She'll be back

CHINESE WHISPERS

The limits of facial recognition

New privacy legislation will be required to limit the use of such technology and to provide checks and balances against abuse



TECH ENABLED

DEVANGHSU DATTA

ecognising people by visually scanning faces is something most human beings do automatically. It is a task computers have struggled to perform. But Face Recognition technology is improving and becoming more popular.

Smartphone and PC users deploy FR to control access. There are public-facing FR deployments in airports, public toilets, smart offices and apartment

blocks. Police and security agencies use FR. Banks, malls, and supermarkets use CCTV systems and cities have large CCTV deployments in public areas, metro stations, municipal buildings, etc. Footage from these can be linked to FR databases. FR is also used by Chinese security forces to maintain surveillance on the Uighur minority and it is key to running China's social credit system.

But FR is not a magic bullet. There are major privacy and ethical issues involved in deployment. There are also huge technical challenges since FR systems often don't work well except in controlled environments.

A PC or smartphone FR system has a narrow purpose. The user records her face and the device security matches faces to that image when somebody logs on. This is a single-person FR database in one sense, though the manufacturer may end up with a large database as it collects images.

A smart building processes a few

thousand images, perhaps. Airport check-in FR systems have a trickier task. There are the names, mugshots, flight numbers and other details of passengers to be matched to people going through check-in.

There are privacy issues here as well. Passengers are either sharing biometrics with private entities (airlines and private companies running airports), or private entities are accessing government databases for matches. Given the well-documented history of Aadhaar abuse and leaks by private entities connected to that system, it's easy to understand why this is problematic.

FR systems in public toilets don't match individuals. These are for gender-differentiation. This is a very different task from putting a name to a face and actually, trickier in some ways. FR gender-ID systems are trained by putting together databases of millions of facial images labelled "man", "woman", "girl", "boy". There is a high error percentage because some men "look" like women, and vice-versa, and teens the scales there are larger than anycan be androgynous.

Those errors are higher if there's hair-style and colour bias in the training databases. Databases trained with mostly white Caucasian faces have very high error rates when identifying gender of persons with darker skins. Transgender people may utterly confuse gender differentiation systems. (There is a wider issue here, since most nations are struggling to decide which public toilet transgenders should use).

In these cases, the subjects are cooperative and these checks are done in controlled environments. Somebody passing an airport or smart office checkin, "poses" in front of a neutral background, making recognition easier.

Police departments and security agencies have a much more difficult task, across multiple dimensions. They work with unclear images sourced from CCTV, with confusing backgrounds; they often deal with subjects, who have been injured, or killed, with resulting mutilations; some subjects deliberately obscure their appearances, and so on. The police also work with far larger databases, comprising millions of people with billions of images. There are often large matching errors.

From what we know of the Chinese social credit and surveillance systems,

where else in the world. According to leaks into public domain, about 2.5 million Uighurs are tracked constantly, using FR among other things. One smart city data system that leaked off Alibaba covered a CCTV network of Beijing's embassy district. It had an FR system that categorised and labelled

people by ethnicity. Selfies and other pictures shot with Chinese smartphones are often stored on clouds run by the phone manufacturers. This helps them build databases containing hundreds of millions of catalogued faces. The Chinese government has legal access to much of that data.

Chinese municipalities use FR system to track down and fine citizens for minor offences, like jaywalking. China's social credit system marks down people who criticise the government, or default on debt, or indulge in drunken brawls. Low scorers can be punished by denial of access to airports and railways stations. Once again, FR comes into play.

While other nations might not put similar social credit scoring systems into operation, they will certainly use the technology. New privacy legislation will be required to delineate and limit the use of such technology and to provide checks and balances

reiterated.

The union minister and national vice-president of the Bharatiya Janata

contesting the ongoing Lok Sabha

any time soon. Bharti, who is

campaigning for party candidate

that even if the 75-year cut-off

Party, Uma Bharti (*pictured*), who is not

polls, has made it clear that she is not

planning to retire from active politics

Pragya Singh Thakur from Bhopal, said

criterion for selection of ministers in

the Narendra Modi cabinet is taken as given, she will be eligible to contest the Lok Sabha polls of 2024, 2029 and

2034 and that she had a good mind to do so. Tired and not retired, she

First garland, then nomination What is the sure-shot sign that one is an aspiring election candidate? Especially if one doesn't wish to be rebuffed right at the filing of nomination stage? The answer is garland. That was the first lesson Anupam Tripathi, who filed his nomination from the East Delhi seat as a Bharatiya Kisan Party candidate, learned when he walked into the district magistrate's office in east Delhi with his family to present his candidature. Inside the DM's office, he realised all other election aspirants present had garlands draped conspicuously around their necks. The takeaway? He would wear

a garland when he goes to file his nomination for the next election.

Rahul's strategy

Congress President Rahul Gandhi held a press conference on Saturday morning. The decision to hold the press conference was taken late on Friday. The reasons for Gandhi holding a press conference on a Saturday morning were interesting. Social media had been abuzz that Gandhi gives scripted interviews. While the Congress social media team tried to counter the perception, the party leadership felt the surest way to neutralise the propaganda was to hold a press conference where journalists can ask the Congress chief all sorts of questions. Of late, Gandhi had insisted on answering questions at press conferences only on the issue of the Rafale fighter jet deal, but on Saturday, he answered questions on several other issues too.

The curious case of twin bad loan resolution

Two cases that could be resolved this week illustrate the progress of the single-window insolvency and bankruptcy resolution process which is expected to minimise the cost and time for liquidation and resolution of bad assets



BANKER'S TRUST

TAMAL BANDYOPADHYAY

n the next 24 hours, the National Company Law Tribunal (NCLT), the arbitration authority for cases filed under India's insolvency law, is expected to settle two cases involving ₹6,113 crore of lenders' money. The State Bank of India is the lead lender. Other banks that have significant exposure to these two companies include Punjab National Bank, Canara Bank and Andhra Bank.

These two featured on the list of 28 defaulters that the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) wanted the commercial banks to take up at the NCLT by the end of December 2017, if the cases were not resolved by mid-December that year.

After the first list of 12 large defaulters — sent to the banks in June 2017 against whom immediate bankruptcy proceedings were to be invoked, the RBI sent the second list of troubled companies in late August. These were accounts where 60 per cent of the outstanding amount had been classified as bad or non-performing on banks' books as of June 30, 2017. Together, the two sets account for almost half of the had debt in the Indian banking system.

Under the insolvency law, a case is expected to be settled within 180 days but the timeframe can be stretched to 270 days. The Mumbai bench of the NCLT admitted bankruptcy resolution petitions for the two companies -Uttam Value Steels Ltd and Uttam Galva Metallics Ltd — in June and July 2018, respectively. The banks got 20 more days to complete the resolution process after the 270-day deadline ended on April 3.

Once a defaulter is identified, a committee of the creditors (CoC) appoints one resolution professional (RP) to supervise the case. In the next stage, an information memorandum is prepared and the so-called expression of interest is sought from the prospective bidders. After checking the eligibility of the bidders, evaluating the bids and identifying the highest bidder, the CoC goes to NCLT. The bankruptcy resolution professional of two companies, Rajiv Chakraborty, partner, PwC, needs to get the resolution plan approved by the NCLT this week.

What is the resolution plan and who has won the bid when the assets were up for sale?

The twin cases illustrate the progress of the single-window insolvency and bankruptcy resolution process which is expected to minimise the cost and time for liquidation and resolution of bad assets.

The winning team consists of distressed assets investor CarVal Investors LLC and Nithia Capital Resources Advisors LLP. Their bid document says that CarVal will set up a trust called Arcil Trust ARC, 15 per cent of which is being held by India's oldest asset reconstruction company, Asset Reconstruction (Company (Ir

The twin assets include a one-million tonne hot-rolled production capacity of Uttam Value Steels at Wardha, Maharashtra, for which it purchases pig iron from Uttam Galva Mettalics.

CarVal is the investment arm of food and agriculture conglomerate Cargill, the biggest closely held US company by revenue. Incorporated in 2010, Nithia Capital is a London-based investment company with a net worth of £1,000. In 2018, it posted a loss of £276,829, a shed less the loss recorded in 2017.

Let's look at the structure and schedule of payment by the winning bidders. They have committed ₹2,541 crore. Of this, ₹625 crore is upfront payment. Indeed, the lenders will get the money but it will be given as loan to two defaulting companies at 15 per cent interest. Another ₹1,200 crore will flow to the lenders over a period of five vears from the internal accruals of the two companies. After repaying the high-cost loan of the bidders, will the companies make enough money to pay up the bankers?

Among other components of the package are ₹198 crore trade receivables, outstanding for at least three years. Another ₹248 crore are advances given to "suppliers" which are group companies of the promoters — Llyods Steel Industries Ltd and Frontline Roll Forms Pvt Ltd — almost a decade ago.

These chunks are part of the payment plan to bankers when recovered, provided they are received within one year. If they are not received, they will be written off. Incidentally, some of the trade receivables and advances have been pending for several years.

Finally, ₹270 crore will be realised the form of subsidy from the state



government. Receipt of this subsidiary has several performance conditions attached.

The operational creditors to whom the companies owe ₹1,017 crore, have been promised a princely sum of ₹3 crore! Essentially, the bankers are assured of ₹625 crore and not ₹2,541 crore. So, the hair-cut could be as much as 90 per cent and not 60 per cent as has been projected.

In the run-up this final bid, there were bids and counter-bids and the rival bidder, a consortium of Synergy Metals and Mining Funds, ART Special Solution Finances and Investment Opportunities IV Pte Ltd, had a ₹3,300 crore resolution plan. It was rejected at it came late. JSW Steel Ltd and the Liberty House Group of the UK had earlier shown interest in bidding for the assets but they backed out.

The key questions are:

■Why would Carval with at least \$10 billion in assets under management and three decades of experience team up with Nithia which has just £1000 net worth and no experience in

seems that the resolution plan was submitted after his resignation. ■Nithia Capital founder CEO Jai Krishna Saraf lives in London. His Linkedin profile does not say much about him. Can he run a one million

this space?

tonne steel plant? ■The resolution plan demands repayment of money to the investors with hefty interest ahead of anything else. Won't that impact the company's abil-

■Did Nithia inform the banks that its

chairman Johannes Sittard, known to

be a close confidante of Lakshmi Mittal

of ArcelorMittal, resigned in April? It

ity to pay back to the bankers? ■Why are ₹248 crore (shown as advances) and ₹198 crore (receivables) in the books of the company payable

■Finally, why was the higher bid rejected even though it envisaged better payment proposal?

to bankers with caveats?

Allowing new bids after sealing the process leads to inordinate delays and kills the sanctity of the process but it also helps the price discovery. The debate on value maximisation versus early resolution will go on but other questions are relevant to appreciate this case. I understand that Bank of Baroda, Vijay Bank and a few others did not agree with the plan which is contingent to a string of conditions.

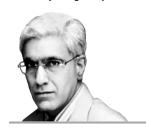
Incidentally, the liquidation value of the two companies is around ₹1,350 crore — more than double of what the banks are assured of getting from the resolution.

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

Does the EC lack courage?

The Election Commission seems to lack the capacity to act against the PM. But I pray it proves I'm horribly wrong. If it does, I will readily apologise

AS I SEE IT



KARAN THAPAR

nlowly but steadily, the Election Commission is exonerating the Prime Minister of the many charges he faces of multiple breaches of electoral laws. After weeks of deliberate prevarication and inexplicable silence, we are, at least, seeing action. However, in the case of Modi's Wardha speech of April 1 I cannot understand how the Commission has concluded he is blameless. In the process it's raised questions about its own judgement and impartiality.

At Wardha, Modi asked the audience not to forgive the Congress for insulting Hindus by coining the term Hindu terror, Translated into English. he said: "The Congress attempted to defame crores of Indians by using the term Hindu terror. How can the Congress be forgiven for insulting Hindus in front of the world? Weren't you hurt when you hear the word Hindu terror?"

Now when Modi tells the audience not to forgive Congress, he is, in fact, telling them not to vote for the party. Even if he hasn't put it that bluntly, that's clearly what he means when he says this in an election campaign speech. And this automatically leads

the grounds that the Congress has insulted Hindus, isn't the appeal made on the basis of religion? And if you bear in mind this was said to a preponderantly Hindu audience, the answer can only be a resounding yes. To me, this is so obvious I find it impossible to conclude otherwise.

If I am right, the Prime Minister has breached three separate electoral laws. Let me take you through them one by one. First, Section 1.3 of the Model Code of Conduct (MCC). This says: "There shall be no appeal to caste or communal feelings for securing votes". Isn't that almost exactly what Modi sought to do at Wardha?

Next is Section 123 (3A) of the Representation of People's Act. This deems as a corrupt practice any "attempt to promote feelings of enmity or hatred... on the grounds of religion". Once again, isn't it obvious the Wardha speech was doing precisely this?

Finally, there's Section 153A of the Indian Penal Code (IPC). This talks of "promoting enmity between different groups on grounds of religion... and doing acts prejudicial to maintenance of harmony". In this case, the offender can be punished with up to three years of imprisonment or a fine or both. When Narendra Modi suggests Congress cannot be forgiven for insulting Hindus, you could question if he's promoting enmity between groups on grounds of religion but he is clearly acting prejudicially to the maintenance of harmony.

The Election Commission, of course, does not agree. However, it's deliberately chosen not to explain why.

to the question: When he does this on No reasoning is given for exonerating the Prime Minister. The Commission's letter to the Congress party, who made the complaint, simply says "in this matter no such violation has been noticed". No doubt the letter claims "the matter has been examined in detail in accordance with the extant guidelines/provisions of the Model Code of Conduct, Representation of People's Act (RPA) 1951 and the report of the Chief Electoral Officer, Maharashtra", but after simply asserting this nothing more has been written. The details of the process by which it reached its conclusion have been omitted.

The other pertinent point is that the Commission's letter says the Wardha speech has been considered in the light of the MCC and RPA but makes no mention of the IPC. It seems Modi's alleged breach of the last has been completely overlooked.

Former Chief Commissioners like TS Krishnamurthy have said the Commission must explain how it's come to its conclusion exonerating Modi. Leading Supreme Court lawyers like Saniay Hegde have said that if no explanatory argument is provided that suggests there is no credible reason for the Commission's conclusion. And Congress, of course, is considering taking the matter to court.

I can only come to one conclusion. This Commission seems to lack the capacity to act against the Prime Minister, It's a lot easier to exonerate him. Now when I say capacity I actually mean courage. This is a cowardly Commission but I pray the Commission acts and proves I'm horribly wrong. If it does ,I will readily apologise.

LETTERS

Beyond streetfighting



This refers to "Modi meets his match in Mamata" (May 4). It is unfortunate to see political icons hailing from Gujarat and Bengal being associated with the current brand of "street-fighting" politics. This is ironical because these two states have gifted the world its greatest apostles of peace and universal broth-– Mahatma Gandhi, Dayananda Saraswati, Raja Ram Mohan Rov and Swami Vivekanand just to name a few. Subsequently, post-independence both Gujarat and Bengal continued on their enlightened path while making monumental contributions to Indian industry and culture. Hence, one hopes that after May 23, once the rhetoric of the election season has settled down, the aforementioned leaders will make every attempt to reclaim the legacy of their illustrious predecessors. S B Bhalerao Mumbai

Role of service

The recent session (Geneva, 1-2 May, 2019) of the UNCTAD multi-year expert meeting on trade, services and development focused on the strengthening productive capacity through services. It is an essential theme for trade policy

as well as for putting us on the path to economic growth and sustainable development. However, the predominance of services in economic activities reflects only one part of the situation. There is another which is equally essential: Intersections or links between services and all other economic activities. Forward and backward linkages measure these value addition of services to output and exports of all economic sectors.

Sourish Dutta Kerala

Interesting proposition

Last week, Sachin Mampatkar, a Business Standard journalist, contacted Disability Rights Alliance (DRA) to talk to a preferably Person with Disability (PWD) member on how the big hype in the press, over the recent elections being rendered disabled- friendly, measures up against the ground reality. The advocacy of the rights of PWD by DRA is apparently credible, going by the newspaper's desire to seek their opinion; and I am understandably proud to be a member of DRA, in fact the one asked to talk to the journalist. After talking to me, Mampatta wrote a piece 'Voting is an obstacle course for persons with disabilities" (April 26) on how one wheelchair using mathematician (me) viewed the ground reality. (He said basically that I could cast my vote only due to my driver's help.)

I later learnt that he was asking, more

process more accessible to PWD, might affect the outcome of the election. The simple arithmetic he proposed was to compare typical margins between winning and losing in our elections, with the proportion of PWD who would be able to cast their vote in a barrier-free electoral process. The typical difference between winning and losing is 15 per cent and typically 20 per cent of voters are PWD who will benefit from the election process being made barrier-free. I'd say to Mampatta: IF you show any PWD (in fact, any reasonably sensitive person) a video of Prime Minister Narendra Modi making "jokes", of very dubious taste, about children afflicted with dyslexia, that was (a) on social media a few weeks back, (b) deleted after many people commented on how shameful and in poor taste it was for the PM to mock dyslexic people, but (c) but not deleted before @RoshanKrRoy thankfully preserved it on Twitter and made it possible for anyone to reload and see the video; then that person will almost surely vote for anybody other than Modi, thereby giving more credibility to Mampatta's conjecture.

pertinently, if making the entire election

VS Sunder Chennai

Letters can be mailed, faxed or e-mailed to: The Editor, Business Standard Nehru House, 4 Bahadur Shah Zafar Marg New Delhi 110 002 Fax: (011) 23720201 · F-mail: letters@bsmail.in

All letters must have a postal address and telephone

► HAMBONE



The NBFC crisis

Downgrades add fresh stress to the sector

on-banking finance companies (NBFCs) are once again in the spotlight after a spate of rating downgrades over the past week, including the Anil Ambani group's finance companies and PNB Housing Finance. For the bond market, which has been walking on thin ice since Infrastructure Leasing & Financial Services (IL&FS) defaulted in the second quarter of FY19, the fresh downgrades have revived concerns on NBFCs' cost of capital and growth. In the past few years, NBFCs accounted for around 70 per cent of the borrowing in the corporate bond market. But after the IL&FS episode, the demand for their papers plummeted, along with evaporating liquidity in the system. Meanwhile, credit-rating agencies downgraded the more vulnerable firms or revised outlook in some others. Today, NBFCs that are able to raise bonds have seen their costs escalating, with AAA-rated NBFCs shelling out around 150 basis points over government bonds. AAA-rated non-finance companies are raising funds 100 basis points higher. Before IL&FS, the spread between corporate bonds and gilts was 50 basis points.

The problems of the NBFC sector have been exacerbated by low liquidity in the system. Demonetisation led to a huge spurt in liquidity, which the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) took away through open market operations (OMO) and other measures. However, in FY19, the RBI had to infuse liquidity through OMOs worth about ₹3 trillion, the highest in history, besides \$10 billion of dollar swaps. These steps have helped in bringing gilt yields down, but even after two rate cuts, the cost of borrowing for NBFCs remains high as lenders do not have the appetite. Mutual funds, which were key buyers of NBFC papers, became riskaverse because they were singed by downgrades in their portfolios and the inability to exit papers without a loss after the IL&FS crisis. Mutual funds were also hit by another problem because they had to suspend their lending to the promoters of the Essel and Anil Ambani groups with shares of listed companies as collateral. The industry, caught on the wrong foot, saw net outflows of ₹68,000 crore in their debt funds and ₹1.3 trillion in their debt schemes between September 2018 and March 2019.

Another worrying development is that the domestic wholesale debt market appears to be differentiating among NBFCs, according to analysts. Housing Development Finance Corporation and LIC Housing Finance account for the lion's share of bond raising since the IL&FS crisis surfaced. Those perceived to be strong or backed by parent have been able to tap the domestic bond markets, but issuances from the rest of the NBFC universe were minimal. With the door of the wholesale debt market virtually shut, NBFCs are looking at other sources of funds such as external commercial borrowings and the retail segment, or even selling down assets, thereby reducing balance sheets.

In the past few years, NBFCs have played an important role in providing credit to retail and small and medium enterprises (SMEs), which banks have not been able to reach. Besides, state-owned banks have been too mired in their bad loan problem to expand their loan book. While some NBFCs may fail or will be forced to merge with stronger ones, an industry-wide shrinkage does not augur well for the economy. SMEs, which were affected by demonetisation and the adjustment to the goods and services tax regime, need capital at a reasonable cost. Retail credit too is crucial for driving the country's consumption engine because there is no sign yet of investment picking up.

Standing up to Fani

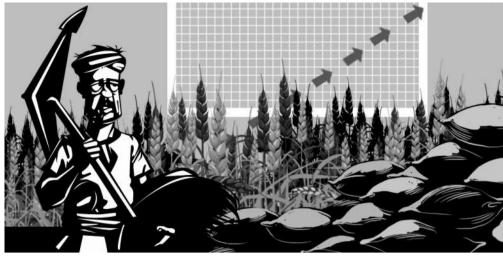
Odisha did a sterling job in disaster management

n October 29, 1999. Odisha went out of contact with the rest of the world for an entire day because of Super Cyclone, which killed nearly 10,000 people. It ranks among the worst natural disasters in the country and a hapless state government only watched as the cyclone ripped its coast. The state was also found wanting on post-cyclone relief measures and there were riots as people starved. Two decades later, all that is distant memory. When Cyclone Fani wreaked havoc in at least 12 districts, bringing life to a standstill in half the coastal state on Friday, the Odisha government was equal to the humungous task. Though it is tragic that 34 people have reportedly died so far, the number should be seen in context. After all, Fani is probably the most extreme weather event to hit the Indian coast in the last 20 years as the cyclone lashed the state with maximum wind speeds of up to 175 km per hour.

The Odisha government deserves compliments for learning the right lessons from Super Cyclone and the remarkable progress it has made in disaster management. It moved fast and set up the Odisha Disaster Management Authority (ODMA), which was the first such body to be set up in India. More importantly, it made sure that the Authority was run independently by competent officials, who ensured a proper risk reduction system was in place and included preparedness activities by families, communities, government bodies and NGOs. The results are visible: In 1999, the state had 21 cyclone shelters; today it has nearly 900. Over the past few days, as the cyclone barreled up the Bay of Bengal towards India, the Odisha government evacuated a million people to higher ground and cyclone shelters. The state also ensured that probable flood inundation villages were identified, rapid response teams were formed, and aircraft and navy ships were kept on standby to aid rescue efforts. The disaster management authority has also trained enthusiastic youth volunteers for relief work who were at the forefront of alerting locals and getting cooperation from civilians on risk mitigation. Of course, the India Meteorological Department too deserves credit for accurate updates about the cyclone path.

While the worst is over, real work begins now. The cyclone has left in its trail vast damages: Thousands of people are feared to have been rendered homeless. and road, power and telecom infrastructure has been destroyed in vast areas, hampering relief work. In 2013, Cyclone Phailin required reconstruction estimated at \$1.5 billion, and it is obvious Odisha would need help from the Central government and others. The affected people will need financial relief, compensation for lost crops, trees and livestock, provision of emergency health intervention, and rehabilitation assistance to rebuild lives. Also, despite the Odisha government's phenomenal work, there is obviously no room for complacency. With extreme weather phenomena increasing due to climate change, there is a need to improve disaster management capacities in many states. The way ahead is to set up an elaborate institutional mechanism by which funding for damaged infrastructure and buildings is readily available. There is also a lot to be done to upgrade infrastructure and housing in coastal districts to meet higher standards of resilience in an era of extreme weather events.

ILLUSTRATION: ALAY MOHANTY



India: Agricultural trade powerhouse

What many of us have not noticed is that agriculture now yields greater exports than automobiles or garments plus textiles

he mentality of food scarcity is increasingly out of touch with modern India. As yields grow, the only way to prevent local price collapses is to integrate into the global economy. India's agriculture exports are at about \$40 billion a year,

which is larger than (say) our exports of textiles and garments put together. Our worldview in agriculture policy needs to shift towards a much more international orientation.

Our self-image in India is that of a country with a high population and food scarcity. While that was the case many decades ago, things have changed. India has a lot of SNAKES & LADDERS arable land, particularly considering that the weather supports multiple crops a year. We started from very poor yields, with potential gains

of two to five times from improved practices. Yields are getting better, and population growth is steadily declining. It is not possible for us to consume our output domestically; this is part of why we are seeing domestic softness of agricultural prices. These developments gave a great phase of exports of agricultural products. By 2013, India surpassed Australia in agriculture exports, with the highest growth rate in the world over the preceding decade.

AJAY SHAH

11.8 per cent in 2008-09 to 15.2 per cent in 2018-19. Discussions of Indian labour-intensive exports tend to centre around fields like automobiles, garments, etc. What many of us have not noticed is that a labour $intensive\ industry\ -- \ agriculture\ -- \ now\ yields\ greater$ exports than automobiles or garments plus textiles.

The trade/GDP ratio for agriculture went up from

And yet, in recent years, growth has stalled. From the 2001-04 numbers to the 2011-14 numbers, we added about \$34 billion a year to the revenues of agriculture. That growth did not take place in the following years. This may be one element shaping

farm distress in the country today. Consistently being part of the export market effectively gives us a minimum support price, the world price. Unilateral full integration

into the world — regardless of protectionism or subsidies in other countries — is now our opportunity. There are four themes about such internationalisation, which are well understood in other industries, that now apply to agriculture. The first theme is that of

specialisation. India is good at doing software and bad at doing hardware or running data centres. Hence, the efficient organisation of the world is for India to make and export software, while renting data centres elsewhere in the world.

In similar fashion, integration into the world economy will profoundly reshape Indian agriculture. Under conditions of trade, we will shift away from producing the things that are best done elsewhere in the world (capital-intensive crops grown on large areas, e.g. sugarcane or wheat) and specialise in doing things that we do uniquely well (labour-intensive small holdings, e.g. fruit and vegetables). This is an old idea that goes back to Ricardo.

The second theme is that of political economy. The domestic policy process can degenerate into a dysfunctional political economy, where special inter-

est groups dominate. Integrating into the global economy helps create a new dynamic. It becomes easier to form coalitions in India, across many different special interest groups, aligned around success in exporting. Agriculture in India has long been stuck in terms of policy progress. Now that the trade/GDP ratio in agriculture has reached 15 per cent, and exports have reached \$40 billion a year, there are new possibilities for re-imagining the politics of agri-

Internationalisation solves some domestic puzzles. As an example, it is hard to make commodity futures markets work in India. But once we internationalise, India will be able to free ride on these markets outside India. Persons in India will look at the futures price outside India and make sowing or storage decisions. Internationalisation helps us sidestep domestic policy problems.

The third theme is that of trade within South Asia. Physical proximity is extremely important for international trade. The most important international trade opportunities for us in India are within our region. This may apply even more for agriculture, given the costs of transportation. We need to create the institutional conditions for intra-South-Asia trade, to obtain the gains from trade in all fields, and particularly with agriculture.

The fourth theme is that of sustained engagement. Many have commented on how India is seen as an unreliable seller owing to periodic bans on export. The problem runs much deeper than this. Exporting is not a simple matter; it requires developing complex organisational capital and business relationships.

Imagine a world where garment or automobile component exports are banned every now and then. This would greatly deter investments by firms in export capability. This includes investments in organisation and process design, business relationships spanning the globe, establishment of offices overseas, products and technologies that cater to the world market, etc. For Indian firms, embarking upon international activities involves complex project planning spread over many years, starting from a few meetings in India with foreign buyers all the way to outbound FDI to establish business operations all over the world.

This same problem applies, equally, for foreign companies who may think about doing business with India. When India vacillates on bans, those companies will be reticent on investing in building an India business. This hampers India's ability to export, as about half of global trade takes place within multinational corporations. For India to export, we need global firms that will commit to growing roots in India.

Our instincts for bans and un-bans are born of the age of food insecurity. The world has changed. India's population is not able to consume the food that India grows. Gains in yield in the future will further exacerbate the problem. We tend to think of agriculture policy as a contest between consumers (who favour low prices) and farmers (who favour high prices). Once we change gear and participate in the global market, this configuration changes. All Indians benefit when we are able to organise ourselves to export more. Land use will shift from low value products to high value products.

The writer is a professor at National Institute of Public

News that matters this election season

♦ he organisation I work with publishes the environment and development fortnightly magazine *Down To Earth*. The publication is not designed to make money and is not a produce of commerce or a product of the market. It is our means to bring information about the world around us, about the everyday life and of life itself, so that we have the knowledge, which gives us the power to make change. In other words, when we write we make no effort to hide our mission — our neutrality and events from the ground.

But our bias and politics are open — not hidden in reams of corporate gloss — but are an open dare about making the change we want in this world.

The question I want to discuss with you is my understanding of Down To Earth's (and other such publications') relevance in today's India and today's world. Today is a cynic's world, where we are seeing as never before the race to the bottom. Countries are showing us their worst sides: lead-

ers are turning into venomous creatures out to polarise people. Real issues are getting lost in the dust and fifth of this virulent discourse, where everybody — all of us — seems "free" only to the extent that we can spill out our vile guts in the now not so open social media. There is no societal decorum that puts lines around what can be said in public and what not.

In this situation, should we ask ourselves, have we failed? Should we even continue hoping against hope that we can make a difference to public opinion? Can we really hope to keep the focus on the real issues that matter?

I believe we must. I also believe that whatever we are seeing today in our world, it is our duty, our job — if you want to call it that — to keep pushing the envelope so that this whimper of real news

I say this particularly as India is in the midst of elections. In this year, we will get a new government, or we will get the old government as new. Whatever

Earth must be there to report on issues that concern our today and tomorrow.

In this election, we have seen that the real issues that matter to people — climate change, which is driving weird weather to destroy crops; insurance companies that do not provide farmers relief to cope with this distress; produce that is not getting value to pay for the labour of farmers: pollution that is destroying livelihoods

and health and, worse, the drought that it crippling large parts of the country all out of the frame.

Nothing real seems to get our attention anymore. These are not eyeball issues. Social media misses these trends. Politicians today want us to believe that they can afford to forget local issues, issues that matter to their constituents, and still win election. Elections then are about on poisoned words and polarised polities.

But it is also a fact that even though these issues that matter are not at the top of the headline in

words between the lines. It is in this time of election that we hear the voices from the ground up. All newspapers send their best reporters to explain all that is happening from farm to factory. This is the only time when we hear that whimper of people and if you read carefully you will find that report after report, region after region, people are saying that the most important issues for them are the ones that matter. The most important issues are employment, livelihood, water scarcity, drought, unseasonal rain, which lead to crop damage and no compensation, menace of stray cattle and

this election season, these are omnipresent in the

attacks by wild animals. In many reports you will read about how waste dumps are being built near their homes or that they are living in hell, because of pollution from local factories or that they have no drainage or no sanitation. So, even if these voices get discounted in this election of 2019, they will not go away. The real issues of livelihood and survival will not go away. They cannot be swallowed up or spit out. They are real.

They matter. The only choice then is that all of us,

who work in this business of change, must ensure

that news that has been shuttered to the margins becomes the main. The other question is more basic — how do we sustain the quest for information as societies become more knowledge-proof and governments become more intolerant? I believe that to remain relevant, we must ensure that we continue to have the credibility of facts and independence of posi-

tion. This then is our common challenge — one I

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hope we will succeed in.

Europe's 'golden age'



MICHAEL A MCFAUL

♦ he Munich Security Conference was a depressing gathering this February. Throughout the Cold War and for decades thereafter, Wehrkunde (as the conference was known when it started in 1963) was the premier event for Europeans and Americans committed to NATO, trans-Atlantic ties and the West.

This year's meeting had little of that. Vice President Mike Pence delivered a Trump-like speech that shocked a quiet hall. He bullied allies rather than celebrating them, most audaciously by urging European partners to withdraw from the Iran nuclear deal and join instead what one former European prime minister feared might be a call to war against Tehran.

The discussion among Europeans at Wehrkunde was equally disheartening. I spent a few meals listening to Britons and their Continental colleagues debate different Brexit options. In parallel, nervous European liberals dissected the causes of various right-wing populists spiking in popularity throughout the Continent. Few had the bandwidth to contemplate the rise of China and Russia. The darkest discussions swirled around the possible collapse of the eurozone and the European Union more generally.

Both sets of challenges — the future of trans-Atlantic relations and the fate of the European Union — are real. However, the history of Europe over the last 70 years as traced and explained brilliantly in Ian Kershaw's magisterial The Global Age: Europe, 1950-2017 — should give at least some credence to the argument that things are not as bad as they seem. In synthesising this period in European history in a long but very readable volume (part of the

Penguin History of Europe series), Kershaw reminds us that the Continent has faced other large challenges in the postwar era and survived; that some longterm trends of peace, prosperity and democracy are both robust and remarkable; and that individuals have agency, and can alter the course of events — they are not mere expressions of those events.

On earlier challenges, Kershaw points out that postwar Europeans tackled difficult issues that make some of today's troubles seem more manageable. During most of "The Global Age," Communist regimes loyal to the Soviet Union subjugated millions of Europeans, sometimes through brutal force, as with Hungary in 1956, Czechoslovakia in 1968 and Poland in 1981. Tensions between East and West escalated precariously close to armed conflict. including once in October 1961 when American and Soviet tanks faced off against each other in Berlin. A year later, all of European security was threatened again because of a standoff between Moscow and Washington in faraway Cuba. Today's Europe, thankfully, is not haunted by the spectre of nuclear war. The probability of a Russian invasion of a NATO member is low.

During this "golden age" for Europe, imperial powers had to navigate decolonisation. The French wars in Indochina and Algeria and the Portuguese wars in Angola and Mozambique were difficult, regimethreatening challenges that make the French and Portuguese problems of the present day look comparatively minor. And Europe endured domestic violence during this golden age, be it from the Red Brigades in Italy, the Baader-Meinhof Group in West Germany, nationalists in Northern Ireland or separatists in the Basque region. Economic setbacks — especially in 1973 and 2008 — disrupted long periods of growth. Even war, sometimes in the form of ethnic cleansing, erupted in the Balkans in the 1990s. Brexit, immigration, populism and even Jihadistinspired terrorism seem like much smaller challenges than genocide. Flowing next to and around these secu-

DOWN TO EARTH

SUNITA NARAIN

rity and economic crises, Kershaw traces several positive, long-term trends in European history from 1950 to 2017 that are downright miraculous. Most important, most of the Continent lived in peace during the Global Age, a sharp contrast to the horrific atrocities chronicled in Kershaw's previous volume in this series,

To Hell and Back: Europe 1914-1949. Second, partly as a consequence of this first achievement, Europeans on average became richer than at any time before. In Kershaw's estimation, the period between 1950 and 1973 was especially prosperous a "golden age" or an "economic miracle" for the western part of the Continent, and even a "silver age" for the Communist bloc.

Europe's future is especially hard to predict, as Kershaw emphasises, because it is easy to underestimate the role of contingency in historical change.' Refreshingly, and against the grain of some current intellectual fads, Kershaw allows for the possibility that individuals not just innate structural forces - can shape history. For instance, Kershaw assigns a pivotal role to Chancellor Konrad Adenauer in transforming Germany from a Continental menace to an anchor of stability and prosperity. Khrushchev gets a big role in Kershaw's narrative, too, for reducing repression in the Communist world. And Kershaw reminds us that Prime Minister David Cameron's decision to hold a referendum on Brexit underscores how the tactical decisions of individual leaders can have strategic consequences. Kershaw ascribes the greatest

agency of all to the Soviet leader Mikhail Gorbachev. "The magnitude of Gorbachev's personal contributions to the dramatic change, not just in the Soviet Union itself but throughout Eastern Europe, can scarcely be exaggerated." This is not to say that Kershaw highlights only the role of political leaders — for good and for ill — in his narrative. He also brings in the masses, recounting how mobilised citizens Communism; an entire chapter is devoted to "Power of the People."

Kershaw's theory of agency in the making of history allows for a range of possibilities about the Continent's future. European leaders should read The Global Age to be reminded of the incredible progress of the last 70 years — and told that such progress is something they have the power to sustain through their individual actions.

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THE GLOBAL AGE Europe, 1950-2017 Ian Kershaw Viking; \$40; 670 pages

augurs well for direct taxes

Even without invoice-matching, there has been a step-up in

collections; information-sharing will also help income tax

There is, for example, the quarter-end bump that is seen regularly—March 2019 collections were the highest in the previous three months, December 2018 in the three months prior to that, September 2018 in the three months prior to that, etc; this could have to

do with the fact that firms try to boost sales before the quarter ends or the fact that the

smaller firms have to file their GST returns every three months. There is also the year-end

effect where, apart from trying to boost sales, firms work hard to ensure that all vendors

upload their GST returns so that they can avail input tax credits. This time around, the

impact was even higher since march 2019 was the last month to claim tax credits for

2017-18. With more firms filing GST returns—the number of filings is up from 5.9 mil-

With March 2019's collections the highest ever, this means monthly collections in

FY19 were, on average, 7% more than those in FY18, and the figure is 13% higher when

you compare the January to March 2019 collections with those in January to March

2018. The two main reasons for the increase in collections and compliance suggest the

system is stabilising. For one, as the growth in the number of filings show, big firms are

clearly ensuring their vendor base is fully GST-compliant. And though the government

keeps postponing the date for implementing the invoice-matching function of GST

which increases the compliance levels quite dramatically—this was supposed to kick in

on April 1 this year, but will now have to await the new government—the fact that the

eway bill has become compulsory for transporting goods of over a certain amount has

also played a big role in raising compliance. While the monthly run-rate of GST collections

in FY20 is ₹1.14 lakh crore, a dip from March 2019 numbers in the rest of the year implies

that, as in FY19, there will be a shortfall in collections in FY20 as well; in FY19, the short-

tax collections as, once firms have no option but to declare their actual turnover to GST

authorities, they will have to do so for the income tax authorities as well. Indeed, last

week, the income tax and GST authorities signed an information-sharing agreement

for precisely this reason of boosting income tax collections. This is important because,

as FE reported last week, there has been a contraction, albeit a small one, in the number

of e-returns filed for personal income tax in FY19 after averaging more than 25% over

the three years prior to this. Indeed, when you compare the number of actual tax filings

to the number of registered taxpayers, the ratio is down to 79.1%, a number not seen in

the last 5-6 years. It is due to this that direct tax collections fell short of projections for

FY19 by as much as ₹50,000 crore, all of this was in personal income taxes since there

was no shortfall in corporate taxes. While there has been an impressive jump in the direct

tax-to-GDP ratio from 5.6% before the NDA came to power to 6% in FY19, the big jump—

from 2.1% in FY16 to 2.4% in FY17 for personal income taxes—due to demonetisation

looks like it has played out unless the tax notices sent out to those who deposited unusu-

ally large sums of cash during the post-demonetisation phase result in a sharp jump in

taxes once the scrutiny of their replies is over. The GST link and the gains from Project

Insight—this links various databases like those from credit cards, jewelers, real estate

firms, etc—are expected to lead to the next big jump in tax collections.

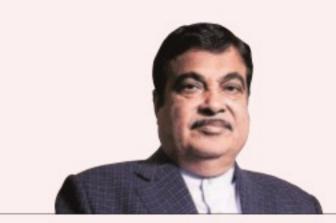
Greater GST compliance will also help raise both corporate as well as personal income

fall was ₹1 lakh crore on account of GST alone.

lion in July 2017 to 6 million in March 2018 to 7.2 million in March 2019.

HE FACTTHAT GST collections for March 2019 touched ₹1.14 lakh crore, up 10% over that in the same month a year ago, augurs well for the future. There is little doubt, though, that there are several one-offs that have boosted the performance—the best since India first started collecting GST in July 2017.

MONDAY, MAY 6, 2019



GANGA CLEAN UP

Water resources minister Nitin Gadkari

We have finished only 30% work (of Ganga clean-up) yet. During the last Kumbh Mela, the PM of Mauritius did not take a dip in the river as the water was dirty. This time, Priyanka Gandhi drank its water many times

BANKING IN FY20 GST on a better footing,

BANKS MUST LOOK AT SHORING UP **C**APITAL ADEQUACY, **A**SSET QUALITY, **M**ANAGEMENT, **E**ARNINGS AND **L**IQUIDITY

Getting the CAMEL back on its feet

MADAN

Views are personal

SABNAVIS

Chief economist, CARE Ratings

VERY YEAR THROWS up new challenges for the banking sector, and FY20 will be no different. The Q4 results of some banks are out and there are signs that the NPA recognition process may not yet be over. In the past, it was always said that whenever there is a change of guard in public sector banks, there are accelerated revelations on the quality of assets that tend to depress the earnings picture. It is now happening for private banks, too, and, hence, we may have to wait and see how things transpire during the course of the year. Against this background, the five pillars of banking that come under the now conventional

CAMEL framework may be debated.

Capital is the driving force in banking, more pertinent for PSBs. This issue has to be tackled head-on in the current year as the demand for credit should be better since there would be no disruptive policy. While overall growth projections for the economy are not very different from that in FY19, credit growth, even if maintained at the existing level, would call for more capital from banks. In FY18, incremental capital plus reserves, which forms the core of capital for calculating capital adequacy, was around ₹85,000 crore. Of this, only ₹10,000 crore came from PSBs. If bank credit grows by 13% in FY20, which is the same as in FY19, then to maintain a cumulative CAR of 9%, an additional ₹1.15 lakh crore would be required. This has to come from either retained profits being ploughed back or fresh capital infusion.

The former looks possible only in case banks are able to make profits, which implies that there should be no additional provisioning for bad assets due to the recognition syndrome of the asset quality review process. While it was generally believed that the worst was over in terms of legacy NPAs, it needs to be seen if more banks have any such recognition when the Q4 results are announced. The latter throws the ball back in the govern-

ment's court as weak PSBs need to be recapitalised further in case there is paucity of the same as of March 2019. The Budget has not made any provision for such recapitalisation that has to be provided in case the need arises. This can be included in the formal Budget in June/July. As some of the prompt and corrective action (PCA) banks will be coming out of the net gradually, the capital issue would have to be addressed with some urgency.

There are talks of some more PSB mergers, which may not actually add to capital of the system, though some of the weaker merged banks may look better. There has, however, not been any mention of divestment, which is understandable as given the present state of banks, the valuation will not be satisfactory.

Asset quality is the other issue of interest. Have all the past NPAs been recognised? If so, have provisions been made? This will have a bearing on the P&L accounts of banks. The other important development will be the way in which banks tackle the resolution process. The Supreme Court judgment on the RBI circular of February 12 does not make the one-day default rule lead to the 90-days resolution channel that subsequently takes the asset to the IBC. It, however, does not stop banks from still taking such action. If the onus is on the banks, the question is whether or not they would look at a solution or prefer to kick the can as was done even earlier before the IBC came in. This will be a call that has to be taken by the banks. Banks, as a rule, have an incentive to keep the asset away from the IBC and defer a resolution as it would mean taking a haircut. At the same time, there is

also pressure to show stronger balance sheets. Hence, there can be an incentive to procrastinate on such resolution.

Management is the third part of the banking outlook for FY20. A lot has been said on this as it raises issues on governance. This, now, holds for both public and private sector banks. RBI had a discussion

FY20 will be a

crucial year for

banks as the true

picture on the

revealed. The

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meaningful manner

paper on compensation for senior bank officials and brought in the issue of claw-back for the first time. Therefore, the way managements conduct business and are held responsible for performance will be something to be watched carefully. Also, the efficacy of the Banks Board Bureau would be tested as decisions are taken on the composition of Boards as well as CEOs. FY18 and FY19 have been particularly challenging for some banks from the point

of view of governance, and it is necessary to have the house in order for ensuring a safe future of the system. There are lessons to be learnt from the past and systems have to be made foolproof given that banks are the fulcrum of the financial system. Earnings will come back to the

forefront, provided that capital and asset quality issues have been addressed. Here, banks have to work around with enhancing efficiency so as to improve their operating profits in a scenario where interest rates are likely to decline rather than increase. RBI has indicated an accommodative

SUVODEEP RAKSHIT,

stance and banks have to follow up with appropriate action to enhance business. The important thing is to balance credit risk with enhanced business levels. Banks have been holding on to excessive SLR paper, which was a safe haven. Some change will be called for as commercial credit demand increases. Risk evaluation has to be at the top of the mind to ensure that growth in new incremental NPAs is contained.

The last part of the approach is liquidity and its prospects for the year. Unlike FY19, liquidity would be less of a challenge as growth in deposits is expected to be higher this year. The recent spate of disruptions in the

mutual funds market, especially in the debt segment, will mean a reverse migration to the 'safer and lower returns' haven of bank deposits. This would be beneficial for banks which had to coninternals would be tend with sluggish growth in FY19. To the challenge would be extent that RBI would be there to provide liquidity through both OMOs and LAF, it would be comforting for banks.

> In a declining interest rate scenario, the sixth element of 'sensitivity to market risk'would be less

of a concern as securities get valued at higher prices which will help the P&L. The risk on forex would be there to an extent but as the rupee is not expected to depreciate by more than 3-4% which is the trend, there would be less pressure on banks as well as corporates who otherwise do run a high currency risk on imports and debt.

Hence, FY20 will be a crucial year for banks as the true picture on the internals would be revealed. The challenge would be to get back from the abyss and move ahead in a meaningful manner so as to take the banks back to a robust, well-capitalised system with a cleaner asset portfolio and governance in place.

NCLAT acts sensibly on RBI How could it rule IL&FS loans couldn't be classified as NPAs?

FTER GETTING IT wrong in not allowing RBI to order banks to classify their loans to IL&FS as NPAs, the NCLAT appears to have finally seen sense. NCLAT has now said that while the loans can be classified as NPAs, the banks must make no attempt to recover their loans till further orders. This makes sense since, while banks would normally try and recover their loans by taking IL&FS to the NCLT, given how large the loans are—and the likely haircuts—the government put a new board in place at IL&FS to try and get the best deal possible for IL&FS debtors; if banks were to be allowed to take IL&FS to NCLAT, the Uday Kotakled team wouldn't get the time it needs to work out an orderly exit strategy. With the latest NCLAT ruling, banks will now start to make provisions for IL&FS loans and so, even if things don't work out according to plan, at least the banking sector will be better shock-proofed against possible losses from their IL&FS loans.

Indeed, it is to be hoped the Supreme Court (SC) will also learn a lesson from this as it has, much like the NCLAT, said that bank loans to Delhi Airport Metro Express Limited (DAMEPL) cannot be classified as NPAs till it rules on the matter. As FE has argued earlier, DAMEPL may have valid reasons for why it has not repaid the bank loans it took—it handed back the airport metro line to DMRC and it has not been paid the damages it was awarded against DMRC—from a bank's point of view, all that matters is that the loan has not been repaid. And even if DAMEPL is to be given time till the other issues are sorted out, surely banks must make provisions in case things still don't get fixed?

It is also to be hoped that other NCLAT/SC rulings that hit RBI and the banking system will also be reviewed. In the case of Essar Steel, for instance, the resolution is being held up by the NCLAT insisting that the Committee of Creditors ensure that ArcelorMittal pays a greater amount to operational creditors who are getting back a much smaller share of their outstanding in comparison to financial creditors. The SC striking down RBI's February 12 circular, similarly, has been a big dampener as far as making defaulters repay banks. As in DAMEPL, SC seems to be arguing that if faulty government policy hit firms, they can't be penalised for not repaying banks; the point, however, is that banks are not a proxy for government, so they can't be penalised either.

VeiledREALITY

A Kerala-based minority education group has sparked off a debate by banning face veils on its campuses

KERALA-BASED MINORITY education group, the Muslim Education Society (MES), has banned students from wearing the face veil on the campuses of its 150-plus institutions. This comes in the wake of the Sri Lanka terror attacks and the country ordering a similar ban, though the group insists its decision has nothing do with the attack. In fact, it draws from a 2018 Kerala High Court judgment that holds that the management of an educational institution has the right to decide a dress code and enforce it, and such dress codes have nothing to do with religion. The MES has deemed face-veils un-Islamic and a form of cultural invasion, perhaps hinting at the Wahabbi/Salafi cultural influence exerted by Saudi Arabia and other Sunni nations in West Asia and the Gulf region, a preferred destination for many migrants from Kerala.

The MES's decision has not gone down well with the Sunni clergy in the state, and a pressure group has said that the group has no right to impede the religious freedom of the students. The clerics' line makes the various forms of veiling/covering—like the burga, nigab and hijab—as integral to Muslim identity and religious freedom. It isn't difficult to see why, in the *burga/hijab*-ban debate in various countries, the decision to wear the garment is made out to be a matter of freedom of choice and expression. With increasing marginalisation of the community, especially in the West, the assertion of Islamic identity has *also* hinged upon *burga/hijab*, often the first overtly "Islamic" identifier to be attacked in nations insisting on cultural assimilation. At the same time, it is necessary that the debate pay adequate attention to the larger reality of veiling being an instrument of oppression in many nations—from the enforcement of compulsory donning by the infamous veiling police of the Taliban regime in Afghanistan to the *mutaween* (anti-vice squad) of Saudi Arabia that had allegedly prevented girls from fleeing a burning school in 2002 because they were not wearing abayas and headscarves—15 died and 50 were injured.

The missing tax filers

While a number of activity indicators have been signaling a slowdown in parts of the economy, the tax collections corroborate it too

UPASNA BHARDWAJ & AVIJIT PURI Authors are with Kotak Economic Research

WE ARE SURPRISED with the decline in income tax e-filing in FY19—a first in the recent history of tax filings. If the filings are indeed plateauing, it will be a worry for the fiscal which has seemingly shifted its focus to compensatory expenditure. The Centre must look at further expanding the tax base (optimally using the data repository from demonetisation and GST). Without a significant improvement in the tax base, the medium-term growth path will be at risk.

Based on the e-filing website of the income tax department, returns filed in FY2019 were at 66.8 mn against 67.5 mn in FY2018—1% lower. This is surprising given that post demonetisation it was expected that the tax base would continue to increase. It does beg the question whether compliance was weaker in the latter part of FY2019 given that the number of registered filers has continued to see steady growth. If compliance has been weak, the new government will aim at increasing the filings and collections in FY2020.

One of the positives out of the filing data has been the steady increase in the share of filers in the ₹0.5-1 mn, away

Tax filings have

plateaued in FY2019

from the ₹0.5 mn bracket. A similar (though quantitatively lower) trend is seen in the ₹1-5 mn brackets too. A focused utilisation of the data on deposits during demonetisation could yield better compliance, especially in the higher income brackets. This, combined with the granular GST-filing data, will be essential in increasing the filings as well as revenues over the next few years. The task is cut out for the next government looking at improving the tax buoyancy essential to fund the increasing transfers in expenditure.

While we hope that the filings for the assessment year increase (around August when filings are completed), a relatively muted tax filing growth will create further headwinds in an already stressed fiscal space. With the recent inception of direct transfers in the budget, the fiscal could easily be on a slippery slope unless there is a rationalisation of expenditure. We note that around 55% of central government expenditure is fixed in nature and the eventual impact could be on further lowering capex. Given the stressed fiscal space, the debt markets are burdened with heavy government and PSE

borrowings, which is likely to keep the yield curve steep in FY2020E.

Whileanumber of activity indicators have been signaling a slowdown in parts of the economy, the tax collections corroborate it too. Aggregate indirect tax revenues'buoyancy has been weak along with targets being missed on direct taxes too. Further, persistently high borrowing cost for financial institutions and companies (given crowding out by the government sector) will weigh on the nearterm aggregate demand in the economy. From a medium-term perspective, if

the government doesn't expand its capex (higher transfers and muted tax growth), growth prospects will be under doubt given estimated fiscal multipliers. Further, the drag from the government on the savings also needs to reduce to create space for higher investment rate without impacting macro balances. With a more moderate fiscal policy, an investment-led growth (and a lower consumption rate) will be essential to keep the savings-investment gap in check. Edited excerpts from

Kotak Economic Research's Public Finance Update dated April 30

Compliance has likely been lower in FY2019 compared to the past few years Actual filing/regsitered filers (%)

Mar-16

Mar-18

Mar-14

THE EDITOR

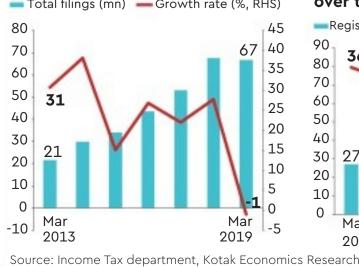
LETTERS TO

EC overlooking PM's MCC violations It is strange that the Election

Commission has found Prime Minister Narendra Modi's appeal to the first-time voters to dedicate their votes to the martyrs and his 'majority-minority' remark made in the context of Rahul Gandhi contesting from Wayanad not violative of the Model Code of Conduct. The commission's clean chit to Modi has led the Congress to ask 'Is it Model Code of Conduct or Modi Code of Conduct?' its differential treatment of leaders based on political hues and positions they hold does not put in the best possible light. In being soft with Narendra Modi and Amit Shah and giving them exemption from following the Model Code of Conduct, the poll panel sees to subscribe to the Orwellian axiom that 'some are more equal than others'. It deleted the complaints on Narendra Modi and Amit Shah from its website, for no acceptable reason. Its eyes are so clouded that the capital letters BJP beneath the 'lotus' symbol in the EVMs were just water lines. This is while even a person with poor eyesight won't miss the letters (the party's name). By not providing a level playing field to all in the electoral fray, the Election Commission has not acted as a neutral umpire. It is a self-evident truth that its failure to enforce its own rules, its selective penal action and its procrastination bear on the sanctity of the election process involving the will of the people. The Election Commission must be fair and seen to be fair lest it will lose credibility as a constitutional body capable of conducting free and fair elections, a major exercise in a democracy worth its — G David Milton, Maruthancode

Write to us at feletters@expressindia.com

Total filings (mn) — Growth rate (%, RHS) 80 70 40 35 60 30 50 31 25 40



Registered filers have increased though growth rate has fallen over the past few years



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FINANCIAL EXPRESS



ILLUSTRATION: ROHNIT PHORE



OVER THE BARREL

Can non-dollar overpower the petrodollar?

The rest of the world must find ways of creating a non-dollar based trading system, particularly with regards to petroleum, and thereby weakening America's stranglehold over the global financial system. For Trump is pushing the Middle East onto a collision course and the consequences for everyone could be severe

NE SHOULD NOT BE SURPRISED by Donald Trump's imperious approach to the rest of the world. He has but one concern—to keep his domestic constituency intact and to win the 2020 presidential elections. He may not even care if, in the process, the 'rest' goes to hell in a hand-basket. His latest missive against Iran is a manifestation of this attitude. The question that one must ask is: What can the 'rest' do to prevent such an outcome.

On April 22, Mike Pompeo, the United States Secretary of State, had announced that the exemptions granted to seven countries (and Taiwan) from the US sanctions law CAATSA (Countering America's Adversaries Through Sanctions Act) against Iran would be withdrawn on May

3. He said these countries would have to bring their imports of Iranian oil/gas down to zero within the next two weeks and the policy objective was to choke off the principal source of revenue of the 'outlaw regimes'

'outlaw regimes'.

Pompeo's announcement should not have come as a surprise. The exemptions had been granted for six months and were to expire on May 3. It did rattle the market, though, because of the impracticality of the demand. How were these countries going to reduce their purchase to zero at such a short notice. Together, they were purchasing 1 million barrels of oil daily, and Turkey imported almost 15% of its gas requirements via pipeline from Iran. It was also not clear what the US would do if China, Turkey and India cocked a snook at this diktat. Would the

government prevent US banks from financing US business in these countries? If so, what and how would these restrictions be implemented? Any way, the uncertainties led to a tightening of the oil market despite Trump's characteristic tweet that he had "spoken to the OPEC" to make up for the shortfall.

On hearing this announcement, the issue that concerned me was not the impact on the oil market or on India. It was the reaction of Iran and whether this might trigger actions and decisions that could lead to a broader conflagration. I knew that India had already substantially reduced its petroleum imports from Iran and that whilst the costs of making up the 11% that it still imported would push its import bill higher, this increase was affordable and it would not create a major economic disruption. Of course, I did wonder whether India would readily accede to the diktat or whether, on a matter of principle, it would signal to America that it could not compromise its principles and be seen as a fair weather friend

and ally. After all, India and Iran have had long-standing strategic, cultural and trading relations. But these were subsidiary thoughts to the contours of a possible disaster scenario that was taking shape in my mind. It was also subsidiary to the follow-up question what if anything can the 'rest' do to prevent Trumpian foreign policy from disproportionately and adversely impacting the people in the region?

Consider the following:
The relatively moderate
government of Iranian
President Hassan Rouhani
collapses because of public

disaffection with the dire state of the domestic economy and because of an emboldened opposition. It is replaced by a hard-line government opposed to the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA), the multi-nation agreement that had placed constraints on Iran's nuclear programme and resumes work on the nuclear programme. John Bolton, the National Security Advisor of the United States and arguably the architect of Trump's hard-line policy towards Iran, finds he now has the excuse to 'bomb' Iran. He has often expressed this wish. Trump signs off on this act of muscularity because he believes it will go down well with his domestic constituency. Iran reacts along multiple fronts. It endeavours to block the Strait of Hormuz through which flow 22 million barrels of

oil every day, it intensifies its support to

anti-American Shia factions in the region, and it reaches out to China for support. The price of oil shoots up, the global economy hits the skids and...

So, what, if anything, can the global community do to avoid such a scenario? What can it do to ensure that Iran continues to exercise 'strategic patience'?

The answer clearly does not lie in a 'jaw jaw' with Trump, Bolton and Pompeo. They have set their stakes in the ground. They will not ease off until, as Pompeo put it, Iran learns "to behave like a normal country." Moreover, they are persuaded that the portrayal of Iran as 'an outlaw regime' plays well with their Republican base.

So, what are the other possibilities?
One of several reasons for America's economic leverage is that it sits at the epicentre of the global financial system. The dollar is a reserve currency. Global trade is preponderantly carried out in dollars. Oil is priced in dollars. The US Treasury is the favoured haven for risk-averse investors. And it controls the financial messaging

system (SWIFT). Banks, financial intermediaries and corporates would not be able to function if they did not have access to this system. This latter reality is the threat that hangs over every entity that continues to trade with Iran after May

Clearly, this threat would lose its edge if there were an alternative messaging system that enabled non-dollar transactions without SWIFT. The European signatories of JCPOA (Germany, France and the UK) have created

such a system. They announced in January the establishment of a special-purpose vehicle (SPV) called the Instrument in Support of Trade Exchanges (INSTEX) to enable companies to trade with Iran without having to deal with dollar-based US banks. It remains to be seen whether companies will avail of this mechanism. Also, the threat would dilute if the countries decided to engage in barter, but

I am sure there is more that can be done. The larger point is that the 'rest' must find ways of creating a non-dollar based trading system, particularly with regards to petroleum, and thereby weakening America's stranglehold over the global financial system. For Trump is pushing the Middle East onto a collision course and the consequences for everyone could be severe.

Participating in electronics GVC

CHANDRAJIT BANERJEE

The author is director general, CII

How to integrate Indian firms into global electronics manufacturing value chain

NDIA'S EXPANDING INCOME LEVELS have translated into a growing trade deficit, with imports of electronic products as a key component—electronics imports (under HS code 85) grew to \$48.3 billion in 2017-18 (10% of total imports), jumping \$10 billion over the previous year and at third rank in total imports after oil, and gems and jewellery. Spurring domestic manufacturing in electronics is thus the need of the hour.

While the Phased Manufacturing Programme (PMP), introduced in 2017, curbed imports under this category over 2018-19, India must build its electronics exports. A way of doing this is to effectively participate in global value chains (GVCs), where Asia has emerged as a major player. There are important takeaways from Vietnam, which expanded its electronics exports by over 700% between 2010 and 2016. Areason for Vietnam's success is FDI by leading MNCs in the electronics sector. Over the past few decades, Vietnam liberalised its economy and instituted laws to protect investments. Huge swathes of coastal areas have been allocated to building economic zones and industrial parks. Corporate income tax has been slashed to 20% with additional financial and tax incentives, which, along with a sound ports and logistics infrastructure, have attracted major MNCs. These companies have further promoted growth of ancillary enterprises, creating a robust ecosystem that is now gaining from the movement of manufacturing out of China.

India's strengths include a vast pool of engineers, competitive labour force, familiarity with English, and others. Many MNCs have set up design and R&D centres in the country, connected with manufacturing sectors. With the right policy environment, a thriving electronics sector well-integrated with shifting regional supply chains could help boost exports and create new jobs.

First, strategising imports of electronics in terms of final and intermediate items is important, as imports of certain products remain essential. Vietnam's import bill in electronics at \$47.7 billion in 2016 is testament to this. While India increased import duties on certain electronic products in the 2018-19 Budget, it recently exempted 35 machine parts used for manufacturing mobile phone components from basic customs duty to promote local handset production. Abalance will need to be maintained on the import duty structures of such products.

Second, India needs to continue focus on easing the way business is done, especially in terms of trade across borders such as time and cost of border compliance, documentary compliance, etc, both for exports and imports. The time taken for border compliance of imports in India is more than five times that in Vietnam and the cost is almost 25% higher, as per the World Bank. Dedicated industrial parks could help develop a supportive trade system.

Third, GVCs demand high quality and on-time delivery, necessitating behind-the-border logistics support, with high-speed and reliable linking of industrial parks and ports. Equally, contract enforcement, recourse available to firms in case of violations, length of settlement periods, legal processes, etc, need to be considered.

Fourth, for upgrades within a GVC, backward linkages between MNCs and domestic industry are critical. India's electronics SMEs need hand holding, both by the government and MNCs. Workshops by MNCs with suppliers including those at lower tiers could assist in building quality and meeting requisite standards. The government could also set up training centres for SMEs in key manufacturing clusters.

While Vietnam's experience of attracting MNCs is a model, integration of its domestic firms into GVCs remains at low levels, mainly in assembly, packaging, etc. India must ensure that it reaches better value addition with deeper local supply chains. An advantage for India is that even if it were to integrate into the GVCs at a lower level initially, its strong private sector ecosystem, coupled with the large pool of talent and entrepreneurial spirit, can help the country rise within GVCs—initial integration is, however, critical.

The electronics market in India is projected to grow to \$400 billion by 2020 and this, coupled with global demand for electronics, creates huge opportunities for firms to invest in India as a hub for exports. The PMP has contributed to lowering imports of handsets while imports of circuits and micro assemblies has concomitantly risen. Systematic government and industry interventions could create a fertile ground to enable development of the electronics sector.

ADAMS' EQUITY THEORY

A reason for

America's

economic leverage

is it sits at the

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DAMS' EQUITYTHEORY, also known as the Equity Theory of Motivation, was developed in 1963 by John Stacey Adams, a Belgian psychologist known for workplace behaviour. When people exhibit inappropriate behaviour at the workplace, everyone suffers. For instance, if someone frequently tells lies, his/her disruptive behaviour affects coworkers' morale and productivity. Equity Theory is based on the idea that individuals are motivated by justice. In simple terms, Equity Theory states that if an individual identifies inequity between himself and a peer, he automatically will adjust his working style to make the situation fair in his own eyes. As an example of Equity Theory, if an employee learns that a peer doing exactly the same job as him is earning more money, he may choose to do less work, thus feeling justified in his own eyes.

Equity Theory focuses on influencing whether the distribution of resources is fair to both relational partners—employer and employee. Equity is measured by comparing the ratio of contributions in terms of costs and benefits in terms of rewards for each person. This theory is also considered as one of justice theories. John Adams asserted that employees seek to maintain equity between the inputs they bring to a job and the outcomes they receive from it against the professed inputs and compare them to the outcomes of others. According to Equity Theory, organisations must maximise individuals' rewards, by creating sys-

Finding motivation at workplace

Employees compare their perks to others; if they perceive inequity, they will adjust their inputs to restore balance



tems where resources can be fairly divided amongst members of a team. If employees feel they are treated unequally in treatment and rewards, they will shy away from giving the best inputs.

The structure of equity at the work-place is based on the ratio of inputs to outcomes. Inputs are the contributions made by the employee for the organisation. Inputs, for instance, come in form of the number of hours worked (effort), the commitment and enthusiasm shown, the experience brought to the role, personal sacrifices made, and responsibilities and duties of the individual in the role. Outputs are the result an individual receives as a result of his inputs to the organisation. Some of these benefits will be tan-

gible, such as salary, while others will be intangible, such as recognition. Common outputs include salary, bonus, pension, annual holiday allowance, company car, company home, stock options, recognition and promotion.

It's a universal truth that company cultures are strongly interrelated with employee happiness. The more appealing and enjoyable an organisation's culture is, the happier its employees will be. It is not possible for workers to be engaged when they are unhappy. Employees keep comparing with each other with regards to salary, perks, recognition and promotion. By cultivating a strong corporate culture, organisations increase the chances of good employee engagement.



adjust their inputs to restore balance.

The airline industry is often mocked for grumpy employees and poor customer service, but Southwest Airlines of the US bucks those trends. Customers loyal to Southwest often point to happy and friendly employees who try hard to

they perceive inequity, then they will

help. This airline has managed to communicate its goals and vision to employees in a way that makes them a part of a unified team. Southwest gives employees 'permission' to go the extra mile to make customers happy, empowering them to do what they need to do to meet that vision. Employees who are convinced of a larger common goal are people who are excited to be part of a larger purpose.

Adobe is a company that goes out of its way to give employees challenging projects and then provide the trust and support to help them meet those challenges successfully. While it offers benefits and perks like any modern creative company, Adobe's is a culture that avoids micromanaging in favour of trusting employ-

ees to do their best. Adobe does not use ratings to establish employee capabilities, feeling that it restrains creativity and harms how teams work. Managers take on the role of a coach/mentor, more than anything, letting employees set goals and determine how they should be assessed. Adobe gives its employees stock options so they respect both a stake and reward in the company's success. Continual training and culture that promotes risk-taking without the fear of penalty are part of Adobe's open company culture. Putting trust in employees goes a long way towards positive organisational culture, because trust leads to independent employees who help their company grow.

Employees who are high in equity sensitivity place more importance on inputs in terms of what they can give in a situation; higher scorers have been labelled 'benevolent'. In contrast, those who score towards the low end of the pole on equity sensitivity place greater importance on outcomes; they value what they can get in a given situation and are labelled as 'entitled'. Towards the midpoint are those individuals who adhere more closely to the originally proposed norm of equityi.e. those who desire their inputs and outcomes to be balanced, and they are labelled as 'equity sensitive'. In sum, along the range, individuals who score high on equity sensitivity lean more towards benevolence, whereas individuals who score low on equity sensitivity lean more towards entitled.

WORDLY WISE

TOO OFTEN, STORIES ABOUT AFGHANISTAN CENTRE AROUND THE VARIOUS WARS... PRECIOUS LITTLE IS SAID ABOUT THE AFGHAN PEOPLE. — KHALED HOSSEINI

The Indian EXPRESS

∽ FOUNDED BY ∽ RAMNATH GOENKA

BECAUSE THE TRUTH INVOLVES US ALL

LISTEN TO YOUR OWN

In case against the CJI, SC should address disquiet expressed by a senior judge, desist from ex parte probe

HERE IS no doubt that the Supreme Court faces a serious challenge of institutional integrity after one of its ex-employees levelled charges of sexual harassment against Chief Justice Ranjan Gogoi. While the apex court showed that it's alive to this concern by instituting a three-member panel to investigate the charges, the complainant's walking away from the probe, after expressing fears that she is "not likely to get justice from the committee," has, by all accounts, muddied the waters even more. Now, a submission by a senior judge of the apex court, Justice D Y Chandrachud, speaks of the sense of disquiet within the higher judiciary. As reported in this paper, Justice Chandrachud has, in a letter to the panel on May 2, asked it to not proceed with the ex parte probe. He also met the panel last week to convey his concerns about the investigation. The committee — and the apex court itself — should do well to pay heed to the most critical of these concerns, as expressed in Justice Chandrachud's letter: The credibility of the Supreme Court would be further damaged if the panel decided to continue the probe in the complainant's absence.

In her press statement after walking out of the probe, the complainant had alleged that she was "not informed of the procedure the committee is following". She had talked of feeling "quite intimidated and nervous in the presence of three Hon'ble Judges of the Supreme Court and without having a lawyer or support person". The committee, however, declined her request for a lawyer and decided to carry on the probe ex parte. The complainant has held that denying her a lawyer was testimony to the committee's lack of sensitivity to "the fact that this was not an ordinary complaint". The panel was dealing "with a complaint of sexual harassment against a sitting CJI and therefore it was required to adopt a procedure that would ensure fairness and equality in the highly unequal circumstances," she has contended.

It's true that the victim's allegations pertain to complex procedural issues. And no doubt the panel's task has become complicated because the SC's "in-procedures" do not have explicit provisions for an inquiry against the CJI. But the principles of natural justice and the SC's own jurisprudence guaranteeing a level-playing field to working women demanded that the committee's first task was to institute processes to mitigate the unequal power relations in this case. Justice Chandrachud's letter too suggests such an imperative. He has suggested that the committee could either accede to the complainant's request for a lawyer or appoint an amicus curiae for the probe. The SC should heed the message of its senior judge.

STALEMATE IN KABUL

Afghan loya jirga fails to convince the Taliban to engage with the elected government

HE TALIBAN'S rejection of a call for an Eid truce by the Afghan loya jirga last week was good indication that despite American optimism, arriving at peace in Afghanistan is not going to be as quick or easy as the United States wants it

The Grand Council of 3,200 Afghans was itself controversial. Left out of the US-Taliban talks, Afghan President Ashraf Ghani called the loya jirga ostensibly to build consensus among the various tribal groups on discussions with the Taliban. The Taliban, however, are resolute that they will not enter into any dialogue with the elected Afghan government until after the US and other foreign troops have withdrawn from the country. And there is no guarantee that they will do so after the withdrawal. The Taliban openly called on the Afghans to boycott the loya jirga. Ghani's political rivals, including chief executive Abdullah Abdullah, refused to attend the meeting for their own reasons. Packed as it was with Ghani loyalists, they saw the jirga as an attempt to boost his own political standing and stature ahead of the September 28 presidential elections. The meeting was hobbled by other difficulties, including that it was led by a former warlord associated with Osama bin Laden and Al Qaeda. Ghani lined the truce call to the Taliban with a sweetener, offering to release 175 Taliban prisoners. But the Taliban, who had observed a three-day ceasefire last Eid, are in no mood to indulge Ghani.

The US too made plain its disinterest in the loya jirga by holding another round of talks with the Taliban in the same week. US Special Representative Zalmay Khalizad has stressed that a deal requires agreement on "four inter-connected issues", which are, a timetable for troop withdrawal, guarantees from the Taliban that no terrorist attacks will be launched against other countries, a dialogue between Taliban and the elected Afghan government, and a ceasefire. But he has also said that he wants to reach this deal before the presidential elections. With Ghani's political opponents readying for a rumoured "interim government" under a peace agreement, there may be no elections. Ghani's own legitimacy has been undermined with each passing day of the US-Taliban engagement. Both see Iran and India as potential trouble makers. Left out of the talks, in which Pakistan has played a significant role, Delhi has so far found it convenient to say it will back any agreement supported by the elected Afghan government. But the dilemma for Delhi is really how to deal with a post-US Afghanistan.

Freeze Frame

EPUNNY



America versus the rest



Non-dollar based trading regime holds key to breaking US stranglehold over oil trade

VIKRAM S MEHTA

ONE SHOULD NOT be surprised by US President Donald Trump's imperious approach to the rest of the world. He has but one concern. To keep his domestic constituency intact and to win the 2020 elections. He may not even care if in the process, the "rest "go to hell in a hand basket". His latest missive against Iran is manifestation of this attitude. The question that one must ask is what can the "rest" do to prevent such an outcome.

On April 22, Mike Pompeo announced that the exemptions granted to seven countries (and Taiwan) from the US sanctions law, CAATSA (Countering American Adversaries through Sanctions Act) against Iran would be withdrawn on May 3. He said these countries would have to bring their imports of Iranian oil/gas down to zero within the next two weeks and the policy objective was to choke off the outlaw regimes' principal source of revenue.

Pompeo's announcement should not have come as a surprise. The exemptions had been granted for six months and were to expire on May 3. It did rattle the market, though, because of the impracticality of the demand. How were these countries going to reduce their purchase to zero at such short notice? Together, they were purchasing one million barrels of oil daily and Turkey imported almost 15 per cent of its gas requirement via the pipeline from Iran. It was also not clear what the US would do if China, Turkey and India cocked a snook at this diktat. Would the government prevent US banks from financing US business in these countries? If so, what and how would these restrictions be implemented? Anyway, the uncertainties led to a tightening of the oil market despite Trump's characteristic tweet that he had "spoken to OPEC to make up the shortfall".

On hearing this announcement, the issue that concerned me was not the impact on the oil market or on India. It was the reaction of Iran and whether this might trigger actions and decisions that could lead to a broader conflagration. I knew that India had

So what if anything can the global community do to avoid such a scenario? The answer clearly does not lie in a 'jaw jaw' with Trump, Bolton and Pompeo. They have set their stakes in the ground. They will not ease off until, as Pompeo put it, Iran learns 'to behave like a normal country'. Moreover, they are persuaded that the portrayal of Iran as "an outlaw regime" plays well

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already substantially reduced its petroleum imports from Iran and that whilst the costs of making up the 11 per cent that it still imported would push its import bill higher, this increase was affordable and it would not create a major economic disruption. Of course, I did wonder whether India would readily accede to the diktat or whether, on a matter of principle, it would signal to America that it could not compromise its principles and be seen as a fair weather friend. After all, India and Iran have had long standing strategic, cultural and trading relations. But these were subsidiary thoughts to the contours of a possible disaster scenario taking shape in my mind. It was also subsidiary to the follow up question: What, if anything, can the rest of the world do to prevent Trumpian foreign policy from disproportionately and adversely impacting the people in the region? Consider the following. The relatively

moderate government of President Hassan Rouhani collapses because of public disaffection with the dire state of the domestic economy, and because of an emboldened opposition. It is replaced by a hardline government opposed to the JCPOA — the multi-nation agreement that had placed constraints on Iran's nuclear programme — which resumes work on the nuclear programme. John Bolton, President Trump's national security adviser and arguably the architect of Trump's hardline policy towards Iran finds he now has the excuse to "bomb" Iran. He has often expressed this wish. Trump signs off on this act of muscularity because he believes it will go down well with his domestic constituency. Iran reacts along multiple fronts. It endeavours to block the Straits of Hormuz through which flow 22 million barrels of oil every day, it intensifies support to anti-American Shia factions in the region and reaches out to China for support. The price of oil shoots up, the global economy hits the

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Trump, Bolton and Pompeo. They have set their stakes in the ground. They will not ease off until, as Pompeo put it, Iran learns "to behave like a normal country". Moreover, they are persuaded that the portrayal of Iran as "an outlaw regime" plays well with their Republican base?

So, what are the other possibilities? One of several reasons for America's economic leverage is that it sits at the epicenter of the global financial system. The dollar is a reserve currency. Global trade is preponderantly carried out in dollars. Oil is priced in dollars. The US treasury is the favoured haven for risk averse investors. And, it controls the financial messaging system (SWIFT). Banks, financial intermediaries and corporates would not be able to function if they did not have access to this system. This latter reality is the threat that hangs over every entity that continues to trade with Iran after May 3.

Clearly, this threat would lose its edge if there were an alternative messaging system that enabled non-dollar transactions without SWIFT. The European signatories of JCPOA (Germany, France and the UK) have created such a system. They announced in January the establishment of a SPV "Instrument in support of Trade Exchange" (INSTEX) to enable companies to trade with Iran without having to deal with dollar-based US banks. It remains to be seen whether companies will avail of this mechanism. Also, the threat would dilute if the countries decided to engage in barter but this is not a sustainable alternative.

I am sure there is more that can be done The larger point is that the "rest" must find ways of creating a non-dollar based trading system, particularly regards petroleum and thereby weakening America's stranglehold over the global financial system. For Trump is pushing the Middle East onto a collision course and the consequences for everyone could be severe.

The writer is chairman and senior fellow, Brookings India

ELECTING A NEW PEOPLE

Statements during 2019 campaign go against principle of universal franchise

SEEMA CHISHTI

SOME DEBATES IN the heat of the battle of 2019 are a throwback to the past, reminiscent of the distance we have veered off the kerb of acceptable ideas about what the pact of India and its people was about. Two distinct statements come to mind that show how close we have been to embracing discarded ideas of separateness, unmindful of the road — crossing near-impossible hurdles — to invent the idea of our republic.

In the fulminations of the RJD in Begusarai where Kanhaiya Kumar is contesting as a candidate of the Communist Party of India, or in what Narendra Modi had to say on Congress President Rahul Gandhi's contest from Wayanad, an important but somewhat neglected chapter from our political history came into sharp focus.

On April 1, speaking in a rally at Wardha, Modi expressed disdain for Rahul Gandhi for standing from an area "where the majority is in a minority". The implication being that it cannot be a legitimate representation if Rahul Gandhi is voted in by the "minority" community. Conversely, fulminations against the Bhumihar-comrade Kanhaiya for daring to contest from Begusarai, where the RJD's Tanveer Hasan is also contesting and so seeking Muslim votes, was made out to be an act against "secularism".

It is common sense, people say — that since India votes according to its micro-identities — to seek votes as per caste, sub-caste, region and religion. But to have been able to forge a modern idea of each citizen having

than Hindus. By drawing attention to

electorates like this, parties as contrasting as the BJP and RJD did not realise how close they were to making a case for separate electorates -- a controversial and longdiscarded idea from colonial India, which was always eager to sharpen the cleavages in Indian society.

one vote has been a big leap for India, as it negotiated several kinds and levels of inequalities and differences, diversities and inequities. This was an idea that was provocative at the time and bore the seed for social revolution, as each voter mattered equally and only as much as the other voter.

But both these recent astounding statements, one consistently made by RJD bigwigs and the other by the PM, calls into contention this very idea of the electorate. In the case of Kanhaiya's candidature, seeking votes from all, the RJD saw red, as drawing Muslims away from a "Muslim" candidate was somehow wrong and a threat. The PM too, anxious to trash Gandhi's choice of Wayanad as his second constituency, sought to diminish representation from there, as being tainted in some way, as it was where Muslims and Christians together, are more

By drawing attention to electorates like this, parties as contrasting as the BJP and RJD did not realise how close they were to making a case for separate electorates — a controversial and long-discarded idea from colonial India, which was always eager to sharpen the cleavages in Indian society.

The year 1909 marked the beginning of separate electorates. The Poona Pact is recalled by how the British wished to further carve out the "depressed classes" as separate electorates. Gandhi fasted over the issue and after protracted pressure, B R Ambedkar agreed to doing away with the demand and agreed to reserved seats instead. It was only a few months after Partition,

as the Constituent Assembly debates were in progress, that a sub-committee looking to examine if separate electorates should be continued gave up on the idea. There were Muslims in the committee, headed by then home minister, Sardar Patel, leading the argument for a joint electorate. The move was towards a democracy where your central identity would be of a citizen; where you would vote as equal to every other citizen, and not demand a set number of representatives for either Muslims or Christians or Sikhs.

Oddly enough, those who now argue for the need for a "Muslim" leadership miss this point entirely: Each MP, after the doing away of separate electorates, is sworn to look after each citizen and constituent, and this is at the heart of the "unseparateness" that the Indian Constitution sought to forge.

In statements focussing, perhaps unmindfully, on what "the people" must represent ("Muslims" be represented by "Muslims" and "Hindu" leaders elected from where the people are "Hindu"), we have come dangerously close to flirting with the dark moment Bertolt Brecht speaks of in Die Losung or The Solution: "Stating that the people/Had forfeited the confidence of the government/And could win it back only By redoubled efforts/Would it not be easier in that case/for the government to dissolve the people/And elect another?"

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May 6, 1979, Forty Years Ago

TEESTA RIFT

INDIAN AND BANGLADESH experts have differences on working out an agreed basis for sharing the Teesta water. Indian experts want the availability of water to be measured in totality in the Bangladesh region for which the country proposes to use Teesta water, while Bangladesh insists on the availability to be at the point where the river enters its territory, according to joint commission sources. A suitable machinery for sharing the water, in pursuance of Prime Minister Morarji Desai's recent talks with President Ziaur Rahman, is to be set up by the Joint River Commission of the two countries. The com-

mission is likely to meet in Delhi later this

month to discuss the augmentation of the Ganga flow.

NON-ALIGNED MEET

PRESERVATION OF NONALIGNED unity was the strand that ran through the 35-minute discussion which the Yugoslav foreign minister, Josip Vrhovec, had with Prime Minister Morarji Desai on May 4. There was unanimity of views on the issue of Egypt's expulsion from the nonaligned movement: That there was no case for such a step to be taken, and that such a move must be discouraged. Southeast Asia was also identified as the critical area, where the interests of three major

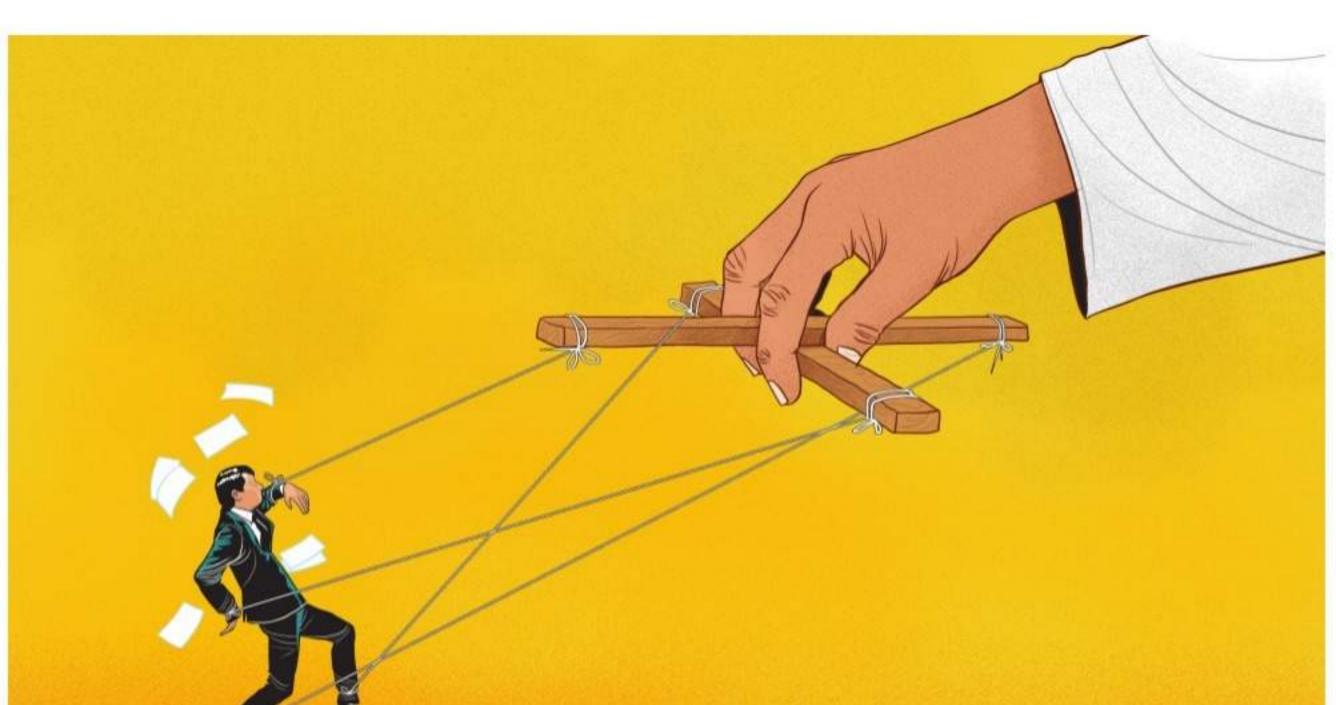
powers – the US, USSR and China –

were clashing.

LONE IN CUSTODY

ABDUL GANI LONE, chairman of the newlyformed Kashmir People's Conference and a "few of his associates" were taken into custody at Baramulla, in north Kashmir. Lone, also a member of the state assembly, had attended a meeting of the District Development Board at Baramulla. As soon as he entered the meeting hall, he created a row by taking exception to his not having been allotted a suitable seat. He also reportedly protested against the way in which his party's public meeting at Sopore was disturbed on May 5.

THE IDEAS PAGE



Suvajit Dey

Clones in the civil service

Indian civil services run the risk of producing just clones who seek precedence not innovation in work

by such officers and supporting them.

The sad truth is, the civil services induct some of the most talented and intelligent individuals in the country, and then labour hard on making them mediocre. We want clones in each of our departments. Original thinkers? The word does not exist in the dictionary of civil servants. Our prime focus is 'safety", and to be in the good books of the party in power: We feel insecure, very often, especially at the slightest departure from "precedence", that holy word. We convey the same sentiment to the political bosses, too. Though they are a little more adventurous initially, soon they fall in line. The result is an opaque governance, the slow chugging train of Indian democracy.

An officer who dares to think different or breaks the stagnant, unproductive routine with any new initiatives, is first looked upon with suspicion. And if he goes at a speed that is decidedly not "ours", he is shunted out so that we feel secure in our own slow bumpy ride. That has been the story for the last 72 years, and yet we wonder why India is still a developing country. Recently, Sabeer Bhatia of Hotmail fame, along with some others, moaned about the non-accountability of civil servants. The truth is that civil servants are as much responsible, if not more, for India missing many achievable goals given the political leadership of different parties: It takes much more to succeed as a nation than the tardy routine that most bureaucrats boast about. If that had been enough, we would have been a happy and healthy nation, decades earlier.

What the civil services need is a culture that accepts and values questioning and the irreverence of bold officers: The ultimate objective, of course, is to have integrity in one's work ethic, and a steady commitment to the common good. If an officer is honest but different, let her be. If the officer has a different viewpoint, it is alright — in fact, that is what we need to take the country out of the rut. We, in the civil services, have been non-performers because we are clones of each other, unable to think differently.

hotel in Mumbai to the 26/11 crisis, they found that "What the Taj Group looks for in managers is integrity, along with the ability to work consistently and conscientiously. to respond beyond the call of duty, and to work well under pressure". While integrity, consistency, and conscientiousness are essential for civil servants, equally important is their ability to think positive, to think different and to be able to implement their thought process to ensure the good of the citizens. If these original thinkers are irreverent of seniority, let it be, as long as they show results. If they question, let us reply to them in full sincerity instead of putting them down. If they have views and opinions of their own, let's forget our cumbersome protocol and listen to them wholeheartedly. They may, and do have substance, most of the time. If they look fearless, let's not feel threatened. Fearlessness comes only if you In India, the colonial culture have a spine and most of us have lost it some time back.

In India, the colonial culture gave way to the culture of "cloneism" in the civil services. That's the reason why the country is stuck the way it is. There are many ways out of it, and one important solution is to make the civil services listen to the voices with a "difference", from among their own. Another is to have a culture that rewards performance and not repetitive motions or "precedence". Encourage officers who offer different solutions, even if they fail. If they are grounded to the field realities, they will come up with new ones. They may be irreverent and outspoken, and yet be the solution. In the "shunting out" of the Enforcement Directorate chief of the Western Zone, the prevalent system has, once again, failed to appreciate and value an officer who dares to think differently.

The writer is an IPS officer of the

When Harvard University studied the extraordinary response of the staff of the Taj

Maharashtra Cadre, and retired as the Director General, Bureau of Police Research and development (BPRD)

VIEW FROM THE Neighbourhood

MEERAN CHADHA

IRREVERENCE HAS ITS place. Especially if it

is coupled with integrity and there is no se-

rious breach in discipline. I am talking of the

civil services and with particular reference

to the sudden and before-time shift of the

Chief of Enforcement Directorate, Western

Zone. The government has been prompt in

avoiding the prolonged and painful tussle

that the country recently witnessed in the

fight between the two powerful blocks of the

Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI). To that

extent, the citizens have been spared the tur-

moil, but the reasons for the sudden action

have not been made public and may never

come out either. Despite the Right to

Information Act, governments — irrespec-

tive of the party in power, are wary of dis-

closing anything as they feel threatened. So,

lesson number one is that the Right to

Information is a long battle and the citizens

bewildering to many, especially if the officer

has been performing well. At such times the

topic of "political interference" in adminis-

tration invariably crops up. Politicians are

painted as darker than black. It is a fact that

if officers bend, politicians make them bend

even more: But if they do not bend, they in-

deed are "shunted out" or not given prize

postings. That is the price one pays for hold-

ing one's spine straight. However, nowhere

have we questioned the culture prevailing

within the civil services — whether it is con-

ducive to civil servants taking value-based

personal positions, and colleagues standing

The sudden "shunting" of civil servants is

have won only the first round.

BORWANKAR



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

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TERROR TAG

THE EDITORIAL reactions in *Dawn* and *The* Express Tribune about Jaish-e-Mohammad chief Masood Azhar being designated a "global terrorist" by the UN, after China lifted its "technical hold", is telling. In its May 3 editorial, Dawn remarks that "JeM may have made India-held Kashmir its focus, but its cadres have caused plenty of havoc in Pakistan as well." It cites the following example: "Its (JeM) militants form the nucleus of what is known as the Punjabi Taliban, a loose confederation of jihadists, also consisting of sectarian elements. Though the JeM was banned in 2002 by Pakistan, its activities continued and Masood Azhar was largely a free man." In addition, China only ceased to block the listing once all mention of Kashmir and terror in India was removed from the resolution. What is interesting – and admirably critical —in Dawn's editorial, is the understanding that Pakistan must put its house in order. The editorial does say that New Delhi tries to link "the Kashmiri struggle for justice" with terrorism and that this "false binary must be exposed". However, it adds that "if we had put our own house in order, India would not have been able to ex-

groups with Pakistan." "Ultimately," writes *Dawn*, "all militant

ploit the situation and associate jihadist

groups and non-state actors that promote hateful, divisive and sectarian narratives must be shut down".

The Express Tribune, on the other hand, rubbishes any claims by Prime Minister Narendra Modi that the listing constitutes a diplomatic victory for India. Its May 3 editorial, in fact, spins the terror tag as China finding an "amicable way out" —it has responded to pressure from the US, UK and France without affecting its deep ties with Pakistan: "The global superpower rivalling the US utilised its power potential, forcing the movers of the resolution against the JeM chief to correct the relevant materials and re-submit them for the sanctioning exercise — all for the sake of Pak-China friendship that is indeed higher than the Himalayas, deeper than the oceans and sweeter than honey."

While one publication seems to address the core issues around Masood Azhar from a patriotic but critical perspective, the other seems to be defending with great zeal China and the stylistically dated rhetoric around the China-Pak relationship — "friendship sweeter than honey" indeed.

ANGER IN SRI LANKA

OVER THE last week, editorials in the Sri Lankan English language press have been consistently critical of the government for failing to prevent the Easter terror attacks and subsequently, failing to be seen to be doing enough in its aftermath. In its May 1 editorial, *The Island* first lauds the Archbishop of Colombo, Malcolm Cardinal Ranjith, for refusing a bulletproof car and security and instead urging the government to ensure the security of all Sri Lankans. While stressing that no one would blame the cardinal for accepting or even seeking security, the editorial remarks that "some politicians have also woken up to the fact that the people are increasingly becoming antipathetic towards them. A few of them have cared to read the public mood. UPFA MP Indika Anuruddha, taking part in a television debate, on Tuesday, said the people were asking why the suicide bombers who carried out the Easter attacks had not targeted Parliament!"

The editorial also calls out the government for attempting to take advantage of the situation to strengthen its own powers: "It is trying to have its new anti-terror Bill passed in spite of fears being expressed by trade unions and the Opposition that it, if passed, can be used to suppress workers, the media and the oppositional forces. Nobody will buy into the government's claim that new laws are needed to combat terror. The LTTE, which was considered the most dangerous terrorist group in the world, was defeated with the help of the existing anti-terror laws. The government had better abandon such sinister moves, for its own sake."

BLAME THE IDEOLOGY

IN HIS column in *Dawn* on May 4, Irfan Hussain demolishes the myth that terrorism, or "radical" or "jihadist" violence is a result of a lack of education. The suicide bombers who killed hundreds in Sri Lanka were well educated and Omar Saeed Sheikh, the man who killed journalist Daniel Pearl was educated at the London School of Economics. Radicalisation of the youth appears to take place largely through Salafism, the most regressive variety of Wahabism. This, argues Hussain, is because these varieties of Islam "are propagated by Saudi Arabia through the vast network of madrasas and mosques it supports across the world. From Jakarta to Johannesburg, clerics often paid by Riyadh preach sermons full of hate towards non-Muslims". The West turns a blind eye to this fact. In the end, though, an important question remains: "Experts are unanimous in suggesting that education and jobs are the answer to jihadist radicalisation. But as we have just seen, some of the deadliest attacks have been carried out by well-educated and well-off men. So how do we remove the poison that has

infected them?"

WHAT THE OTHERS SAY

"Venezuela cannot recover politically, socially or economically while Mr Maduro remains in charge. Even a tranche of Chavistas have abandoned the man Hugo Chávez picked as his successor." - THE GUARDIAN

The Socratic question

On the birthday of Socrates, what can be said about the philosopher whom nobody has read?



IN GOOD FAITH

By Vijay Tankha

THOUGH PROBABLY THE best known philosopher in the Western tradition, Socrates' fame is based not on his work, as he wrote nothing, but on the monument of his life as reconstructed by his disciples, mainly Plato. The Socratic question is: How real is the character Plato sketches in his numerous dialogues? Plato's Apology, reporting the defence (*Apologia*) made by Socrates at his trial, shows him to be the first public intellectual rather than an absent minded stargazer.

Socrates had no interest in natural science or metaphysics (unconcerned with fantasies of the afterlife), epistemology (his model of knowledge was based on everyday occupations), or theology (he neither spoke on behalf of the gods nor about them). Instead, Socrates positioned himself as practitioner of free inquiry. Interacting with fellow citizens in the Agora (the centre of the city), he forced them to reflect on their own beliefs. His method, stylistically grounding both philosophical prose and tragic poetry of the time, was akin to a judicial cross-examination, in tune with his claim: "The unexamined life is not worth living." Obeying this dictum, he followed his god-given duty to "... go about doing nothing else than urging you... not to care for your persons or your property more than for the perfecting of your souls... for virtue is not derived from wealth, virtue is itself the source of wealth... both for the individual and the State".(*Apology* 30).

Care of the self and the examined life are conceptually linked. To say that the unexamined life is not worth living is to make a claim for the importance of philosophical examination in one's own life. This has parallels in other traditions, in the practice of meditation, confession of sins, etc, but these are usually private rather than public acts.

Care of the self also involves paying attention to what is really important and so becomes the question of how one should live one's life, a question which, for Socrates, philosophy alone is equipped to answer. In a paradoxical reversal, asking the question becomes the answer. The simple asking of questions (of ourselves, of others) is living the examined life. More recent versions emphasise paying attention to what we do - thinking about and examining our motivations is to live authentically — the hallmark of the Socratic demand that we place ourselves under scrutiny.

Unlike other Socratic paradoxes ("no one does wrong willingly", "the good man cannot be harmed"), this injunction is easy to repeat but difficult to practice. What Socrates called for was an examination of our belief system as a whole which, once exposed, was subject to a rigorous assessment, leaving no room for anything hidden or unexpressed. This was also the beginning of philosophical therapy: Ironing out the wrinkles of deceit and double dealing, seemingly necessary to everyday existence. Socratic examination was the first step in the care of the self.

Socrates, though put to death by majority vote, was not in opposition but in apposition to democratic Athens, where freedom of speech was every citizen's right. Even the city's most vociferous critics could speak openly: Reasoning in the courts (where citizens doubled as either judge or jury) or declaiming in the Assembly (where policies were debated and ratified). Nor was it surprising that the heights of Athenian civilisational achievement was bracketed between the tyranny of Pisistratus and the hegemony of Philip of Macedon.

Unlike the intelligentsia of the past (poets and poet-prophets), Socrates laid no claim to wisdom, nor did he praise rulers. Pilloried by comic poets long before he was brought to trial, he compared himself to a gadfly whose job was to sting the state and its citizens. Although he did not seek office, yet during the brief terror of the Thirty Tyrants, he refused, under threat of death, to obey them. Unjustly condemned by the restored democracy in 399 BCE ("many a good man has been condemned because of prejudice"), he declined to flee. The slow nature of his virtue overtaken by the speed of their wickedness (Apology 39a) Reminding us of Gandhi who had translated this work into Gujarati).

How should one live? The question, signalling the entry of ethics into politics, is possible only in a democratic polity. Only in democracies can the self determine itself, becoming at last no less than the sum of its accidents. The classic separation of mind and body was designed to separate being from beings, contrasting the uncertainty about the Self with the certainty of what it is not. Am I not as well what I seem most not to be? Not merely a disembodied soul but an embodied self (*jiva*)? Knowledge and care of the self still remains the goal of all our endeavours. Refashioning the oracular imperative — know thyself – the real Socratic question turns out to be

not about him but about ourselves.

The writer taught philosophy at Delhi University

LETTER TO THE EDITOR

LONG-TERM SECURITY THIS REFERS TO the editorial, 'Tagging

Azhar' (IE, May 3). As a lay person I am perplexed as to how the labeling of terrorist Masood Azhar shall have a negative impact on the terrorism unleashed against India by JeM in the past. Terrorists are known to execute their plans through proxies and the tagging of Azhar is no guarantee that there shall be no terrorists attacks on India when Pakistan harbours such innumerable terrorists. The only solution is to make our borders secure and take people of Kashmir into confidence as a lot of attacks are by people from within the country. There should also be a mecha-

Deepak Singhal, Noida

GOOD NEIGHBOURS

nism to extradite terrorists.

THIS REFERS TO the article, 'Wuhan spirit needs a body' (IE,May 3). China's decision to alter its stand on Masood Azhar is a welcome one and it could lead towards solving the Indo-China border issue which has been the bone of contention between India and China since 1962. Informal meetings like the Wuhan summit allow leadership of both countries to imagine out-of-thebox solutions.

Akshay Sharma, via e-mail

LACK OF BALANCE

THIS REFERS TO the editorial, 'Listen to her' (IE, May2). The editorial does not take a balanced position and has become a mouthpiece of the complainant. The complainant has sought to dissociate herself from the probe on specious grounds like asymmetry of power equations. That is an integral aspect of the factual matrix of the case and can't be altered. Her desire to tweak the probe procedure to suit her conven-

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

edit page @ expressind ia.comor sent to The Indian Express, B-1/B, Sector 10, Noida-UP 201301. Letter writers should mention their postal address and phone number.

e-mailed to

THE WINNER RECEIVES **SELECT EXPRESS PUBLICATIONS**

ience under the garb of natural justice is wrong. The editorial does not aver to the allegations of conspiracy, addressing which are very important given that the stakes are very high. It has reduced the matter into a lopsided issue. **RK Mathur,** *Ghaziabad*

PM's concerns

This refers to the editorial, 'The Maoist challenge' (IE, May 3). The attacks highlighted the incompetent security preparations of the government, but the problem needs to be understood in a larger context. Maoists need to be deradicalised but the hardcore Maoist needs to be dealt sternly by the security forces. The prime minister's concerns national security has been proven right. Pranay Kumar Shome, Kolkata

#ExpressExplained

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

TELLING NUMBERS

In growing income tax base, number of e-filings down 6.6 lakh

INCOME TAX e-filings in 2018-19 dropped by more than 6.6 lakh, statistics put out on the Income Tax Department's e-filing website show. Tax return forms for 2019-20 have been notified, with July 31 as the deadline for filing. In 2018-19, the number of returns e-filed was 6.68 crore, down from 6.74 crore in the 2017-18, after a jump from 5.28 crore in 2016-17.

The drop in e-filings comes at a time when the number of registered filers have risen. This count was 8.45 crore as of March 31, 2019, which was 15% more than the 7.36 crore on March 31, 2018. From the same date in 2013, when the count was 2.69 crore, the rise has been more than threefold in six years.

A PTI report on Sunday quoted from a Kotak Economic Research report on April 30, which said: "We are surprised with the decline in income tax e-filing in FY2019. If the filings are indeed plateauing, it will be a worry for the fiscal which has seemingly shifted its focus to compensatory expenditure. Tax filings have surprisingly plateaued in FY2019. This is surprising given that post demonetisation it was expected that the tax base would continue to increase."

E-RETURNS RECEIVED



REGIST	ERED FILERS	
2012	1,97,42,161	
2013	2,69,45,778	
2014	3,61,86,146	
2015	4,31,20,913	
2016	5,22,23,836	
2017	6,21,34,605	
2018	7,36,34,944	
2019	8,45,14,539	
Data sourc	e: Income Tax Department	

THIS WORD MEANS

CHEWBACCA

In culture and science, the legacy of a 'Star Wars' character played by a recently deceased actor

ON SATURDAY, May 4, Science News magazine's Twitter handle replugged a report from 2016 with the words: "In a galaxy far, far away, Chewbacca is a 7.5-foot-tall Wookiee. On Earth, he's a small furry beetle. #Maythe4th." The tweet had an immediate context in two ways — May 4 is celebrated as *Star Wars* Day by fans of the series, and the actor who played the role of Chewbacca in the series, Peter Mayhew, died at age 74 last week.

Chewbacca, a fictional character, has left a lasting legacy on popular culture as well as science, as the naming of the beetle shows. As co-pilot with lead character Han Solo, Chewbacca was placed at number four in *Entertainment Weekly*'s 2013 list of 50 "greatest sidekicks" in film history. He has been the subject of comics, a TV series and books; and inspired scientists to name species after him.

The fictional Chewbacca belongs to a species called Wookiee, comes from the planet Kashyyyk, and is hairy, intelligent and 7.5 feet tall, as mentioned in the tweet. The real-life beetle, on the other hand, is one of four species that researchers had



Trigonopterus chewbacca

discovered on an island off the coast of Papua New Guinea. Earlier, a furry moth was named after him, the Science News report said. Among the four beetles, the one whose name he inspired, Trigonopterus chewbacca, is black, flightless and about 3 mm long. "Although Tchewbacca doesn't resemble its namesake in size, the dense hairlike scales covering its head and legs reminded the researchers of Chewbacca's fur," the magazine explained.

SIMPLY PUT

The road to an EVM landmark

Nizamabad seat presented the EC with 185 candidates, more than any EVM had ever handled. What were the challenges, and how did the EC meet them in an exercise now being documented for future reference?

RITIKA CHOPRA

NEW DELHI, MAY 5

OF ALL the Lok Sabha constituencies gone to polls so far — 425 out of 543 by Monday — Nizamabad in Telangana presented the Election Commission with the most remarkable challenge. When nominations closed for the April 11 first phase, the EC found itself faced with an unprecedented 185 candidates in Nizamabad — most of them troubled farmers contesting in protest — which was more than most Electronic Voting Machines (EVMs) can handle. The EC considered going back to paper ballots for the 15.5 lakh voters but, in the end, conducted the biggest ever exercise carried out using EVMs.

The planning and conduct is being documented by the office of the Telangana Chief Electoral Officer so it can be consulted for similar cases in future. The EC is also in touch with a Guinness Book of Records team to recognise the effort as a world record.

What were the challenges, and how did the EC meet them

Getting the EVMs

A second generation (M2) EVM can accommodate 64 names, with 16 names per Ballot Unit connected to it. When nominations were scrutinised on March 26, the final list of 185 candidates was nearly three times the capacity of an M2 EVM. "It was a logistical nightmare. We had just 11 days to make to make quick, sound decisions and execute them," an election officer said.

It briefly led to calls for paper ballots. "But that was never an option. With so much being said to discredit EVMs, this was an opportunity to prove their efficacy," said an official.

On March 31, the EC decided to use thirdgeneration (M3) EVMs, which can connect to 24 Ballot Units, with 384 names. But this threw up another challenge. Electronics Corporation of India Limited, the designated EVM manufacturer in Hyderabad, did not have enough M3 machines to supply at such short notice. An urgent delivery was then sought from Bharat Electronics Limited in Bangalore. The EVMs — 25,000 Ballot Units, 2,000 Control Units and 2,000 VVPATs — covered a distance of 781 km in two days in a convoy of 20 containers and reached Nizamabad on April 3.

Storage

The arrival of this new batch required several last-minute adjustments. "We had to fig-



Outside a booth in Nizamabad, 186 symbols on display for voters; inside, with VVPAT machine at centre.

Nizamabad TELANGANA

Hyderabad

12 Ballot Units arranged in an L-shape

Setting up the EVMs At 16 names to a Ballot Unit, the 186 op-

Nizamabad on April 5 to review preparedness,

and address the concerns of the candidates.

tions — 185 candidates plus NOTA — meant that each EVM needed to be connected with an unprecedented 12 Ballot Units. To accommodate so many, the poll panel had to tweak the layout of the voting booth. "We had to arrange the Ballot Units and VVPAT machine in such a way that a voter would be able to cast her vote and simultaneously verify with the VVPAT unit," said an EC official.

After testing a few options, an L-shaped arrangement was finalised in which six BUs were placed on either arm branching out from where the VVPAT unit was placed. "This arrangement optimised aspects like economy of space, in addition to facilitating the viewing of the VVPAT slip by the voter in the minimum possible time," the officer added

To main secrecy of voting, the EC ordered special voting compartments that were five feet tall and suitably wide. The L-shaped layout led to a new chal-

lenge - space. It was decided to turn the entire polling station room into a voting compartment; polling personnel, who are normally present inside the room, were now stationed just outside the door.

Also, the large number of candidates meant as many symbols. "Entering a room with so many Ballot Units displaying 186 symbols would have been overwhelming. So outside every polling station room, a large hoarding depicting symbols against each candidate was placed so that voters could familiarise themselves with the layout," the officer said.

Extra manpower

Given the large number of machines, the EC stationed six polling officers — rather than the usual five — at each of the 1,788 polling stations. A total of 10,800 polling personnel, 354 sectoral officers and 354 route officers were put on election duty on polling day. The polling personnel had been given special training in handling M3 EVMs.

"The duration of polling for Nizamabad was the same as for other seats -10 hours. However, as the number of candidates was large, we anticipated the mock poll to take more time than usual. So, the mock polling exercise was scheduled from 5 am to 8 am on polling day and polling time was scheduled from 8 am to 6 pm, as opposed to the normal poll time of 7 am to 5 pm," said the EC official.

THE LOGISTICS LEADING TO APRIL 11

How women differ from men in jihadi terrorism

15,52,838 VOTERS

7,37,543 men, 8,15,266 women and 29 third gender, registered across 7 **Assembly segments**

12 BALLOT UNITS Connected to each EVM (one Ballot Unit can accommodate up to 16

names) in 1,788 polling stations

ure out additional storage space. The existing arrangement was useless as we had our stock of M2 machines there. A warehouse and a college building were arranged at the last minute to store M3 EVMs," the EC official said.

Close to 600 engineers and 2,000 personnel were deployed for the first-level check or

10,800

186 SYMBOLS

rejected and 4 withdrew

Poll personnel at work on voting day on April 11, along with 354 sectoral officers and 354 route officers

NOTA plus 185 candidates — out of

203 original nominations, 14 were

FLC, mock poll and assigning of EVMs to different polling booths over three days. Meanwhile, a team of senior EC officers

was sent to Hyderabad on April 1 to chalk out a detailed action plan with the Telangana CEO, the Returning Officer and the concerned District Electoral Officers. The CEO visited

most 42% of the women were unemployed

during the same timeframe.

NEW DELHI, MAY 5

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE

A LARGE-SCALE research project has sought to evaluate the characteristics of women involved in jihadism-inspired terrorism. Coincidentally, one of the suicide bombers in the Easter Sunday attacks in Sri Lanka was a woman. The researchers, led by a PhD student at North Carolina State University, drew on data from the Western Jihadism Project, based at Brandeis University, which collects data on terrorists associated with al-Qaedainspired organisations. They conducted comparative analyses of 272 women and 266 men, who were matched to control for vari-

ables such as ethnicity, nation of residence and age at radicalisation. Among the findings:

Rising women recruitment The researchers said the data suggests

that terrorist organisations may be increasingly recruiting women. For example, 34% of the women in the sample were born after 1990, compared to only 15% of the men. Having controlled for age at radicalisation, the researchers said this suggests an increase in women's involvement in terrorist groups.

Different roles

"Women were less likely than men to be involved in planning or carrying out terror-

ist attacks. Only 52% of the women were involved in plots, compared to 76% of men," the university quoted PhD student Christine Brugh as saying. "In many ways, the roles of the women in these terrorist groups are consistent with traditional gender norms. The women were more likely to play behind-thescenes roles aimed at supporting the organisation," associate professor Sarah Desmarais was quoted as saying.

Background differences

Only 2% of the women had a criminal background before radicalisation, compared to 19% of the men. And 14% of the men had no profession in the six months preceding their affiliation with a terrorist group, while al-

Beyond jihadism Brugh was quoted as saying: "We need to

see what, if anything, sets these people apart from their counterparts in the general population. Are there relevant variables that could inform threat assessments or models of radicalisation? It would also be good to see if there are similar patterns in other types of terrorism. Are the differences we found in this study particular to jihadism-inspired groups? In short, there is a lot of work to be done in this field." The paper is published in the *Journal* of

Threat Assessment and Management.

Imran's Iran outreach: evolution of a relationship, what it means for India

SHUBHAJIT ROY NEW DELHI, MAY 5

AT A joint press conference with Iran's President Hassan Rouhani in Tehran late last month. Pakistan's Prime Minister Imran Khan said: "I know Iran has suffered from terrorism [perpetrated] by groups operating from Pakistan. ... We [need to] have trust in each other that both countries will not allow any terrorist activity from their soil. We hope this will build confidence between us."

Back in Pakistan, the Opposition PML(N) leader Khurram Dastgir Khan said, "No Prime Minister has ever made such a confession on foreign soil", and the PPP's Hina Rabbani Khar, a former Foreign Minister, said the country was "continually becoming a laughing stock", and that it was "not funny anymore".

The background

Imran — who was accompanied by ISI chief Gen Asim Munir – spoke a little over two months after 27 personnel of Iran's Revolutionary Guards were killed in a suicide attack in the Sistan-Baluchistan province along the border with Pakistan. Iran said the bomber was Pakistani. The attack — which happened the day before the Jaish-e-Mohammad attack on the CRPF bus in Pulwama — was claimed by the Sunni jihadist Jaish al-Adl. Tehran says the Jaish al-Adl operates mostly out of Pakistan and, in

March, Rouhani demanded that Pakistan act decisively against anti-Iranian terrorists.

On April 18, three days before Imran travelled to Iran, a terrorist attack targeted security forces in Pakistan, which Foreign Minister Shah Mehmood Qureshi blamed on outfits that had their "training and logistic camps inside Iranian areas bordering Pakistan". Gunmen stopped a bus on the Makran coastal highway between Karachi and Gwadar, checked passengers' IDs and took away 10 Pakistani Navy personnel, three from the Air Force, and one from the Coast Guard, and executed them.

Friends with the Shah

Shia Iran has repeatedly criticised Pakistan's backing of Sunni terrorist outfits involved in attacks in Iran's eastern areas. and the killing of Shias inside Pakistan. Pakistan's proximity to Saudi Arabia — Iran's great rival in the Middle East — has been a constant irritant in ties between Tehran and Islamabad. But this wasn't the case always.

The Shah of Iran was a Cold War ally of the United States, and during his rule, Iran and Pakistan were important partners. "For the Shah, Pakistan over the years morphed into a critical buffer zone, a line of defence against not only the Soviets but also the then Soviet-leaning India," Alex Vatanka, a senior fellow at the Middle East Institute in Washington, wrote in *Iran and Pakistan*: Security, Diplomacy and American Influence (2015).



Iran President Hassan Rouhani with Pakistan Prime Minister Imran Khan in **Tehran on April 22.** *Iranian Presidency via AP*

In 1950, the Shah became the first foreign Head of State to visit Pakistan, and at one time even proposed a confederation of the two countries with a single army, and with him as Head of State. There was a logic, Vatanka wrote: "First, Iran and Pakistan were already members of the budding new organisation CENTO (the Cold War military alliance known as the Central Treaty Organisation). There was already much talk about political, military and economic integration as part of the structures of CENTO. Second, the Shah had not envisioned the

idea out of the blue. Right next door in the Arab world, four regional countries were at the time already experimenting with political confederations. In 1958, Egypt and Syria agreed on a union, which became known as the United Arab Republic."

Indeed, the Iran-Pakistan axis was so strong that Iran had even threatened to attack India if it did not stop its offensive against Pakistan in the 1971 Bangladesh War.

Post-Revolution freeze

Avatollah Khomeini's 1979 Islamic

Revolution marked a turning point in the Iran-Pakistan relationship. After the Shah's departure, Pakistan worked closely with the Saudis in the war in Afghanistan. In the 1990s, as rival militias battled to gain control over Afghanistan, Iran backed the Northern Alliance against the Pakistan-backed Taliban. In 1998, after the Taliban captured Mazar-i-Sharif, at least 11 Iranians, mostly diplomats, were killed in the city.

In subsequent years, the future of Afghanistan and the Baloch insurgency were the major sticking points in the relationship. The outsize influence of the Saudis in Pakistan's foreign and security policy, and their investment in Pakistan's Balochistan province bordering Iran, has added to the suspicion and trust deficit. While Pakistan refused to bend to the pressure from Riyadh to join the war in Yemen against the Iranbacked Shia Houthi rebels, Rawalpindi did clear the appointment of former Pakistan Army Chief General Raheel Sharif to lead the Saudi-backed coalition.

Writing in *Dawn*, Arif Rafiq, a non-resident fellow at the Middle East Institute, described Iran as a "frenemy to Pakistan's west". He underlined that Iran is a potential supplier of natural gas, of which Pakistan has a massive supply shortfall; the fact that Iran has emerged as Afghanistan's largest trading partner, eclipsing Pakistan; and that with the prolonged closure of the Chaman and Torkham border crossings, Afghan trade with the outside world is be-



Surviving Fani

The Odisha government has shown by example how to manage a natural disaster

yclone Fani has left a trail of destruction across a large part of coastal Odisha, but its management has emerged as a global example of how timely weather alerts, preparedness and informed public participation can dramatically reduce loss of life. The toll from the extremely severe cyclonic storm on May 3 stood, at last count, at 34 deaths. In terms of material losses, several districts were battered, houses flattened and electricity and telecommunications infrastructure destroyed, but the relatively low mortality shows a dramatic transformation from the loss of over 10,000 lives in 1999 when super cyclone 05B struck. Odisha then worked to upgrade its preparedness, which was tested when very severe cyclonic storm Phailin struck in 2013. It was able to bring down the number of deaths to 44 then, in spite of a wide arc of destruction: 13 million people were hit and half a million houses destroyed. The Odisha government and the Centre now have the task of rebuilding infrastructure. They should use the opportunity to upgrade technology, achieve cost efficiencies and build resilience to extreme weather, all of which can minimise future losses. Given the vulnerability of Odisha and Andhra Pradesh to cyclones, the frequency and intensity of which may be influenced by a changing climate, the Centre should press for global environmental funding under the UN framework to help in the rebuilding. Both States have received funding from the World Bank in cyclone risk mitigation efforts since 2011.

The priority in Odisha is to restore electricity and telecommunications, which will require massive manpower. This should be treated as a national mission. Public health interventions are paramount to avoid disease outbreaks. The State government has been able to restore some physical movement by opening up highways and district roads; the Centre has relieved tension among students by postponing the National Eligibility-cum-Entrance Test in Odisha. Overall, there is a sense of relief that in the midst of a national election the toll was effectively contained. Looking ahead, India must prepare for many more intense and frequent cyclones along the coastal States. Preparedness has to focus on building resilience and strengthening adaptation. This can be achieved through better-designed houses and cyclone shelters, good early warning systems, periodic drills and financial risk reduction through insurance. Early weather warnings hold the key to better management, and during the Fani episode the India Meteorological Department played a crucial role. Its commendable performance has been recognised by the UN as well. Odisha's experience, which coincides with similar devastation along east Africa this year, will be keenly followed at the UN Disaster Risk Reduction conference convening on May 13 in Geneva.

Endless crisis

The Maduro-Guaidó stand-off is deepening Venezuela's economic distress

Tenezuelan Opposition leader Juan Guaidó has been trying to oust President Nicolas Maduro for months. Last week, in his most daunting effort yet, he called for a military uprising. Hours later, the U.S., which has recognised him as Venezuela's President, supported his bid. A few soldiers broke ranks with the military and joined him, along with tens of thousands of protesters who battled for two days with police and government supporters. Still, Mr. Guaidó failed to topple the Maduro regime. This was the third major attempt by Mr. Guaidó to seize the government. In January he declared himself President, saying Mr. Maduro's presidency was not legitimate as he had "rigged" last year's election. Since then, the U.S. has imposed sanctions on top Venezuelan government officials and the state-run oil company PDVSA on the calculation that these would make the already battered Venezuelan economy worse, rendering Mr. Maduro even more unpopular. In February, Mr. Guaidó launched another bid when he went to the Colombia border to accept U.S. aid, which the government had rejected. He called for mass protests, but Mr. Maduro survived. Last week's failed attempt was Mr. Guaidó's biggest setback so far.

It is evident that Venezuela is going through serious political and economic crises. Governance has broken down, with state institutions at war against one another. Mr. Guaidó is the President of the National Assembly and has the support of most Opposition parties. Mr. Maduro has the support of the executive branch, the military and the judiciary. While they fight, the most pressing problems remain unaddressed. Inflation is sky-high, food and medicine are scant, and millions have fled the country owing to its economic woes. Mr. Guaidó says he will solve the problems after Mr. Maduro is ousted. But the way he is trying to achieve his goal has pushed the country deeper into misery. The Opposition miscalculated the durability of the Maduro regime. Mr. Maduro's Socialist Party, thanks to the pro-poor policies under his predecessor Hugo Chavez, still commands loyal support among sections of society, especially among the poor. Second, even if the Opposition parties' narrative that Mr. Maduro lacks legitimacy is accepted, the military's support is pivotal if they want to remove him by force. Repeated attempts by Mr. Guaidó to win over the military have failed. Third, his over-reliance on the U.S. seems to have backfired. It only strengthened Mr. Maduro's argument that "imperialists" are behind the chaos. Mr. Maduro also has the backing of Russia, China and Cuba. The way forward is not further clashes, but mutual talks aimed at resolving their differences and giving primacy to rebuilding both the economy and the governance system. If they continue on the path of confrontation, Venezuela will be in permanent crisis.

The difference between a job and work

Work satisfies a deeper urge than livelihood which, if denied, takes a significant political and social toll



mong the words that have infiltrated the vocabulary of common sense during the recent past, none is as egregious as 'aspiration'. Its rampant use in the economic and political spheres has dented public awareness of reality. In the sphere of economics, in terms of both policies and propaganda, the use of 'aspiration' in various combinations and contexts has pushed aside common sense knowledge about life's necessities. Things have come to a point where something as important as the need to work in order to make a living is referred to as aspiration. As political coinage, 'aspirational India' connotes revolutionary change. The users of this phrase ignore the long and tiring struggle of countless youth to find work. The vast majority spends years waiting, or in 'time pass' as an economist has called it. Those who portray India as 'aspirational' look at other basic needs in a similar vein. The security that a house gives and the basic amenities of life one needs in a house are deemed to be part of an aspirational package. We are not far from the day when the desire to avail one's constitutional rights will be treated as a sign of aspira-

In an ethos where words and meanings are mutating fast, we must ask whether a right – any right - can be described as an aspiration. The debate whether the right to work is fundamental or not will hopefully be settled one day; for now, let us talk about

one's need to have some income, preferably by working. Someone who has no income can only survive as a dependent. That is how children and the elderly often do. The family provides the cover that the state does not explicitly acknowledge. In our society, the family provides a financial cover to the young for remarkably long periods. No wonder, university and college teachers routinely refer to their adult students as children. No matter how much you quarrel with this usage, its hold in academic institutions persists. One reason for this is that the family continues to support a student well past the official age of childhood. Parents go to remarkable lengths to support their progeny through expensive higher professional education for howsoever many years it takes.

Degrees and jobs

When they don't find employment, what do students do? Many enrol in another course, aiming to qualify for one more degree or diploma. They keep gathering qualifications, hoping that more qualifications will get them higher-level employment one day. Things seldom work out that way. More qualifications don't necessarily lead to better employment prospects. When a potential job slot does appear, you are told you are overqualified. British sociologist Ronald Dore studied this phenomenon and presented his analysis in what soon became a classic title, The Diploma Disease. This book tells us that the tendency among youth to gather qualifications leads to devaluation of degrees. Dore was interested in the comparative study of industrial economics. He noticed that in Sri Lanka. only half the graduates in any given year ended up finding a job. That was in the 1970s; things are



now worse. Although Dore did not study India, his observations were equally applicable here. Bureaucratisation had led to strong linkages between paper qualificaand selection employment. When Rajiv Gandhi spoke about the need to de-link degrees from jobs, he was referring to the problem Dore had spot-

Today, when people say that educational standards are declining, they are in fact responding to devaluation of degrees. They feel that a certificate or degree does not mean what it did some time back, both in terms of knowledge and its value in the job market. People's memories are often subjective, but the phenomenon they are talking about is real. Quite often, the reason for devaluation of degrees is that institutions cannot cope with the increased number of candidates without letting norms become lax. Stagnant financial resources are often an additional reason why institutions can-

not cope with swollen enrolment. To say that the increasing clientele of higher and professional education is a sign of greater aspiration in society is to derive a misleading conclusion from the proliferation of degree-holders and degree-vendors. No doubt the market of degrees is wider today, but that has little to do with aspirations. Young people want to work

and have an income; when they find neither, they occupy themselves by enrolling in yet another educational venture, without necessarily wanting to do so. When a relative or well-wisher asks, 'What are you doing these days?', it hardly feels nice to reply, 'Nothing.' To name a course you are pursuing now feels better. As economist and planner Santosh Mehrotra has pointed out (The Hindu, Editorial page, "The shape of the jobs crisis", February 13, 2019), the number of young people who are 'not in education, employment or training' - 'NEET' - has been steadily increasing. According to his estimate, there are more than 115 million young people in this category, representing what he calls a 'potential lumpen fodder' available for political misuse. This analysis does not imply that if we cannot employ our youth, let us keep them enrolled in one course or another. Prolonging student life will not solve the problem posed by disappearance of work.

Job versus work The term 'job' is now more common than 'work', indicating a shift in perspective. It also signifies the emergence of a new ideology that reinforces the traditional denial of dignity to work. 'Job' and 'work' differ in that a job is what someone gives you whereas work is what you do. For some kinds of work, the two meanings may be close or similar, but this is not true for many other kinds. If the political economy is eating up work opportunities, it can still keep on creating jobs artificially, to avoid social instability. Short-term jobs are often used to cite the success of an economic policy which, in reality, is decimating work and de-skilling people. This is often done in the name of modernisation. Driverless trains and automated manufactur-

progress. An automation-obsessed economy thrives by maintaining millions in replaceable, short-term positions involving low-skill tasks. Such jobs make it impossible for lower-income participants in the work force to gain experience and a self-identity associated with a specialised skill.

Those who justify all-round automation as a legitimate means of economic progress define the term 'skill' in a sense quite different from how it was understood so far. In its conventional sense, skill implies a specialised expertise that grows with experience and imparts a personal identity. Jobs that vanish after a brief period, forcing the work force to leave and look for re-training for a new short-term stint, offer no genuine opportunities for developing a skill.

An ideological trap

To treat such job-culture as a symbol of progress is to fall into an ideological trap. Supporters of reckless automation say that it represents a natural course of technological progress. They also suggest that there is no alternative to automation, so we have no choice in the matter now. This approach echoes a theory of destiny. It assumes that the human desire to find meaning in work and cultivate a personal identity through skill will soon surrender to economic pressure and acceptance of vulnerable jobs as a permanent fact of life. This is a rather limited and myopic view. The history of work shows that work is more than a means of livelihood. It satisfies deeper an urge which, if ignored or denied, takes significant political and social tolls.

Krishna Kumar is a former director of

Talking fair trade in Delhi

At the WTO mini-ministerial meet, developing countries must make a case for stable and transparent multilateral trade



SEEMA BATHLA & ABHISHEK JHA

ndia will host the second miniministerial meet of the World Trade Organisation (WTO), on May 13-14, 2019. To discuss the interests of developing and least developed countries in global trade this informal meet will also focus on the accusation by the U.S. that these economies benefit from exemptions meant for the poorer na-

Overall, it could be a preparatory meeting to set a common agenda at the 12th Ministerial Conference, scheduled for June 2020 at Astana, Kazakhstan. The 11th Ministerial Conference (Buenos Aires, December 2017) collapsed despite efforts by 164 WTO members to evolve a consensus on several issues. The U.S. has refused a reduction in subsidies and also pulled back on its commitment to find a perennial solution to public stockholding – an issue central to developing and less developed countries. In fact, the deadlock left many trade analysts wondering whether this was the beginning of the end for the WTO.

Despite the earlier outcomes of the ministerial meetings, the Delhi meet has created some hope of it being a platform to resuscitate the WTO. The issues under discussion will relate to protectionist measures, digital trade, fisheries, subsidies, environmental goods, standardisation and implementation

of sanitary and phytosanitary measures, and other matters ripe for negotiation and agreement, mainly investment facilitation. From a plurilateral approach toward multilateralism, members may also ensure the sanctity and 'drivability' of the WTO. It is, therefore, indispensable to bring mutual accord, mainly on the timelines, to implement policies as an outcome of talks.

Bridging the gaps

It may be useful to recollect that the WTO replaced the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT) as an international organisation mainly to overcome tussles over trade interests. The economies of the developing and less developed world (with little bargaining power) were unable to gain market access in most of the developed economies (which were influential in negotiations), especially when it came to agricultural commodities. The deadlock on the issue of agricultural trade negotiations, first in the late 1980s and then in 2017, was no surprise. The disagreements between developed countries (the European Union and the U.S.) and developing countries (Malaysia, Brazil and India) to discipline the farm regime in their favour continue, thereby threatening the WTO's comprehensive development agenda.

The expectations of developing countries from trade also get belied due to sizeable support by the developed nations to their farmers in a situation of market failure and other uncertainties. The support through subsidies tends to bring distortions in commodity prices. The Organisation for Economic

Cooperation and Development es-

timates the quantum of subsidies by developed nations to vary from \$300 to \$325 billion annually, which is much higher than that e timated for developing countries. This has become a bone of contention in trade talks as farm lobbies in the U.S., Europe and Japan have steadily exercised political clout to influence officials and lawmakers to continue giving subsidies to

Another point of concern is that developed countries design and implement stringent non-tariff measures (NTMs) which exacerbate the problems faced by poor countries that are willing to export. NTMs significantly add to the cost of trading. However, the costs of acquiescence with many NTMs are asymmetrical across exporters because compliance depends on production facilities, technical know-how and infrastructure factors that are usually inadequate in developing economies. These countries are, therefore, unable to compete in international markets and hardly gain from sectors with comparative advantage such as agriculture, textiles and apparels.

Developing countries are willing to break the deadlock on these issues and are preparing a common ground to jolt the mandate of the global trade body. India, in

particular, seeks amendment of laws on unilateral action by members on trade issues and a resolution of the WTO's dispute settlement system. The expectation is that the meeting may lead to policy guidance on issues such as global norms to protect traditional knowledge from patenting by corporates, protection through subsidies, e-commerce, food security and continuation of special and differential treatment to poor eco-

Breaking the deadlock

Importantly, if the interests of developing and less developed countries are not addressed, ceteris pajargon, convoluted negotiations and dictums will become trivial now and in the future. For example, the 10th Ministerial Conference (Nairobi, December 2015) laid emphasis on agriculture trade. But it was a setback to most agrarian economies, including India and in Africa, when developed countries directly challenged their models of food security designed for the poor. The outcome eloquently showed the constraints of a 'multilateral negotiation system where the need for agreement and not compromise prevails and allows any member, no matter how small, to block any progress on all issues. In what has become an increasingly politicised environment, members with wide and divergent interests have simply halted the process and refused to negotiate in good faith across a spectrum of issues'

There was a similar outcome at Buenos Aires in 2017. Developed nations created alliances to prepare the ground to push nascent issues such as investment facilitation, rules for e-commerce, gender equality and subsidy on fisheries, while most developing nations were unable to fulfil or implement ____ rudimentary dictums. For instance, e-commerce has been a key agenda following the second ministerial conference, in Geneva in 1998. It was agreed to 'establish a work programme to examine global e-commerce, with a focus on the relationship between ecommerce and existing agreements. It generated a sizea bate on the fringes of the conference as many accredited NGOs opposed it and raised concerns that it was a push by dominant global players. The underlying fear was it might allow unfettered access to data, which could then be processed and exploited for profit' by developed nations, mainly the

The Delhi meeting can be a breakthrough if members negotiate these issues in a convergent manner. The time is opportune for developing countries to voice their concerns and push for a stable and transparent environment for multilateral trade. India must do its homework to focus on the unresolved issues and address the newer ones which are of interest to developed nations, investment facilitation. The WTO needs to be sustained as countries need an international platform to formulate trade rules and bring convergence on divergent matters.

Seema Bathla and Abhishek Jha are Professor and research scholar, respectively, at the Centre for the Study of Regional Development, Jawaharlal Nehru University, New Delhi

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.

Early warnings The lesson from handling cyclone Fani is that advancements in weather forecasting do aid the authorities in minimising losses. But the focus should now be on creating infrastructure that is resilient enough to withstand the onslaught of nature's fury. This is more important now with climate change-induced extreme weather becoming the norm rather than the exception. M. JEYARAM, Sholavandan, Tamil Nadu

The government appears to be doggedly challenging the

admissibility of documents on the Rafale fighter aircraft deal submitted by petitioners (Page 1, "PMO 'monitoring' Rafale deal progress not interference: govt.", May 5). Taking shelter under the guise of 'sensitivity of documents' is no ground to cover wrongdoings. The Prime Minister's Office (PMO) seems to have created a fait accompli for the Ministry of Defence (MoD). For argument's sake, if we take that the PMO was indeed monitoring progress, it brings two points to the fore. First, the PMO has shown its lack of faith in the competency of the MoD.

Second, why does the PMO not monitor other ministries to the same level and extent? DEEPAK SINGHAL,

'They visited India' The Sri Lankan army chief's startling claim that some of the Easter Sunday bombers had "visited Kerala, Bengaluru and Kashmir" cannot be brushed aside (Page 1, May 5). Going by the General's statement. India seems to have had a narrow escape too. The government must deal with local terror with an iron hand. SRAVANA RAMACHANDRAN, Chennai

Points of conflict As a senior banker and risk

management specialist, I feel a more detailed analysis is needed as far as the issues of disclosure and "wilful defaulters" being the point of conflict between the Reserve Bank of India, rights activists and the Supreme Court are concerned ('FAQ' page, "Points of conflict", May 5). The worrisome aspect of corporate finance is that it is happening under the watch of the government and banks. Faults in banks will be exposed if inspection reports become public information – a step that could undermine the

financial system. Disclosure could also give rise to questions on the role of RBI directors on the boards of banks and its actions on bank inspection

While disclosure is necessary, defining the features of 'disclosure' is important. Disclosure can take the form of a template to screen out sensitive information. Banks adopt a committee-based approach to take decisions on corporate advances. Most

corporate advances are sanctioned/renewed/ reviewed by the board based on the information given by the management. If directors are asked to account for their contribution to the board annually along with their intended contribution for the following year, most ills of governance could be rectified. B. YERRAM RAJU,

MORE LETTERS ONLINE:

CORRECTIONS & CLARIFICATIONS: The headline of a story on Namami Gange mission (May 4, 2019) has been amended to read: "Only 10 of 100 new sewage projects on

Hyderabad

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

THE HINDU DELHI MONDAY, MAY 6, 2019

What we need today is social justice

The victims of capitalism have always been the disadvantaged sections of society



The world celebrated the 200th birth anniversary of Karl Marx, which was on May 5, 2018, for a year. Marx was not like other philosophers who interpreted the world in various ways; he made it a point to change it. Marx and Friedrich Engels laid the formulations for the theory and practice of scientific socialism. They applied dialectics to the study of human society and human consciousness. They strove for the liberation of humanity from all forms of discrimination and exploitation. They argued that Parliament should be used as a forum to articulate the concerns of the working people. Marxism as a science, as an ideology, and as a methodology keeps demonstrating its relevance every day.

In the present election campaign to the Lok Sabha, the Left parties have been raising several ideological and political questions in order to save the Republic of India so that it ensures a dignified life to all the people and empowers them in every respect. But it is ironical that several ideological questions are being raised over the relevance of the Left and its future in India. While admitting the widespread influence of communist ideology, some people say communism is dead and the Left as a political force is dead.

The march of capitalism

After the disintegration of the Soviet Union, some proclaimed that there was no alternative to neoliberalism. Since then, the so-called triumphant march of neoliberal capitalism has seen many hurdles, such as the 2008 financial crisis. The worst victims of this march and its consequent crises have always been the disadvantaged sections. This shows the presence of class conflict in society. Needless to say, the vulnerabilities of the disadvantaged are a creation of capitalism itself. The French economist Thomas Piketty exposed the essence of neoliberalism, which leads to unprece-

dented inequalities and disparities.

In the Indian context, liberalisa-

"Only by saying a big 'no' to brutal capitalism can we remedy the problems that we face today." Workers walk past a portrait of Karl Marx in Ernakulam, Kerala. • THULASI KAKKAT

tion of the economy was initiated on the premise that the seemingly socialist and centrally planned economy had outlived its utility and that private ownership and market forces would efficiently replace public sector undertakings and provisions. Such an opening up of the economy was also tried in other parts of the world with only one consequence – unprecedented concentration of wealth in the hands of a few and a marked shift in the actual centres of power. Crony capitalism was soon making fast inroads into the policymaking coteries of India, and this new-found confidence of the private sector bore fruits. But for whom? Definitely not for the masses, as shown in a recent study which named India as the second most unequal society in the world. According to Credit Suisse Research Institute's Global Wealth Report, 1% of the Indian population owns 51.5% of the wealth in the country, and the top 10% own about three-fourths of the wealth. On the other hand, the bottom 60%, the majority of the population, own 4.7% of the total wealth.

Public-funded education and health are the worst hit by capitalism. Education spending by the Centre has been showing a downward trend - from 6.15% in the 2014-15 Budget to 3.71% in the 2017-18 Budget. Instead of expanding higher education horizontally (to more far-flung areas) and vertically (to the disadvantaged sections of society), the Central government is allowing the Higher Education Financing Agency to allow the private sector to dominate the education sector and make higher education a distant dream for the deprived classes. In the health sector too, the government has chosen private insurance companies and private healthcare lobbies as its partners, taking away the attention from public healthcare infrastructure and its

upgradation. In a country like India, which is plagued with social problems such as widespread poverty, a deepening agricultural crisis, a very high unemployment rate, and abysmal health indicators, giving away public sector assets to private players and shifting the discourse away from realising socialism could prove fatal for a vast majority of the population.

Rhetoric over real issues

In India, in this election season, real issues of the people are considered secondary to vague appeals of nationalism and national security. The last five years are witness to the fact that the ruling elites of India favour improvement in 'Ease of Doing Business' to improvement in the Human Development Index. India is doing badly on many parameters - nutrition, peace, human development, and press freedom – while a section of the media is celebrating improvement in the Ease of Doing Business Index. In other words, ensuring that people live a decent life is subordinate to ensuring that business becomes easier for crony capitalists.

The ruling party's appeals to nationalism and its use of the sacrifices of the Army for votes are attempts to hide its failure in giving employment to the youth, providing remunerative prices to farmers, ensuring social justice to the marginalised sections, and creating a conducive environment for the overall development of society. The government has presided over the gradual undermining of constitutional institutions, the giving away of national assets to the private sector and the increase in violence against minorities. It brands any opposition to its policies and views as 'anti-national'. All of these, however, are symptoms of a deeper problem. One has to look beyond the cacophony of high-pitched TV debates that are centred on sensationalism. As Noam Chomsky wrote, "It is easy to be carried away by the sheer horror of what the daily press reveals and to lose sight of the fact that this is merely the brutal exterior of a deeper crime, of commitment to a social order that guarantees endless suffering and humiliation and denial of elementary human rights."

The tying of national interest to global capital has not only produced adverse and livelihood-threatening consequences for the masses of the country, it has also deprived India of the higher moral pedestal in foreign policy. Deep-rooted socialism is the only true alternative to this 'posttruth' world where rhetoric has dislodged real issues.

Marx and Engels wrote in The Communist Manifesto: "The history of all hitherto existing society is the history of class struggles... [where] oppressor and oppressed, stood in constant opposition to one another, carried on an uninterrupted, now hidden, now open fight." It is the duty and the responsibility of socialism to carry on that struggle for humanity, and to bring politics back to where it belongs - to the people. Only by saying a big 'no' to brutal capitalism and by following what the Constitution envisages in its Preamble – social justice – can we remedy the problems that we face today.

D. Raja is national secretary, Communist

FROM THE READERS' EDITOR

Seeking and seeing parallels does not undermine science

A recent article on black holes in this newspaper has provoked an age-old debate



A.S. PANNEERSELVAN

The Magazine supplement of this newspaper recently carried a speculative piece on black holes by Vikram Zutshi. Mr. Zutshi, fascinated by the first-ever image of a black hole that was unveiled by astronomers in April, wrote that there are many striking parallels between Eastern thought and modern astrophysics, especially in their imagining of space, time and the birth of the universe.

Responses from scientists

Ajit M. Srivastava, Professor at the Institute of Physics, Bhubaneswar, wrote to us saying

that he trusted only The Hindu for reliable science coverage in India, but that the publication of Mr. Zutshi's article had shaken his faith in the newspaper. Ravinder Banyal of the Indian Institute of Astrophysics, Bengaluru, wrote a stinging mail: 'The author has absolutely no idea about the process of discoveries and underlying rigour

that mark the success of modern science. How can such [an] article evade editorial scrutiny and manage to find place in a respected newspaper? Conflating mythology with the findings of modern science has already created enough confusion and misunderstanding among [the] common public. Rationality and scientific outlook is our only hope to guard against the mighty tides of obscurantism and propaganda that need to be opposed and not encouraged. As a practising scientist, I appeal [to] you to kindly retract this article and issue a clarification for the benefit of your readers." Arnab Bhattacharya, Professor at the Tata Institute of Fundamental Research in Mumbai, was equally livid in his response to the article. He wrote: "It is easy to conflate mythology and history, which, combined with a poor understanding of science, leads to an article which is honestly filled with logical fallacies. (Just because a particular deity is represented in black does not imply a connection with a

What was missed in this entire debate was the simple fact that the article was a soft feature; it was a personal and emotional response to a certain discovery. It was not a news article and it did not try to peddle religiosity or pseudoscience. In an earlier column, "Carnival of conversation" (November 30, 2015), I had explained in detail this newspaper's wisdom to draw a distinction between faith and bigotry, and its unwavering commitment to retaining the space for a multireligious and pluralistic public discourse. In another column, "Tall claim is not science" (January 18, 2016), I had spelt out the rules that govern the reporting of science and health stories. This newspaper walks the extra mile to give well-rounded stories on science and technology.

A newspaper publishes both reports and reflective pieces. The reflective pieces sometimes tend to draw parallels between an event and seemingly unrelated worlds. Even

scientists have done this. Robert Jungk, in Brighter Than a Thousand Suns: A Personal History of the Atomic Scientists, records the reflections of J. Robert Oppenheimer about Trinity, the code name of the first detonation of a nuclear weapon. Oppenheimer quoted a short verse from the Bhaga-

vad Gita: "If the radiance of a thousand suns/ Were to burst forth at once into the sky/ That would be like the splendour of the Mighty One/ I am become Death,/ The shatterer of worlds."

The idea of scientific temper

In India, in the early 1980s, there was an intense debate about the idea of scientific temper. On July 19, 1981, the Nehru Centre in Bombay released a document by P.N. Haksar, along with Raja Ramanna and P.M. Bhargava, which was titled, 'A Statement on Scientific Temper'. It called for fostering scientific temper with care at the "individual, institutional, social and political levels". In his counterstatement, social scientist Ashis Nandy argued for a humanistic temper as he felt the argument for a scientific temper forecloses the space for criticism of criticisms. The feature in the Magazine is a continuation of this debate.

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President Zakir Husain passed into history as he was laid to

rest with full military honours to-night [May 5] amidst groves

of blooming oleander, bougainvillaea and gold mohur in Jamia

Milia here [New Delhi] which he nurtured into a premier edu-

was lowered, amidst benedictions, into the grave, and sprinkled with handfuls of earth by close relations and friends, in-

cluding the acting President, Mr. V.V. Giri, the Prime Minister,

Mrs. Indira Gandhi, and the Deputy Prime Minister, Mr. Mo-

rarji Desai. Citizens of Delhi in their thousands stood still for

several hours in the sun along the 15-kilometre procession

Milia to have a glimpse of the body of a great humanist that the

late President was. The gun-carriage bearing the body of Dr.

FROM The Mindu. ARCHIVES

FIFTY YEARS AGO MAY 6, 1969

Dr. Zakir Husain laid to rest

SINGLE FILE

A battle won by many

Demagoguery aimed at appropriating the result of a hard-won battle against terrorism will diminish its effect

ANMOLAM & FARHEEN AHMAD



The persistent efforts of India, with the express support of France, the U.K. and the U.S., and the acquiescence of China, culminated in the designation of Masood Azhar as a global terrorist by the UN Security Council. This has come as a breather at a time of dwindling faith in in-

ternational law and related institutions.

The UNSC said: "Masood Azhar was listed on 1 May 2019... as being associated with Al-Qaida for 'participating in the financing, planning, facilitating, preparing, or perpetrating of acts or activities by, in conjunction with, under the name of, on behalf of, or in support of', 'supplying, selling or transferring arms and related material to', 'recruiting for', 'otherwise supporting acts or activities of', and 'other acts or activities indicating association with' Jaish-i-Mohammed [JeM]." The UNSC recognised that Azhar founded the JeM upon his release from prison in India in exchange for 155 hostages held on an Indian Airlines airplane that had been hijacked to Kandahar. It said that he has been found to be financially supporting the JeM since its inception. However, it made no mention of his role in any of the attacks against India, including the recent one in Pulwama, which was mentioned in the original proposal.

The immediate impact of the listing would subject Azhar to an assets freeze, travel ban, and an arms embargo. Assets freeze means that all states are required to freeze without delay the funds and other financial assets or economic resources of designated individuals and entities. By virtue of the arms embargo, all nations are required to prevent the direct or indirect supply, sale and transfer from their territories or by their nationals outside their territories of arms and related material of all types to designated individuals and entities. This resolution is expected to have a long-term impact and is likely to have a preventive and deterrent effect on terrorist activities globally, and particularly in South

While this is a big diplomatic win for India, showcasing this as only an individual accomplishment is a parochial and imprudent approach. A nuanced analysis of international diplomacy shows that India's foreign policy decisions depict more of a continuity than a change. Any indulgence in whataboutery for petty political gains will clearly harm all political players. Facts affirm that compromises are often made in international negotiations. Diplomacy can neither be critiqued in rallies, nor steered by shrill mass media debates. It is important to appreciate that any form of demagoguery aimed at appropriating the result of a hard-won battle against terrorism will only arrest its enduring potential and diminish the real value of this extraordinary feat.

Anmolam runs a non-profit organisation called BDLAAAW, and Farheen Ahmad is a research scholar who is pursuing his Ph.D. in international law from South Asian University, New Delhi

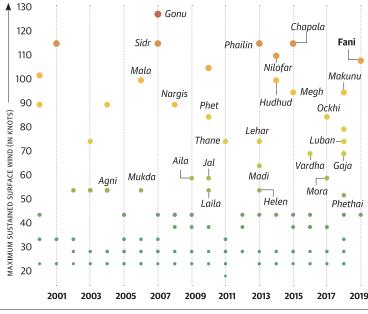


DATA POINT

Fani, an unusual storm

Fani, one of the biggest storms in years to make landfall in India, is a unique cyclone for two reasons. One, April is an unusual month for a cyclone (only 3% of cyclones have occured in this month since 1891 in India). And two, only once before (in 1966) did a super cyclone form over the Bay of Bengal in April and make landfall in India. By Vignesh Radhakrishnan

Fani's maximum speed of 108 knots makes it the seventh fastest cyclone to have occurred in the North Indian Ocean since 2000. The chart plots all the 178 depressions (D*)/cyclonic storms (CS)/severe cyclonic storms (SCS) that have been recorded since 2000. The higher-up a storm in the chart, the higher the Maximum Sustained Surface Wind (in knots). Storm Gonu was the strongest (127 knots). It originated in the Arabian Sea and affected Oman, the UAE, Iran and Pakistan



A rarity... | Of the 1,528 D/CS/SCS over the North Indian Ocean since 1891, only 3% occurred in April. The table shows all the recorded storms between 1891 and 2019

Month	D	CS	SCS	Total
Jan.	10	7	2	19
Feb.	5	1	1	7
March	4	3	2	9
April	12	13	20	45
May	39	25	59	123
June	107	43	22	172
July	142	38	9	190
Aug.	190	29	4	223
Sept.	162	34	20	216
Oct.	120	66	51	237
Nov.	61	53	83	197
Dec.	37	27	26	90

... but high on severity | The probability of a depression getting converted into a CS/ SCS is high in April Between 1891 and 2019

44% of all storms in April were SCS								
	D	cs	scs	The table shows				
Jan.	53%	37%	11%	the share				
Feb.	71%	14%	14%	of storm				
Mar.	44%	33%	22%	types that				
Apr.	27%	29%	44%	occured				
May	32%	20%	48%	during a				
Jun.	62%	25%	13%	month				
Jul.	75%	20%	5%	*Wind speeds				
Aug.	85%	13%	2%	D: 17-33				
Sept.	75%	16%	9%	knots;				
Oct.	51%	28%	22%	CS: 34-47 knots:				
Nov.	31%	27%	42%	SCS: >47				
Dec.	41%	30%	29%	knots				
Source: India Meteorological Department								

Zakir Husain moved slowly along Rajpath, India Gate, Welleseley Road, Mathura Road and on to Jamia Milia.

A HUNDRED YEARS AGO MAY 6, 1919.

Message of Congratulations.

Sir M. Bhownaggree has received [in London] replies to the Addresses of thanks to the King Emperor and Premier and of congratulations to Lord Sinha on his peerage and appointment. The Address to the King was signed by numerous leading Indians in England. It expressed gratification at the recognition of the eligibility of Indians for such rank and position as proving His Majesty's desire to raise India to a state equally important as the Dominions. Mr. Montagu wrote that the King Emperor had read the address with great satisfaction. Mr. Montagu also expressed his own appreciation of the spirit animating the action of the signatories. The Premier wrote from Paris that he much appreciated the tribute. Lord Sinha wrote from Paris that he was deeply grateful for the congratulations.

POLL CALL

Polling agent

It is not possible for a candidate to be physically present at every polling station on the day of voting in her constituency. Therefore, the law allows the candidate, or his/her election agent, to appoint a polling agent to act as a representative at every polling station to watch his/her interests. The work of polling agents includes ensuring that EVMs and VVPATs are in order, detecting and preventing impersonation of voters, and helping to secure and seal the EVMs, VVPATs and election records after polling is over. Those holding government positions and those who have been given security cover at the state's expense, including Ministers, are not allowed to be polling agents.

MORE ON THE WEB

ICC Cricket World Cup - 10 facts you need to know

http://bit.ly/WCStatistics

प्रवाह

व्यक्ति जीवन में





श्रीलंका के सेना प्रमुख ने पिछले महीने वहां हमला करने वाले आतंकियों के भारत आने से संबंधित जो खुलासे किए हैं, वे बेहद चौंकाने वाले हैं और आंतरिक सुरक्षा के मोर्चे पर सतर्कता बरतने की मांग करते हैं।

आंतरिक सुरक्षा की चुनौती

게(아)

के सेना प्रमुख का यह खुलासा बेहद चौंकाने वाला और गंभीर है कि उनके यहां के आत्मघाती हमलावरों में से कुछ ने प्रशिक्षण और दूसरे विदेशी संगठनों के साथ संपर्क बनाने के लिए कश्मीर और केरल

का दौरा किया था। उनका यह भी कहना है कि हमले की भीषणता को देखते हुए उसमें बाहरी हाथ होने की आशंका से इनकार नहीं किया जा सकता। गौरतलब है कि विगत 21 अप्रैल को श्रीलंका में हुए आठ बम विस्फोटों में सैकड़ों लोग मारे गए थे। उसकी जिम्मेदारी आईएस ने ली थी, जबकि श्रीलंका की सरकार उसके पीछे स्थानीय आतंकवादी संगठन नेशनल तौहीद जमात का हाथ मानती है। हालांकि हमारी केंद्रीय सुरक्षा एजेंसियों ने श्रीलंका के सेना प्रमुख के दावे का खंडन किया है। उनका कहना है कि आतंकी हमलों के बाद आव्रजन दस्तावेजों में ऐसा कोई रिकॉर्ड नहीं मिला है, जिससे श्रीलंका के दावे की पुष्टि होती हो। लेकिन एनआईए द्वारा पिछले दिनों केरल और तमिलनाडु के कई इलाकों में मारे गए छापे और गिरफ्तारियों को भी हल्के में नहीं लिया जा सकता। उल्लेखनीय है कि तमिलनाडु में भी श्रीलंका के नेशनल तौहीद जमात की तरह तमिलनाडु तौहीद जमात संगठन है, जिसका नाम अक्सर आतंकी घटनाओं से जुडता रहा है। ऐसे ही, केरल से रियास अबुबकर की गिरफ्तारी से वहां आईएस के स्लीपर सेल की मौजदगी की आशंका मजबूत होती है। केरल वही राज्य है, जहां से कुछ युवा आईएस में शामिल होने के लिए सीरिया गए थे। जहां तक कश्मीर की

बात है, तो हाल के वर्षों में वहां के युवाओं में अलगाववादी भावना मजबूत हुई है। अब केरल समेत तमिलनाडु और दक्षिण भारत के कुछ और इलाकों में आईएस जैसे आतंकी संगठन के मददगारों के होने की बात भी उतनी ही चिंताजनक है। तब तो खासकर और भी, जब लोकसभा चुनाव में राष्ट्रीय सुरक्षा को बड़ा मुद्दा बनाया गया है। साफ है कि बाहरी दुश्मनों से देश की रक्षा करने को महत्व देने के साथ-साथ आंतरिक सुरक्षा पर भी उतना ही ध्यान देना होगा। कश्मीर में बढ़ती अलगाववादी भावना पर देश का जितना ध्यान है, दक्षिण भारत में आईएस और दूसरे आतंकवादी संगठनों की पैठ और प्रसार पर उतना फोकस नहीं नजर आता। श्रीलंका के सेना प्रमुख के दावे का खंडन करने के बजाय आंतरिक सुरक्षा पर ध्यान देना ही समय की मांग है।

मतदाताओं का मन



रतीय चुनावों से संबंधित एक शाश्वत सत्य यह है कि इनमें 'विशेषज्ञ' अक्सर गलत साबित हो जाते हैं। इसकी वजह स्पष्ट है। और सत्रहवीं लोकसभा के लिए हो रहे चुनाव के समय इसका जिक्र करना

मौजूं भी है। जैसे कि उस दिन एक नामचीन टेलींविजन पत्रकार ने कहा, 'लोग कैमरे के सामने जो कुछ भी कहते हैं, अकेले में आमने-सामने मिलने पर उससे अलग बात कहते हैं।' भारतीय मतदाता, उनमें भी खासकर ग्रामीण

मतदाता बहुत चालाक होते हैं। वे जानते हैं कि चुनाव के समय अचानक उनके इलाके में टपक पड़ने वाले और उनसे राय मांगने वाले पत्रकारों को सच बताना जोखिम भरा हो सकता है, इसलिए वे जमीनी वास्तविकताएं बताने के बजाय यथास्थिति को स्वीकार करने को ही प्राथमिकता देते हैं।

ग्रामीण मतदाता वोटिंग पैटर्न के बारे में बाहर से आए पत्रकारों को सच्चाई बताने का साहस नहीं करते, बल्कि ज्यादातर वही कहते हैं, जो पत्रकारों या वहां मजबूत राजनीतिक दल के अनुकूल हो। इसको इस तरह भी समझा जा सकता है कि ट्रेन या बस में, या हाइवे पर स्थित चाय की दुकानों पर कोई मतदाता जो कुछ भी कहता है, वह अमूमन सच नहीं होता, क्योंकि जब वह पत्रकारों के सवालों के जवाब दे रहा होता है, तब आसपास खड़े और भी अनेक लोग उसे सुन रहे होते हैं।

चूंकि उनमें से कुछ लोग उसके परिचित हो सकते हैं, इसलिए वह अपने मन की बात कहकर किसी से शत्रुता मोल नहीं ले सकता। इसके विपरीत, एक पत्रकार का सच्चाई से सामना तब होता है, जब वह मुख्य सड़क को



चुनाव के समय हम मतदाताओं से जो कुछ सुनते हैं, वह इस पर भी निर्भर करता है कि हॅमने ये बातें कहां सुनी हैं। जो इस चुनावी सच्चाई से परिचित हैं, वही वास्तविकता का बेहतर आकलन कर सकते हैं।

पत्रलेखा चटर्जी, वरिष्ठ पत्रकार

छोडकर दर के गांव में निकल जाता है और वहां लोगों से उनके घर में जाकर मिलता है। चूंकि घर के अंदर मौजूद लोग अपने ही होते हैं, लिहाजा वहां कही गई बातें अमुमन सच होती हैं। यह बात खासकर उन मतदाताओं के बारे में सच होती है, जो दबाव में होते हैं और समाज के हाशिये पर भी होते हैं। इनमें शहरी निम्न वर्ग के लोग, गरीब दलित, कर्ज में डूबे किसान के अलावा वे लोग भी होते हैं, जिन्हें लगता है कि

उनकी आवाज नहीं सुनी जाती।

हुल गांधी के एक झुठ को लेकर

सर्वोच्च न्यायालय में अभी कार्यवाही

चल ही रही है कि कांग्रेस अध्यक्ष ने एक और झूठ बोल डाला। बहुत

बड़ा झूठ। एक आम सभा को संबोधित करते हुए

उन्होंने कह दिया कि नरेंद्र मोदी की सरकार ने एक

कानून पारित किया है, जिसके तहत पुलिस वालों को

आदिवासियों पर गोली चलाने का अधिकार दिया गया

है। मैंने जब उनको यह कहते सुना, तो इतनी हैरान

खोज में कांग्रेस अध्यक्ष के कई और चुनावी भाषण

करते हुए उन्होंने कहा कि कांग्रेस आदिवासियों को

उनकी जमीन रखने का अधिकार देने का काम कर

चुकी है, लेकिन मुख्यमंत्री नवीन पटनायक उनसे

उनकी जमीनें छीन लेना चाहते हैं, ताकि वह इन

जमीनों को उद्योगपतियों को दे सकें। उन्होंने यह नहीं

बताया कि इन जमीनों पर जब कारखाने बनते हैं, तो

रोजगार के अवसर पैदा होते हैं आदिवासी युवाओं के

लिए। इसके बदले उन्होंने यह कहा कि आदिवासी

युवाओं को ओडिशा के मुख्यमंत्री न रोजगार देना

चाहते हैं, न शिक्षा। इस तरह की झूठी बातें कांग्रेस

अध्यक्ष चुनाव अभियान शुरू होने से पहले भी कहते

कि प्रधानमंत्री ने इस सौदे में से 30,000 करोड़

रुपये चोरी करके अपने दोस्त अनिल अंबानी को दे

दिए हैं। आज तक उन्होंने इसका कोई सुबूत पेश

नहीं किया है। लेकिन यह झूठ बोलते जाते हैं, शायद

आइसलैंड

स्वीडन

03

ब्रिटेन

नोट : रिपोर्ट वर्ष 2018 में

तैयार की गई है।

जारी आंकड़ो के आधार पर

फ्रांस

01

नॉर्वे

02

भारत

बांग्लादेश

विश्व में लैंगिक

समानता

चीन

103

राफेल सौदे को लेकर उन्होंने बार-बार कहा है

आए हैं।

ओडिशा में आदिवासियों की सभा को संबोधित

सुनने को मिले, जिनमें कई सारे और झूँठ थे।

हुई कि युटाब पर जाकर उस भाष

हाल में ही उत्तर प्रदेश में, जो कि देश के मतदाताओं का मिजाज मापने का बैरोमीटर है, एक लंबी सड़क यात्रा करते हुए, मुझे भी कई मूल्यवान सूत्र हाथ लगे। उसमें से एक बात यही हैं कि लोग क्या कह रहे हैं, वह महत्वपूर्ण नहीं है, महत्वपूर्ण यह है कि वे कौन हैं, और कहां आपसे बात कर रहे हैं। और इसके बाद भी उनकी कथनी और करनी में फर्क हो सकता है।

कोई कुछ भी कहे, सच्चाई तो आखिरकार 23 मई को ही सामने आएगी।

छोटे शहरों, हाइवे पर स्थित ढाबों और चाय की दकानों पर मझे ज्यादातर वही बातें सनने को मिलीं, जो कद्दावर प्रधानमंत्री नरेंद्र मोदी और उनकी पार्टी भाजपा द्वारा राष्ट्रीय सुरक्षा के संबंध में लगातार दिए जा रहे तर्कों से संबंधित थीं। उत्तर प्रदेश के खासकर शहरी इलाकों में मुझे यही बातें सुनने को मिलीं। वाराणसी में एक ब्यूटी पार्लर में काम करने वाले युवक ने मेरे सामने यह स्वीकारा कि उसके अपने जीवन में कोई उल्लेखनीय बदलाव नहीं आया है, लेकिन वह नई सड़कें, पुल और फ्लाइओवर से प्रभावित है। उसका भी मानना है कि सिर्फ नरेंद्र मोदी ही पाकिस्तान और देशद्रोहियों को सबक सिखा सकते हैं।

पर लखनऊ-आगरा एक्सप्रेस-वे से गुजरते हए और कन्नौज जिले के बेहरीन गांव में लोगों से बात करते हुए पता चला कि वहां के लोगों ने सत्ताधारी पार्टी से किस तरह दूरी बना ली है। उस गांव के किसान आवारा पशुओं के उपद्रव और इससे होने वाले फसल के नुकसान के कारण क्षुब्ध हैं।

उस गांव के ही एक बुजुर्ग किसान राजिकशोर ने शिकायती लहजे में कहा कि रात में अपनी फसलों को आवारा पशुओं के हमले से बचाने के लिए गांव के लोगों को रात भर जागना पड़ता है, 'प्रधानमंत्री कहते हैं कि वह चौकीदार हैं, पर असल चौकीदार तो किसान हैं। हम दिन को चिलचिलाती धूप में खेतों में काम करते हैं और रात को अपनी फसल की रखवाली करने के लिए जागने को मजबूर हैं। इस गांव का कोई भी आदमी गाय पालना नहीं चाहता, क्योंकि जब वे बूढ़ी हो जाएंगी, तब उनका हम क्या करेंगे? तब उन्हें कौन चारा देगा? पहले हम बूढ़ी गायें बेच देते थे, पर अब ऐसा नहीं कर सकते। इसलिए हम अब भैंस पालने लगे हैं। इसके बावजूद दूसरे गांवों से गायें आ जाती हैं। जब हमारे पास अपने पशुओं को चारा देने के लिए ही पैसे नहीं हैं, तब हम दूसरे की गायों के लिए घास और चारे का प्रबंध भला किस तरह कर सकते हैं?

बहुत सारे किसान इस बात से खिन्न दिखे कि आवारा गायों को रखने के लिए पर्याप्त संख्या में गोशालाओं का निर्माण नहीं किया गया है, ऊपर से गायों को बेचना कठिन है। ऐसे में किसानों के सामने अपनी बूढ़ी गायों को खुला छोड़ देने के अलावा और कोई विकल्प नहीं बचा है, क्योंकि वे उन गायों के घास-चारे का बोझ नहीं उठा सकते, जो दूध नहीं देतीं।

उसी गांव की बी.एससी. प्रथम वर्ष की छात्रा कुंती की शिकायतें अलग हैं। उसका कॉलेज गांव से सात किलोमीटर दूर है और उसे लगभग रोज रिक्शे से यह दरी तय करनी पड़ती है। वह बताती है कि उसके कॉलेज में कोई ढंग की प्रयोगशाला नहीं है। बेहरीन गांव में शिक्षित युवा तो बहुत हैं, पर रोजगार की कमी है, जिससे परेशानी है। ग्रामीण क्षेत्रों में लड़कियों को उनके परिवार वाले निजी क्षेत्र में नौकरियां नहीं करने देते। गांव के बुजुर्ग कहते हैं कि सिर्फ वही देश

यह कहना कठिन है कि चुनावी दौरे में मैंने जिन लोगों से मुलाकातें कीं, उन्होंने किसे वोट दिया है या किसे वोट देंगे। पर चुनाव के इस समय में हम जो कुछ भी सुनते हैं, वह इस पर भी निर्भर करता है कि हमने ये बातें मुख्य सड़क से कितनी दूर जाकर सुनी हैं। जो लोग देश की इस चुनावी सच्चाई से परिचित हैं, वही वास्तविकता का बेहतर आकलन करने में सक्षम हो सकते हैं।



जब मन अविश्वास से दुर्बल हो उठे तब मौन ही शक्ति देता है

कभी आपने सोचा है कि जो लोग अधिक बात करते हैं, उनसे हम कतराने क्यों लगते हैं? उसका मतलब यही होता है कि अमुक जो कुछ बोलता है, हम सुनना नहीं चाहते। शताब्दियों से लोग सुनने के उत्सुक चले आ रहे हैं। और इस दिशा में सबसे अधिक उपलब्धि उन कवियों को हुई है, जो इधर सृष्टि का निखिल मौन संगीत सुनते रहे, प्रेमिका का मूक स्वरों में अनुरोध भी। सुना है, वाल्मीकि भी कभी मौन थे, व्यथा के तीखे शरो से तिलमिला कर अचानक उनका कंठ फूटा।



सुनना एक ही क्रिया के दो भाग हैं; अपने मे अलग-अलग ये संपूर्ण नहीं हैं। किंतु कितने ही लोग बोलना चाहते हैं, पर उन्हें बोलने नहीं दिया जाता

और लोग उन्हें सुनना चाहते हैं, पर सुन नही पाते। कितने ही लोग बोलते हैं, और उन्हें कोई सुनता नहीं। कितने ही लोग सुनना नहीं चाहते, पर उन्हें सुनना पड़ता है। बोलना सुनने से कुछ बड़ाँ होते हुए भी नितांत सुनने पर आश्रित है। कोई आपसे कुछ कह रहा हो और आप सुन न रहे हों, तो संभव है आपको अपनी अन्यमनस्कता के लिए कुछ कटु-वचन सुनने पड़ें। आप बोलनेवाले के ऊंचे स्थान पर तभी तक रहते हैं जब तक उनको मानते रहते हैं, उनका मान द्रवित हुआ नही कि फिर आप फिर श्रोता बन गए। यों, मौन रहना, सुनते हैं, स्वास्थ्यदायक भी होता है। मौन-व्रत रखने से वृथा नष्ट होनेवाली शक्ति संचित होती है। जब मन अविश्वास से दुर्बल हो उठे, तब मौन ही शक्ति देता है। मैं मौन रहूं तो पता नहीं किस वक्ता की अवज्ञा कर बैठूं, क्योंकि मौन रहते-रहते यह भी लग सकता है कि आपकी बात नहीं सुन रहा और आपको लगने लगे कि मेरा चुप रहना मूर्खता की निशानी है। मौन हो जाता हूं तो लगता है कि चारों ओर से उठ रहा है एक हाहारव और अंतर से उठ रहा है एक विद्रोह का रणघोष। -प्रसिद्ध हिंदी कवि



>> शकुंतला मजूमदार

कुत्ते के घसीटे जाने के दृश्य ने पशुप्रेम के लिए प्रेरित किया

हम तब कोलकाता में रहते थे। मैं सातवीं क्लास में थी और स्कूल जा रही थी। हमारी स्कूल बस के आगे एक कूड़ा गाड़ी जा रही थी। उस के पीछे एक कुत्ता बंधा हुआ था, वे उसे घसीटते हुए ले जा रहे थे। लोगों का कहना था कि वह कुत्ता पागल है। पूरे रास्ते मैंने उसको खून में लथपथ देखा, फिर भी किसी को उस पर दया नहीं आई। उस घटना ने मुझे हिलाकर रख दिया। सबसे ज्यादा दुख मुझे इस बात का हुआ कि उस समय मैं कुछ नहीं कर पाई। वहीं से मेरे दिल में घर से बाहर भी जानवरों के लिए कुछ करने का जज्बा जागा। बचपन से ही मैंने देखा कि हमारे घर में बहुत से पशु-पक्षी मौजूद रहते थे, जिन्हें मेरी मां अक्सर घायल अवस्था में घर लातीं, फिर हम उनकी देखभाल करते। वर्ष 1982 में मैं मुंबई आ गई। पढ़ाई के दिनों से ही मैं मदर टेरेसा चैरिटी होम से जुड़ गई। लेंकिन जानवरों के प्रति मेरा प्रेम

वैसा ही बना रहा, जैसा कोलकाता में था। वर्ष 1994 में मैं 'सोसाइटी फॉर प्रोटेक्शन ऑफ एनिमल्स ऐंड नेचर'



मैं और मेरी टीम के लोग अब तक एक लाख से भी ज्यादा जानवरों का इलाज व संरक्षण कर चुके हैं।

(एसपीसीए) से जुड़ गई। यहां पर काम करते हुए मुझे ठाणे के इलाके में जानवरों के साथ हो रही हिंसा की बहुत-सी खबरें मिलती थीं। मैंने इस इलाके में एसपीसीए शुरू करने का निर्णय लिया और व्यक्तिगत तौर पर वर्ष 2002 में ठाणे एसपीसीए की शुरुआत की। हालांकि यहां तक का मेरा सफर आसान नहीं रहा। इन बेजुबान जीवों की आवाज बनने के लिए मुझे बहुत-सी चुनौतियों का सामना करना पड़ा। दशकों पहले हमारे यहां जानवरों के प्रति हिंसा के खिलाफ कानून (द प्रिवेंशन ऑफ क्रुएलिटी टू एनिमल्स ऐक्ट, 1960) बन चुका है। इस कानून के तहत किसी जानवर को नुकसान पहुंचाने पर सजा का प्रावधान भी है। लेकिन इस कानून के बारे में आम नागरिकों को क्या, बहुत से पुलिस अधिकारियों को भी पता नहीं होता। इस वजह से मैं अगर किसी भी व्यक्ति

के खिलाफ मुकदमा दायर करवाना चाहती, तो पुलिस वाले मुझे वापस भेज देते। एक बार पर मुझे फोन पर धमकी भी दी गई कि अगर जानवरों के लिए काम करना बंद नहीं किया, तो वे मेरी बेटी को अगवा कर लेंगें। इस तरह की बात सुनकर कुछ पलों के लिए मैं कांप गई, पर मुझे पता था कि मैं कुछ गलत नहीं कर रही हूं। अपने घर के पास ही मैं रोज एक कुत्ते को खाना खिलाती थी। पर वह किसी बीमारी के चलते ज्यादा जी नहीं पाया। मैंने और मेरे पड़ोसियों ने बहुत कोशिश की थी कि उसे सही उपचार मिल सके, पर उसकी बीमारी तक का पता नहीं चला। इस घटना के बाद मुझे जानवरों के लिए स्वास्थ्य सुविधाओं पर काम करने की जरूरत महसूस हुई। मेरे जज्बे को देखते हुए समाजसेवी डॉ. नानजीभाई खिमजीभाई ठक्कर ने जानवरों के लिए एक अस्पताल शुरू करने लिए जमीन दी। वर्ष 2005 में हमने 'ठाणे एसपीसीए इमरजेंसी एनिमल केयर सेंटर' की शुरुआत की। इस काम में मुझे 'एनिमल वेलफेयर बोर्ड ऑफ इंडिया', वन-विभाग और अन्य बहुत-से अधिकारियों की सहायता मिली।

आज एसपीसीए के पास 25 लोगों का स्टाफ है। वे हर तरह के छोटे-बड़े जानवरों के बचाव कार्य व संरक्षण के लिए काम करते हैं। मैं और मेरी टीम अब तक एक लाख से भी ज्यादा जानवरों का इलाज व संरक्षण कर चुके हैं। मुझे इस काम के लिए वर्ष 2016 में 'नारी शक्ति पुरस्कार' से भी सम्मानित किया गया। मैं सिर्फ इतना चाहती हूं कि अगर आप जानवरों से प्यार नहीं कर सकते, तो उनसे नफरत भी न करें।

-विभिन्न साक्षात्कारों पर आधारित।

राहुल के दावों का सच

चुनावों के समय हर राजनेता कुछ हद तक झूठ का सहारा लेता है, लेकिन क्या यह भी जरूरी नहीं है कि इतने बड़े राजनीतिक दल के अध्यक्ष थोड़ी जिम्मेदारी दिखाएं? मतदाता अब राजनेता से अधिक समझदार हो गए हैं।



इस उम्मीद से कि जब किसी झूठ को बहुत बार बोला जाता है, तो वह लोगों के मन में धीरे-धीरे सत्य बन जाता है। सो वह यह भी बोलते हैं बार-बार कि मोदी ने नोटबंदी सिर्फ इसलिए करवाई थी, ताकि 'अपने 15 उद्योगपित दोस्तों' को लाभ पहुंचा सकें। कभी वह यह भी कह डालते हैं कि गरीबों का पैसा हथियाने के लिए नोटबंदी की गई थी। माना कि चुनावों के समय हर राजनेता कुछ हद तक झूठ का सहारा लेता है, लेकिन क्या यह भी जरूरी नहीं है कि इतने बड़े राजनीतिक दल के अध्यक्ष थोड़ी जिम्मेदारी

मजे की बात यह है कि राहुल गांधी जब भी मोदी का नाम लेते हैं, तो उन पर सबसे बड़ा आरोप उनका

इकोनॉमिक

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रिपोर्ट जारी की

गई है। इसमें

१०८वां स्थान

यही रहता है कि मोदी ने झूठ बोलकर 2014 का चुनाव जीता था। वह बैंक खातों में 15 लाख रुपये डॉलने वाला उदाहरण दोहराते हैं। सच पूछिए तो यह

मोदी का वह भाषण ऑनलाइन अगर आप सुनने का कष्ट करेंगे, तो पाएंगे कि उन्होंने सिर्फ यह कहा था कि विदेशी बैंकों में इतना पैसा है भारत का कि अगर उसको वापस लाया जाए, तो शायद देश के हर नागरिक के बैंक खाते में 15 लाख रुपये डाल दिए जा सकेंगे। इस बात को तोड़-मरोड़ कर लोगों को गुमराह करना गलत है। लेकिन ऐसा लगता है कि राहुल गांधी सत्ता में अपने परिवार को वापस लाने के लिए कोई भी झूठ बोल सकते हैं। कांग्रेस अध्यक्ष शायद अब भी उस जमाने में जी रहे हैं, जब देश के मतदाताओं को उल्लू बनाना आसान था राजनेताओं

मेरी उम्र के पत्रकारों को उनकी दादी का दौर अच्छी तरह याद है, जब लोग कहा करते थे कि वह इंदिरा गांधी को वोट दे रहे हैं, सिर्फ इसलिए कि उनको उनका चेहरा पसंद है। तब लोग राजनेताओं को भगवान का रूप मानते थे। पर अब ऐसा नहीं है। अब मतदाताओं का दिल झूठ बोलकर या करिश्मा के बल पर जीतना इतना आसान नहीं है। लगता है कि मतदाता राजनेताओं से अधिक सयाने हो गए हैं।

हरियाली और रास्ता

राज, सुमन और बच्चे

प्रोफेसर मनन की कहानी, जिन्होंने छात्रों को जीवन का एक अनुठा पाठ पढाया।



प्रोफेसर मनन जाने-माने मनोवैज्ञानिक थे। एक बार वह अमेरिका की एक नामचीन यूनिवर्सिटी में पढ़ाने गए। उन्होंने एक साधारण-सी कहानी छात्रों को सुनाई। पर उस कहानी ने छात्रों की सोच पर खासा असर डाला। राज और सुमन बहुत दिनों बाद एक दूसरे से सपरिवार मिले। दोनों के बच्चे लगभग एक ही उम्र के थे। खा-पीकर वे लोग एक पार्क में घूमने गए। वहां ढेर सारे पेड़ थे। राज का बेटा दस साल का और सुमन का बेटा बारह साल का था। सारे लोग एक पेड़ के नीचे बैठकर बातें कर रहे थे, जबिक दोनों बच्चे पेड़ पर उछल-कूद मचा रहे थे। राज हमेशा जल्दी में रहता था। कई बार वह बिना सोचे-समझे काम करता था। जबकि सुमन शांत स्वभाव की थी। दोनों अपनी जिंदगी में अच्छे मुकाम पर पहुंच चुके थे। उनकी बातें चल ही रही थीं कि राज की पत्नी ने देखा, दोनों बच्चे पेड़ की ऊंची शाखा पर जाकर बैठे हैं। वजन ज्यादा होने के कारण शाखा टूटने लगी। राज चिल्लाया, बंटी, देखो, गिर जाओगे। वहीं सुमन चिल्लाई, डाल पकड़े रहना, हम आ रहे हैं। जब तक वे वहां पहुंचते, राज का बेटा गिर गया था और उसे चोट आई। पर सुमन का बेटा शाखा को पकड़े रहा और बच गया। प्रोफेसर ने छात्रों से पूछा, एक बच्चे के गिरने और दूसरे के बच जाने की वजह क्या आप जानते हैं? फिर वह खुद ही कहने लगे कि इसकी वजह उनके पिता-माता की सोच है। जब राज ने बंटी से कहा कि देखो, गिर जाओगे, तो बंटी के दिमाग में पेड़ से गिरने की तस्वीर बनी। वहीं सुमन के बेटे के दिमाग में तस्वीर बनी कि वह शाखा पकड़े हुए है और मां उसे बचा रही हैं। यानी हम जो बोलते हैं, उसका काफी असर हमारी सोच और कर्म पर होता है। इसलिए हमें हमेशा सकारात्मक बात करनी चाहिए। छात्रों को बेहद उपयोगी सबक मिला।

हमारी कही गई बात हमारी सोच और संस्कार को ही दिखाती है।

खून और दूध

गुरु नानक लोगों को उपदेश देते हुए एक गांव में पहुंचे। वहां वह एक गरीब बढ़ई के घर ठहरे, जिसका नाम लालो था। उसी गांव में एक धनाढ्य व्यक्ति रहता था, जिसका नाम मलिक भागो था। एक दिन मलिक भागों ने गांव के सारे लोगों को भोजन के लिए निमंत्रित किया। सारे लोगों के खाना खा चुकने पर उसने नौकरों से पूछा कि गांव में कहीं कोई आदमी बिना खाए तो नहीं है ? इस



पर नौकरों ने बताया कि लालो के घर में एक साधु आया है जो भोजन से वंचित रह गया है। भागो ने गुरु नान्क को बुलाया तथा उनसे पूछा, आप मेरे यहां भोजन करने क्यों नहीं आए? गुरु नानक ने कहा, अब आया हूं। नौकरों ने उनके सामने तरह-तरह के पकवान लाकर रखे। तब गुरु नानक ने लालों से भी घर से भोजन लाने को कहा। वह घर जाकर रोटियां ले आया। गुरु नानक ने भागो की रोटी लेकर उसे

दबाया, तो उसमें से खून निकलने लगा। फिर उन्होंने लालो की रोटी दबाई, तो उसमें से दूध निकलने लगा। यह देख वहां उपस्थित लोग चिकत हो गए। तब गुरु नानक देव जी ने बताया कि भागो ने गरीबों को लूटा है, इसलिए उसकी रोटी में गरीबों का खून है, जबकि लालो की कमाई ईमानदारी की है, अतः उसकी रोटी से दूध निकला। यह सुनकर भागो नानक के चरणों में गिर पड़ा और उनसे क्षमा मांगकर कहने लगा कि आगे से मैं मेहनत की कमाई खाऊंगा और दूसरों को कष्ट नहीं दूंगा।

बिज़नेस स्टैंडर्ड वर्ष 12 अंक 67

एनबीएफसी का संकट

गैर बैंकिंग वित्तीय कंपनियां (एनबीएफसी) एक बार फिर चर्चा में हैं। बीते सप्ताह कई एनबीएफसी की रेटिंग में गिरावट आई। इनमें अनिल अंबानी के समूह की वित्तीय कंपनियों और पीएनबी हाउसिंग फाइनैंस शामिल हैं। बॉन्ड बाजार की बात करें तो वह वित्त वर्ष 2019 दसरी तिमाही में इन्फ्रास्टक्वर लीजिंग

(आईएलऐंडएफएस) के डिफॉल्ट करने के बाद से ही जोखिम में था। ऐसे में ताजा गिरावट ने एनबीएफसी की पूंजी और वृद्धि की लागत पर सवालिया निशान लगा दिए हैं। बीते कुछ वर्ष में एनबीएफसी क्षेत्र ने कॉर्पोरेट बॉन्ड बाजार की कल उधारी का करीब 70 फीसदी हिस्सा लिया है। परंत आईएलऐंडएफएस की घटना के बाद न केवल नकदी की किल्लत हुई है

बल्कि इनकी मांग में भी कमी आई है। इस बीच क्रेडिट रेटिंग एजेंसियों ने कमजोर कंपनियों की रेटिंग घटा दी तथा अन्य के पर्वानमान में संशोधन किया। आज, जो एनबीएफसी बॉन्ड जुटाने में सक्षम हैं, उनकी लागत बढ़ रही है। एएए रेटिंग वाली एनबीएफसी सरकारी बॉन्ड से करीब 150 आधार अंक तक ऊपर हैं। जबिक एएए रेटिंग वाली गैर वित्तीय कंपनियां 100 अंक के आधिक्य पर पूंजी जुटा रही हैं। आईएलऐंडएफएस की घटना के पहले यह विस्तार 50 आधार अंक तक था। नकदी की कमी ने एनबीएफसी क्षेत्र का संकट और बढा दिया। नोटबंदी के कारण नकदी की किल्लत हुई। हालांकि केंद्रीय बैंक ने खुले बाजार में बिक्री तथा अन्य उपायों से इसे दर करने का प्रयास किया। वर्ष 2019 में आरबीआई ने खुले

बाजार में खरीद के जरिए करीब 3 लाख करोड़ रुपये की राशि डाली जो ऐतिहासिक है। इसके अलावा 1000 करोड़ डॉलर की का बैंकों के साथ विनिमय किया गया। इन कारणों से बॉन्ड प्रतिफल में कमी आई लेकिन दरों में दो बार कटौती के बावजूद एनबीएफसी के लिए उधारी की दर ऊंची बनी हुई है क्योंकि कर्जदाताओं की मांग नहीं है। म्युचुअल फंड एनबीएफसी के प्रमुख ग्राहक थे लेकिन अपने पोर्टफोलियों में गिरावट को देखते हुए वे भी जोखिम से बच रहे हैं। आईएलऐंडएफएस संकट के बाद वे बिना नुकसान के इससे बाहर नहीं निकल सके। म्युचुअल फंडों को उस समय भी झटका लगा जब उनको एस्सेल समूह के प्रवर्तकों और अनिल अंबानी समृह को ऋण देना रोकना पडा। सितंबर 2018 और मार्च 2019 के बीच इस

उद्योग के डेट फंड से 68,000 करोड़ रुपये और डेट योजनाओं से 1.3 लाख करोड़ रुपये की निकासी की गई। विश्लेषकों के मताबिक चिंता की बात यह भी है कि घरेलू थोक ऋण बाजार एनबीएफसी के बीच भेद करता नजर आ रहा है। आईएलऐंडएफएस संकट सामने आने के बाद से बॉन्ड बाजार में हाउसिंग डेवलपमेंट फाइनैंस कॉर्पोरेशन और एलआईसी हाउसिंग फाइनैंस की हिस्सेदारी सबसे अधिक है। जिन कंपनियों को मजबूत माना जाता रहा है कि वे घरेलू बॉन्ड बाजार से राशि जुटाने में सफल रहीं लेकिन शेष कंपनियों पर यह बात लागु नहीं होती। थोक डेट बाजार के दरवाजे बंद होने पर एनबीएफसी फंड के अन्य जरियों मसलन बाह्य वाणिज्यिक ऋण और खुदरा क्षेत्र की ओर निगाह कर रही हैं।

बीते कुछ वर्ष में एनबीएफसी ने खुदरा और छोटे एवं मझोले उपक्रमों को ऋण देने में अहम भिमका निभाई है। बैंक ऐसा नहीं कर सके हैं। इसके अलावा सरकारी बैंक फंसे कर्ज की समस्या से भी दो-चार हैं। कुछ एनबीएफसी नाकाम हो सकती हैं या फिर उन्हें मजबूत कंपनियों के साथ विलय करना पड सकता है लेकिन व्यापक तौर पर देखें तो कुल कारोबार में आ रही कमी अर्थव्यवस्था के लिए अच्छा संकेत नहीं है। एसएमई पर नोटबंदी का असर पड़ा और उनको वस्तु एवं सेवा कर व्यवस्था के साथ तालमेल करने में भी दिकक्त हुई। उनको उचित लागत पर पूंजी चाहिए। खुदरा ऋण देश में खपत को गति देने के लिए बहुत जरूरी है क्योंकि निवेश में सुधार की कोई संभावना नहीं दिख रही।



मोदी से जूझने का माद्दा रखती हैं ममता बनर्जी

मोदी और शाह की जोड़ी हिंदू-मुस्लिम ध्रुवीकरण के जरिए बंगाल में जीत हासिल करने का प्रयास कर रही है। परंतु ममता बनर्जी उनसे अपने ही तरीके से निपट रही हैं।

प अपना रूपक चुन सकते हैं: लोहा ही लोहे को काटता है या हीरा हीरे को काटता है। आप चाहें तो यह भी कह सकते हैं कि जहर ही जहर की काट है। इन सारी बातों का मतलब एक है। परंतु चूंकि हम देश के अब तक के सबसे जहरबुझे चुनाव अभियान की बात कर रहे हैं तो इनमें से अंतिम उपमा ही सही प्रतीत होती है।

इस अभियान का रुख प्रधानमंत्री नरेंद्र मोदी ने तय किया। उनसे यह उपलब्धि कोई नहीं छीन सकता। विरोधियों को देशद्रोही कहने, पाकिस्तान से सांठगांठ वाला बताने. परिवार जमानत पर होने जैसी बातें उन्होंने ही शरू कीं। उनकी पार्टी के राष्ट्रीय अध्यक्ष अमित शाह और उत्तर प्रदेश के मुख्यमंत्री योगी आदित्यनाथ ने इसे आगे बढ़ाया। एक ने मुस्लिम प्रवासियों को दीमक बताया तो दूसरे ने बजरंग बली बनाम अली का राग छेड़ा। देश के बड़े हिस्से में, खासकर हिंदी प्रदेशों में यह कारगर साबित हुआ है। परंत यह वहीं काम कर रहा है जहां भाजपा की प्रमुख प्रतिद्वंद्वी कांग्रेस है।

महाराष्ट, गजरात, मध्य प्रदेश, बिहार, दिल्ली, हरियाणा, उत्तराखंड और हिमाचल प्रदेश में भाजपा की यह युक्ति काम कर रही है क्योंकि इन जगह भाजपा के सामने कांग्रेस है। जवाब में कांग्रेस कहती है कि इंदिरा गांधी ने पाकिस्तान के दो टुकडे किए थे, ऐसे में उसकी देशभिकत पर सवाल कैसे उठाया जा सकता है ? यह भी कि जब कांग्रेस अध्यक्ष के पिता और उनकी दादी आतंकियों के हाथों मारे गए तो उस पर आतंक के खिलाफ नरमी का इल्जाम कैसे लगाया जा सकता है ? परंतु यह जवाब रक्षात्मक और नरमी भरा है। जाहिर है जहर को नारियल पानी से नहीं काटा जा सकता

इसे समझने के लिए पश्चिम बंगाल का उदाहरण देखना होगा। इस प्रांत में पूरे देश में सबसे अधिक मौखिक और भौतिक हिंसा से भरे चुनाव हो रहे हैं। यह वह जगह है जहां मोदी और शाह को दीदी यानी ममता बनर्जी के रूप में अपनी टक्कर का नेता मिला है। भाजपा को जवाब देते हुए वह एक भी ऐसा शब्द नहीं बोलती हैं जिससे लगे कि वह रक्षात्मक हैं। न ही वह पीड़ित नजर आती है। अपना मजाक उड़ाए जाने पर वह भी पलटकर आपका मखौल उडाती हैं। वह

शेखर गुप्ता इतने भद्दे तरीके से प्रत्युत्तर देती कर पा रहे हैं।

राष्ट्र की बात

मोदी-शाह की भाजपा पांच वर्ष से पश्चिम बंगाल पर हमलावर है। अगर हिंद-मुस्लिम ध्रुवीकरण उसके लिए सत्ता की कुंजी है तो पश्चिम बंगाल इस मामले में उत्तर प्रदेश से भी अधिक संवेदनशील होना चाहिए।ऐसा इसलिए कि असम की तरह पश्चिम बंगाल में भी 30 फीसदी आबादी मुस्लिम है। असम में कांग्रेस की तरह धारणा यही है कि पश्चिम बंगाल में भी पहले वाम और फिर ममता वोट के लिए मुस्लिमों का तुष्टीकरण कर रही हैं।

असम में यह तरीका कामयाब रहा। भाजपा मान रही है कि पश्चिम बंगाल में भी यह कारगर होगा। यही कारण है कि पार्टी यहां 42 में से 22 लोकसभा सीट जीतने का दावा कर रही है। उत्तर प्रदेश (80) और महाराष्ट्र (48) के बाद यह सबसे अधिक सांसदों वाला राज्य है।

भाजपा को लग रहा है कि 2014 में उत्तर प्रदेश और अन्य राज्यों में मिली अपार जीत में इस बार जो कमी आएगी. उसकी भरपाई वह पश्चिम बंगाल में कर लेगी। ऐसा सोचना गलत है। यह सही है कि प्रधानमंत्री की रैलियां सफल रही हैं लेकिन जनाधार की कमी के चलते पार्टी के लिए यहां चुनावी जीत हासिल करना कंचनजंघा पर विजय प्राप्त करने जैसा होगा।

भाजपा की डराने-धमकाने की चाल भी ममता पर बेअसर है। इस वक्त वह संभवत: देश की सबसे सख्त राजनेता हैं। इस मामले में वह मायावती पर भी भारी हैं। उनका अतीत सड़क पर लड़ने का रहा है। राहुल और प्रियंका, कमलनाथ और अखिलेश यादव पर यह बात लागू नहीं होती। हालांकि अरविंद केजरीवाल उस श्रेणी में आते हैं। ममता ने उस राज्य

हैं जो शायद हाल के दिनों में राज ठाकरे ही में अपना अस्तित्व कायम किया जो उनके लिए वाम यातना शिविर से कम नहीं था। उन्हें प्रतिकुलता को अवसर में बदलने का हुनर आता है। वह मोदी के इस तंज में भी अवसर तलाश लेती हैं कि बंगालियों के लिए दर्गापजा मनाना तक कठिन हो गया है।

> मैंने उस दिन उनकी रैलियों का अवलोकन किया जिस दिन फनी तुफान दस्तक दे रहा था और उनका हेलीकॉप्टर हिचकोले खा रहा था। भाटापार (बैरकपुर, जहां से पर्व रेल मंत्री दिनेश त्रिवेदी चनाव लड रहे हैं) और कोलकाता का बाहरी इलाका राजारहाट (जहां से काकोली घोष तीसरी बार जीत के लिए मैदान में हैं) में भी दुर्गा पुजा चुनावी मुद्दा है। मंच पर वायरलेस माइक लिए यहां-वहां टहलती हुई ममता बिना किसी की आंख में आंख डाले जिस तेजी से बोलती हैं, उसका मुकाबला गौतम गंभीर जैसे जल्दी बोलने वाले वक्ता भी नहीं कर सकते। ममता कहती हैं, 'मोदी बाबू, आपको हम बंगालियों पर चीखने चिल्लाने के पहले गृहकार्य करके आना चाहिए। ऐसा न करने वाले स्कूली बच्चों तक को उनके शिक्षक डांटते हैं। आप झूठ बोलेंगे तो लोग आपके साथ क्या करेंगे ? आप बंगाल आकर लोगों से कहते हैं कि यहां दुर्गा पूजा नहीं होती? माताओं और बहनों आप मुझे बताओ, हमारे

यहां दुर्गा पूजा होती है या नहीं ?' भीड़ इसका जवाब हां में देती है। वह पूछती हैं कि क्या कोई दुर्गा पूजा करने से रोकता है? भीड नकारती है। वह लक्ष्मी पुजा, सरस्वती पुजा, क्रिसमस, रमजान और छेठ पूजा के होने या न होने के बारे में सवाल करती हैं। भीड सारे सवालों का जवाब हां में देती है। इस पर वह कहती हैं कि यहां केवल एक काम नहीं होता- यहां मोदी नहीं होता, यहां भाजपा नहीं है, यहां झुठ नहीं है, कुत्सा (चरित्रहनन) नहीं है। ममता मोदी से कहती हैं कि वे अच्छे से तैयारी करके आएं ताकि उनका मजाक न उडे। मोदी राहुल को शहजादा कहते हुए या राहुल मोदी को चोर कहते हुए जितना मजाक नहीं उड़ाते, उससे सौ गुना तंज भरे लहजे में वह 'मोदी बाबू' कहती हैं। वह एक सांस में उन तमाम पूजाओं के नाम लेती हैं जो बंगाल में की जाती हैं। वह मोदी पर तंज करती हैं कि क्या उन्हें सरस्वती मंत्र आता है ? उसके बाद वह संस्कृत में इस मंत्र का उच्चारण करती हैं। मुस्लिमों समेत तमाम श्रोताओं का उत्साह देखते ही बनता है। इसके बाद वह खानपान का जिक्र करते

हुए कहती हैं, 'मोदी बाबू, अगर हम गुजरात जाते हैं तो ढोकला खाते हैं, तमिलनाडु में इडली, केरल में उपमा, बिहार में लिट्टी-चोखा, गुरुद्वारों में हलवा, पंजाब में लस्सी पीते हैं। आप लोगों को आदेश देते हो कि मछली-मांस और अंडा मत खाओ। गर्भवती महिलाओं को अंडा नहीं खाना चाहिए। मेरे भाई आप कौन हो यह आदेश देने वाले कि महिलाएं क्या खाएं, क्या नहीं?' वह कहती हैं कि देश को वही खाने को कहा जाता है जो मोदी खाते हैं, वह पहनने को कहा जाता है जो मोदी पहनते हैं, पूरा दिन उनको टीवी पर देखने को कहा जाता है। ममता कहती हैं, 'मैं सोचती थी कि वह निस्वार्थ आरएसएस प्रचारक हैं लेकिन खाकी निकर में परेड करने वाले आरएसएस के ये लोग अब पैंट पहनकर, ब्रीफकेस लेकर मॉल में घूमते हैं और करोड़ो कमाते हैं।' वह नोटबंदी को लेकर उन पर हमला करती हैं, लेकिन राफेल पर समय नहीं खराब करतीं। वह अंतिम प्रहार करते हुए कहती हैं, 'अभी कुछ समय पहले जो पार्टी भूखों मरती थी और दिन में तीन बार एक ही बीडी फुंकती थी, अब उसके पास अरबों की संपत्ति है।'

जनता की ओर से चौकीदार चोर है कि नारों के बीच वह कहती हैं कि इतना सब कुछ होने पर भी वे खुद को चौकीदार कहते हैं। पश्चिम बंगाल में कांग्रेस उनकी विरोधी

लिया है। सवाल यह है कि यह नारा एक राज्य की नेता के पास इतना प्रभावी क्यों लगता है जबिक कांग्रेस ने इसका अविष्कार किया और देश भर में प्रसार भी किया? ऐसा इसलिए कि शायद कांग्रेस को अभी भी मोदी और शाह की रणनीति को समझना है। अटल बिहारी वाजपेयी और आडवाणी के उलट ये दोनों जमीन पर जूझने वाले हैं और इससे पार्टी की प्रकृति बदल गई है। ऐसे लोगों से इन्हीं के तरीकों से निपटा जा सकता है। अगर मोदी और शाह ने 2019 के आम चुनाव के लिए जहरीली बातों और ध्रुवीकरण को अपना ब्रह्मास्त्र बनाया है, तो ममता बनर्जी भी उनको उनकी सीमाओं का अहसास करा रही हैं कि उनके 42 सीटों वाले राज्य में यह नहीं होगा।

किसी के लिए कहीं से अच्छी नहीं सेना और राजनीति की करीबी

वर्ष 2009 में जब युनाइटेड किंगडम में प्रधानमंत्री पद के आकांक्षी डेविड कैमरन ने घोषणा की थी कि पूर्व ब्रिटिश चीफ ऑफ जनरल स्टाफ, जनरल सर रिचर्ड डन्नाट को हाउस ऑफ लॉर्ड्स में भेजा जा रहा है तो इसकी सार्वजनिक आलोचना हुई थी। स्वयं कैमरन की पार्टी के लोगों ने आपत्ति की थी कि वरिष्ठ सैन्य अधिकारियों को दलगत राजनीति से दूर रखने की पुरानी परंपरा तोड़ी जा रही है। एक वरिष्ठ टोरी नेता ने द गार्जियन से कहा था, 'यह समझदारी नहीं है। डन्नाट बहुत अच्छे व्यक्ति हैं लेकिन उन्हें राजनीति का अनुभव नहीं है। उनके पास केवल सैन्य अनुभव है। सेना में उनके उत्तराधिकारी इसे लेकर क्या रुख अपनाएंगे?'

हमारे देश में पिछले दिनों जब रक्षा मंत्री निर्मला सीतारामन ने सात वरिष्ठ सैन्य अधिकारियों को सार्वजनिक समारोह में भाजपा में शामिल किया तब शायद ही किसी ने कुछ कहा। इन अधिकारियों में से एक लेफ्टिनेंट जनरल जेबीएस यादव ने कहा, 'मैं मानता हूं कि आम मान्यता यही है कि रक्षा बलों के सदस्य किसी राजनीतिक दल में नहीं जाएंगे लेकिन हर व्यक्ति का राजनीतिक विचार होता है...हम केवल हाशिए पर नहीं रह सकते।' इस माह के आरंभ में पूर्व सैन्य उप प्रमुख लेफ्टिनेंट जनरल शरद चंद को भी इसी प्रकार सत्ताधारी दल में शामिल किया गया। सेवा में रहने के दौरान उन्होंने रक्षा मामलों की स्थायी संसदीय समिति के समक्ष प्रस्तुत होकर कहा था कि सरकार सेना के पुराने उपकरणों को बदलने के लिए पैसा दे पाने में नाकाम रही है। अब सेवानिवृत्ति के एक वर्ष के भीतर वह कह रहे थे, सेना के लिए भाजपा जितना काम किसी ने नहीं किया। यह सही है कि सेना के अधिकारियों के राजनीति में आने में कोई कानूनी या विधायी बाधा नहीं है, न ही देश के सैन्य अधिकारी सैन्य परंपरा के मताबिक राजनीति से परहेज करते हैं। फिर भी कई पुराने सैन्य अधिकारियों को सक्रिय राजनीति में आने से एक किस्म का नैतिक परहेज है। वर्दी पहनने के दिन से ही उन्हें सिखाया जाता है कि वे इन चीजों से निरपेक्ष रहें। सैन्य अधिकारियों के मेस में दो विषयों पर चर्चा वर्जित थी, एक तो महिलाएं और दुसरी राजनीति। यही परंपराएं अब तक सेना को राजनीति से बचाती आई हैं।



दोधारी तलवार

यही कारण है कि पूर्व सैन्य

सेवा प्रमुखों समेत करीब 500

अजय शुक्ला

प्रतिष्ठित वरिष्ठ अधिकारियों ने राष्ट्रपति को याचिका देकर राजनेताओं द्वारा सैन्य कार्रवाइयों का श्रेय लेने की बयानबाजी पर नाराजगी प्रकट की। यहां तक कि सैन्य बलों को 'मोदी जी की सेना' तक कह दिया गया। मीडिया में ऐसी तस्वीरें आती रहीं जहां पार्टी कार्यकर्ता चुनावी मंचों और अभियानों में सैन्य वर्दी पहने नजर आए। यह सही है कि देश की रक्षा-सुरक्षा किसी भी सरकार का प्राथमिक कर्तव्य है। हर दल को अपने घोषणापत्र में रक्षा को लेकर विस्तृत जानकारी देनी चाहिए। यह बताना चाहिए कि शिक्षा और स्वास्थ्य सुविधा जैसे मदों से अत्यंत कम धनराशि के साथ वे सेना को किस तरह मजबूती देंगे। हकीकत में सरकारी व्यय के 16 फीसदी की खपत वाले क्षेत्र को लेकर गंभीर बहस के बजाय संभावित शत्रुओं को धमकाकर और शेखी बघारकर मतदाताओं के एक धड़े को संतुष्ट किया जाता है, जबिक संभावित शत्रुओं को रोकने के लिए कुछ खास उपाय नहीं किए जाते। यहां पर पूर्व सैन्यकर्मियों की अहम भूमिका हो सकती है। मसलन लेफ्टिनेंट जनरल डीएस हुडा ने राष्ट्रीय सुरक्षा नीति तैयार की जो कांग्रेस के घोषणापत्र में रक्षा से जुड़े भाग का हिस्सा है। हुडा ने किसी दल के बजाय अपना अनुभव देशहित में साझा करने की ठानी।

भारतीय सेना दशकों से संसाधनों के लिए जझ रही है और उसकी उपेक्षा होती रही है, उससे जुडे लोगों को राजनेताओं की सराहना के रूप में अचानक मिली चकाचौंध पसंद आ सकती है। ये सर्खियां छंटने के बाद सैन्यकर्मियों को अहसास होता है कि उनके हालात तो जस के तस हैं। अधिक बजट, आधुनिकीकरण, बेहतरीन हथियार आदि के वादे हवा हो जाते हैं। सरकार और रक्षा मंत्रालय हजारों सेवानिवृत्त अपंग सैन्य कर्मियों के संभावित लाभ की राह का रोड़ा बन जाते हैं। सैनिकों की बहादुरी के बखान

के बीच देश के राजनीतिक वर्ग द्वारा सेना को हाशिए पर रखने का आकलन बीते दो दशक में चुनाव मैदान में उतरे सैन्य कर्मियों के आधार पर किया जा सकता है। किंग्स कॉलेज लंदन में भारतीय मामलों के जानकार वाल्टर सी लैडविग ने लोकसभा में सैन्यकर्मियों के प्रतिशत की तुलना युके की संसद और अमेरिकी कांग्रेस के प्रतिशत से की है। सन 1970 के दशक में 70 फीसदी अमेरिकी कांग्रेस सदस्य सैन्यकर्मी थे। ऐसा वियतनाम युद्ध के समय अनिवार्य सैन्य सेवा के कारण हुआ। सन 1990 तक यह प्रतिशत गिरकर 50 फीसदी पर आ गया। आज, केवल 19 फीसदी अमेरिकी कांग्रेस सदस्य पूर्व सैन्यकर्मी हैं। यूके में यह आंकड़ा 8 फीसदी के आसपास है जबकि भारत में पहली से 14वीं लोकसभा तक केवल 2.4 फीसदी पेशेवर ही सदस्य बने। इनमें पुलिसकर्मी, पूर्व सैन्यकर्मी और डॉक्टर.

चुनाव आयोग के आंकड़े बताते हैं कि 1999 के आम चुनाव में 16 पूर्व सैन्य अधिकारियों को टिकट दिया गया था। 2004 में इनकी संख्या घटकर 10 रह गई और 2014 में दोबारा बढकर 16 हो गई। यह तादाद कुछ अधिक हो सकती है क्योंकि लैडविंग ने सदस्यों के नाम के साथ जुड़े सैन्य परिचय का इस्तेमाल किया। इसमें जनरल वीके सिंह जैसे लोग शामिल नहीं थे जिन्होंने अपनी रैंक का त्याग किया।

इंजीनियर जैसे पेशेवर थे।

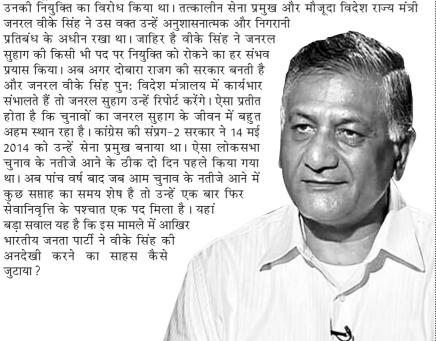
अराजनीतिक सैन्यकर्मियों के लिए आज अहम सवाल यह है कि क्या सेना का भगवाकरण हो रहा है ? याद रहे कि दुनिया भर की सेनाएं रुढ़िवादी होती हैं और उनमें भाजपा जैसे दल की ओर झुकाव की प्रवृत्ति होती है। चिंता की बात है, संघ परिवार द्वारा सैनिकों का देवताकरण। मीडिया इसमें सहायक है। सैन्य अधिकारियों का प्रयोग सरकार का नजरिया रखने के लिए किया जा रहा है या फिर आलोचकों को जवाब देने में। यह उचित नहीं। यह यरोपीय फासीवादी तरीका समाज, राजनीति और सेना किसी के लिए उचित नहीं। समय आ गया है कि सैन्य अधिकारी इससे दूरी बनाएं।

कानाफूसी

नियुक्ति की पहेली

पूर्व चीफ ऑफ आर्मी स्टाफ (सीओएएस) जनरल दलबीर सिंह सुहाग को पिछले दिनों सेशेल्स का राजदूत नामित किया गया। उन्हें उसी पार्टी ने यह पद सौंपा जिसने सीओएएस के रूप में उनकी नियुक्ति का विरोध किया था। तत्कालीन सेना प्रमुख और मौजूदा विदेश राज्य मंत्री

सुहाग की किसी भी पद पर नियुक्ति को रोकने का हर संभव प्रयास किया। अब अगर दोबारा राजग की सरकार बनती है और जनरल वीके सिंह पुन: विदेश मंत्रालय में कार्यभार संभालते हैं तो जनरल सुहाँग उन्हें रिपोर्ट करेंगे। ऐसा प्रतीत होता है कि चुनावों का जनरल सुहाग के जीवन में बहुत अहम स्थान रहा है। कांग्रेस की संप्रग-2 सरकार ने 14 मई 2014 को उन्हें सेना प्रमुख बनाया था। ऐसा लोकसभा चुनाव के नतीजे आने के ठीक दो दिन पहले किया गया था। अब पांच वर्ष बाद जब आम चुनाव के नतीजे आने में कुछ सप्ताह का समय शेष है तो उन्हें एक बार फिर सेवानिवृत्ति के पश्चात एक पद मिला है। यहां बडा सवाल यह है कि इस मामले में आखिर भारतीय जनता पार्टी ने वीके सिंह की अनदेखी करने का साहस कैसे जुटाया ?



आपका पक्ष

आचार संहिता के दौरान कामकाज

आचार संहिता के दौरान चुनाव कार्य में व्यस्तता का हवाला देकर सरकारी कर्मचारियों व अधिकारियों द्वारा आम जनता से संबंधित कार्यों के प्रति उदासीनता की खबरें आने लगी हैं। इस प्रकार की उदासीनता व लापरवाही उस समय चरम पर पहुंच जाती है जब मतदान संपन्न करा कर मतगणना की तिथि की प्रतीक्षा की जा रही होती है। ऐसा देखा जाता है कि अधिकारी अनुपस्थित रहते हैं या देर से कार्यालय आते हैं। अगर मीडिया में यह खबर आ जाए तो वरिष्ठ अधिकारी औचक निरीक्षण की औपचारिकता निभाते दिखते हैं। इस औचक निरीक्षण के दौरान भी अधिकारी अपने लापरवाह मातहतों का बचाव करते पाए जाते हैं। ऐसा नहीं है कि उच्च पदस्थ अधिकारी केवल आचार संहिता के दौरान ही ऐसा व्यवहार करते हैं, बल्कि ऐसा रवैया साल भर देखने को मिलता है। अक्सर देखा जाता है कि अधिकतर जिला स्तर



अधिकारियों द्वारा स्थानीय अाचार संहिता लागू होने के बाद जनप्रतिनिधियों को घंटों इंतजार कराया जाता है। जिले के सुदूरवर्ती क्षेत्रों के दौरे पर जाने वाले जनप्रतिनिधियों को उस दर्जे की सुविधाएं नहीं मिल पाती हैं। सरकारी अतिथि गृहों के कमरे की बुकिंग तक में नौकरशाहों व उनके परिजनों को प्राथमिकता दिए जाने

राज्य की मशीनरी चुनाव आयोग के पास चली जाती है

ग्राम पंचायत के प्रतिनिधियों की स्थिति नौकरशाहों के सामने बेहद दयनीय हो जाती है। अपने अधिकारों से अनिभज्ञ पंच, सरपंच की घटनाएं सामने आती रहती हैं। 🗄 पूरी तरह नौकरशाहों की कृपा पर

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

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

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

निर्भर देखे जाते हैं। पंचायती राज 🗄 सेना का परोक्ष हाथ हमेशा रहा है। 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। अनुशासन की याद दिलाने व जनता के प्रति संवेदनशीलता का व्यवहार सिखाने के किए प्रशासनिक अकादिमयों में उच्चाधिकारियों के लिए विशेष सत्र आयोजित करने चाहिए।

ऋषभ देव पांडेय. कोरबा

चीन और आतंकवाद

चीन ने आखिरकार मसूद अजहर को अंतरराष्ट्रीय आतंकी घोषित करने के प्रस्ताव से रोक हटा ही ली। मसूद अजहर और उसका आतंकवादी संगठन जैश ए मोहम्मद काफी समय से भारत में आतंकवादी गतिविधियों को अंजाम देता आ रहा है। उस पर पाकिस्तानी सरकार और

अब मसूद की गतिविधियों पर कुछ रोक लगेगी। 14 फरवरी को पुलवामा हमले में करीब 40 जवान शहीद हो गए थे। पूरे देश में मसूद अजहर के खिलाफ जन आक्रोश उमड़ पड़ा। सरकार ने भी विश्व समुदाय का ध्यान पाकिस्तान में पलते आतंकवाद की तरफ खींचा। विश्व समुदाय के दबाव में पाकिस्तान सरकार ने कुछ प्रतिबंध लगाने की बात कही। ये प्रतिबंध अंतरराष्ट्रीय समुदाय के आतंक के खिलाफ आक्रोश को शांत करने की एक चाल थी। चीन इस वस्तुस्थिति को जानता था लेकिन पाकिस्तान में अपने आर्थिक हितों के मद्देनजर मसूद को अंतरराष्ट्रीय आतंकवादी घोषित करने के प्रस्ताव के खिलाफ वीटो लगाता रहा। बालाकोट हमले के बाद चीन को अंतरराष्ट्रीय मंच पर अलग-थलग पड़ जाने का खतरा मंडराने लगा। इसलिए चीन ने पाकिस्तान के साथ मिलीभगत कर इस प्रस्ताव को मंजूरी दिलवाने में मदद की।

यह उम्मीद की जानी चाहिए कि



मर्यादा चरित्र का आभूषण है

सवालों के जवाब चाहिए

एक ऐसे समय जब हर आरोप का जवाब प्रत्यारोप से दिया जा रहा है तब यह हैरानी की बात है कि कांग्रेस इस आरोप पर मौन सा धारण किए है कि राहुल गांधी की पूर्व कंपनी के एक साझीदार ने एक रक्षा सौदे के तहत ऑफसेट अनुबंध हासिल किया था। मीडिया में इस आशय की खबरें आने के बाद वित्त मंत्री अरुण जेटली ने राहुल गांधी से जिन सवालों के जवाब मांगे उनके संतोषजनक जवाब सामने आने ही चाहिए। इसलिए और भी आने चाहिए, क्योंकि एक तो राहुल गांधी बिना किसी सुबूत राफेल सौदे के मामले में चौकीदार चोर है का शोर मचाने में लगे हुए हैं और दूसरे अभी तक इस सवाल का भी जवाब नहीं आ पाया है कि क्या उन्होंने ब्रिटेन की नागरिकता ली थी? इस सवाल के जवाब में यह कहने का कोई मतलब नहीं कि दुनिया जानती है कि राहुल गांधी भारत में ही पैदा हुए। सवाल यह नहीं है कि उनका जन्म कहां हुआ? सवाल तो यह है कि क्या उन्होंने कारोबार करने के उद्देश्य से ब्रिटेन की नागरिकता ली थी? कारोबार के सिलसिले में किसी भारतीय की ओर से किसी अन्य देश की नागरिकता लेने में हर्ज नहीं, लेकिन इस पर रहस्य का आवरण नहीं होना चाहिए। कम से कम उन्हें तो संशय को दूर ही करना चाहिए जो न केवल सार्वजनिक जीवन में हैं, बल्कि देश का प्रधानमंत्री भी बनना चाह रहे हैं। चंकि नागरिकता संबंधी सवाल का कोई ठोस जवाब सामने नहीं आया है इसलिए वह आरोप और गंभीर दिखने लगा है जो पहले मीडिया के एक हिस्से में आया और फिर जिसे वित्त मंत्री अरुण जेटली ने उछाला।

आरोपों के तहत राहुल गांधी ने पहले भारत में बैकप्स नामक एक कंपनी स्थापित की, जिसमें उनकी बहन प्रियंका भी साझीदार थीं। इसके बाद वह इसी नाम की कंपनी ब्रिटेन में स्थापित करते हैं। इसमें गोवा के एक कांग्रेसी नेता के दामाद साझीदार बनते हैं। राहुल के इन्हीं साझीदार की एक कंपनी को कुछ समय बाद फ्रांस के साथ हुए रक्षा सौदे में ऑफसेट अनुबंध हासिल हो जाता है। अगर वास्तव में ऐसा हुआ तो यह कई गंभीर सवालों को जन्म देता है। इन सवालों की गंभीरता इससे कम नहीं हो जाती कि 2009 में राहुल अपनी ब्रिटिश कंपनी से अलग हो जाते हैं। सार्वजनिक जीवन में सिक्रय लोगों के लिए यह ठीक नहीं कि वे दूसरों को तो सवालों के घेरे में खड़ा करें, लेकिन अपने जीवन से जुड़े सवालों पर मौन धारण कर लें। क्या यह अजीब नहीं कि राहुल राफेल विमान सौदे को लेकर तो बिना किसी प्रमाण उल्टे-सीधे आरोप उछालने में लगे हुए हैं, लेकिन जब वह स्वयं मनमोहन सरकार के समय हुए एक रक्षा सौदे से जुड़े सवालों से दो-चार हुए तो कुछ कहने की जरूरत नहीं समझ रहे हैं? शीशे के घर में रहने वालों को दूसरों के घर पत्थर उछालने के परिणाम से परिचित होना चाहिए। चूंकि राहुल राफेल सौदे में कथित गड़बड़ी को लेकर कुछ ज्यादा ही शोर मचा रहे हैं इसलिए उन्हें वित्त मंत्री के सवालों के जवाब आगे बढ़कर देने चाहिए। अगर वह ऐसा नहीं करते तो संदेह

हिंसा की आशंका

पश्चिम बंगाल में प्रथम चार चरणों के मतदान में जमकर हिंसा हुई। एक व्यक्ति बूथ के पास ही मारा गया था। चौथे चरण में सुरक्षा बढ़ाएँ जाने के बावजूद स्थिति नहीं बदली तो अब चुनाव आयोग ने पांचवें चरण में 100 फीसद बूथों पर केंद्रीय बल को तैनात कर दिया है। यह पहला मौका है कि किसी भी बूथ पर राज्य पुलिस की तैनाती नहीं है। यह सब हिंसा की आशंका के मद्देनजर किया गया है ताकि निष्पक्ष, निर्बाध और शांतिपूर्ण मतदान हो सके। पहले चरण में 50 फीसद, दूसरे चरण में 75 फीसद, तीसरे चरण में 85 फीसद और चौथे चरण में 99 फीसद बूथों पर केंद्रीय सशस्त्र बल की तैनाती हुई थी। इसके बावजूद निर्बाध एवं शांतिपूर्ण मतदान संभव नहीं हो पाया था। विशेष चुनाव पर्यवेक्षक और विशेष पुलिस पर्यवेक्षक तक को नियुक्त किया गया है। अब सोमवार को जब पांचवें चरण में सात सीटों की 13290 बूथों पर मत डाले जाएंगे, तब क्या स्थिति होती है, इस पर सब की निगाहें टिकी रहेंगी। वहीं दूसरी ओर इस चरण से तृणमूल कांग्रेस की भी असली परीक्षा शुरू हो रही है। इसकी वजह यह है कि अब तक चार चरणों में भाजपा, माकपा और कांग्रेस के कब्जे वाली क्रमशः दो-दो एवं चार सीटें थीं। बंगाल में अब तक 18 सीटों पर हुए मतदान में आठ सीटें विपक्षी दलों के पास थीं, जबकि 10 सीटें तृणमूल के पास। पांचवें चरण से तृणमूल के एकछत्र राज वाले संसदीय इलाकों में मतदान शुरू हो रहा है। ये संसदीय क्षेत्र काफी अहम हैं। ये सात सीटें ऐसी हैं, जहां हिंदीभाषी, जूट मिल श्रमिक एवं मतुआ निर्णायक भूमिका में हैं। हावड़ा जिले की दो सीटें हावड़ा सदर एवं उलबेड़िया, हुगली जिले की तीन सीटें हुगली, श्रीरामपुर एवं आरामबाग और उत्तर 24 परगना जिले की दो सीटें बैरकपुर एवं बनगांव के लिए मतदान होंगे। इन संसदीय क्षेत्रों के 1.16 करोड़ से अधिक मतदाता 83 प्रत्याशियों के भाग्य का फैसला करेंगे। एक तरफ तुणमूल पूरी ताकत लगा रही है, वहीं भाजपा भी पीछे नहीं है। माकपा एवं कांग्रेस भी जोर लगाए हुई हैं। ऐसे में टकराव की आशंका अधिक है। यही वजह है कि हुगली जिले की सभी बूथों को संवेदनशील घोषित कर दिया गया है। जम्मू-कश्मीर के बाद बंगाल में ही मतदान के दौरान बूथों पर रिकॉर्ड केंद्रीय बलों की तैनाती हैं, क्योंकि यहां एक भी चरण बिना हिंसा के समाप्त नहीं हुई है।

वैचारिक दुराग्रह से पीड़ित वामपंथी



हृदयनारायण दीक्षित

येचुरी की मार्क्सवादी दृष्टि में रामायण-महाभारत में हिंसा है, लेकिन उन्हें इन महाकाव्यों में विश्व को एक परिवार मानने वाला दर्शन नहीं दिखाई पडता

सा और करुणा समतुल्य नहीं हैं। बेशक गाय और हिंसक शेर दोनों ही पशु हैं, लेकिन मातृवत गाय और हिंसक शेर की तुलना नहीं हो सकती। खलील जिब्रान ने ठीक लिखा था कि 'मेंढक बैलों की अपेक्षा भले ही अधिक शोर कर लें, लेकिन वे न तो खेतों में हल खींच सकते हैं और न ही कोल्हू के चक्र को हिला सकते हैं।' तुलना हमेशा समतुल्यों के बीच ही होती है, लेकिन मार्क्सवादी नेता सीताराम येचुरी ने हिंसक पंथिक विचारधारा की तुलना उदारचित्त हिंदू मानस से की। उन्होंने कहा कि 'यह कहना गलत है कि हिंदू हिंसा में विश्वास नहीं करते। रामायण और महाभारत जैसे महाकाव्य हिंसा से भरे हैं।' येचुरी के बयान पर तीखी प्रतिक्रिया हुई है। रामायण और महाभारत भारतीय राष्ट्रजीवन के उदात्त उद्देश्यों से भरे हैं। येचुरी मार्क्सवादी हैं। मार्क्सवाद की अपनी विवेचन दृष्टि है। येचुरी अपनी स्थापना के लिए स्वतंत्र भी हैं, लेकिन भारतीय संस्कृति और दर्शन को समझने में उन्होंने ऐतिहासिक गलती की है। वामपंथी हमेशा ऐतिहासिक गलतियां करते रहे हैं इसीलिए विलुप्तप्राय होते जा रहे हैं। वाल्मीकि रचित रामायण और व्यास की महाभारत में हिंसा की पक्षधरता नहीं है। यहां युद्ध की अपरिहार्यता में ही युद्ध हैं। ऐसे युद्ध लोकमंगल का राष्ट्रधर्म हैं।

वामपंथ का इतिहास हिंसा से भरा है। येचुरी की मार्क्सवादी दृष्टि में रामायण-महाभारत में हिंसा है। उन्हें इनमें विश्व को एक परिवार जानने वाला दर्शन नहीं दिखाई पड़ता, लेकिन वरिष्ठ मार्क्सवादी चिंतक डॉ. रामविलास शर्मा को ऐसा दिखाई पड़ता है। वह 'भारतीय संस्कृत और हिंदी प्रदेश' में लिखते हैं 'रामायण ऐसे युग की रचना है जब मनुष्य स्वतंत्र है। वाल्मीकि में जगह-जगह उदात्त स्वर सुनाई देता है। उसका रहस्य यही है। मनुष्य को अपने ऊपर विश्वास है। विपत्तियां परिस्थितियों के कारण उत्पन्न होती हैं। इन्हें वह नियति कहता है। परंतु नियति कोई देवता नहीं है।' वह लिखते हैं, ऐसा धर्मनिरपेक्ष काव्य शायद ही किसी और ने लिखा हो।' डॉ. शर्मा 'रामायण' को 'धर्मनिरपेक्ष' काव्य बताते हैं। 'महाभारत' भी ऐसा ही है। इसकी रचना दीर्घकाल में हुई है। जीसी पाण्डेय ने 'द महाभारत रिविजिटेड' में बताया है कि यह लगभग 800 ईसा पूर्व से लेकर 200 ईसवी तक हजार साल की अवधि में फैला हुआ है।' यह अवधि और पीछे भी संभव है। इसमें ऋग्वेद की प्रेमपूर्ण परंपरा, उपनिषदों का अद्वैत दर्शन व हड़प्पा की सभ्यता है। उदात्त जीवनमूल्य हैं। महाभारत यथार्थवाद

महाभारत का मूल स्वर हिंसा विरोधी है। हिंसा का जैसा विरोध 'महाभारत' में है, वैसा अन्यत्र नहीं है। भारत भूमि की प्रशंसा में कवि कहता है, 'यह भूमि देवों और मनुष्यों की इच्छाएं पूरी कर सकती है, लेकिन जैसे कुत्ते मांस के लिए परस्पर लड़ते हैं, एक दूसरे को नोचते हैं उसी प्रकार राजा इस पृथ्वी को भोगने के लिए लड़ते हैं, लेकिन आज तक किसी की कामनाओं की पूर्ति नहीं हुई।' युधिष्ठिर युद्ध के बाद आहत थे। उन्होंने अर्जुन से कहा, 'हमने बंधु-बांधवों को मरते हुए देखा है। अब तीनों लोकों का राज्य देकर



भी कोई संतुष्ट नहीं कर सकता। जैसे मांस लोभी कुत्तों को अशुभ ही मिलता है, उसी प्रकार राज्य आसक्ति में हम लोगों को भी अनिष्ट मिला है।' महाभारत के शांति पर्व के अनुसार विचार-विमर्श का स्थान 'सभा' है। सभा की शक्ति दुर्बल है। यहां सभा को जीवंत बनाने के प्रयास भी हैं। सभा में किसानों का प्रतिनिधित्व कम रहा होगा। व्यास की घोषणा है, 'जो खेती नहीं करता उसे सभासद होने का अधिकार नहीं।' सभा में उत्पात भी थे। जुआ सभा भवन में हुआ था। विदुर ने सभा का विशेषाधिकार बताया, 'सभा के उत्पात का 25 प्रतिशत दोष उत्पत्तियों का, 25 प्रतिशत दोष मौन रहने वालों का और आधा दोष सभाध्यक्ष का है। सभा जैसी संस्थाओं में सुधार के प्रयास भी

बेशक रामायण-महाभारत के कथानक में हिंसा है, लेकिन दोनों महाकाव्यों के नायकों पर युद्ध थोपे गए हैं। रामायण के महानायक श्रीराम की पत्नी सीता का हरण हुआ था। श्रीराम ने तब भी दूत भेजा। रावण ने सीता को मुक्त नहीं किया। श्रीराम क्या करते ? युद्ध टालने के प्रयास असफल हो गए तब युद्ध हुआ। यह पंथिक युद्ध नहीं था। रावण शिव उपासक था तो श्रीराम भी।

श्रीराम रावण पर अपना धर्म नहीं थोप रहे थे। आधुनिक विश्व पंथिक दुराग्रहों को लादने वाली कट्टरपंथी हिंसा की चपेट में है। पंथ थोपने की हिंसा और पत्नी मुक्ति के प्रयासों में हुई हिंसा तुलनीय नहीं है। महाभारत का युद्ध पारिवारिक संपदा को हडपने वाले कौरवों व अपने हिस्से से भी कम लेने को तैयार पांडवों के बीच था। कौरव पांडवों के धार्मिक विश्वास, कुल, वंश एक थे। इनमें कोई पंथिक कट्टरवादी नहीं था। इसकी तुलना पंथिक दुराग्रहों वाली हिंसा से कैसे हो सकती है? येचुरी भी पांडवों का पक्ष सही मानते रहे हैं। उन्होंने कुछ समय पहले अपने पक्ष को पांडव व भाजपा को कौरव बताया था। यों उनका नाम 'सीताराम' रामायण का ही प्रसाद है।

दर्शन और विज्ञान के सामने झुठे तर्क नहीं टिकते। कार्ल मार्क्स ने अपने शोध की भूमिका में डेविड ह्यूम को उद्धृत किया है 'दर्शन की सत्ता को स्वीकार किया जाना चाहिए। यह उसका अपमान है कि वह अपने निष्कर्षों के लिए क्षमा याचना करें।' भारत के उदात्तवादी दर्शन को कट्टरपंथी पंथिक हिंसावादियों के सामने जवाबदेह नहीं बनाया जा सकता। रामायण-महाभारत पेरक महाकाव्य हैं। मार्क्सवादी डॉ

शर्मा के अनुसार 'महाभारत इतिहास है, आख्यान है। वह वीर काव्य है। यूरोप और भारत में अनेक वीर काव्य लिखे गए हैं। किसी भी वीर काव्य में दार्शनिक विचारों का ऐसा तानाबाना आदि से अंत तक नहीं फैला हुआ है जैसा महाभारत में है।' महाभारत के भीष्म पर्व की गीता विश्व दर्शन को भारत का अप्रतिम उपहार है। शांति पर्व में युधिष्ठिर व भीष्म के प्रश्नोत्तरों में अर्थशास्त्र समाजशास्त्र, राजव्यवस्था आदि के विवरण हैं। यक्ष प्रश्न लोकायत दर्शन की जिज्ञासा हैं 'वसुधैव कुटुंबकम' महाभारत की ही उदात्त घोषणा है। यहाँ युद्ध का ध्येय भी लोकमंगल है। पंडित नेहरू ने 'डिस्कवरी ऑफ इंडिया में लिखा है, 'हिंदुस्तान के दो बड़े महाकाळ रामायण और महाभारत शायद कई सदियों में तैयार हुए। मैं दुनिया की किसी ऐसी पुस्तक नहीं जानता, जिसने जनता के दिमाग पर इतना व्यापक प्रभाव डाला हो, जितना इन दो पुस्तको ने डाला है।' क्या हिंसा के कारण? या अपनी उपादेयता के कारण? नेहरू जी ने रामायण पर फ्रांसीसी इतिहासकार मिशले की टिप्पणी का हवाला भी दिया है- 'पश्चिम में सभी चीजें तंग और संकरी हैं। यूनान का विचार करते समय मेरा दम घुटता है। मुझे पूरब की ओर देखने दो वहां है मेरे मन का महाकाव्य। हिंद महासागर जैसा विस्तृत, मंगलमय। कशमकश के बीच यहां मिठास भरा भाईचारा है।' नेहरू लिखते है 'रामायण बहुत बड़ा ग्रंथ है। महाभारत दुनिया की खास पुस्तकों में एक है। इसमें हिंदुस्तान की मौलिक एकता पर जोर देने की निश्चित कोशिश है।' हिंसा के बारे में वह लिखते हैं 'अहिंसा की कल्पना का संबंध ध्येय से था। इसका मतलब यह नहीं था कि जरूरी हो तब भी हिंसा नहीं करनी चाहिए।' गांधी का विचार भी यही था। पाकिस्तान ने युद्ध थोपे और हम लड़े तो क्या हिंसक कहे जाएंगे? हिंसा का अपना औचित्य है, लेकिन उदारता राष्ट्र जीवन का श्रेयस्कर मुल्य है।

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स्वार्थ सिद्धि का साधन बना समाज

ऐसा क्यों है कि भारत का मुस्लिम समाज आज भी उसी दिशा भ्रम का शिकार है, जैसे 1940 से 1947 के बीच था। विभाजन के समय भारत की 10 करोड़ की तत्कालीन मुस्लिम आबादी लगभग बराबर-बराबर तीन हिस्सों में बंट गई। पाकिस्तान बनने के बाद 3.4 करोड़ मुसलमानों ने भारत में रहना तय किया। एक प्रश्न यह भी है कि 1946 में पाकिस्तान के साथ खड़े लोग 1947 में अचानक हिंदुस्तानी कैसे हो गए? बिहार, बंबई, मद्रास, उड़ीसा, यूपी जैसे राज्य तो किसी भी दशा में पाक का हिस्सा नहीं हो सकते थे। फिर इन्होंने पाकिस्तान का समर्थन क्यों किया था? एक मजहबी जवाब तो यह बना कि इससे भारत की कम से कम दो-तिहाई मुस्लिम आबादी तो हिंदुओं के आधिपत्य से मुक्त होकर दारुल इस्लाम का हिस्सा हो सकी। बाकी जद्दोजहद अभी जारी है। जैसा कि गजवा-ए-हिंद की हदीसें हमसे कह चुकी हैं। दूसरा जवाब यह है कि पाकिस्तान के जुनून से बाहर आने के बाद यह अहसास हावी हुआ कि हमारा सब कुछ तो यहीं है। यहीं बरेलवी का मरकज है, यहीं निजामुद्दीन औलिया, अजमेर शरीफ की दरगाहें हैं। व्यावहारिक पक्ष भी आया कि हमें हिजरत से मिलना क्या है? यहां नेहरू, मौलाना आजाद और गांधी जी थे, जिनसे उम्मीदें लग गई थीं। यह अहसास भी होने लगा कि भारतीय राष्ट्रवाद के धर्मनिरपेक्ष स्वरूप के विकास में मुसलमान गुजरे इतिहास को पीछे छोड़कर बराबर के भागीदार होंगे। समतावादी सोशलिस्ट आंदोलन में मस्लिम भागीदारी अच्छी-खासी थी। नई पीढी की सोच में मजहबों की जगह अमीरी-गरीबी विमर्श आने से ऐसा लगने भी लगा कि खालिस हिंदू-मुस्लिम सोच का दौर गुजर चुका है। कांग्रेस धर्मनिरपेक्षता, समाजवाद के लिए खड़ी थी, इसलिए उसे वोट देना जायज भी था, लेकिन समय के साथ कांग्रेस नेतृत्व आजादी के दौर की अपनी वैचारिकता, नैतिकता के उच्च प्रतिमानों से नीचे उतर आया। प्रत्येक सफलता अपनी बर्बादी के बीज भी साथ लेकर चलती है।

नेहरू जी ने वर्ष 1959 में प्रयास करके इंदिरा गांधी को कांग्रेस अध्यक्ष बनवाया। दुर्गादास की पुस्तक 'फ्रॉम कर्जन टू नेहरू' में आया है कि नेहरू ने इंदिरा जी को बतौर वारिस प्रमोट करने का कार्य शुरू कर दिया था। लालबहादुर शास्त्री जी ने कलदीप नैयर से कहा भी था कि नेहरू जी की दिष्ट में उनके बाद उनकी पुत्री ही हैं। परिवार की सत्ता का बीजारोपण हो चुका था। शास्त्री जी की असामयिक मृत्यु के बाद नेतृत्व इंदिरा जी के हाथों में आया। 1967 के चुनावों, फिर 1969 में कांग्रेस विभाजन के बाद इंदिरा गांधी को वामपंथी दलों की बैसाखी पर एक मजबूर सरकार चलानी पड़ी। मुस्लिम वर्ग जो परंपरागत कांग्रेस के वोटर रहे थे, ने अन्यत्र भी



मुस्लिम समाज को वोट बैंक बने रहने पर मजबूर किया गया। इससे प्रगति की दौड़ में यह तबका लगातार पिछड़ता गया



संभावनाएं तलाशनी प्रारंभ की। फतवों का भी महत्व बढा और अल्पसंख्यक समाज एक वोट बैंक जैसा आकार लेने लगा। अल्पसंख्यकों को बताया जाना आम हो गया कि तुम्हारे हित दूसरे हैं, तुम्हें हिस्सेदारी नहीं मिली है। वही जानी-पहचानी जिन्ना के दौर की बातें दोहराई जाने लगीं। प्रगतिशील मुस्लिम नेतृत्व को दरिकनार कर मुस्लिम समाज को वोट बैंक बनाने और इस्तेमाल होने के लिए मजबूर किया गया। सच्चर कमेटी गवाह है कि प्रगति की दौड़ में मुस्लिम पीछे छूट रहे थे।

कंप्यूटर और कुरान के नारे ने सोच कितनी बदली है, यह अभी सामने नहीं आया है। चिंता यह है कि कट्टरता की ओर बढ़ रहे कदम अगर नहीं रुके तो वोट बैंक से आगे का रास्ता हमें कहां ले जाएगा? एक वर्ग है जो राष्ट्रीयता की सोच को अपशब्द समझता है। भारत का उप-राष्ट्रीयता में बिखर जाना ऐसे रणनीतिकारों का लक्ष्य मालूम पड़ता है। इन विभाजनकारी रणनीतिकारों ने नए साथी तलाश करने प्रारंभ किए हैं। जातीय, क्षेत्रीय, वंशवादी सोच मात्र सत्ता आकांक्षी होती है, उनका कोई भारतीय स्वप्न नहीं होता। उन नेताओं का इस्तेमाल यह वोट बैंक अब अपने लिए कर रहा है। कतिपय दलित एवं पिछड़ी जातियों के साथ एक मजबूत इत्तिहाद की सूरत उभर रही है। यह मोर्चा पाकिस्तान के प्रति नरम है। वे किसी भी कीमत पर प्रधानमंत्री मोदी से मुक्ति चाहते हैं। क्षेत्रीय, जातीय, वंशवादी नेता इस वोट बैंक के सहारे सत्ता के सपने देख रहे हैं। इस आकलन के बाद प्रश्न यह है कि क्या मुस्लिम नौजवान वोट बैंक की इस गिरफ्त से

के मुकाबले बहुत बढ़े हुए हैं। नए रास्ते खुल रहे हैं। फिर भी धर्म पर खतरे की नारेबाजियां भी जारी हैं। कहा गया कि मजहब पर खतरा है। धर्म पर खतरे पाकिस्तान जैसे देशों में होते हैं, जहां हिंदू लड़िकयों को जबर्दस्ती उठाकर धर्म परिवर्तन करा लिया जाता है। हिंदू धर्म में तो यह व्यवस्था तक नहीं बनाई गई। किसी ने दूसरे धर्म में विवाह कर लिया तो खुद उसे जाति/धर्म से बाहर होने की नौबत आ जाती है। भला ऐसा धर्म किसी मजहब के लिए खतरा कैसे बनेगा? अल्पसंख्यक समाज अगर बदल रहे वक्त के साथ आगे आता है तो देश को फर्क पड़ता है। चिंताएं हैं कि कहीं विकास की दौड़ में वे इतने पीछे न छूट जाएं कि कल भारत के भविष्य का हिस्सा ही न बन पाएं।

जहां कोई खतरा नहीं है, वहां खतरा देखना एक समस्या है। दुसरा, सशक्त एकीकृत भारत को लेकर अनायास का संशय है। ऐसी ही कृत्रिम समस्याओं से जिन्ना ने पाकिस्तान का माहौल बनाया था। कहा गया था कि हिंदू और मुसलमान दो अलग कौमें हैं। 6.5 करोड़ लोग तो इस्लामिक पाकिस्तान का हिस्सा बने। जो यहां रह गए, उनकी जिम्मेदारी बहुत बड़ी थी। उस जिम्मेदारी का निर्वहन वोट बैंक बनकर तो नहीं होना था। उन्हें तो भारत के लिए बहुसंख्यकों से भी बढकर प्रतिबद्ध होना था। उन्हें क्या जरूरत पड गई कि सत्ता आकांक्षी, जातीय, क्षेत्रीय, वंशवादी वर्गी को साथ लेकर बिखराव की पटकथा लिखी जाए? दुर्भाग्य है कि आज यह वोट बैंक उन लोगों का मंच बन रहा है, जो सत्ता की भागीदारी का स्वप्न दिखाकर दलित-पिछड़े समाज और वंशवादियों का इस्तेमाल कर रहे हैं। इस 'टुकड़े-टुकड़े गैंग' की पूरी मोर्चेबंदी सत्ता में नियंत्रक भूमिका में आने की है। हम सबने इस एजेंडे की प्रतिध्वनियां सुनी हैं। कश्मीर इनके लिए कोई मुद्दा नहीं है, ये धारा 370 के धुर समर्थक हैं, ये सेनाओं के घोर विरोधी हैं। इन शक्तियों के संयुक्त मोर्चे की इस रणनीति का परिणाम क्या होगा ? क्या ये वही चाहते हैं, जो आज पश्चिम एशिया में हो रहा है? विचारों, रणनीतियों, समाजों की कोई राजनीतिशास्त्रीय प्रयोगशाला नहीं होती, जहां प्रयोगों से यह परिदृश्य प्रदर्शित किया जा सके। लोकतंत्र में तात्कालिकता प्रभावी होती है, भविष्यवादी आकलन नहीं होता। यह समस्या बनी रहेगी, जब तक भारतीय सपनों का एक साझा संसार नहीं बनता, भारतीय राष्ट्रवाद की दिशा में मुस्लिम समाज का प्रस्थान नहीं होता। यह दायित्व हमारे अल्पसंख्यक समाज के विचारशील बुद्धिजीवियों का है।

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अध्यात्म

जिससे मनुष्य के मन को शांति मिले, वही सच्चा अध्यात्म है। अध्यात्म का अर्थ है अपने भीतर के तत्व को जानना मनन करना और दर्शन करना। अध्यात्म हमारी संस्कृति की परंपरागत विरासत है। भारत के सिद्ध-साधक संतों ऋषि-मुनियों के चिंतन का निचोड़ है अध्यात्म। नैतिकता और पवित्र जीवन मूल्य बने रहें और साथ ही यदि हम नकारात्मक विचारों से बचते रहें तो यही अध्यात्म है। 'अध्यात्म' एक छोटा शब्द है, लेकिन इसके पीछे जो भावना निहित है, वह अत्यंत ही महान और व्यापक है जीवन में शाश्वत मूल्यों की रक्षा करना, राष्ट्रीय हितों एव परोपकार के लिए सदैव तत्पर रहना ही अध्यात्म है।

अज्ञात परमतत्व की खोज, स्वयं का परम बोध करन ही अध्यात्म है। स्थूल से सूक्ष्म की परिधि से केंद्र की ओर बढ़ना ही अध्यात्म है। परमात्मा अध्यात्म को मनुष्य के मूल में रखकर इस शरीर में भेजता है। जीवन को सुचार रूप से चलाने की वैज्ञानिक विधि भी अध्यात्म ही है। अध्यात्म में गोता लगाकर मनुष्य नर से नारायण बन सकता है अपनी सोई हुई इंद्रियों को जागृत कर सकता है। जीवन जीने की कला भी मनुष्य अध्यात्म से ही सीख सकता है अध्यात्म मानव जीवन के चरमोत्कर्ष की आधारशिला है। वस्तुतः यह मानवता का मेरुदंड है। अध्यात्म सीमाओ से परे है। अध्यात्म के अभाव में मानव जीवन में सुख की परिकल्पना नहीं की जा सकती है। मनुष्यता को बचाए रखने के लिए, अनगिनत समस्याओं के समाधान के लिए अध्यात्म औषधि है। जीवन में सफलता का मूल मंत्र जान पाना, अध्यात्म के बिना असंभव है। आध्यात्मिकता का समावेश कर हम अपने परिवार, समाज और राष्ट्र को उत्तरोत्तर उन्नति के पथ पर अग्रसर कर सकते हैं। अध्यात्म सुख से ही जीवन में सारे दुखों का अंत संभव है। स्वय का विवेचन, स्वयं के अंतस का अध्ययन ही अध्यात्म है।

आध्यात्मिकता के मार्ग में सही दिशा निर्देशन का विशेष महत्व है। जिस प्रकार से विज्ञान के छात्र गलत सम्मिश्रणों का यदि प्रयोग करते हैं तो मिश्रण ही नष्ट हो जाता है या लेबोरेटरी ही प्रयोग के उपयुक्त नहीं रह जाती है। उसी प्रकार शरीर रूपी प्रयोगशाला को अध्यात्म का निर्देशन सही तरीके से मिल सके, यह नितांत आवश्यक है अध्यात्म अनंत तक पहुंचने की एक अंतर्यात्रा है।

शंभुनाथ पांडेय

सोशल मीडिया की दुनिया

मुझ जैसी महिला के लिए हर रोज सुबह एक नई मुसीबत लेकर आती है। आप पूछेंगे कि ऐसा क्या हैं जो रोज आती है! सुबह नाश्ते में क्या बनेगा और दिन में खाने में क्या बनेगा? यह एक चिंता तो वाजिब ही है, क्योंकि इस चिंता से हर महिला गुजरती है, लेकिन मेरी दूसरी चिंता भी साथ-साथ ही चलती है कि लैपटॉप पर क्या पकाया जाए और पाठकों को क्या परोसा जाए? राजनीति पर लिखो तो वह कढ़ी जैसी होती है, कब बासी हो जाए और कब बासी कढ़ी में उफान आ जाए? सामाजिक मुद्दे पर क्या लिखें, लोग कहने लगे हैं। कि समाज माय फुट ! परिवार तो मैं और मेरा बुद्धा में ही सिमट गया है! रोज-रोज न खिचड़ी बनती है और न ही मटर-पुलाव बनाया जाता है। कल एक मित्र ने लिख दिया कि मुड़-मुड़कर ना देख, मुड़-मुड़कर। अब हमारी उम्र तो मुड़-मुड़कर देखने की ही है, आगे देखते हैं तो पैरों के नीचे से धरती खिसक जाती है तो पीछे देख लेते हैं, और कभी हंस देते हैं और कभी दो बूंद आंसू बहा लेते हैं। आज का सच तो यह है कि वास्तविक दुनिया लगातार हमसे कुछ न कुछ छीन रही है और यह फेसबुकीय दुनिया जिसे देख तो सकते हैं, लेकिन छू नहीं सकते हैं, बहुत कुछ दे जाती है। कभी ऐसे लगता है कि हम क्रिकेट खेल रहे हैं। बल्ला हमारे

वास्तविक दुनिया लगातार हमसे कुछ न कुछ छीन रही है वहीं यह फेसबुकीय दुनिया बहुत कुछ दे जाती है

हाथ में है। दुनिया के समाचार रूपी बॉल हमारे पास आती है और हम झट से बैट संभाल लेते हैं। कभी बॉल एक रन दे जाती है तो कभी चार और कभी पूरे छह। कभी ऐसा भी होता है कि किसी ने बॉल पकड़ ली और जोर से दे मारी विकेट पर। हम आऊट तो नहीं हुए, लेकिन सामने वाले का गुस्सा टिप्पणी के रूप में हमारे विकेट को उड़ाने की हिम्मत कर लेता है। कभी प्यार से ही हमें कैच कर बैठता है तो कभी पास खड़ा विकेटकीपर ही हमारी गिल्लियां उड़ा देता है। कभी कोई ताली बजा देता है तो कभी कोई शाबासी दे देता है। कोई ऐसा भी होता है जो मन ही मन खुंदक खाता रहता है कि इसका खेल एक दिन चौपट जरूर करूंगा। तो सोशल मीडिया की इस दुनिया में आसान

कुछ नहीं है। कब अपने ही दूर हो जाते हैं और

कब दूर के लोग नजदीक आ जाते हैं। जानते किसी को भी नहीं, लेकिन लड़ भी पड़ते हैं और लड़ा भी लेते हैं। जिन्हें जानते हैं वे तो दूरी बनाकर ही चलते हैं और बेगाने लोग नजदीक आ जाते हैं। हमसे कुछ लोग पूछ लेते हैं कि क्या करते हो ? हम क्या बताएं कि हम क्या करते हैं! कह देते हैं कि कुछ-कुछ पकाते हैं। लोग समझ लेते हैं कि महिला हैं तो खाना ही पकाती होंगी, उन्हें क्या पता कि मैं और क्या पका रही हूं! लेकिन उनका काम भी चल गया और हमारा भी। आज भी जब कुछ पकाने का नहीं था तब भी हमने आपको पकाने का सामान ढूंढ़ ही लिया है। कहते हैं कि जब पकाने को कुछ न हो तो पत्थर की भी सब्जी बना दो, बस मसाले भरपूर हों तो स्वाद आ ही जाता है। अरे, अरे, मैंने क्या लिख दिया ! पत्थर की सब्जी, नहीं बाबा, पत्थर के लड्डू पर तो ममता दीदी का अधिकार है, भला मैं पत्थर की कोई चीज कैसे पका सकती हूं! माफ करना, लेकिन एक आराम तो हो गया हम जैसी गृहणियों को, कंकड़ अगर निकल आए दाल में तो कह देंगे कि ममता दीदी की है, हमारी नहीं। सुना है कि दाल भी आजकल फेसबुकियों का पसंदीदा

(अजित गुप्ता का कोना ब्लॉग से साभार)

दूरदर्शी नीति की दरकार

पाकिस्तान पर दबाव बढ़ाने की जरूरत शीर्षक से लिखे अपने लेख में संजय गुप्त ने आतंकी मसूद अजहर को संयुक्त राष्ट्र सुरक्षा परिषद द्वारा अंतरराष्ट्रीय आतंकी घोषित किए जाने को भारत की बड़ी कामयाबी माना है एवं पाकिस्तान पर और अधिक दबाव बढ़ाए जाने पर विशेष बल दिया है। भारत द्वारा 2009 से लगातार जैश ए मुहम्मद के सरगना मसूद अजहर को अंतरराष्ट्रीय आतंकवादी घोषित करने पर बल दिया जाता रहा है. लेकिन अब जाकर कामयाबी हासिल हुई है। अभी तक चीन को छोड़कर लगभग सभी देशों की सहमित भी थी, लेकिन अब चीन के दृष्टिकोण में भी परिवर्तन आया है। मोदी सरकार द्वारा सर्जिकल स्ट्राइक करना तो ठीक है, लेकिन उसका आवश्यकता से अधिक प्रचार-प्रसार करना और चुनावी मुद्दा बनाकर लाभ लेने की कोशिश समझ से परे है। मोदी सरकार यदि यह मानती है कि सर्जिकल स्ट्राइक आतंकवाद का स्थायी हल है तो यह उसका भूल ही है, क्योंकि ऐसा यदि होता तो पुलवामा हमला ही नहीं होता। अब एयर स्टाइक के बाद जरूरी नहीं कि आतंकी घटना को अंजाम नहीं देंगे। जरूरत इस बात की है कि आतंकवाद के स्थायी हल पर विचार किया जाए और यह पाकिस्तान के साथ बातचीत द्वारा ही संभव है, क्योंकि पाकिस्तान द्वारा पोषित आतंकवाद से परेशान भारत ही नहीं, बल्कि श्रीलंका समेत कई अन्य देश भी हैं। इसके स्थायी हल हेतु हमें आंतरिक सुरक्षा को बहुत ही चुस्त दुरुस्त करना होगा, जरूरत पड़े तो रक्षा बजट में भी अपेक्षित बढ़ोतरी करनी होगी। साथ ही आतंकवाद पर भारत की स्पष्ट नीति हो, जो सरकार बदलने पर भी जारी रहे, क्योंकि यह राष्ट्रीय सुरक्षा का मामला है।

सर्वजीत आर्या, कन्नौज, उत्तर प्रदेश

मेलबाक्स

पानी का संकट

वोट का अधिकार

मई महीने की शुरुआत में ही बढ़ते तापमान के साथ देश के कुछ भागों में जल संकट और सूखे के संकेत मिलने लगे हैं। महाराष्ट्र की डेढ़ सौ तहसीलें सूखे से प्रभावित बताई जा रही हैं और उत्तर भारत के कुछ हिस्से भी जल संकट की गिरफ्त में हैं। इसी बीच जहां एक ओर मानसून पूर्व मार्च-अप्रैल में होने वाली बारिश में 27 फीसद की कमी देखी गई, वहीं आने वाले मानसून पर अल-निनो का संकट बताया जा रहा है जिसके चलते सामान्य से लगभग 4 फीसद कम बारिश के आसार हैं। भारत में विश्व की 18 फीसद आबादी रहती है और उसके लिए उपलब्ध जल स्नोत विश्व की तुलना में सिर्फ 4 फीसद ही है। परिणामतः 2018 की नीति आयोग की रिपोर्ट कहती है कि हम 2030 तक एक गंभीर जल संकट की ओर बढ़ रहे हैं। ऐसे में बड़ा सवाल यह है कि पानी की उपलब्धता और उसके खपत के बीच की खाई को कैसे भरा जाए? इस संकट से निपटने के लिए सबसे पहले उपलब्धता प्रबंधन से ज्यादा उपयोगिता प्रबंधन पर ध्यान देना होगा। नागरिकों में जागरूकता लाने के साथ-साथ उन पर पानी के सीमित उपयोग के लिए दबाव बनाना होगा। चूंकि करीब 80 फीसद पानी कृषि सिंचाई में उपयोग होता है ऐसे में सूखे और पानी की मार झेल रहे राज्यों के किसानों को कम पानी वाली फसलें उगाने के लिए प्रोत्साहित करना होगा।

संजय दुबे, नई दिल्ली

राजनीति में सक्रिय भागीदारी प्रजातंत्र का आधार है। भारत जैसे

देश में इसका और भी महत्व है, ताकि योग्य जनप्रतिनिधियों का चुनाव हो सके। लेकिन दुर्भाग्य से बहुत से शिक्षित लोग भी लाइनों में लगने से बचते हैं और मताधिकार का प्रयोग नहीं करते हैं। इसका नतीजा होता है कि गलत लोग चुनकर आ जाते हैं। राजनीति में सही लोगों का चुनाव हो, इसके लिए हर किसी को अपना वोट डालना चाहिए।

हरगोपाल तनेजा, सोनीपत

नकारात्मक राजनीति

आचार संहिता के नीति-नियमों के पालन में राजनीतिक पार्टियां बिल्कुल भी खरा नहीं उतरना चाहतीं। सत्ता की महत्वाकांक्षा में जनप्रतिनिधियों की बयानबाजी एक-दूसरे को नीचा दिखाने में निकृष्टम स्तर तक आ गई है। यह नकारात्मक राजनीति की पराकाष्ट्रा है, जिसमें सकारात्मक राजनीति सर्वथा विलुप्त ही हो गई है। सस्ती लोकप्रियता के लिए नेता विवादास्पद बयान देते हैं। यहां तक कि उन्हें चुनाव आयोग का भय भी नहीं है भारतीय राजनीति में जन आदर्श बनने वाले नेताओं का अभाव देश के लिए अच्छा संकेत नहीं है।

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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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आतंक के खिलाफ

श ए मोहम्मद के सरगना मौलाना मसूद अजहर के वैश्विक आतंकी घोषित होने के बाद भारत ने आतंकवाद के खिलाफ लड़ाई में अगला कदम बढ़ाते हुए संयुक्त राष्ट्र से आतंकवाद के मुद्दे पर वैश्विक सम्मेलन बुलाने को कहा है। भारत की यह मांग प्रासंगिक है और सम्मेलन की जरूरत को रेखांकित करती है। इस वक्त दुनिया के ज्यादातर देश किसी न किसी रूप में आतंकवाद के शिकार हैं और इसकी भारी कीमत चुका रहे हैं। रोजाना बड़ी संख्या में निर्दोष नागरिक मारे जा रहे हैं, बेघर हो रहे हैं, अरबों-खरबों की संपत्ति का नुकसान हो रहा है, शरणार्थी के रूप में दूसरे देशों में शरण ले रहे हैं। आतंकवाद अब कितना भयावह रूप ले चुका है, यह किसी से छिपा नहीं है। पश्चिम एशिया तो लगता है आतंकवाद का केंद्र ही बन गया है। लेकिन दुख की बात है कि संयुक्त राष्ट्र जैसी वैश्विक संस्था आतंकवाद के मुद्दे पर ऐसा कुछ नहीं कर पा रही है जिससे इस समस्या से निपटने के लिए ठोस और सर्वमान्य निष्कर्ष पर पहुंचा जा सके और पीड़ित देश मिल कर मुकाबले की रणनीति बना सकें। इसकी बड़ी वजह यह है कि संयुक्त राष्ट्र के सदस्य देशों में ही खेमेबाजी है और खासतौर से सुरक्षा परिषद के स्थायी सदस्य भी ऐसी समस्या से निपटने के लिए एकजूट नहीं हो पाते। वे अपने हितों में उलझे पड़े हैं।

दो महीने पहले न्यूजीलैंड और पिछले महीने श्रीलंका में हुए हमले बता रहे हैं कि आतंकवाद ने किसी देश को नहीं छोड़ा है। न्यूजीलैंड की मस्जिदों पर हमले स्तब्ध कर देने वाले थे। श्रीलंका में बौद्ध व मुसलिम समुदाय में टकराव होते रहे हैं, लेकिन ये संघर्ष वैसी गंभीर चुनौती नहीं बने थे जैसे पिछले महीने ईस्टर के मौके पर गिरजाघरों को निशाना बनाया गया। यह साफ हो चुका है कि श्रीलंका में इस आतंकी हमले के पीछे इसलामिक स्टेट (आइएस) का हाथ था और इसे न्यूजीलैंड के हमले का बदला बताया जा रहा था। हाल में अमेरिका के कुछ शहरों में यहूदी धर्म स्थलों पर हमले हुए, पहले भी होते रहे हैं। अमेरिका अलकायदा का सबसे बड़ा आतंकी हमला झेल चुका है। यूरोप का शायद ही कोई देश बचा हो जहां आतंकी हमले न हुए हों। ऐसे में क्यों नहीं आतंकवाद पीड़ित देशों को मिल-बैठ कर रणनीति बनाने पर विचार करना चाहिए!

भारत ने अंतरराष्ट्रीय आतंकवाद पर वैश्विक सम्मेलन बुलाने के लिए एक दस्तावेज संयुक्त राष्ट्र में 1986 में पेश किया था। लेकिन दुर्भाग्य यह रहा कि सदस्य राष्ट्रों के बीच आतंकवाद की परिभाषा को लेकर एक राय नहीं बन पाई और यह प्रस्ताव लागू नहीं हो पाया। आठवें दशक में भारत ने पंजाब में आतंकवाद की पीड़ा झेली थी। पंजाब में आतंकवाद अलग खालिस्तान की मांग को लेकर शुरू हुआ था, और इसके पीछे पाकिस्तान का हाथ था। इसके बाद कश्मीर में आतंकवाद का दौर शुरू हुआ जो आज तक कायम है। लेकिन तब दुनिया के देश भारत के साथ इसलिए नहीं आ रहे थे क्योंकि वे खुद आतंकवाद से त्रस्त नहीं थे। हकीकत यह है कि आतंकवाद से निपटने के लिए दुनिया के असहाय देश जिन बड़े अधिकार-संपन्न देशों की ओर देखते हैं और उनसे उम्मीदें लगाते हैं वही दुनिया में आतंकवाद पनपाने के लिए जिम्मेदार भी हैं। पाकिस्तान दुनिया में आतंकियों का सबसे बड़ा ठिकाना है, यह जानते हुए भी अमेरिका और चीन उसके हमदर्द हैं। दरअसल वैश्विक राजनीति में आतंकवाद को हथियार के रूप में इस्तेमाल करना कुछ देशों की रणनीति का हिस्सा ही है। ऐसे में संयुक्त राष्ट्र कर भी क्या सकता है!

शिहरें संभालने के मामले में हमारे देश में प्रायः उदासीनता ही दिखाई देती है। निजी संपत्तियों से लेकर सार्वजनिक इमारतों तक के मामले में यही आलम है। हिंदी फिल्म जगत में इतिहास रचने वाला आरके स्टूडियो का बिक जाना इसकी ताजा मिसाल है। आरके स्टूडियो की स्थापना अभिनेता, फिल्म निर्माता राज कपूर ने पाई-पाई जोड़ कर की थी। इस स्टूडियो में अनेक नामचीन फिल्मों का फिल्मांकन हुआ। सिने दर्शकों में इस स्टूडियो को लेकर एक भावनात्मक लगाव था। मगर व्यावसायिक दबाव और बदलते जमाने की कारोबारी होड़ में यह स्टूडियो अपने हाल पर बिसूरता रहा। राज कपूर के न रहने के बाद उनके बेटे और दूसरे परिजन इसकी देखभाल नहीं कर पाए। काफी समय तक कपूर खानदान की बहू जेनिफर नाटकों का आयोजन कर इस स्टूडियो की विरासत को बचाए रखने का प्रयास करती रहीं, पर वे भी विफल रहीं। एक टीवी कार्यक्रम की शूटिंग के दौरान स्टूडियो में आग लगी और आखिरकार कपूर परिवार ने इसे बेचने का फैसला किया। अब उस पर गोदरेज समूह का स्वामित्व हो गया है। गोदरेज कंपनी वहां आलीशान रिहाइश और कारोबार केंद्र बनाएगी।

इस जमाने में जब मुंबई फिल्म निर्माण का बड़ा केंद्र है, फिल्मों का कारोबार काफी बढ़ चुका है। इसमें तकनीक का भरपूर उपयोग होने लगा है। बहुत सारे फिल्मकार जगह न मिलने के कारण मुंबई से बाहर फिल्मांकन के लिए जगह तलाश करते हैं। अगर आरके स्टूडियो को बदलते समय के अनुसार कारोबार की तरह विकसित किया जाता, तो आज उसकी यह दशा न होती, जो हुई है। मगर राज कपूर के वारिस अभिनय और दूसरे जरिए से अपने जीवन-यापन करते रहे, स्टूडियो की विरासत को बचाए रखने को लेकर उदासीन ही देखे गए। कुछ पेचीदगियां इसके स्वामित्व को लेकर भी थीं, पर उन्हें सुलझाना कठिन नहीं माना जा सकता। दूसरे, इसे संभालने में आर्थिक तंगी भी बड़ा कारण नहीं हो सकता था। आजकल फिल्म स्टूडियो बनाने, संभालने के लिए आसानी से कर्ज उपलब्ध हो जाता। बस, जरूरत थी तो इसे कारोबारी शक्ल देने की, जो कपूर खानदान नहीं दे पाया। काश, इसे कोई ऐसी कंपनी लेती, जो उसकी गरिमा को अक्षुण्ण रख पाती। वहां रिहाइशी और कारोबारी केंद्र बनने से स्टूडियो की पहचान तो खत्म ही हो जाएगी। दूसरे अनेक देशों में ऐसी विरासतों को संभालने में सरकार भी दखल देती है, मगर हमारे यहां ऐसी कोई रीति–नीति नहीं है। इसी का नतीजा है कि निजी प्रयासों से बने ऐसे कई ठिकाने बिला गए।

ऐतिहासिक महत्त्व की निजी संपत्तियों को राष्ट्रीय स्मारक के रूप में विकसित करने के सरकारी प्रयास की तो क्या उम्मीद की जाए, सरकारें खुद अपने यहां मौजूद ऐतिहासिक महत्त्व के भवनों, जगहों, रमारकों आदि को संरक्षित नहीं कर पातीं। भारत में पर्यटन के क्षेत्र में अपार संभावनाएं हैं, पर उसे ध्यान में रख कर न तो ऐतिहासिक महत्त्व की चीजों को सहेजने का कोई उत्साहजनक प्रयास दिखता है, न उनके बारे में विश्व स्तर पर प्रचार-प्रसार का कोई जतन। अब ऐतिहासिक महत्त्व की इमारतों की साज-संभाल की जिम्मेदारी निजी कंपनियों को सौंपने का एक नया चलन शुरू हुआ है। लाल किला इसका ताजा उदाहरण है। ऐसे में निजी प्रयास से बनी मशहूर जगहों-भवनों को बचाने में भला सरकारी दखल की क्या बात की जा सकती है। ऐसी जगहें सिर्फ सजावट की वस्तु नहीं होतीं, वे अपने जमाने का इतिहास भी होती हैं। इसलिए इस मामले में व्यावहारिक नीति पर विचार की जरूरत से इनकार नहीं किया जा सकता।

कल्पमधा

उचित अवसर के अभाव में योग्यता का मूल्य बहुत कम रह जाता है। -नेपोलियन

विदेश व्यापार घाटे की चुनौती

जयंतीलाल भंडारी

अब यह जरूरी है कि सरकार निर्यात को प्रभावित करने वाले मुद्दों पर ध्यान दे, जैसे- अन्य देशों की गैर शुल्कीय बाधाएं, मुद्रा का उतार-चढ़ाव और सेवा कर। तुलनात्मक रूप से कम उपयोगी आयात पर कुछ नियंत्रण करना होगा। जबकि निर्यात की नई संभावनाएं खोजनी होंगी।

छिले वित्त वर्ष (2018-19) में देश के आयात बिल जिस तरह बढ़ा है उससे विदेश व्यापार घाटे का ग्राफ चढ़ता दिखाई दे रहा है। हाल में वाणिज्य एवं उद्योग मंत्रालय ने पिछले वित्त वर्ष 2018-19 से संबंधित भारत के विदेश व्यापार के आंकड़े जारी किए हैं। इनके मृताबिक वर्ष 2018-19 में भारत का निर्यात नौ फीसद बढ़ कर तीन सौ इकतीस अरब डालर पर पहुंच गया। यद्यपि निर्यात का यह रिकॉर्ड स्तर है, लेकिन निर्यात के साढ़े तीन सौ अरब डालर के लक्ष्य से कम ही है। इसी तरह पिछले वित्त वर्ष में देश का आयात भी करीब नौ फीसद बढ़ कर पांच सौ सात अरब डालर मूल्य का रहा। ऐसे में पिछले वित्त वर्ष 2018-19 के दौरान व्यापार घाटा बढ कर करीब एक सौ छिहत्तर अरब डालर के रिकार्ड स्तर पर रहा, जो वर्ष 2017-18 में 162 अरब डालर था।

हालांकि चीन से पिछले वित्त वर्ष में व्यापार घाटे में

कमी आई है, लेकिन इससे देश के बढ़ते हुए विदेश व्यापार घाटे के कम होने के मद्देनजर अधिक असर नहीं दिखा है। हाल में प्रकाशित भारत-चीन व्यापार के आंकड़ों के मुताबिक 2018-19 में भारत और चीन के बीच द्विपक्षीय व्यापार करीब अट्टासी अरब डालर रहा। यह बात महत्त्वपूर्ण है कि पहली बार भारत, चीन के साथ व्यापार घाटा दस अरब डालर तक कम करने में सफल रहा है। भारत का व्यापार घाटा करीब बावन अरब डालर रहा। पिछले कई वर्षों से चीन के साथ लगातार बढ़ता व्यापार घाटा भारत के लिए बड़ी चुनौती बन गया था। चीन के बाजार तक भारत की अधिक पहुंच और अमेरिका व चीन के बीच चल रहे मौजुदा व्यापार युद्ध के कारण पिछले वर्ष भारत से चीन को निर्यात बढ़ कर अठारह अरब डालर पर पहुंच गया, जो वर्ष 2017-18 में तेरह अरब डालर था। इतना ही नहीं, चीन से भारत का आयात भी छिहत्तर अरब डालर से कम होकर सत्तर अरब डालर रह गया।

वर्तमान में चीन भारतीय उत्पादों का तीसरा बड़ा निर्यात बाजार है। चीन से भारत सबसे ज्यादा आयात करता है। दोनों देशों के बीच 2001-02 में आपसी व्यापार महज तीन अरब डालर था जो 2018-19 में बढ़ कर करीब अट्ठासी अरब डालर पर पहुंच गया। चीन से भारत मुख्यतः इलेक्ट्रिक उपकरण, मशीनी सामान, कार्बनिक रसायन उत्पाद आदि आयात करता है। वहीं भारत से चीन को मुख्य रूप से खनिज, ईंधन और कपास आदि का निर्यात किया जाता है। पिछले एक दशक के दौरान चीन ने भारतीय बाजार में तेजी से अपनी पैठ बढ़ाई है। लेकिन 2018-19 में पहली बार चीन से होने वाले आयात में कमी आई। यह भारत-चीन व्यापार को रेखांकित करने वाला नया तथ्य है। भारत ने पिछले महीने ही चीन

के साथ द्विपक्षीय कारोबार में व्यापार घाटे को कम रूस, श्रीलंका, ताइवान, दक्षिण कोरिया और थाईलैंड करने के लिए तीन सौ अस्सी उत्पादों की सूची चीन को भेजी है, जिनका चीन को निर्यात बढाया जा सकता है। इनमें मुख्य रूप से बागवानी, कपड़ा, रसायन और औषधि क्षेत्र के उत्पाद शामिल हैं।

इसमें कोई दो राय नहीं कि इस समय देश के व्यापार घाटे के सामने एक बड़ी चुनौती अमेरिका की ओर से आती दिखाई दे रही है। अमेरिकी राष्ट्रपति डोनाल्ड ट्रंप ने कहा है कि भारत ने अमेरिकी वस्तुओं पर अन्यायपूर्ण तरीके से आयात शुल्क लगाए गए हैं। अब अमेरिका भी भारत को विभिन्न प्रकार की निर्यात संबंधी रियायतों पर नियंत्रण करेगा। अमेरिका जल्द ही भारत को दी गई प्राथमिकताओं की सामान्यीकरण

प्रणाली (जीएसपी) का दर्जा समाप्त कर सकता है। अमेरिका से मिली व्यापार छूट के तहत भारत से किए जाने वाले करीब 5.6 अरब डालर यानी चालीस हजार करोड़ रुपए के निर्यात पर कोई शुल्क नहीं लगता है। अमेरिका द्वारा भारत से आयात को दी जा रही तरजीही बंद करने से भारत में कपड़े, रेडीमेड कपड़े, रेशमी कपड़े, प्रसंस्करित खाद्य पदार्थ, फुटवियर, प्लास्टिक के उत्पाद, इंजीनियरिंग उत्पाद, हाथ के औजार, साइकिल के पूर्जों जैसी संबंधित औद्योगिक इकाइयों के सामने बड़ा संकट खड़ा हो गया है। इन उद्योगों की मुश्किलें बढ़ने से इनमें कार्यरत हजारों लोगों के सामने नौकरियां जाने का खतरा भी खड़ा है।

चूंकि इस समय देश से निर्यात बढ़ाने और व्यापार घाटा कम करने की डगर पर कुछ और चुनौतियां भी दिखाई दे रही हैं। इन चुनौतियों में सबसे बड़ी चुनौती पिछले दिनों यूरोपीय यूनियन, चीन, जापान, कनाडा,



ने अमेरिका के साथ मिल कर विश्व व्यापार संगठन (डब्ल्यूटीओ) में भारत की निर्यात संवर्धन योजनाओं के खिलाफ प्रस्ताव पेश किया है। इसमें कहा गया है कि अब भारत अपने निर्यातकों के लिए सब्सिडी योजनाएं लागु नहीं कर सकता, क्योंकि ऐसा करना डब्ल्यूटीओं के समझौते का उल्लंघन है।

निश्चित रूप से निर्यात परिदृश्य पर दिखाई दे रही मुश्किलों को दूर करना होगा। भारतीय निर्यातकों के संगठन फियो (फेडरेशन ऑफ इंडियन एक्सपोर्टर्स ऑर्गनाइजेशन) का कहना है कि भारत के मुकाबले कई छोटे–छोटे देश मसलन– बांग्लादेश, वियतनाम् थाईलैंड जैसे देशों ने अपने निर्यातकों को भारी सुविधाएं देकर भारतीय निर्यातकों के सामने कड़ी प्रतिस्पर्धा खड़ी कर दी है। निर्यातकों को वस्तु एवं सेवाकर (जीएसटी) में रिफंड संबंधी जो कठिनाई आ रही है, उसे दूर किया जाना होगा। निर्यात को प्राथमिकता वाले क्षेत्र में शामिल किया जाना चाहिए और सभी निर्यातकों के लिए ब्याज सब्सिडी बहाल की जानी चाहिए। सरकार द्वारा निर्यात वृद्धि के दीर्घकालिक प्रयासों के तहत निर्यात कारोबार का कमजोर बुनियादी ढांचा सुधारे जाने की जरूरत है। खासतौर से समुद्री व्यापार से संबंधित बुनियादी ढांचे पर विशेष ध्यान देना होगा। विभिन्न क्षेत्रीय कारोबारी समूहों और मुक्त व्यापार समझौतों के क्षेत्र में पूरा नियंत्रण हासिल करना होगा। सार्क देशों- श्रीलंका, बांग्लादेश, भूटान, मालदीव और अफगानिस्तान को भारतीय निर्यात बढ़ने की संभावनाएं हैं। ब्राजील, रूस, चीन और दक्षिण अफ्रीका में भी निर्यात बढ़ने की संभावना है। इसी तरह म्यांमा और मलेशिया सहित आसियान देशों को भी निर्यात बढ सकते हैं।

अब यह जरूरी है कि सरकार निर्यात को प्रभावित करने वाले मुद्दों पर ध्यान दे, जैसे-अन्य देशों की गैर शुल्कीय बाधाएं, मुद्रा का उतार-चढ़ाव और सेवा कर। तुलनात्मक रूप से कम उपयोगी आयात पर कुछ नियंत्रण करना होगा। जबकि निर्यात की नई संभावनाएं खोजनी होंगी। इस समय भारत-चीन के बीच व्यापार बढ़ने और भारत से चीन को निर्यात बढ़ाने का जो नया परिदृश्य दिखाई दे रहा है, उसका भरपूर लाभ लिया जाना चाहिए। चीन को निर्यात बढ़ाने के लिए हमें चीन के बाजार में भारतीय सामान की पैठ बढ़ाने के लिए उन क्षेत्रों को समझना होगा, जहां चीन को गुणवत्तापूर्ण भारतीय सामान की दरकार है। गुणवत्तापूर्ण उत्पादों के मामले में भारत चीन से बहुत आगे है। देश से कृषि निर्यात की नई

संवादहीनता के खतरे

आलोक रंजन

र्मारे विद्यालय में सौर ऊर्जा से बिजली प्राप्त करने वाले उपकरण लगाए जा रहे थे। इस कारण पूरे परिसर में जगह जगह से काटने, ठोकने-पीटने की आवाजें आ रही थी। वे वही दिन थे जब बोर्ड की परीक्षाएं चल रही थी। वह समय विद्यार्थियों के गहन अध्ययन का होता है। ऐसे में इस तरह की आवाजें उनका ध्यान भटका रही थीं। उनमें से एक छात्रा मेरे पास आई। उसे उन आवाजों से परेशानी हो रही थी। एक को शिकायत करते देख बाकी विद्यार्थियों ने भी बोलना शुरू कर दिया। मैं इसे उनसे ही हल करवाना चाह रहा था। मैंने खिड़की की पास बैठी एक छात्रा से कहा कि वहां खड़े नजदीकी व्यक्ति को बोलो कि तुमलोगों को पढ़ने में दिक्कत हो रही है, इसलिए वे इस काम को अभी बंद कर दें और बाद में करें जब विद्यार्थी न हों। उस छात्रा के मुंह से एक शब्द नहीं निकल पाया। मैंने दूसरी छात्रा से कहा, तो उसका भी वही हाल। पूछने पर पता चला कि वे समझ नहीं पा रही हैं कि काम करने वाले लोगों को क्या कह कर संबोधित करें!

मेरे लिए यह नई बात थी। यह संबोधन के शब्द के न होने का मामला भर नहीं था, बल्कि बात अनजान पुरुषों को कैसे संबोधित किया जाए, उसकी थी।

पिछले दिनों दिल्ली के एक कैफे में भी यही बात देखने को मिली। वहां ज्यादातर कर्मचारी लड़िकयां थी। उन सबके दोपहर के भोजन का समय था, सो दो लड़िकयां हमारे पीछे की खाली

टेबल पर आकर बैठ गईं। दुनिया मेरे आगे और खाने लगी। थोड़ी देर बाद काउंटर पर काम कर रही एक लड़की ने उनकी ओर किसी बात के लिए इशारा किया। वे दोनों खाने में मशगूल थीं। मुझसे नहीं रहा गया तो मैंने पीछे मुड़ कर उन्हें बता दिया कि काउंटर से आप लोगों के लिए कोई संदेश है। मैं उन्हें बोल कर मुड़ा ही था कि मेरे दोस्तों ने मुझे ऐसे देखा जैसे मैंने कोई बहुत बड़ा अपराध कर दिया हो। उनकी बातों का मतलब यह था कि लड़िकयों से ऐसे बात नहीं करनी चाहिए। मुझे अपनी छात्राएं याद आ गईं। उनके लिए सवाल अनजान पुरुषों से बात करने का था

और यहां अनजान लड़िकयों से। वे तय नहीं कर

पा रही थीं कि वे कैसे बात करें और यहां मैंने

कर ली तो यह ठीक नहीं माना गया।

असल में यह समस्या बहुत गहरी है। अपने देश में विपरीत लिंग के व्यक्ति से बात करने का नजरिया सहज नहीं है। परिवार से लेकर विद्यालयों तक में इसका प्रशिक्षण नहीं दिया जाता। लड़िकयों के मामले में बात बहुत ही अलग तरह से काम करती है। उन्हें अनजान लड़कों या पुरुषों से बात न करना सिखाया जाता है। इसकी अपनी वाजिब वजहें हैं।

पुरुषों के प्रति भय-मिश्रित संकोच सामान्य रूप से पाया जाता है। आगे यही और अलग-अलग तरीकों से काम करता है। पुरुषों से सीधे-सीधे बात करने वाली स्त्री को समाज स्वस्थ दृष्टि से नहीं स्वीकार करता है। लोग उन्हें कई निकृष्ट विशेषण से संबोधित करने से नहीं चूकते। वहीं पुरुषों से बात न करने वाली और शरमाते-सकुचाते हुए बात करने वाली स्त्री

इससे उनके मन में अनजान

को 'सुशील' स्त्री माना जाता है। समाज की इस मानसिकता को समझने के लिए हमें कहीं और जाने की जरूरत नहीं है। अपने आसपास नजरें फिराते ही यह दिख जाता है। लडकों की बात करें तो हमारा समाज इस मामले में काफी

अजहर पर शिकंजा

१ रत के हर शहीद जवान के लिए प्रत्येक भारतीय के सीने में जो आग धधक रही थी, उसे थोड़ी राहत मिली है। हाल ही में पुलवामा में सीआरपीएफ के चालीस जवानों को मार दिया गया था। इस घटना के बाद पूरा देश तिलमिलाया हुआ था कि आतंकी मसूद अजहर को शिंकजे में लाया जाए। आखिरकार भारत अपनी इस कूटनीति में कामयाब हुआ और संयुक्त राष्ट्र ने आतंकी मसूद अजहर को वैश्विक आतंकी घोषित कर दिया है। मसुद अजहर को वैश्विक आतंकी घोषित करने के लिए संयुक्त राष्ट्र की सुरक्षा समिति के सदस्य देशों अमेरिका, ब्रिटेन, फ्रांस लगातार कोशिश कर रहे थे, लेकिन बार-बार चीन इस पर वीटो लगा दे रहा था। लेकिन अब उसने अंतराष्ट्रीय दबाव पड़ने के बाद इस बार वीटो नहीं किया और मसुद अजहर को वैश्विक आतंकी घोषित करने में साथ खड़ा हुआ। अगर इसे एक सियासी नजरिए से देखा जाए तो चुनाव के समय में आतंकवाद पर इतनी बड़ी करवाई कहीं न कहीं प्रधानमंत्री के पक्ष में है। अब उम्मीद की जानी चाहिए कि आतंकवाद के खिलाफ जंग में भी चीन और अमेरिका भारत का इसी तरह संथईन करेंगे और पाकिस्तान पर दबाव बनाएंगे ताकि वह वांछित अपराधियों को भारत के हवाले करे।

• शिवानी पटेल, कानपुर

वंशवाद से मुक्ति

आज भारतीय राजनीति की सबसे बडी विडंबना यही है कि यहां राजनीति में आने का मकसद जन समस्याओं का समाधान या देशहित नहीं, बल्कि अकृत धन संचय और अपने को समाज के एक

आम नागरिक, पुलिस और प्रशासनिक अधिकारियों कर दिए गए। ऐसा कदम तो कल्याणकारी राज्य से भी बहुत ज्यादा शक्ति-संपन्न बनाना भी है। के स्थान पर पूंजीवादी व्यवस्था की ओर बढ़ने का भारत में नेताओं को बहुत ही ठाठबाट, ठसक और संकेत है। लोगों की बुनियादी आवश्यकताओं में जेड सुरक्षा के साथ ऐश्वर्यशाली जीवन जीने की शामिल शिक्षा, स्वास्थ्य, सुरक्षा के संदर्भ में आदत पड़ गई है। इसलिए यहां कुछ अपवादों को छोड दें तो लगभग सभी राजनीतिक दलों के नेता अपने परिवार को राजनीति जैसे 'व्यवसाय' में लाना चाहते हैं। भारतीय राजनीति का एक दुखद पहलू यह भी है कि 1947 के स्वतंत्रता संग्राम में जो राजा-रजवाड़े इस देश के खिलाफ अंग्रेजों का साथ दे रहे थे, वे सभी आज सांसद, विधायक, मंत्री, मुख्यमंत्री

सरकारी नियंत्रण कम से कम होता जा रहा है। दुसरी ओर व्यक्ति अपने जीवन पर राज्य का कम से कम हस्तक्षेप तो चाहता है, लेकिन जीवन रक्षा के संदर्भ में राज्य से उसकी प्रासंगिकता की मांग करती है। राज्य और सरकार का निर्माण इसलिए हुआ ताकि वह जनता के टैक्स के

बदले उसको न केवल स्वतंत्रता

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

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

और राज्यपाल आदि पदों पर बैठ कर इस देश के कथित नियंता बने हुए हैं। चूंकि यहां की जनता अधिकांशतः अशिक्षित है और जाति, धर्म जैसे खांचों में बंटी हुई है, इसलिए फिलहाल भारतीय राजनीति से 'परिवारवाद' की बुराई समाप्त होने की उम्मीद कम ही है। फिर भी जनता जैसे-जैसे जागरूक होती जाएगी, वही इस वंशवाद और परिवारवाद की बुराई का शमन भी करेगी।

• निर्मल कुमार शर्मा, गाजियाबाद सरकार और जिम्मेदारी

दिनोंदिन बढ़ रही जनसंख्या के साथ-साथ नौकरियों की संख्या बढ़ने की भी जरूरत थी। लेकिन सरकार में तो कई प्रकार के पद ही समाप्त

सुरक्षा देगी, बल्कि विकास के तमाम अवसर मुहैया करा कर व्यक्ति के अस्तित्व संवर्धन के साथ-साथ सर्वांगीण विकास में मददगार होगी। लेकिन हकीकत के धरातल पर जनसंख्या के अनुपात में सरकार शिक्षक भी मुहैया नहीं कराती, जिसका परिणाम आधे-अधूरे विकास के रूप में सामने आता है। इसी तरह जनसंख्या के अनुपात में चिकित्सकों की बहाली नहीं की जाती। जबकि दिनों दिन बीमार और बीमारियों की संख्या में तेजी से वृद्धि हुई है। इसके अलावा सुरक्षा हेतु पुलिस प्रशासन की स्थापना की गई, लेकिन आम लोगों के मन में पुलिस के प्रति कैसी कैसी छवि है, यह जगजाहिर है।

• मिथिलेश कुमार, भागलपुर