिन विकास के मायने जहां ये होने चाहिए थे कि तकनीकी उपलब्धियों के समांतर हमारा समाज भी ज्यादा सभ्य, संवेदनशील और मानवीय बने, वहां कई बार ऐसा लगता है कि मनुष्य के बीच दूरी पैदा करने वाले विचारों की जड़ें अभी भी काफी मजबूत हैं और तकनीकी उपलब्धियों को नफरत या हिंसा फैलाने का जरिया बना लिया गया है। हाल के वर्षों में दुनिया के अलग-अलग हिस्सों में अनेक धर्मों की पहचान के साथ जुड़े समूहों की गतिविधियां जिस तरह की नफरत और उस पर आधारित हिंसा के रूप में सामने आ रही हैं, वह समूचे मानव-समाज के लिए बेहद चिंता की बात हैं। शायद यही वजह है कि लगातार गहराता यह मसला अब संयुक्त राष्ट्र की चिंता में भी शुमार हुआ है। सोमवार को संयुक्त राष्ट्र प्रमुख एंतोनियो गुतेरस ने साफ तौर पर कहा कि पूरी दुनिया में हम देख रहे हैं कि असहिष्णुता और विभिन्न पंथों के अनुयायियों के खिलाफ घृणा आधारित हिंसा बढ़ रही है और यह जहर हर उस व्यक्ति के खिलाफ है, जिसे 'दूसरा' समझा जाता है। उन्होंने आगाह किया कि इंटरनेट का कुछ हिस्सा 'घृणा का हॉटहाउस' बनता जा रहा है। सवाल है कि सामाजिक विकास के क्रम में हमें जहां ज्यादा से ज्यादा सभ्य और संवेदनशील बन कर अपने बीच इंसानियत के मूल्यों को मजबूत करना चाहिए था, वहां हमारे समाज में यह हालत कैसे हो गई?

गौरतलब है कि हाल ही में श्रीलंका में गिरजाघर सहित कई जगहों पर हुए सिलसिलेवार आतंकी बम विस्फोटों में ढाई सौ से ज्यादा लोगों की जान चली गई। इससे कुछ दिन पहले न्यूजीलैंड में एक मस्जिद पर हुए आतंकी हमले में करीब पचास लोग मारे गए। इसके अलावा भी गिरजाघरों में इसाइयों की हत्या, सिनेगांग यानी यहूदी प्रार्थना-गृहों में यहूदियों का कत्ल, मस्जिद में मुसलमानों को मार डाला जाना, धार्मिक स्थलों में तोड़फोड़ जैसी घटनाएं हाल के दिनों में न्यूजीलैंड ने लगी हैं। भारत में भी एक समुदाय विशेष के प्रति ऐसे दुराग्रह उभरते देखे जा सकते हैं। नफरत के स्तर का अंदाजा इससे लगाया जा सकता है कि यहूदियों की कब्रों पर स्वस्तिक का निशान बना दिया जा रहा है, जो एक समय में जर्मनी में हिटलर और उसकी नाजी पार्टी का प्रिय निशान था। एक समय में नाजीवाद से मुक्ति के लिए दुनिया के बहुत सारे देशों को एक मोर्चा बनाना पड़ा था, ताकि नफरत और हिंसा के विचार से मुक्त एक मानवीय संवेदनाओं वाला समाज बनाया जा सके। लेकिन दूसरे विश्वयुद्ध में नाजीवाद को हराने के आठ दशक बाद भी दुनिया के अलग-अलग हिस्सों में धर्म या नस्ल के नाम पर नफरत और हिंसा अगर एक प्रवृत्ति के रूप में हमारे सामने हैं तो यह ठहर कर सोचने का वक्त है कि हमारे बीच इंसानियत और अपनापे के विचार की जगह क्यों सिकुड़ती गई है। दुनिया को तो हम सब यही बताते हैं कि हमारा धर्म या मत सबसे ज्यादा मानवीय है। तो आखिर इसी बीच किसी भी 'दूसरे' कहे जाने वाले धर्म और मत के लोगों के प्रति उस असहिष्णुता और नफरत का विकास कैसे हुआ, जो अमानवीयता और हिंसा के सहारे जिंदा रहना चाहता है?

आपदा के वक्त

प्राकृतिक आपदा को रोकना मनुष्य के वश की बात नहीं। बस उससे होने वाले नुकसान से बचने के एहतियाती उपाय किए जा सकते हैं। आधुनिक तकनीक और संचार माध्यमों से एक सुविधा यह जरूर हुई है कि आपदा का पूर्व अनुमान लगाना संभव हो गया है। इससे समय रहते लोगों को सावधान रहने और आपदा प्रबंधन की तैयारी में मदद मिली है। चक्रवाती तूफान फानी से पार पाने के लिए ऐसी तैयारी पूरी दिख रही है। बंगाल की खाड़ी में करीब दो सौ किलोमीटर प्रति घंटा की रफतार से चल रही हवाओं ने चक्रवाती तूफान का रूप ले लिया। इससे भारत के पूर्वी तट को भारी नुकसान पहुंचने की आशंका जताई गई। इसलिए पश्चिम बंगाल, ओड़ीशा, आंध्र प्रदेश, तमिलनाडु आदि राज्यों में अतिरिक्त सतर्कता बरतने के निर्देश दे दिए गए। आपदा प्रबंधन की तमाम तैयारियां कर ली गईं। इस तूफान के अधिक प्रभाव में आने वाले क्षेत्रों में आपदा प्रबंधन के लिए निर्वाचन अयोग ने आदर्श आचार संहिता में छूट भी दे दी। इस तरह लोगों को जान के खतरे से बचाने के लिए सराहनीय तैयारियां की गई हैं। मगर इससे संपत्ति और प्राकृतिक संसाधनों को पहुंचने वाले नुकसान को कितना रोका जा सकेगा, अभी दावा नहीं किया जा सकता।

जिन इलाकों में फानी से भारी नुकसान का अनुमान है, वहां तो एहतियाती तैयारियां कर ली गई हैं, पर ऐसी आपदाओं का दायरा बहुत विस्तृत होता है। इसका असर दूसरे समीपवर्ती राज्यों पर भी पड़ता है। यह फसल कटने का मौसम है। बहुत सारे किसानों ने अपनी फसलें काट कर खेतों में उनके ढेर लगा रखे हैं। बहुत सारे लोगों ने अनाज की मड़ाई करके बाहर छोड़ रखा है। अभी काफी खेत कटने को हैं। ऐसे में बारिश आने से फसलों को भारी नुकसान पहुंचेगा। यह लगभग हर साल का सिलसिला बन चुका है कि जब किसान फसल काट कर रखता है या फसल कटने को होती है तो मौसम का मिजाज करवट लेता है और किसान की सारी मेहनत पर पानी फेर जाता है। बहुत सारा अनाज बारिश की वजह से सड़ जाता है। फिर ऐसे तूफान से समुद्री इलाकों में बने भवनों, बाग-बागीचों, खेतों, रिहाइशी बस्तियों, मछुआरों के रोजगार को भारी चोट पहुंचती है। पुरी के जिस समुद्र तट पर फानी के टकराने का अनुमान है, वह वैसे भी उग्र है और उसमें उठा उफान कितना नुकसान पहुंचाएगा, अनुमान नहीं लगाया जा सकता।

प्रकृति का कोप कोई नई बात नहीं है, पर पिछले कुछ सालों में ऐसी आपदाएं अधिक उग्र और थोड़े-थोड़े अंतराल पर दिखने लगी हैं, तो इसकी कुछ वजहें साफ हैं। जलवायु परिवर्तन की वजह से हवाओं का चक्र गड़बड़ हो गया है। इसकी वजह से बेमौसम बारिश और तूफान उठ खड़े होते हैं। पिछले कई सालों से जोर दिया जा रहा है कि दुनिया के सारे देश, खासकर विकसित देश अपने कार्बन उत्सर्जन में कमी लाएं। प्राकृतिक संसाधनों के अतार्किक दोहन पर विराम लगाएं। मगर आर्थिक उन्नति के इस प्रतिस्पर्धी समय में कोई भी अपनी औद्योगिक गतिविधियों को नियंत्रित नहीं करना चाहता। बड़े-बड़े कल-कारखाने लगाने और नदियों, पहाड़ों, जंगलों की चिंता किए बगैर सड़कों और रिहाइशी कॉलोनियां, बाजार बसाने की जैसे होड़ लगी हुई है। ऐसे में प्राकृतिक आपदा से होने वाले नुकसान से बचने के फौरी इंतजाम तो हम कर लेते हैं, पर आपदा को रोकने के इंतजाम करने में नाकाम साबित हो रहे हैं। जब तक इस दिशा में नहीं सोचा जाता, संकट से पार पाना कठिन बना रहेगा।

कल्पमेधा

जो किसी बेहूदा और बदमिजाज आदमी को नसीहत देता है, उसे खुद नसीहत की जरूरत है।

-शेख शादी

जनसत्ता

मोर्चे पर महिलाओं को मौका

योगेश कुमार गोयल

काफी पहले एक पिछड़े जमाने में अगर युद्ध क्षेत्र में कपड़े बदलने या गर्भवती होने या फिर पुरुष सैनिकों द्वारा उनका नेतृत्व स्वीकार करने जैसे सवालों से परे रह कर महिला वीरांगनाएं अपनी वीरता और युद्ध कौशल से हर किसी को हतप्रभ करती रहीं और अपने अदम्य साहस की मिसाल पेश करती रहीं तो क्या आज की महिलाओं में उस साहस या कौशल की कोई कमी है? अगर नहीं, तो फिर क्यों उनका नेतृत्व स्वीकारने या मातृत्व अवकाश जैसी बातों को बेवजह तूल दिया जाता है?

भारतीय सेना में महिलाओं की भागीदारी, बहुत कम संख्या और महत्वपूर्ण अभियानों में उनकी नगण्य भूमिका को लेकर लंबे समय से बहस चलती रही है। मगर हाल ही में भारतीय सेना में 'महिला सैनिक भर्ती' के लिए ऑनलाइन पंजीकरण की शुरुआत के साथ ही सेना में बतौर सैनिक कॅरियर बनाने की इच्छुक महिलाओं के लिए द्वार खोल दिए गए हैं। हालांकि शुरुआती चरण में सिर्फ सौ पदों के लिए भर्ती का जा रही है, लेकिन खबरों के मुताबिक भविष्य के लिए सेना में जवानों के रूप में महिलाओं की श्रेणीबद्ध तरीके से भर्ती की जाएगी, जिनकी भूमिका अपराध के मामलों की जांच करने से लेकर भर्ती से संचालन में सहायता करने तक होगी। जवानों के रूप में सेना में भर्ती की शुरुआत करने के साथ यह भी स्पष्ट किया गया है कि भारतीय सेना में अब महिलाओं की संख्या बीस फीसद होगी। ये महिलाएं सेना की मदद के साथ ही बलात्कार, छेड़छाड़ जैसे

मामलों की जांच करेंगी। सेना पुलिस की भूमिका सैन्य क्षेत्रों के भीतर पुलिस कार्य की होती है। इन जवानों को सैनिक की तरह प्रशिक्षण तो दिया जाता है, मगर इन्हें युद्ध क्षेत्र में नहीं भेजा जाता।

सन 1990 के दशक में महिलाओं ने सेना में जाना शुरू किया था, लेकिन करीब तीन दशक बाद भी अगर सेना में उनकी संख्या देखें तो हेरानी होती है। फिलहाल चौदह लाख सशस्त्र बलों के पैंसठ हजार अधिकारियों की फौज में वायुसेना में 1610, थल सेना में 1561 और नौसेना में 489 महिलाएं ही हैं। दरअसल, अभी तक सेना में महिलाओं को सिर्फ अधिकारियों के रूप में शामिल किया जाता रहा है और उनकी भर्ती चिकित्सा, कानूनी, शैक्षिक, सिग्नल, इंजीनियरिंग जैसे क्षेत्रों में होती रही है, जिनकी जिम्मेदारी सैनिकों द्वारा नियमों और विनियमों के उल्लंघन को रोकना, सैनिकों के साथ शांति और युद्ध के दौरान रस्द को बनाए रखना, युद्धबंदियों को सभालना और आम पुलिस को सहायता पहुंचाना आदि रही है। शॉर्ट सर्विस कमीशन के तहत चुनी जाने वाली महिला अधिकारी सेना में चौदह-पंद्रह साल तक ही अपनी सेवाएं दे पाती हैं। ऐसी महिला अधिकारियों की संख्या नगण्य ही रही है, जो स्थायी कमीशन में जगह बना पाती हैं।

जहां तक युद्ध ऑपरेशनों की बात है तो दुनिया के कई समृद्ध देशों में युद्ध ऑपरेशनों में भी महिलाओं की अच्छी-खासी भागीदारी रहती है। अमेरिका में तो न्यूक्लियर मिसाइल सबमरीन्स पर भी महिलाओं की नियुक्ति होती है और मलेशिया, श्रीलंका, बांग्लादेश जैसे देश युद्ध में अपनी महिला सैनिकों को भी भेजते हैं। मगर हमारे यहां युद्ध अभियानों से महिलाओं को दूर रखा जाता रहा है। हमारी वायुसेना की महिला अधिकारियों को हेलिकॉप्टर और भारवाहक हवाई जहाज उड़ाने की ही अनुमति है और प्रायोगिक तौर पर उन्हें लड़ाकू जेट उड़ाने की भी अनुमति मिली है। वायुसेना में इस समय करीब सौ महिला पायलट हैं, लेकिन युद्ध क्षेत्र, सबमरीन और संकटग्रस्त क्षेत्रों में उनकी नियुक्ति का अभी तक कोई प्रावधान नहीं है।

अगर विदेशी सेनाओं के मुकाबले भारतीय सेना में महिलाओं के प्रतिनिधित्व की बात की जाए तो हम इस मामले में बहुत पीछे हैं। हालांकि अब सेना में महिलाओं का प्रतिनिधित्व बीस फीसद करने का निर्णय लिया गया है, उसका स्वागत किया जाना चाहिए। विदेशी सेनाओं में महिलाओं की संख्या पर नजर डालें तो चीनी सेना में करीब ढाई लाख महिला सैनिक हैं, जिनमें से डेढ़ लाख सशस्त्र बलों का हिस्सा हैं।



जिम्मेदार रही है। इसका अनुमान कुछ जिम्मेदार पदों बैठे लोगों के विचार से भी लगाया जा सकता है कि भारतीय सेना के अधिकतर जवान गांवों से आते हैं और वे महिला अधिकारियों का नेतृत्व स्वीकार करने को अभी तैयार नहीं हैं। यह भी कहा गया था कि अगर किसी युद्ध क्षेत्र में महिला को कमांड दी गई और उस दौरान अगर वे मातृत्व अवकाश मांगती हैं, तो क्या होगा? अगर महिला कमांडर के नेतृत्व में एक टुकड़ी लंबे ट्रेक पर जा रही है तो महिला अफसर के सोने का अलग से बंदोबस्त करना होगा और उनके कपड़े बदलने के लिए किसी जगह को घेर कर तैयार करना होगा।

इस प्रकार की मानसिकता के दायरे में भारतीय सेना को बांधते समय हम यह क्यों भूल जाते हैं कि हमारा इतिहास महिला वीरांगनाओं के युद्ध कौशल से भरा पड़ा था। झांसी की रानी लक्ष्मीबाई, चित्तूर की

नाकामी का डर

अपनी काबिलियत पर भरोसा करे तो सफलता के मार्ग पर दस्तक देने वाली ऐसी समस्याओं से निपटना आसान हो जाता है। सफलता से अधिक हम अपनी विफलता से सीखते हैं। विफलता सिर्फ इस बात का संकेतक होती है कि हमारे परिश्रम में कुछ कमी रह गई। अगर समय रहते उन कमियों को सुधार लिया जाए तो अगले इम्तिहान में सफलता हासिल करना निश्चित हो जाता है।

इतिहास में ऐसे अनेक दृष्टांत मौजूद हैं, जिनमें हम देखते हैं कि विफलता के बाद आलोचनाएं सुनने और हार कर बैठने के बजाय कुछ लोग अपने बच्चों पर अधिक अंक लाने का दबाव बनाते हैं। 1878 में आविष्कृत बल्ब आज हमारी जिंदगी का अभिन्न हिस्सा बन चुका है। मानव समाज को बल्ब का उपहार देकर विश्व में 'प्रकाश क्रांति' की मशाल जलाने वाले एडिसन के बारे में बहुत कम लोग जानते हैं कि बल्ब बनाने के क्रम में वे हजार बार विफल रहे थे। अपनी विफलता के बारे में उन्होंने कहा कि 'मैं कभी नाकाम नहीं हुआ, बल्कि मैंने दस हजार ऐसे रास्ते निकाल लिए जो मेरे काम नहीं आ सके।' अपने

जानते हैं। शासकीय अतिथि गृहों के कमरे की बुकिंग तक में नौकरशाहों और उनके परिजनों को प्राथमिकता दिए जाने की घटनाएं सामने आती रहती हैं। इसके चलते ग्राम पंचायत के प्रतिनिधियों की हालत नौकरशाहों के सामने बेहद दयनीय हो जाती है। अपने अधिकारों से अनभिज्ञ पंच सरपंच पूरी तरह नौकरशाहों की कृपा पर निर्भर देखे जाते हैं। कभी-कभी उनके साथ अधिकारियों द्वारा शिष्टाचारपूर्ण व्यवहार भी नहीं किए जाने की शिकायतें सामने आती हैं। पंचायती राज अधिनियम के कुछ प्रावधान भी ग्राम पंचायत के प्रतिनिधियों को नौकरशाहों पर निर्भर बनाते हैं। ऐसे प्रावधानों में जरूरी संशोधन किए जाने की जरूरत है। नौकरशाहों को अपनी

क्षेत्र में ढलान पर होते हैं। सनी देओल से लेकर उर्मिला मातोंडकर, गौतम गंभीर और विजेंद्र तक का हाल ऐसा ही है। जाहिर है, राजनीति इनके लिए करियर की दूसरी पारी जैसी है, जहां इन्हें बड़ी आसानी से प्रवेश मिल जाता है। लेकिन हाल में जितने भी सितारे संसद पहुंचे, बतौर सांसद उनके प्रदर्शन में ऐसा कुछ भी नहीं दिखा, जिससे नए सितारों के राजनीति में आने से कोई उम्मीद पैदा होती हो। कुल मिलाकर इनकी भूमिका चुनाव में किसी पार्टी को थोड़ा और प्रचार दिलाने तक सीमित रहती है।

● ***हेमंत कुमार, ग्राम-गोराडोह, भागलपुर, बिहार***

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

जिम्मेदारी और भूमिका समझनी होगी। अनुशासन की

याद दिलाने और जनता के प्रति संवेदनशीलता का व्यवहार सिखाने के लिए प्रशासनिक अकादमियों में उच्चाधिकारियों के लिए बीच-बीच में विशेष सत्र आयोजित किए जाएं ताकि इनका व्यवहार मातहत कर्मचारियों के लिए आदर्श बने और सुशासन का रूप निखर कर सामने आए जिससे जनता लाभान्वित हो।

- ऋषभ देव पांडेय, कोरबा, छत्तीसगढ़***

दूसरी पारी

क्षेत्रीय दलों में तुणमूल कांग्रेस ने अभिनेत्री और मॉडल मुनिरत जहां और मिमी चक्रवर्ती को चुनाव लड़ने का मौका दिया है। दमदार एक्टर प्रकाश राज कर्नाटक की बंगलुरु सेंट्रल लोकसभा सीट से निर्दलीय चुनाव लड़ रहे हैं। राजनीति में अब वही सितारे आ रहे हैं, जो अपने

रानी चैनम्मा, चांद बीबी, गोंड की रानी दुर्गावती, झलकारी बाई, उदादेवी पासी आदि अनेक ऐसी ही महिला वीर योद्धाओं ने इसी धरा पर जन्म लेकर युद्ध के मोर्चे पर वीरता की चुनहरी इबारतें लिखी हैं। काफी पहले एक पिछड़े जमाने में अगर युद्ध क्षेत्र में कपड़े बदलने या गर्भवती होने या फिर पुरुष सैनिकों द्वारा उनका नेतृत्व स्वीकार करने जैसे सवालों से परे रह कर महिला वीरांगनाएं अपनी वीरता और युद्ध कौशल से हर किसी को हतप्रभ करती रहीं और अपने अदम्य साहस की मिसाल पेश करती रहीं तो क्या आज की महिलाओं में उस साहस या कौशल की कोई कमी है? अगर नहीं तो फिर क्यों उनका नेतृत्व स्वीकारने या मातृत्व अवकाश जैसी बातों को बेवजह तूल दिया जाता है?

एक सवाल यह भी उठया जाता रहा है कि अगर युद्ध के दौरान महिला सैनिक दुश्मन सेना की गिरफ्त में आ जाएं तो उनके साथ बहुत बुरा व्यवहार हो सकता है। युद्धबंदियों के संरक्षण के लिए विवयना सम्मेलन और कुछ अन्य अंतरराष्ट्रीय कानून अस्तित्व में हैं। इस तरह के सवालों या दलीलों के बीच अगर हम देखें तो दूसरे देशों की सेनाओं में महिला सैनिकों का पर्याप्त संख्या बल है। अमेरिका तो अपनी महिला सैनिकों को युद्ध के मोर्चे पर भी भेजता है, जहां वे शहीद भी होती हैं और कभी-कभार युद्धबंदी भी बनाई जाती हैं। मगर इसे लेकर वहां कभी इस प्रकार की मानसिकता या दलीलें देखने-सुनने को नहीं मिलीं। दरअसल, भारत को एक आधुनिक राष्ट्र के रूप में विकसित करने के लिए हमें महिलाओं के प्रति अपना दृष्टिकोण बदलना ही होगा।

यह तर्क भी दिया जाता है कि लड़ाकू भूमिकाओं में भर्ती के लिए महिलाएं सेना में अनिवार्य कठोर शर्तों को स्वीकार नहीं कर पाएंगी, क्योंकि महिलाओं के लिए वही मानक होंगे, जो लड़ाकू भूमिकाओं के लिए किसी आम सैनिक से अपेक्षित होते हैं। ऐसे तर्क देते समय हम यह भूल जाते हैं कि एक ओर जहां भारतीय वायुसेना में महिलाएं लड़ाकू पायलट बन चुकी हैं, वहीं सीमा सुरक्षा बल का महिला दस्ता पूरी जंबाजी के साथ देश की सीमाओं की चौकसी कर रहा है। आज अगर महिलाएं लड़ाकू विमानों से मिसाइलें गिरा सकती हैं तो उनमें बंदूक, तोप और टैंक चलाने की भी पूरी सामर्थ्य है। जरूरत है देश की बहादुर बेटियों को सेना के द्वार खोल कर अवसर प्रदान करने की। अगर देश की बेटियां सेना में भर्ती होने के तमाम जोखिम और परेशानियों को जानते-समझते हुए इसका हिस्सा बनने का जब्जा रखती हैं तो उन्हें इसका अवसर मिलना ही चाहिए।

संघर्ष के दिनों में अपने परिवार और समाज से काफी आलोचनाएं भी सुनीं, लेकिन उनके मजबूत इरादों के सामने आलोचनाएं प्राणहीन साबित हुईं। महज पैंतीस वर्ष की आयु में फ्रेंच की गद्दी पर बैठने वाले नेपोलियन बोनापार्ट ने कहा था- 'मेरे लिए कोई भी कार्य असंभव नहीं है, यह और बात है कि मैंने उस कार्य को करने का प्रयास ही नहीं किया।' दरअसल, किसी काम के प्रति हमारा प्रयास ही सफलता या विफलता की आधारशिला रखता है। प्रयास अगर सही दिशा में हों तो परिणाम सकारात्मक आते हैं। बेमन से किया गया प्रयास निरर्थक और निराशाजनक परिणाम देता है।

परीक्षा एक माध्यम होती है, जिससे हम साल भर की अपनी पढ़ाई, ज्ञान और याददाश्त को परखते हैं। साल भर हमने कितनी ईमानदारी और मेहनत से पढ़ाई की है, वह एक दर्पण की भांति परीक्षा-परिणामों में नजर आता है। कम नंबर लाने का अर्थ यह नहीं है कि ऐसे विद्यार्थी के भीतर प्रतिभा की कमी है। दरअसल, यह संभलने का एक सुअवसर है, जहां से अधिक मेहनत कर अपने सुकहरे भविष्य के निर्माण की ओर कदम बढ़ाया जा सकता है। इसलिए निराशा के भंवर में फँसने के बजाय दृढ़ इच्छाशक्ति के साथ अगली परीक्षा की तैयारी पर ध्यान केंद्रित करना ही श्रेयस्क है। हमारा प्रयास ही हमें चुनौतियों से लड़ने के लिए तैयार करता है।

निम्नतम होता जा रहा है। प्रत्याशी एक-दूसरे के विरुद्ध बिना सबूत के अनर्गल आरोप लगा रहे हैं। गाली-गलौच में नए-नए शब्दों का प्रचलन हो रहा है। आने वाले समय में हो सकता है कि प्रचार की कालावधि में उम्मीदवारों में गुप्तमगुप्त्या भी होने लगे और सिरफुटीवल की बारी आ जाये। तब नित्य ऐसे-ऐसे अप्रिय समाचार सुनने को मिल सकते हैं कि फलों सीट से फलों पार्टी के प्रत्याशी ने विरोधी पार्टी के प्रत्याशी के सिर पर पत्थर दे मारा जिसे उसे पचास टांके लगवाने पड़े या फलों ने फलों पर तेजाब से हमला कर दिया। बहुत चिंताजनक स्थिति होती जा रही है। ईश्वर ऐसे प्रचारकों और प्रत्याशियों को सदबुद्धि दे दे जिससे लोकतंत्र की गरिमा बची रह जाए।

● ***सत्यकाश सनोटिया, रोहिणी, दिल्ली***

पाबंदी के बावजूद

मसूद अजहर को सिर्फ पुलवामा हमले के कारण संयुक्त राष्ट्र की वैश्विक आतंकवादियों की सूची में नहीं डाला गया है। दरअसल, भारत ने 2009 में ही मसूद अजहर पर प्रतिबंध लगाने संबंधी प्रस्ताव पेश किया था क्योंकि उसे मुंबई हमले के लिए भी जिम्मेदार माना जाता है। निश्चित तौर पर संयुक्त राष्ट्र का यह कदम स्वागत योग्य है लेकिन भारत को समझना होगा कि मुंबई हमले के जिम्मेदार हाफिज सईद को भी संयुक्त राष्ट्र ने आतंकी सूची में डाल रखा है फिर भी वह पाकिस्तान में भारत विरोधी भाषण देता रहता है। दिलचस्प बात तो यह है कि उसने इस सूची से अपना नाम हटाने की सिफारिश भी की थी।

लेकिन सही बात है। प्रधानमंत्री ने कहा कि दीदी उन्हें नए-नए कुत्ते और बंगाली मिठाइयों भेजती रहती हैं। यह बयान धधकते चुनावी वातावरण में शीतल बयार जैसा था, लेकिन कंकड़ के रसगुल्लों ने सब गुड़-गोबर कर दिया।

सत्ता की चाह में इस तरह के बचकाने बयान देने से न केवल मतदाताओं पर विपरीत प्रभाव पड़ेगा बल्कि उनके समर्थकों को भी लज्जापूर्ण स्थिति का अनुभव होगा। देखा जा रहा है कि हर चुनाव में प्रचार का स्तर

नई दिल्ली

बड़ी कूटनीतिक जीत

सुरक्षा परिषद द्वारा जैशे-मोहम्मद के सरगना मसूद अजहर को वैश्विक आतंकी घोषित किया जाना भारतीय कूटनीतिक की महत्वपूर्ण उपलब्धि है, हालांकि, उसके गिरोह को 2001 में ही आतंकी सूची में डाल दिया था तथा 2009 में भारत ने भी अजहर को आतंकी घोषित करने का प्रस्ताव दिया था, किंतु अंतरराष्ट्रीय राजनीति की खिंचतान और चीन के अडिगल रवैये के कारण वह बचता रहा था. पुलवामा हमले के बाद भारत ने इस दिशा में ठोस पहलें कीं और चीन को भी भरोसे में लेने की कोशिश हुई. कुछ दिन पहले विदेश सचिव विजय गोखले ने ठोस दस्तावेजों के आधार पर मसूद अजहर के खतरनाक हरकतों से चीनी नेतृत्व को अवगत कराया था. चीन ने भी अपने रुख में बदलाव के बारे में जानकारी देते हुए कहा है कि ऐसा नये सबूतों के कारण हुआ है. भारतीय प्रयासों के कारण ही फ्रांस, ब्रिटेन और अमेरिका ने सिर्फ प्रस्ताव लेकर आये, बल्कि उन्होंने यह भी कह दिया था कि अगर सुरक्षा परिषद में प्रस्ताव फिर से रूक जाता है, तो वे इस मसले पर खुली चर्चा करायेंगे. इससे भी चीन पर दबाव बढ़ा,

आतंकवाद के विरुद्ध व्यापक अंतरराष्ट्रीय एकजुटता आवश्यक है और मसूद अजहर को वैश्विक आतंकी घोषित कर सुरक्षा परिषद ने इस दिशा में एक बड़ी पहल है.

पाकिस्तान से अपनी गतिविधियों के संचालन करने के बावजूद इन्होंने वहां की जनता को भी अपना शिकार बनाया है. सुरक्षा परिषद के प्रस्ताव में मसूद अजहर के अल-कायदा और तालिबान से जुटजोड़ को रेखांकित किया गया है. बालाकोट में भारतीय वायु सेना की कार्रवाई पर अंतरराष्ट्रीय स्तर पर कोई आलोचना न होने से भी यह इंगित हुआ था कि दुनिया में आतंक को लेकर एक आम राय बन रही है तथा भारत की ऐसी प्रतिक्रिया स्वाभाविक है. चीन द्वारा इस प्रस्ताव पर सहमत होने से भारत के साथ उसके संबंधों पर भी सकारात्मक असर होने की उम्मीद है. यह दोनों देशों के आर्थिक एवं सुरक्षा हितों के लिए शुभ संकेत है. लेकिन, यह भी ध्यान रखना होगा कि मसूद अजहर को वैश्विक आतंकी घोषित करना आतंक के विरुद्ध लड़ाई में एक कदम ही है, क्योंकि पहले की पारबंदियों के बावजूद विभिन्न गिरोह हमलावर होते रहे हैं. ऐसे में सबसे जरूरी है कि पाकिस्तान पर पूरी दुनिया दबाव बनाये कि वह आतंक को शह देना बंद करे. अक्सर ताकतवर देश अपने हितों के कारण आतंकवाद पर दोहरा मानदंड अपनाते हैं. इससे उन्हें बड़ा नेटवर्क बनाने में मदद मिलती है. यह वैश्विक शांति और सुरक्षा के लिए ठीक नहीं है. आतंकवाद के विरुद्ध व्यापक अंतरराष्ट्रीय एकजुटता आवश्यक है और सुरक्षा परिषद का निर्णय इस दिशा में एक बड़ी पहल है.



बोधि वृक्ष

मन का कोना

एक फकीर अकबर से मिलने गया था. उसके मित्रों ने उससे कहा था कि अकबर से कलह कि यदि वह इतना तुम्हें प्रेम करता है, तो हमारे गांव में एक छोटा सा स्कूल खोल दे. वह फकीर जब पहुंचा तो अकबर सुबह की नमाज पढ़ रहा था. नमाज पूरी हुई. अकबर ने दोनों हाथ उठाये और कहा कि हे परमात्मा! मेरे राज्य को और बड़ा कर, मेरे खजानों को बड़ा कर, मेरे धन-दौलत को बढ़ा. वह फकीर हैरान हो गया. उसने कल्पना न की थी कि अकबर भी मांगता होगा. वह चापस लौटने लगा सोचियेंगे, अकबर उठा तो उसने देखा और पूछा कि कैसे आये और कैसे वापस लौट चले? उस फकीर ने कहा: मैंने सोचा मैं बादशाह से मिलने जाता हूँ, पाया कि यहाँ भी एक फकीर बैठा है. जो खुद ही मांगता है उससे और मांगकर लज्जित कराना शोभा नहीं देता. अगर मांगना ही होगा, तो हम भी उसी परमात्मा से मांग लेंगे. अकबर भी मांगता है. सम्राट भी मांगते हैं. इसलिए दुनिया में दो तरह के भिखारी होते हैं, एक जिनके पास कुछ नहीं होता और मांगते हैं और एक जिनके पास सब होता है फिर भी मांगते हैं. लेकिन भिखारी होने में कोई फर्क नहीं होता है. हो सकता है कि बहुत कुछ आपके पास हो, इससे इस भ्रम में न पड़ जायें कि आपके भीतर का भिखारी मर गया. भीतर का भिखारी समाप्त ही नहीं होता. मन मांगे चला जाता है. क्यों मांगे चला जाता है? और जो भी मिलता है उससे पूर्ण क्यों नहीं होती? क्या है बात? इतना इकट्ठा कर लेते हैं फिर भी मन का खालीपन बना रहता है, उसमें कोई फर्क नहीं पड़ता. आपके पास जल्द कुछ न कुछ होगा. क्या उस कुछ से आपके मन का कोई कोना भी भरा? अगर मन का कोई कोना भी भर गया हो, तो आशा बंध सकती है कि कभी पूरन मन भी भर जायेगा. जो हम इकट्ठा करते हैं, वह मन में पहुंचता ही नहीं. पहुंचेगा भी कैसे? जो भी हम इकट्ठा करते हैं वह बाहर है और मन भीतर है. भीतर और बाहर का संबंध ही क्या? यह ऐसे ही है जैसे मेरा घर खाली हो और मैं पड़ोस के घर में सामान इकट्ठा करता रहूँ, तो मेरा घर इससे कैसे भर जायेगा? **आचार्य रजनीश ओशो**

कुछ अलग

आम के आम

आम यों तो हमेशा आम ही रहता है, जो कि आम तौर पर उसे रहना भी चाहिए, क्योंकि आम की किस्मत में ही लिखा है आम होना, करना वह आम होता ही क्यों? लेकिन चुनाव के समय वह एकदम से खास हो उठता है. चुनाव एक समर है, जिसे छल-फरेब से जीता जाता है.

चुनाव के दौरान आम को अचानक खास समझने का पहसास करना ऐसा ही छल है, जिसके फरेब में वह फौन आ जाता है और अपने पैरों पर खुद कुल्हाड़ी मार लेता है. इससे नेता को उसके पैरों पर कुल्हाड़ी मारने की जहमत नहीं उठानी पड़ती. कुल्हाड़ी अलबत्ता नेता खुद ही उसे उपलब्ध कराता है. ऐसा वह इसलिए करता है कि कहीं वह आम, जिसका कि बहुवचन अवाम यानी जनता होता है, उसके विरोधी नेता की बातों में आकर उसके द्वारा दी गयी कुल्हाड़ी अपने पैरों पर न मार बैठे. वह जानता है कि जो जनता उसकी बातों में आकर अपने पैरों पर कुल्हाड़ी मार सकती है, वह किसी दूसरे की बातों में आकर भी ऐसा कर सकती है. इससे चुनाव में इस 'चु' की 'नाव' डूब सकती है और उधर चूना लगानेवाले की पार लग सकती है. सर्वविदित है कि हर नेता चुनाव में जनता को चूना लगाकर अपनी नाव बनाता है.

पूजा जा सकता है कि चुनावी समर के 'समर' में 'स' से क्या बनता है और 'मर' से उसका क्या संबंध है? जबाब में कहा जा सकता है कि समर में, भले ही वह फिर

जापान से हमें बहुत कुछ सीखना चाहिए, क्योंकि जापान एक ऐसा देश है, जो अपनी परंपराओं की रक्षा और निर्वाह बखूबी करता है. भारत में यदि कोई प्राचीन परंपराओं को संभालने की बात करता है, तो उनके बारे में यह कहा जाता है कि ये लोग अतीतजीवी हैं. ऐसे लोग यह बात नहीं समझते कि भविष्योन्मुखी होने के लिए अतीत को त्यागना या उसका अपमान करना जरूरी नहीं है. ये लोग जापान को नहीं देखते, जिसने यह बात सिद्ध करके दिखायी है. जापान में ढाई हजार साल से भी पुरानी राजवंशीय परंपरा आज भी फल-फूल रही है तथा बौते 30 अप्रैल को वहां के सम्राट अकिहितो ने 85 वर्ष की आयु में अपने स्वास्थ्य कारणों से सिंहासन त्याग कर दिया और अगले दिन यानी एक मई, 2019 को उनके 59 वर्षीय पुत्र राजकुमार नारुहितो ने जापान के 126वें सम्राट के रूप में पद संभाला. इसके ही सदभावहार पुष्य सिंहासन (गुलदाउदी) पर बैठे नये सम्राट नारुहितो ने जापान में एकता के सूत्र को अपनाते हुए एक नये युग का प्रारंभ किया.

सम्राट नारुहितो ने इंग्लैंड में अवस्थित ऑक्सफोर्ड विश्वविद्यालय में पढ़ाई की है, तथा उनकी पत्नी साम्राज्ञी मसाको ने भी अमेरिका के हार्वर्ड विश्वविद्यालय से शिक्षा हासिल की है. वे जापान के ऐसे पहले सम्राट हैं, जिनका जन्म दूसरे विश्वयुद्ध के बाद हुआ और पश्चिमी तौर-तरीकों तथा शिक्षा में निष्णात हैं. अपने पूर्वजों की तुलना में वे युवा तथा बेहद प्रगतिशील विचारों के धनी हैं. आज के समय में जब जापान आर्थिक मंदी, घटती जन्म दर, बूढ़े लोगों की बढ़ती संख्या तथा महिला-पुरुष भेद जैसी समस्याओं से गुजर रहा है, सम्राट नारुहितो पर जापान के लोगों की बहुत आशाएं टिकी हुई हैं.

द्वितीय विश्वयुद्ध के बाद 1945 तक जब अमेरिका ने जापान पर परमाणु बम गिराकर उसे परास्त किया,

वहां के सम्राट को देवस्वरूप माना जाता था. उस हमले से हुई जापान में तबाही तथा पराजय से टूट चुके सम्राट हीरोहितो ने दैवी रूप का प्रभासंडल हटाने की घोषणा कर दी. जापान को नये सिरे से बनाने का काम तथा टूटे मनोबल को उठाने की जिम्मेदारी हीरोहितो तथा उनके बेटे राजकुमार अकिहितो ने संभाली. हीरोशिमा का घाव मिटना मुश्किल था. अमेरिका ने जापान का नया संविधान कुछ इस प्रकार बनवाया कि सम्राट के पास सिर्फ दिखावटी संवैधानिक अधिकार रहे. फिर भी जापानी जनता के मन में अपने सम्राट के प्रति सम्मान और उनकी महानता का बोध तनिक भी कम नहीं हुआ. जापान पुनः उद्योग, व्यापार, चिकित्सा तथा प्रत्येक नागरिक को उन्नति और समृद्धि का अवसर देने में विश्व में शिरोमणि बना.

एक करोड़ तीस लाख की आबादी वाला जापान, लगातार भूकंपों को झेलनेवाला जापान और चीन से आक्रामक तेवर भी संभालनेवाला जापान केवल आत्मरक्षा के लिए सेना रख सकता है. लेकिन, जापान की प्रति व्यक्ति आय और औसत आय विश्व में सर्वोपरि है. 'मेड इन जापान' का अर्थ आज भी दुनिया में सर्वाधिक विश्वस्तनीय तथा दीर्घकालिक और बिना किसी तकलीफ के चलनेवाले उत्पादों के लिए जाना जाता है.



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जापान से आज हमारे जिस तरह के संबंध हैं, वैसे शायद ही किसी अन्य देश से हों. नये सम्राट नारुहितो के साथ भारतीय जनता और विचारकों के संबंध प्रगाढ़ हों, यह हमारे राजनीतिक और कूटनीतिक संबंधों के बढ़ने से भी ज्यादा जरूरी है.

भारत में जापानी सहयोग से सुजुकी मोटर्स ने संजय गांधी के साथ मारुति कार बनाना शुरू किया और हम सभी यह बात अच्छी तरह मानते हैं कि मारुति 800 ने भारत की सड़कों का नक्शा ही बदल दिया. दिल्ली सहित

किसान नहीं पेप्सिको है दोषी

विदेशी कंपनियों द्वारा भारत के किसानों से मुनाफा वसूली नयी बात नहीं है. बौटी कपास के बीज पर बिना पेटेंट अधिकार के मोनसैंटो नामक अमेरिकी कंपनी द्वारा भारत के किसानों से सात हजार करोड़ रुपये से भी ज्यादा रॉयल्टी की वसूली अभी तक की जा चुकी है. अब नया मसला पेय पदार्थ, आलू चिप्स और अन्य प्रकार के स्नैक्स बनानेवाली कंपनी पेप्सिको से जुड़ा है. गौरतलब है कि एफसी-5 नाम की एक आलू की किस्म की 'ठेका खेती' यह कंपनी कुछ राज्यों में किसानों से करवाती है. कंपनी के ठेका अनुबंध के अनुसार, किसानों से एक निश्चित कीमत पर एफसी-5 किस्म के आलू उगावये जाते हैं, जिन्हें ये किसान पेप्सिको की हिदायत के अनुसार उन आलू चिप्स निर्माताओं को बेचते हैं, जिनसे पेप्सिको आलू चिप्स खरीदती है. फिर पेप्सिको द्वारा पूरे भारत में आलू चिप्स का विपणन किया जाता है. यह बहुराष्ट्रीय कंपनियों का जाना-पहचाना मॉडल है. जाहिर है कि पेप्सिको कंपनी इस प्रकार से मोटा मुनाफा कमाती है, क्योंकि जो आलू पांच रुपये किलो से भी कम कीमत पर किसानों से खरीदे जाते हैं, मगर उपभोक्ताओं को सैकड़ों रुपये किलो के हिसाब से आलू चिप्स बेचकर कंपनियां मोटा मुनाफा कमाती हैं.

गुजरात के कुछ किसानों के खेत में जासूस भेजकर पेप्सिको कंपनी ने उन किसानों से आलू लेकर उनकी जांच करवाकर 11 किसानों पर मुकदमा कर दिया कि ये किसान कंपनी की एफसी-5 किस्म के आलू उगा रहे हैं, जिसके बीज को इन किसानों ने पंजाब के उन किसानों से खरीदा है, जिनका पेप्सिको के साथ अनुबंध था. कंपनी का आरोप है कि इस बीज को कंपनी ने पंजीकृत करवाया हुआ है, इसलिए किसानों ने कंपनी के बौद्धिक संपदा अधिकारों का हनन किया है. पेप्सिको ने अहमदाबाद, गुजरात की व्यावसायिक अदालत में मुकदमा दाखिल कर किसानों द्वारा उत्पादन पर रोक लगाने की मांग तो की ही, साथ ही चार किसानों पर उसके बौद्धिक संपदा अधिकारों के हनन की एवज में प्रत्येक से 1.05 करोड़ के हखाने की वसूली हेतु भी मांग की. विडंबना देखिये कि अदालत ने किसानों के खिलाफ फैसला भी दे दिया.

बौद्धिक संपदा कानूनों के जानकार का मानना है कि व्यावसायिक अदालत ने सही निर्णय नहीं दिया, क्योंकि वास्तव में किसानों ने किसी भी प्रकार से कंपनी के बौद्धिक संपदा अधिकारों का हनन किया ही नहीं. भारत के बौद्धिक संपदा कानूनों के अनुसार, वास्तव में बीज और पादप के संबंध में पेटेंट कानून लागू नहीं होता. इसके संबंध में एक दूसरा कानून है, जिसे पादप किस्म एवं किसान अधिकार संरक्षण (पीपीवीएफआर) अधिनियम, 2001 के नाम से जाना जाता है. इस

कानून के हिसाब से कोई व्यक्ति अथवा व्यावसायिक इकाई किसी बीज अथवा पादप किस्म का पंजीकरण करा सकती है और किसी अन्य व्यक्ति अथवा व्यावसायिक इकाई को उस किस्म के उत्पाद को उस नाम (ब्रांड) से बेचने का अधिकार नहीं होगा. लेकिन इस कानून की धारा 39(1)(IV) में किसानों के अधिकारों को सुरक्षित किया गया है. इस धारा के अनुसार, 'एक किसान को इस अधिनियम के तहत संरक्षित एक किस्म के बीज सहित अपने खेत की उपज को बचाने, उपयोग करने, बोने, पुनः बोने, आदान-प्रदान करने, साझा करने या बेचने का हकदार माना जायेगा, क्योंकि वह इसके लागू होने से पहले हकदार था.' गौरतलब है कि इस बात की जानकारी कंपनी को पहले से थी.

प्रश्न है कि कंपनी ने जानबूझ कर किसानों पर मुकदमा क्यों ठोका. कारण स्पष्ट है कि किसान अपने अधिकारों के अनुसार आलू पैदा कर बेच रहे हैं, लेकिन कंपनी अपनी आर्थिक ताकत के गुरू में है कि वह मुकदमा करके गरीब किसानों को डराकर उन्हें अपने साथ अनुबंध करने के लिए मजबूर कर सकती है. यह बात अदालत में स्पष्ट भी हो गयी, जब कंपनी के वकील ने प्रस्ताव रखा कि वह अपना मुकदमा वापस ले लेंगी, यदि किसान उसके साथ अनुबंध करके कंपनी को ही अपने आलू बेचने के लिए तैयार हो जायें. मुकदमे की अगली तारीख जून में है. किसानों ने कहा है कि उन्हें इस बाबत समय दिया जाये.

देशभर में पेप्सिको के खिलाफ गुस्सा बढ़ रहा है कि यह कंपनी अपने लाभ के लिए किसानों को गलत मुकदमे में घसीट रही है. गुजरात सरकार ने भी कहा है कि वह किसानों के समर्थन में खड़ी है. जब यह कंपनी चारों तरफ से घिर गयी, तो इसके मुख्यालय द्वारा कंपनी के स्थानीय अधिकारियों को हिदायत दी गयी कि जल्दी से कंपनी किसानों के साथ समझौता कर ले, ताकि जनता के गुस्से से बचा जा सके. वहीं, कुछ लोग यह भी कहते हैं कि एफसी-5 किस्म को विकसित करने में कंपनी ने लाखों डॉलर खर्च किये हैं, इसलिए उसे मुनाफा वसूली का अधिकार है. उन्हें पता नहीं है कि एफसी-5 किस्म का पंजीकरण पेप्सिको द्वारा किया गया है, वह एक 'एक्सटेंट वेरायटी' यानी पहले से उपलब्ध किस्म के रूप में किया गया है. ऐसे में कानूनी रूप से ही नहीं, बल्कि नैतिक रूप से भी कंपनी का यह मुकदमा कमजोर है.

किसी भी विदेशी कंपनी को उस देश के कानूनों को मानना पड़ना है. पेप्सिको को समझना चाहिए कि भारत के कानून उसके लिए बदलेंगे नहीं, खुद पेप्सिको को ही बदलना पड़ेगा. वह किसानों को बाध्य नहीं कर सकती कि वे आलू उसी को बेचें. हां, यदि पेप्सिको आलू खरीदना चाहती है, तो वह किसानों को बेहतर कीमत देकर खरीद सकती है.

देश दुनिया से

सूडान में जनता का विरोध प्रदर्शन

साल 1950 के दशक का उत्तरार्ध अरब अधिकारियों के राजनीतिकरण के लिए जाना जाता है. वर्ष 1957 में अली अबू नुवार ने जॉर्डन में एक असफल तख्तापलट किया था. सीरियाई अधिकारी राष्ट्रपति, सरकार या संसद की जानकारी के बिना 1958 में काहिरा चले गये. वहां, उन्होंने गमाल अब्देल नासर के साथ 'एकता' नामक यथास्थिति लागू करने पर सहमति जतायी. वहीं अब्दुल करीम कासिम और अब्दुल सलाम आरिफ ने भी इराक से राजशाही को उखाड़ फेंकने के लिए तख्तापलट किया. सूडान में स्थिति अलग थी. आजादी के दो साल बाद इब्राहिम अब्दुद का 1958 का तख्तापलट किसी विचारधारा से प्रेरित नहीं था. यह स्थिति, प्रधानमंत्री अब्दुल्ला खलील की सरकार में राजनीतिक दलों के आम सहमति तक नहीं पहुंचने से उपजी थी. खलील सहित राजनीतिक नेताओं को जुबा निर्वासित कर दिया गया. सेना से उसकी शक्तियां छीन ली गयीं, मजदूर युनियनों को भंग कर दिया गया और हड़ताल पर प्रतिबंध लगा दिया गया. इसके पीछे कोई विचारधारा नहीं थी. मिश्र के साथ सूडान की छह-दशक लंबी एकता ने इसमें मदद की थी. अन्याय के खिलाफ वमेशा सूडानी जनता खड़ी रही है और फिर एक बार वह विरोध प्रदर्शन के लिए सड़कों पर है.



हाजेम साबह

कार्टून कोना



सामर : बीबीसी

पोस्ट कार्ड : प्रभात खबर, 3, डेकर्स लेन, पहला तल्ला, कोलकाता-69. **फैक्स कार्ड** : 033-22100178
मेल कार्ड : eletter@prabhatkhabar.in पर ई-मेल संक्षिप्त व हिंदी में हो. लिपि रोमन भी हो सकती है

अनेक प्रदेशों में मोटर वाहन और रेलगाड़ियां जापान की ही देन हैं, तो वहीं भारत की पहली बुलेट ट्रेन भी पूर्णतया जापानी सहयोग से ही निर्मित हो रही है. नेताजी सुभाष चंद्र बोस तथा क्रांतिकारी रासबिहारी बोस जापान के सामान्य जन के भीतर बेहद आदर और सम्मान के साथ याद किये जाते हैं. हमारे लिए यह कितने गौरव की बात है. नेताजी सुभाष चंद्र बोस ने जापान की सहायता से ही अंडमान-निकोबार आजाद करवाया था और उसका नाम शहीद और स्वराज रखा था.

जापान के साथ वर्तमान समय में प्रधानमंत्री नरेंद्र मोदी और जापानी प्रधानमंत्री शिंजो आबे के मध्य असाधारण आत्मीय संबंधों ने एक नया अध्याय प्रारंभ किया. जापान यात्रा के समय नरेंद्र मोदी तत्कालीन सम्राट अकिहितो से राजमहल में विशेष चर्चा के लिए आमंत्रित किये गये थे. नरेंद्र मोदी ने जापान में एक सशक्त और अत्यंत विश्वस्तनीय आत्मीय मित्र के नाते बहुत गहरी छाप छोड़ी है, जिसके परिणामस्वरूप रक्षा क्षेत्र में जापान के साथ वार्षिक मलाबार सैन्य अभ्यास, और नागरिक परमाणु सहयोग संभव हो पाया है.

जापानी फिल्मों के महानायक अकिरा कुरोसोवा, यासुजिरो तथा ताकाशी शिमीजु ने सत्यजीत रे और गुरुदत्त जैसे भारत के महान निर्देशकों को खूब प्रभावित किया था.

जापान से आज हमारे जिस तरह के संबंध हैं, वैसे शायद ही किसी अन्य देश से हों. सम्राट नारुहितो जापान की सामान्य जनता के महानायक और पूजित प्रतीक हैं. जापान में सम्राट जीवनपटल पद पर बने रहते हैं. केवल सम्राट अकिहितो ही पिछले दो सौ साल में पहले ऐसे सम्राट हुए, जिन्होंने अपने जीवन काल में ही सिंहासन त्यागा. सम्राट नारुहितो के साथ भारतीय जनता और विचारकों के संबंध प्रगाढ़ हों, यह हमारे राजनीतिक और कूटनीतिक संबंधों के बढ़ने से भी ज्यादा जरूरी है.



आपके पत्र

मसूद वैश्विक आतंकवादी घोषित

10 साल के लड़ोजहद के बाद अंततः मसूद अजहर को, राष्ट्र संघ सुरक्षा परिषद द्वारा वैश्विक आतंकवादी घोषित कर दिया गया. भारत के लिए यह उपलब्धि है भी और नहीं भी. चीन सुरक्षा परिषद के शेष 14 स्थायी सदस्यों के दबाव में आकर अजहर का बचाना नहीं कर सका. इस घोषणा के बाद मसूद का विदेशी दौरा बंद हो जायेगा. विदेशों में बैंक एकाउंट्स को फ्रीज करने की बात है, तो वहां से सारा फंड बंद पहले ही ठिकाने लगा चुका है. जिस देश में वह रह रहा है, वहां का प्रशासन अगर उसका साथ देता रहेगा, तब तक उसे कुछ नहीं होगा. वह अपना अलगाववाद जारी रखेगा. अक्टूबर 2001 में राष्ट्र संघ ने, दिसंबर 2011 में अफ्रीका ने जैश-ए-मोहम्मद को प्रतिबंधित किया. इससे हुआ क्या? इससे अपना नाम बदल लिया. इस पर भी दबाव पड़ा तो एक ट्रस्ट के नाम से काम करने लगा. पिछले 18 सालों से इमने भारत के नाक में दम कर रखा है.

जंग बहादुर सिंह, गोलघाहरी, जमशेदपुर

घटना मतदान चिंता की बात है

पिछले लोकसभा चुनाव की तुलना में इस लोकसभा चुनाव का मतदान सरकार और चुनाव आयोग के कई अच्छे प्रयासों के बावजूद भी कम है जो दुख और चिंता की बात है. यही नहीं दुर्भाग्य से नोटा भी बढ़ता जा रहा है. लोगों की इस बढ़ती उदासीनता का कारण पार्टियों और नेताओं के झूठे वादे और व्यक्तित्व घटिया और चिन्नों आरोप और बयान ही हैं. नेताओं और पार्टियों को इस कदर गिरावट बड़े दुख और चिंता का विषय है, ऐसे में ये लोग देश की क्या सेवा, सुधार और भला कर पायेंगे, सोचने की बात है. सेवा और सादगी की बात, तो प्रायः सभी करते हैं. मगर असलियत किसी से छुपी नहीं है. ऐसे में यह स्वाभाविक ही है. सबसे बड़ी समस्या तेजी से बढ़ती बेरोजगारी और जनसंख्या पर दुर्भाग्य से कतई किसी का कोई ध्यान ही नहीं है, जबकि आज काम की कोई कमी नहीं है और इनको आपस में जोड़ना भी अब बहुत जरूरी है. यदि अब भी ऐसा नहीं हुआ तो हालात और बिगड़ेंगे.

वेद मागपुर, नरला

आतंकवाद का कोई मजहब नहीं होता

कुछ लोग इस देश में धार्मिक और जातीय नफरत के बीज बो रहे हैं. यह किसी भी नक्सली या पाकिस्तानी या आइएसआइएस आतंकवाद से ज्यादा खतरनाक है. देश का हर मुसलमान गद्दार और देशद्रोही नहीं है. आतंकी का कोई धर्म नहीं होता. वे पूरी मानवता के दुश्मन होते हैं. अभी विदेशियों में 15 पुलिसकर्मियों सहित 16 लोगों को नक्सलियों ने आरडीएक्स से उड़ा दिया, श्रीलंका में कई सौ लोगों को प्रार्थना सभा में फिदायीन हमले में बमों से चिथड़े उड़ा दिये गए. इससे पता चलता है कि आतंकवाद चर्च में पचासों लोगों को इबादत करके समय गोलियों से उड़ा दिया गया. ये उदाहरण यह दर्शाते हैं कि आतंकवादी किसी एक धर्म विशेष में ही नहीं पैदा होते. इसलिए धर्म के ठेकेदारों और राजनीति के ठेकेदारों के चंचल मन नहीं फँसे. वास्तव में ये लोग भेड़ की खाल ओढ़े भेड़िए हैं.

निर्मल कुमार शर्मा, गाजियाबाद