

CHATTERBOX

Foes or friends?



From friends to enemies at one fell swoop? Telangana Chief Minister K Chandrasekhar Rao thought that the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) was a friendly ally till the Lok Sabha elections, when BJP candidates defeated his daughter and sitting MP Kavitha in Nizamabad and his trusted aide B Vinod Kumar in Karimnagar. Speaking to his newly elected Lok Sabha members in Hyderabad earlier this week, he is said to have observed: “We are neither friends nor enemies with the BJP. They don’t need our support as they have sufficient strength in the Lok Sabha, so expect them to be lukewarm to our demands or requests.”

BJP’s Telangana unit President K Laxman has added to the growing distance between the two groups. After a meeting with Amit Shah in Delhi earlier this week, Laxman is said to have commented that the BJP would definitely come to power in the state in 2023. “Now our focus is on Telangana and we will make every effort to capture power from TRS,” Laxman told reporters.

It hasn’t helped that KCR wanted to meet Prime Minister Narendra Modi to invite him for the inauguration of the Kaleswaram irrigation project and was ready to come to Delhi, except that Modi’s office communicated that the PM had no time to meet the Telangana CM. KCR was so annoyed that he called off his Delhi tour altogether and as a result, skipped the NTTI Aayog meeting of chief ministers as well.



OPINION
SHAKTIKANTA DAS

Role of central bank is important, crisis or no crisis

Though there is no unique solution to these policy issues confronting the global economy, we could clearly draw three broad inferences:

- First, the central banks’ role is important, both during normal as well as crisis times. While mandates for the central banks broadly remain same during both the periods, weightage attached to competing objectives and the choice of policy instruments become crucial in the crisis periods.
- Second, communication by the central banks is very important that may be different in crisis times than in normal times. Not only it helps convey decisions in a more transparent way, it also signals the present and future policy stance of the central banks. In fact, unconventional monetary policy measures undertaken by the central banks during the crisis period worked mainly through the confidence and signaling channels. The US Federal Reserve’s statement on December 16, 2008 provided a clear forward guidance for the markets. On the other hand, only a mere hint of monetary policy normalisation by the US Fed (popularly known as taper tantrum) in May 2013 triggered portfolio outflows from some emerging market economies (EMEs). This led to high volatility in equity, debt and currency markets. In fact, such market volatilities in EMEs could have been avoided through clear advance communication.

In the Indian context, the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) communicates its monetary policy decisions in terms of changes in the policy repo rate and stance based on an assessment of the current and evolving macroeconomic situation. The stance of the monetary policy is communicated as neutral, accommodative or calibrated tightening in consonance with the mandate of achieving the medium-term inflation target of 4 per cent ± 2 per cent, while keeping in mind the objective of growth. The RBI’s approach to communicate the policy stance is to explain it with rationale, information and analysis to enable market participants and stakeholders to have better clarity.

■ Third, the global financial crisis was also a testimony to the fact that coordination of policies both at the global and domestic level is important for macro-financial stability. It is only through better coordination between the central banks and between monetary and fiscal authorities in the domestic sphere that adverse consequences of spillovers and spillbacks could be contained. The fact remains that as most policy makers have domestic mandates, international cooperation may be hard to engender if international outcomes militate against domestic policy preferences. Therefore, success of coordination depends on deft calibration of policies by major stakeholders.

Issues in the current context

Even after more than a decade of global financial crisis and six years after taper-tantrum, the global economy is still not on a stable growth path. Following an upward swing in 2017, there has been growing evidence that global growth and trade is weakening. Unsettled trade tensions and developments around Brexit are imparting further downside risks to the outlook. While signs of weakening world industrial production and trade volume were discernible in early 2019, other business confidence indicators have also dampened in many OECD countries. Taking cognisance of these factors, projections of world growth for 2019 have been revised down by the IMF, World Bank and the OECD in their latest assessments.

While the global economy is still to recover to the pre-crisis growth path, India has continued to exhibit robust growth driven by consumption and investment demand in the last three years. However, we have seen a loss of speed in the second half of 2018-19 as some drivers of growth, notably investment and exports, slowed down. On the supply side, activity in agriculture and manufacturing moderated sharply. It is expected that the end of political uncertainty associated with an election season and continuation of economic reforms would lead to a reversal of the current weaknesses in some of the indicators in our economy.

To reinvigorate growth by improving investment climate, a healthy financial sector, inter alia, plays an important role. In this context, the RBI has accorded high policy attention to reform both banking and non-banking sectors. We have been taking several steps to strengthen the regulatory and supervisory frameworks in order to increase the resilience of the banking system. New guidelines have been issued for resolution of stressed assets, which will sustain the improvements in credit culture.

In the non-banking sector, the RBI has recently come out with draft guidelines for a robust liquidity framework for the NBFCs. We are also giving a fresh look at their regulatory and supervisory framework. It is our endeavour to have an optimal level of regulation and supervision so that the NBFC sector is financially resilient and robust. The RBI will continue to monitor the activity and performance of this sector with a focus on major entities and their inter-linkages with other sectors.

Interplay between inflation and growth objectives

At the end, let me highlight the role of the RBI in the context of the mandate under the Reserve Bank of India Act, 1934: “to regulate the issue of Bank notes and the keeping of reserves with a view to securing monetary stability in India and generally to operate the currency and credit system of the country to its advantage”. This mandate has been interpreted over time as to maintain price stability, financial stability and economic growth with the relative emphasis between these objectives governed by the prevailing macroeconomic conditions. This role of the RBI has been restated as per the amendment in the RBI Act in May 2016 according to which “the primary objective of the monetary policy is to maintain price stability while keeping in mind the objective of growth”. Therefore it has been our endeavour in the RBI to ensure price stability under the flexible inflation targeting regime and simultaneously focus on growth when inflation is under control.

Edited excerpt from a speech by RBI Governor Shaktikanta Das at the Lal Bahadur Shastri National Academy of Administration, Mussoorie, June 17

DID THEY REALLY SAY THAT?



"Sanskrit is in the DNA of India, it is now limited to the work of priests."

UP CM, Yogi Adityanath on why UP government press releases will now be issued in Sanskrit in addition to Hindi, English and Urdu, Lucknow, 17 June



ILLUSTRATION BY BINAY SINHA

Anuradha Chenoy, retired professor, School of International Studies, Jawaharlal Nehru University, and former director and chairperson, Centre for Russian and Central Asian Studies, tells Aditi Phadnis how India and Russia can deepen their strategic relationship and not look at it through either the United States or Pakistan lens. Edited excerpts:

'India needs to walk a tightrope with US'

Vladimir Putin was the first leader to congratulate Prime Minister Narendra Modi on his re-election. On the same day, the spokesperson of the Russian MFA spoke at length on the recent intensification of Russia’s contacts with Pakistan. What, if anything, should we read into this?

In the current fast track international system with transitional geopolitics where multiple powers exercise leverage, both Russia and India have to craft multiple options in foreign policy. This means that influencer powers like India and especially Russia cannot depend on singular relations. India has developed strong relations with the US, EU, Japan and others. But there is clarity in India (so far) that each relation should not be at the cost of others. Especially Russia.

Russia is in a different position. They have fewer options. The deep state in the US is structurally in opposition to Russia. Even though President Donald Trump tried changing this in a limited way. The US and others have imposed unilateral sanctions on Russia. Further, they also threaten to impose sanctions on third states that trade with Russia through their 2017 law called Countering America’s Adversaries Through Sanctions Act (CAATSA). This has driven Russia strategically

and economically closer to China. China is the only power that has expressed outrage against CAATSA and has the capacity to impose counter sanctions, tariffs and withstand trade wars. China has put pressure on Russia to improve its relations with Pakistan.

Russia also needs Pakistan to fulfil its policy for a stable Afghanistan and Central Asia. So Russia is balancing China-Pakistan without upsetting its relations with India. Similarly, despite the US raising tariffs on Indian exports, India is balancing its relations between the US with Russia, by seeking to accommodate its defence purchases with Russia by seeking special exemptions from the US on CAATSA on the one hand, while offering the US low hanging fruit like new defence deals with the US and Israel and others.

Will this come up on the sidelines of the G 20 conference when the two leaders meet?

India cannot afford to link foreign relations and ties through the Pakistan lens. If she did, how could she develop relations even with the US that has been Pakistan’s major supporter and still treats it as a client state?

India and Russia have important issues that include:

- Strategic issues: India and Russia share a

CHECKLIST
MAMATA BANERJEE: THE ENFANT TERRIBLE OF INDIAN POLITICS?

- 2016: Banerjee locked herself up at the state government secretariat “guarding our democracy” and claimed that the Indian Army’s presence at toll plazas in the state was akin to a military coup. She even accused the Army of lying. The Army had to immediately clarify via Twitter that the presence of soldiers was a part of the routine exercise in all northeastern states.
- On demonetisation: During a *dharna* in Patna, Banerjee flayed Bihar Chief Minister Nitish Kumar. Without naming Kumar, she called him a *gaddar* and said, “*gaddari karne walon ko nahin chhodenge* (betrayers will not be spared)”. Kumar openly supported demonetisation and boycotted any opposition group protesting against the move.
- On Narendra Modi: The Prime Minister asked all BJP MPs and MLAs to submit details of the bank transaction done by them during

- November 8 to December 31, 2016. Banerjee’s response: “Why only account details from Nov 8? Just 3 weeks. Why not last 2 1/2 years all details? PM Ji you think you alone are intelligent...and the rest are ... ??? After your 21 days of *note bandi*, the whole country is *ghar bandi*, so why this farce?”
- During the 2019 election campaign: “Where will the country go if Narendra Modi comes to power again? He is the greatest danger of the country. West Bengal is a place where all religions co-exist. I will give my life to see that no riot takes place in the state”.
- After electoral losses and TMC defections in 2019: “The TMC is not a weak party. If four MLAs want to leave, they can. I do not care if 15–20 councillors quit the party by accepting cash. We don’t want thieves in TMC. If one person leaves, I will prepare 500 more”.

common understanding of terrorism and their interests in Afghanistan have some convergences. Even though Russia now appears to be ready to have the Taliban on the peace table that India still resists, the end goal of a stable Afghanistan is of common interest to India and Russia. India has to leverage Russia for deepening development partnerships in Central Asia and Afghanistan.

Russia has an interest in the Indian Ocean as a zone of peace. The interests of great powers increased in the Indo Pacific with differences between China and the US. The US wants to engage India in its plans. India has been taking tiny steps like the partnership of the QUAD (USA, Australia, Japan, India) India and Russia need to collaborate in the Asia Pacific and Arabian Sea and the Gulf. They can work with Vietnam and others in the Pacific also.

■ Transport Corridors: The most critical aspect on which India and Russia have been negotiating is the International North South Corridor. Given the huge plans of the Chinese Belt and Roadway Initiative (BRI), and India staying away from it, India should no longer do a “go slow” on this. President Putin, is likely to talk of this.

■ Energy: India has major interests and investment in Russian hydro carbons. These interests have been under the radar, but are important to both. The two heads of state need to review if Indian investments in Sakhalin I and II have been beneficial and set rules for Russia as a player in the private energy market in India.

■ Economic and trade issues: There will be discussion on the hurdles on increasing trade and investment especially in the context of sanctions. In this light, it would be useful for India and Russia to consider a debt swap and trade in national currencies. While it was tried earlier as rupee rouble, the old experience minus the problems is worth looking at more so because Russia and China have worked out a good deal on this. Further countries blocked by the US like Venezuela, Iran and others are engaging with Russia and China in local currencies. Of course, India would not like to anger the US, but it needs to keep an Indian perspective.

Defence platforms in India remain structurally aligned with Russia, despite Indian diversification. It is likely that the Indian side would like not just transfer of technology in defence sectors but also to commercial sectors.

There have been proposals that Russia should accept Indian migrant and skilled labour. This will be a major opening for India with high unemployment levels and Russia with labour shortage. Missing out on this will be a hugely missed opportunity.

The US principal deputy assistant secretary for South and Central Asia, Alice Wells recently stated at a congressional hearing that Washington had ‘serious concerns’ over the USD 5 billion deal signed with Russia in October 2018 to procure the S-400 Air Defence Systems. Will India be forced to choose between Russia and the US?

No country can be forced to make a strategic choice. India’s national interest will be jeopardised if it makes a jump into the US strategic plans of isolating Russia and containing China. The US does not have equal relations with countries. They have primarily different levels of client states. India will have to resist US pressure. India can only do this if they are determined to continue with strategic autonomy. This is possible with counter pressure and retaining multiple choices. The Russians are not pressurising India not to diversify their relations, because they respect india’s sovereign choices.

According to the Russian constitution, this is President Putin’s last term in office and Russia will elect a new President in 2024. Jockeying for power appears to have begun already. Who are the leaders in line to become Putin’s successor and what are the implications for the internal politics of Russia? Especially in the light of the country’s economic problems and specifically, unpopular pension reforms?

Putin who had high popularity ratings, suddenly sees a decline in his popularity. He is concerned about his legacy. Yes, it is clear that he led the revival of the Russian state and stabilised it politically and economically. He has challenged the liberal democracies through the concept of ‘sovereign democracy’. The pension reforms have been unpopular but he has tweaked them, especially after Russian women and others resisted and criticised these. Russia has big problems of stagnation, multiplied because of sanctions. China is making big inroads by dumping cheap goods and connecting roads to Europe through Russia. But at the same time Russian manufacturing has improved. Education and health is better.

As far as successor goes Putin will try and put his own name in the Kremlin. Opposition leader Alexei Navalny has been working hard in difficult conditions. What and who emerges, time will tell. This is always a problem with centralised political systems.

A key element in India-Russia ties is the relationship between Russia and the US. Do you expect conditions to improve? or deteriorate further?

President Trump has tried to contest the structural animosity of the US State and Military Industrial economy against the US. His plan was that China is the main competitor of the US and the US can no longer afford two major antagonist powers. He therefore has been trying to refigure US relations with Russia. But the allegations of his personal close relations with the Putin regime, American outrage at the alleged intervention in elections (as if the USA has never intervened in any other countries elections) etc have made a firewall for Trump. So US-Russia relations have worsened with sanctions. India will have walk a tightrope to understand and maintain their relations with the US and their strategic partnership with Russia.

Lives that should matter

The death of seven workers in a manhole in Gujarat has yet again brought to focus state apathy towards manual scavengers. Despite an SC ruling, availability of modern methods of sewer cleaning, there's a clear sign of neglect and don't care attitude among the state machinery, writes Sneha Bhattacharjee

In February this year when Prime Minister Narendra Modi washed the feet of sanitation workers at Kumbh Mela, his gesture was seen as symbolic of his support for them. However, a symbolic gesture does not necessarily amounts to benefits for sanitation workers across the country, who risk their lives day in and day out without any protective gear.

Take the recent case of seven workers — three employees and four sanitation workers — who died after inhaling toxic fumes while cleaning the sewer of a hotel in Vadodara, Gujarat. The incident has invoked angry reactions from several people on social media. Mahindra Group Chairperson, Anand Mahindra, sharing the news on Twitter, questioned what was stopping the authorities from employing safety measures. He even offered funds if that was the reason for the authorities’ unwillingness to adopt safer methods of cleaning manholes.

But is it really a lack of funds that’s stopping the governments to adopt mechanical methods of sewage cleaning or is there more than meets the eye? National Convenor, Safai

Karmachari Andolan, Bezwada Wilson, calls it the state government’s denial to accept that manual scavenging is prevalent. Citing the example of Gujarat incident, Wilson says, “the government is downplaying the incident.

They do not want to accept any machinery help or rehabilitation drive for the workers.” “We are willing to offer solutions to them, but the safai karmachari commission in the state has to be open to accepting them. They don’t want to because that would destroy their image of a model state,” he adds.

It is not just the denial of the government but also the notion of “they were born to do this job” that has been reverberating in the minds of the state machinery. “*Log toh mil he jayenge* (you will find people any way) is the standard mindset. Caste plays an important role in determining this mindset too. There is no point of all the modernisation when everything revolves around the fact that there are some castes that are born to be manual scavengers,” says the author of the book *Unseen: The Truth about India’s Manual Scavengers*, Bhasha Singh.



As per the Prohibition of Employment as Manual Scavengers and their Rehabilitation Act, 2013, the practice of manual scavenging is referred to as “manually or barehanded cleaning, carrying, disposing of, or otherwise handling in any manner, human excreta from the insanitary latrines”. The Act disallows all kinds of employment that force individuals to engage with human excreta in any form manually. However, the Act does not mention any provisions related to the death of manual scavengers and despite most deaths being caused by lack of safety equipment, it fails to explain what qualifies as an “appropriate safety gear”. In 2014, the Supreme Court while expanding the contours of the Act, declared ₹10 lakh as compensation in case of death.

Singh notes, it is not just the compensation that the state machinery is supposed to pro-

vide to the family of the deceased worker, but also education and housing. However, the state openly flouts the SC ruling by providing either a compensation less than the requisite amount or employing the wife in the same job. “The state machinery basically acts like a mediator. Once they enter into the job, the families are forced to decline on the compensation. They are made to believe how beneficial they have been by getting a ‘job’. The families are in no position to ask for their compensation,” Singh adds.

Both Singh and Wilson lament the fact that despite being an illegal activity since 1993, there have been no policy on eradication of manual scavenging. “Instead there is a deliberate shift towards building more toilets and declaring states open defecation free,” says Singh. No questions are raised on where the “shit” is going? According to Singh, not a single city can boast of having direct connection to sewer lines. “How is human waste being cleaned then?” she asks.

A classic example of the state apathy is the declining allocation to the Self Employment Scheme for Rehabilitation of Manual Scavenger, launched in 2007 by the government of India (GoI). In FY 2013-14, the GoI had allocated ₹70 crore, it decreased to ₹47 crore in FY2014-15 and further to only ₹5 crore in FY 2015-16.

“Instead of focusing on how to construct sewage management systems, research and develop more on this sector, we are running towards building toilets that are lying unused,” Wilson says. He adds that declaring a state open defecation free will not serve a purpose. The government has to look at human perspective — who is cleaning those toilets, how are they doing it, do they have the requisite machinery? “A *safai karmachari* is not keen on going into a manhole that stinks, it is the notion that they are born to do this, which needs to change,” he observes.

Facebook’s Libra gamble

RBI should stay firm in not allowing it in India

Facebook’s planned 2020 launch of Libra will mark a paradigm shift by taking the cryptocurrency concept mainstream. The Libra will be backed by a basket of assets. By enabling fast, seamless cross-border transactions and micro-payments, it could substantially reduce transaction costs and address the needs of the unbanked. Facebook has a user base of over 2 billion and it has signed up some of the biggest names in financial services to join the new initiative. While FB will back the initiative through its subsidiary, Calibra, the currency will be managed by an independent foundation, the Libra Association. It is based in Geneva, and other members will have voting rights. The Association already includes Visa,

Mastercard, PayPal, Uber, Lyft, Spotify, Coinbase, Vodafone, and several large Venture Capital firms. Any reputable entity can join by paying \$10 million into the reserves. The Association will take independent decisions on currency management. Libra will be a “stablecoin” issued on the currency board principle: Every coin will be backed by assets. The reserves will consist of a basket of fiat currencies, gold, etc, and it will be regularly audited. Libra would be issued to all Association members against the membership fees payable. The digital wallets will be issued by Calibra to users of Facebook Messenger and WhatsApp, after KYC certification. Transactions will be han-

dled by Calibra, which will do verifications on a “permissioned” blockchain. The blockchain will be open-source. But access to carry out transaction verifications will be restricted to Association members. Calibra has invented a new computer language, Move, for the specific purpose of handling Libra-related activities. The social network has said there will be a “Chinese Wall” between the parent Facebook, and Calibra, to prevent Facebook accessing sensitive transaction data. In a nod to the practices in bitcoin, and other cryptocurrencies, users may own multiple Calibra wallets used under pseudonyms. This would help them maintain secrecy from other users, although Calibra would be able to map transactions and wallets back to the owner’s KYC, preventing easy money-laundering. Putting together the financial muscle and reach of the Association members, Libra would be available to nearly 3 billion individuals scattered across the globe.

This also means that it would be widely acceptable to all sorts of vendors, and easily vetted by central banks. This could dramatically reduce transaction fees in many domains, by for example, charging a small flat fee for every transaction, regardless of the transaction size. Unlike bitcoin, or ethereum, or other cryptocurrencies, a stablecoin also rules out wild speculation that characterises cryptocurrencies backed by nothing. The supply of Libra depends on the value of reserves held by Libra, implying non-volatile exchange ratios depending on the movements of fiat currencies. This also means it is easily and seamlessly convertible back to fiat currency. The social network is also setting up a technical and organisational structure that complies with both local and international regulations, and anti-money-laundering norms. Questions remain, of course. For example, it’s not clear how Libra intends to comply with the know-your-customer norms for

the unbanked - reason why it is unlikely to be available to customers in India, one of the world’s largest remittance markets. Though it could, among other things, save non-resident Indians huge fees and commissions on the \$80 billion they are expected to remit in 2020, the Reserve Bank of India is unlikely to grant it permission despite India being Facebook’s largest user-base. Privacy is also a huge concern, particularly in view of Facebook’s dubious record in this respect. In any case, the central bank has been dead-set against cryptocurrency and in April 2018 had given regulated entities a three-month deadline to stop dealing in virtual currencies due to associated risks. The argument in favour of Libra has been that it is a stablecoin — a cryptocurrency whose value is pegged to be as stable as the dollar. But the RBI should stay firm in its decision not to allow any form of cryptocurrency due to legitimate concerns around tax evasion, money laundering and fraud.

Juggling competing interests

India will need to strengthen ties with Russia and China while simultaneously maintaining its strategic relationship with the United States

ANITA INDER SINGH

Officialse usually conceals more complex situations than it reveals. The invitations India received at the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO) meeting in Bishkek from China and Russia to strengthen trade ties should not deflect attention from New Delhi’s need to craft a strategy to have good ties with them, while simultaneously maintaining its strategic partnership with the US. And the communiqué’s call to end terrorism was preceded by China’s advice that India should not make an issue of Pakistan, which is also a member of the SCO. Obviously India and China have differences over how to handle Pakistan’s training and export of extremists.

When it comes to trade ties, the SCO communiqué’s call to protect multilateral trade was preceded by a Chinese call asking India to team up to ward off America’s bullying trade practices. India’s response will strengthen or weaken India’s ties with China, Russia — or the US. The fact that India will retaliate against the US withdrawal of duty-free benefits under its Generalised System of Preferences does not imply that that it is somehow taking sides with China and Russia against the US.

After all, India has a border dispute with China. Should it ever come to the crunch, America’s global weight will count with India, because the US is the only country which can counter China’s growing military and economic clout singlehandedly.

India’s attitude to the US is at variance with those of Russia and China. Unlike India, Russia and China are challenging US global primacy. And one of the aims of their strategic partnership is to limit American influence in what they see as their own spheres of influence. For Russia this implies the Eurasian countries that emerged from the collapse of the Soviet Union in 1991; for China, the South China Sea and more generally, the western Pacific. Unlike India, Russia supports China’s claim to the South China Sea.

At another level, for all the talk in some Indian circles about Russia being India’s tried and trusted friend, Moscow is neutral on the Sino-Indian conflict. It has also advised India to join China’s Belt and Road Initiative, which India views as a unilateral push to advance China’s interests and a threat to India’s sovereignty, because it cuts across disputed turf in Pakistani-occupied Kashmir.

On the US-Russia front, India should not view last October’s deal to buy Russia’s S-400 missile as implying that Russia has done it a unique favour. The missile will help India to track aircraft beyond its borders and project power in the Indian Ocean, where Beijing has grown increasingly assertive. But Russia has always had two irons in the fire. Moscow offered Beijing the S-400 in 2015 and started delivering the missile to China in 2018. Delivery to India of the S-400 will start in 2020 — if India does not back out of the deal under American pressure to buy the F-35 with the intent of advancing interoperability between Indian and US forces.

Even if India sticks to the deal, the outstanding point is that the S-400 deal will not upset Sino-Russian ties. In fact, India and Russia signed the deal as Moscow and Beijing extolled the highest levels of their ties, and hailed the golden age of their partnership just before the SCO summit.

India’s strategy pundits should also take note of other factors that strengthen Russia-China ties. China’s need for gas and oil entails amicable ties with neighbouring Russia, which is one of the world’s biggest energy producers. Also, with Moscow’s consent China has established a sizeable economic pres-



Prime Minister Narendra Modi at the recent Shanghai Cooperation Organisation Summit in Bishkek, Kyrgyzstan. Both Russia and China sought closer economic collaboration with India at the meeting

ence in Russia and Central Asia. It has built railways in Russia and constructed railway lines connecting Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Uzbekistan and Turkmenistan to China. Earlier this year, their connectivity was further strengthened by the building of a railway bridge across the Amur River, linking the Russian Far East with northeast China.

The Russia-China call for more Indian investment and trade is welcome. But China is already the top trading partner of the Russian-led Eurasian Economic Union (EAEU). In 2016, India ranked in 18th place in the EAEU’s imports and 15th place in the EAEU’s exports. Unfortunately, India’s efforts to

connect with Russia and Central Asia are hampered by the absence of shared borders with any country in the region.

At another level, some in New Delhi wrongly

thought that the International North-South Corridor (INSTC) could counter China’s BRI. Founded in 2002 by India, Iran and Russia, the INSTC was inaugurated in January 2018. Apart from India, all other members of the INSTC, which include Iran, Eurasian Russia and its “near abroad” in Central Asia, the Caucasus and Europe, have joined the BRI. Each has stronger trade and investment ties with China than with India. And Indian media reports have missed the listing of the INSTC in the Annex to the joint communiqué issued after China’s Second Belt and Road Forum on April 27 — though it is not specified what projects China will carry out along the Corridor.

The SCO meeting highlights the necessity for New Delhi to build bilateral ties with Beijing and Moscow. But as it tries to maximise its diplomatic options, it must reconcile India’s need with its wish to strengthen its strategic partnership with the US, whose global ascendancy is challenged by China and Russia.

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How to ramp up global climate finance flows

RAJASREE RAY & J M MAUSKAR

From the 1992 Rio Conference to the Katowice Conference in 2018, the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) witnessed a remarkable journey, with the adoption of a number of agreements, the latest being the Paris Agreement, which aims to strengthen the global response to the threat of climate change. Every nation was called upon to submit its nationally determined contribution (NDC), to achieve the Convention’s objectives. India’s NDC was on a “best efforts basis”, keeping in mind developmental imperatives, envisaging availability of international public finance.

Climate finance is indisputably a key pillar in enabling climate actions. The Convention mandates developed countries to take the lead in mitigation actions and provide financial resources to developing countries for climate actions. For the first time since 1992, climate finance was quantified in Copenhagen in 2009, to induce developing countries to scale up their mitigation actions and a flow of \$100 billion a year by 2020 by the developed countries was mooted.

Article 9 of the Agreement stipulates that developed countries shall provide financial resources to developing countries. While the Agreement was hailed by many, all agreed that a new collective goal from the current floor of \$100 billion per year be set in 2025.

There have been various claims about progress towards the Copenhagen goal of \$100 billion. Just before the Paris negotiations in 2015, an Indian ministry of finance paper questioned the credibility and accuracy of the reported figures. According to a UNFCCC report, total climate-specific finance flows (self-reported figures) from developed countries in 2016 were only about \$38 billion. Estimates suggest that implementing developing-country NDCs would require \$4.4 trillion. Therefore, how this quantum jump would be achieved was the foremost question in everybody’s mind after the Paris Agreement.

Besides agreeing on new rules of accounting and a reporting framework for climate finance, the Katowice outcome was expected to improve the acceptability of the reported numbers.

In the run-up to Katowice in 2018, India’s ministry of finance had released a paper, *3 Essential ‘S’s of Climate Finance — Scope, Scale and Speed: A Reflection*. The paper analysed post-Paris Agreement developments and the seriousness of discourse needed in the international climate finance arena. In essence, the paper observed that coverage of climate finance was ambiguous, the quantum was insufficient and pace of delivery of finance was slow. The paper also identified essential elements required for a robust and transparent accounting of climate finance flows.

The Katowice decision came out with

rules governing climate finance — identification of *ex ante* and *ex post* information on financial support provided and mobilised by developed countries. This stressed greater granularity in reporting — type of sectors for which support is provided, type of financial instruments, etc. Apparently, the outcome was tilted towards developed countries with wording such as “as available” and “an indication”, with regard to projected levels of financing and new and additional resources respectively. Financial instruments such as loans and equity were allowed to be counted as climate finance and developed countries were asked to report the grant equivalence on a voluntary basis only.

In effect, the long-standing demand for ensuring clarity in climate finance flows was not delivered. The commitment of finance by developed countries has also been diluted because the \$100 billion per year originally meant for mitigation now includes adaptation also. In essence, the Katowice finance outcome was thus a bit of an anti-climax. Since Katowice, the IPCC Report is being used to urge all nations including developing countries to ramp up their already submitted NDCs even before they start implementing it from January 1, 2021. However, it is evident that any increase in ambition will need to be accompanied by an increase in climate finance, on an equal footing.

It is essential to explore innovative instruments to supplement public finance, such as interest subsidies and sovereign guarantees, which can catalyse private finance

Some processes tend to put private finance on a higher pedestal. The private sector is likely to invest where returns are high and risks are low. Precisely for this reason, Article 9.3 of the Agreement noted the significant role of public finance. Yet, it is essential to explore innovative instruments to supplement public finance, such as interest subsidies and sovereign guarantees, which can catalyse private finance.

Lastly, a great deal of stress is being laid upon inter-generational equity (the rights and welfare of future generations) in regard to emergent climate actions proposed to be taken by the present generation. However, the imperatives of intra-generational equity, such as eradication of poverty and equitable socio-economic development, cannot be brushed-aside.

The next Conference is to be held in Chile in December 2019. The UN Secretary General, in his World Environment Day message on June 5, stated: “There is no time to lose. This is the battle of our lives. Solutions exist”. Implementation of NDCs will apparently hit a roadblock in the face of an uncertain future in the provisioning of climate finance. Under these circumstances, effectively addressing the three “Ss” of climate finance — scope, scale and speed — is necessary for a realistic hope of achieving the goals of the Paris Agreement.

Ray is Economic Advisor, Department of Economic Affairs, Ministry of Finance. Mauskar is former Special Secretary, Ministry of Environment & Forests. The views are personal

▶ OTHER VIEWS

‘One country-one election’ move needs rigorous debate

The government must accord higher priority to other electoral reforms

The decision to form a committee to examine the issue of holding simultaneous elections to the Lok Sabha and the State Assemblies is a significant step towards achieving Prime Minister Narendra Modi’s objective of synchronising elections across the country. Advocates of such elections point to potential benefits. There is the obvious advantage of curbing the huge expenditure involved and reducing the burden on the manpower deployed. The second point in its favour is that ruling parties can focus more on governance and less on campaigning. But there are challenging questions of feasibility that the political system must contend with. First, it may require the curtailment or extension of the tenure of state legislatures to bring their elections in line with the Lok Sabha poll dates. Another question is: what happens if the government at the Centre falls?

In terms of principle, the main issue is whether getting all elections to coincide undermines representative democracy and federalism. In a parliamentary democracy, the executive is responsible to the legislature; and its legitimacy would be undermined by taking away the legislature’s power to bring



down a minority regime by mandating a fixed tenure just to have simultaneous elections. The interests of regional parties may take a beating, as regional issues may be subsumed by national themes in a common election. Given these challenges, there is simply no case for hastening the introduction of simultaneous elections. The government must accord priority to other electoral reforms.

The Hindu, June 21

Holistic farm budget needed

Ad-hoc policies must be replaced

The Central government is reportedly planning a big boost for the rural and farm economy in its first budget. The interim budget for 2019-20 presented in February this year had committed a total spending of ₹4.6 trillion for the ministries of agriculture, consumer affairs, food and public distribution, food processing and rural development. Most of the money spent by these ministries goes to the rural economy. However, it can be said that the government will do well to use its historic mandate to unveil some radical reforms in agriculture, not only in the often discussed areas of improving market linkages, but also tackle long-term challenges, especially those regarding climate change and sustainability of

our agricultural ecosystem. This will take a holistic approach towards deciding goals as well as allocating scarce resources. For example, can the government think of a way to incentivise farmers/clusters with regularly updated soil health card based farming practices in its PM-KISAN scheme? Can rural employment guarantee or procurement programmes be tailored to larger goals of environmental sustainability? The short point is Indian farms and farmers will continue to be mired in crisis unless the silo-based and ad-hoc agricultural policies are replaced with goals which have empathy for the Indian farmer as well as foresight.

Hindustan Times, June 21

A beginning for Congress

Karnataka a prelude to wider change?

The dissolution of the Karnataka PCC on Wednesday is the first major step the Congress has initiated after its drubbing in the general election nearly a month ago. Hopefully, Karnataka marks a beginning for the Congress leadership towards reorganising itself and facing up to the challenge posed by the BJP. The Congress continues to be the largest Opposition party in the country and its conduct will have a bearing on political institutions and the democratic process itself. While the KPCC restructuring may shed light on the Congress strategy to rebuild, the party’s decline is the result of a process that dates back to the late 1960s. The non-dynasts who helmed the party in the 1990s —

Narasimha Rao and Sitaram Kesri — could neither rebuild the organisation nor retrieve lost ground. Sonia Gandhi, the undisputed party chief for nearly two decades since the late 1990s, was successful in keeping the party reasonably intact. Now Rahul Gandhi’s attempt to explain his resignation as party chief within the framework of accountability has threatened to disrupt the leadership model the Congress has subscribed to for many years. Karnataka, a state where the Congress is in office, offers an opportunity to institutionalise inner-party democracy and introduce fresh blood in the organisation.

The Indian Express, June 21

EVERY GOVERNMENT IS taken by surprise when a grave crisis explodes in its face. Someone is at fault, but nobody will take responsibility. Ultimately, the buck stops at the table of the head of the government — chief minister or Prime Minister. A deeper probe will, however, reveal that s/he is not the first person who should be held responsible, but the parliamentary system of government holds otherwise.

Cruel deaths

The encephalitis epidemic that has consumed 117 lives so far in Muzaffarpur district, Bihar, is a case in point. According to the Union Health Ministry's Management Information System, all of the 103 primary health centres and the only community health centre in the district were rated 0 out of 5 because they did not meet the mandatory requirements for evaluation (medical officer, nurse/midwife). The paediatric unit of the Sri Krishna Medical College and Hospital in Muzaffarpur, where the affected children were treated, did not meet the criteria to qualify as a paediatric ICU. On these facts, who should take the blame? No one will, so we will blame a small, white-coloured (and delicious) fruit called litchi! Doctors said that eating lychees affected only children who did not eat a meal at night. And pray, why did they not eat a meal at night? Because they are poor and don't get a meal. Can there be anything more devastating and painful? (Between 2008 and 2014, there were 6,000 deaths from encephalitis.)

A few days ago, seven sanitation workers died while emptying a septic tank in a hotel near Vadodara, Gujarat. It was not the first time such a tragedy happened and, sadly, it will not be the last. Cleaning a septic tank is not rocket science: there are machines and an Indian version (Bandicoot) has been developed by a start-up in Kerala. When men have to be unavoidably deployed for cleaning sewers and septic tanks, there are special clothing, masks and oxygen cylinders. None of the equipment is scarce or beyond the financial capacity of a municipal corporation like Vadodara, yet seven poor men were allowed to die. (Between 2011 and 2018, death of 114 sanitation workers was reported from all states of India.)


Shocking negligence

There is another unbelievably shocking statistic: on an average, four persons are killed in Delhi in road accidents every day. You can expect that four persons will be killed tomorrow, four the day after, and so on, on average four, every day in Delhi alone. Only a fraction of that number is killed in air accidents all over the world in a whole year! Why do we have strict rules for air travel and lax rules for road travel? (Between 2011 and 2017, 12,724 persons were killed in road accidents in Delhi.)

Have you traveled on the Barapulla flyover in Delhi which is the 'pride' of the PWD of the Delhi government and which took years to be built? The flyover is average, the design is average, the ride is average, but the quality of the construction is awful. Just look at the parapets on either side of the carriageway — chipped or broken, uneven height, disjointed slabs, terribly plastered and

ACROSS THE AISLE

P Chidambaram



gOVERNMENT WITHIN GOVERNMENT



A demonstration in New Delhi against deaths of children in Bihar who suffered from encephalitis, commonly known as brain fever

Painted and, on the whole, ugly. Yet, it passed all quality tests, the contractor was paid (and presumably feted) and the flyover inaugurated in 2010. It won't be long before it is closed for repairs.

Intention & implementation

In none of these cases — and you can think of others — was there a policy failure. Any government's policy is to build, equip and staff health facilities and hospitals; to abolish manual scavenging; to enforce traffic rules and ensure safety; to build quality infrastructure and beautify cities and towns; and so on. The Legislature or the Executive (i.e. the ministers) makes the policy and, naturally, wants the policy implemented well. But there is a huge gap between intention and implementa-

tion. Why? We are hesitant to say it, but it must be said: within the Government (with a capital G) there is another government (with a small g). It is the small-g government that has failed the big-G government as well as the people, at least as far as India is concerned.

Let me make the point with two contrasting examples. Demonetisation was a policy blunder; the ministers who dreamed up that policy and constituted big-G Government must own responsibility. On the other hand, GST was a good policy. If it has caused as much distress as demonetisation, the blame must be taken by small-g government.

Swachh Bharat is good policy, but the false statistics fed on ODF status of states and villages is the deceit of small-g government. Ujjwala is good policy, but the replacement cylinder rate of three per year is the failure of small-

g government.

When we vote, we the people vote for big-G Government. There is a small-g government over which we the people have no control at all. We have no say in their selection, recruitment, training, evaluation, posting, appraisal or promotion. We cannot go on in this fashion. We must re-invent small-g government. Just as we the people reward or punish big-G Government and its occupants every five years, we must find a way to reward or punish small-g government and its occupants every five years or sooner.

The main challenge that we face today is not in making policy. It is in the efficient, economical and excellent implementation of the policy.



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INSIDE TRACK

COOMI KAPOOR



Modi's choices

With the appointment of Om Birla as Speaker of the Lok Sabha, the top three posts in the country, President, Prime Minister and Speaker, are held by men who use Hindi as the lingua franca. They come from diverse castes, Dalit, OBC and Bania, and humble backgrounds. As with Ram Nath Kovind, Modi did not opt for a conventional choice, surprising everyone, including the person selected. Modi does not go by the traditional logic of job suitability. More than language skills and parliamentary experience, Birla was rewarded for outstanding social work and public service in his constituency. Incidentally, Birla along with two other Rajasthan ministers in Modi's Cabinet, Gajendra Singh Shekhawat and Arjun Ram Meghwal, are part of the anti-Vasundhara Raje camp, indicating that the former CM is out of favour.

Odd choice

The selection of Adhir Ranjan Chowdhury as leader of the Congress in the Lok Sabha has taken many party MPs by surprise. Chowdhury, a five-time MP from West Bengal, is a doughty street fighter with several criminal cases against him. He does not have either the oratory or familiarity of the parliamentary rule book possessed by more obvious contenders for the post such as Manish Tewari, Shashi Tharoor or K Suresh. An added disadvantage is that floor coordination with the Trinamool will be awkward. In the last Parliament session, Chowdhury had infuriated Mamata Banerjee by alluding to her name in the Saradha scam. One surmise for the surprising choice is that Sonia Gandhi's advisers who recommended his name did not want to prop up anyone who would pose a threat to them. Another speculation is that the Congress assumes that, as in the last Parliament session, there will be little room for meaningful debate and discussion. The only way to grab attention will be through disruptive behaviour and adjournments, something that Chowdhury is familiar with.

Real-life heroine

The Capital's media has focused on the victories of first-time actress MPs Sumalatha Amarnath from Karnataka and Mimi Chakraborty and Nusrat Jehan from West Bengal. But one spectacular win has been largely ignored. Outspoken Dalit actress Navneet Kaur, standing as an Independent from Amravati in Maharashtra, defeated five-time Shiv Sena MP

Anand Rao Adusul, despite the Modi wave in the state. Navneet, a Punjabi, has starred in Telugu, Malayalam, Kannada, Punjabi, Tamil and Hindi films, but never in a Marathi movie.

Next stop, Raebareilly

Smriti Irani received a huge applause when she took her oath as MP. The feisty minister is not content to rest on her laurels. The giant killer wants to ensure that the BJP wins Raebareilly in 2024. She hopes that her party will permit her to offer advice as how to go about storming Sonia Gandhi's citadel, which neighbours Amethi. Irani was perceived by the voters of Amethi as a helpful big sister, with none of the noblesse oblige airs of the Gandhis. Leaving nothing to chance, Irani even sent across a few Trojan horses to lull the Congress camp into a false sense of complacency.

Sporting loser

Akhilesh Yadav has taken his party's defeat with equanimity, unlike most defeated party leaders who kept away from Parliament's Central Hall for the first few days. A good natured Yadav answered all the queries posed to him by journalists. Asked about his wife Dimple's defeat from Kannauj, he joked that, in a way, it was a blessing since someone needed to stay home and take care of his mischievous son. Besides, Dimple can now resume work on a delayed project — opening her Hibiscus Hotel in Uttar Pradesh.

Ace up its sleeve

The Gujarat Congress has gone to court over the Election Commission's decision that elections to the two Rajya Sabha seats, where vacancies have arisen due to the resignations of Amit Shah and Smriti Irani, should be held separately and not as one election. In a simultaneous poll for the two Gujarat vacancies, the Congress stands to win one RS seat since the electoral system provides each MLA with a single first-preference vote. However, if elections are held separately, then the BJP, which has a majority over the Congress, can walk away with both seats. The BJP is certain that past legal precedents in filling such vacancies is on its side. But it is extra confident since it has an additional ace up its sleeve. The two vacancies from Gujarat did not occur on the same day. Shah resigned his Rajya Sabha seat on May 23 after winning from Gandhinagar, Irani on May 24 because her victory from the Amethi was confirmed only the next day.

The Pogba problem

Solskjær needs a dressing room free of Pogba as it will reduce the player-power factor and bad vibes

RINGSIDE VIEW

Shamik Chakrabarty



PAUL POGBA IS a World Cup winner. Manchester United fans, however, give a hoot about what Pogba has achieved for France. His performance has been patchy, to put it mildly, for United, a club that had coughed up the then world record fee of £89 in 2016 to land him from Juventus. United also pay him £290,000 every week. Pogba has failed to turn up, especially in big games.

From United's perspective, it absolutely doesn't matter whether Pogba has won the World Cup or the Milk Cup. Jose Mourinho had brought him to make an impact. The 26-year-old is said to have made a negative impact in the dressing-room. There was a reason why Mourinho's third season at Old Trafford fell apart. The day the Portuguese was sacked as United manager, Pogba had posted a cryptic, classless tweet — "Caption this!" — alongside a picture of himself adopting a knowing look. He raised his game after Ole

Gunnar Solskjær arrived. The new manager didn't have Mourinho's personality and tried to keep the club's most expensive buy in good humour. But as Zinedine Zidane became the Real Madrid manager and made the Pogba overture, the United midfielder went back to square one, performance-wise, and started to glorify the Madrid club and its boss.

"Like I have always said, Real Madrid is a dream for anyone. It's one of the biggest clubs in the world. There's also Zidane as a coach and it's a dream for anybody who likes football," Pogba had said during the March international break. It could have been the end of Pogba at United if Sir Alex Ferguson were in charge. But the Red Devils are now fallen giants, with a lightweight manager manning the dug-out.

Recently, Pogba once again hinted a move away from his present club. "Like you said, there's a lot of talking and a lot of thinking as well. For me I have been for three years in Manchester and have been doing great; some good moments and some bad moments, like everybody. Like everywhere else. After this season and everything that happened this season, with my season being my best season as well. I think for me it could be a good time to have a new challenge somewhere else.



Back in December last year, Mourinho reportedly had branded Paul Pogba 'a virus' in the dressing-room

I'm thinking of this; to have a new challenge somewhere else," he told reporters in Tokyo.

United finished sixth in the Premier League last season and will play Thursday night football, the Europa League, this term. Pogba, on the other hand, wants Champions League football. But unlike David De Gea, he has preferred not to keep his counsel. That a player is publicly deriding United shows how far this great club

has fallen off their perch. Ed Woodward, the club's executive vice-chairman, is reportedly willing to pay £500,000-per-week to keep the misfiring, overrated midfielder at Old Trafford. Woodward, a specialist in signing up new noodles partners, seldom looks beyond shirt sales and Pogba remains a lucrative option. Solskjær doesn't have the aura of a big manager. Maybe, reluctantly he toes the line.

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reportedly had branded Pogba "a virus" in the dressing-room. "You don't play. You don't respect players and supporters. And you kill the mentality of the good honest people around you. You are like a person with a flu, with a virus in a closed room; you pass that virus to the others," Mourinho was alleged to have told Pogba. The then United manager had also benched the enfant terrible. In 2003, when David Beckham's eye was cut by a flying Sir Alex

boot, the former's time at his boyhood club was up, notwithstanding his superstar status. United under their present dispensation sided with the player in a player-manager feud. Pogba's commercial viability was always greater than Mourinho, who is 56 years old and past his prime as a manager. It probably clinched the deal for the former.

United are progressing at a snail's pace towards the proposed squad overhaul. Solskjær wanted new players to arrive by July 1, when the squad will return for pre-season. So far only Daniel James has arrived in a £15million move from Swansea. United, out of the Europe's elite competition, will have to make do with the also-rans. A lot will depend on Solskjær's ability to improve the young players. It's going to be a lengthy process. United can forget about winning the Premier League title in the next four-five years. At the moment, even a top-four finish next season looks difficult, although Chelsea are hit with a transfer ban and they have lost their most prized possession; Eden Hazard.

It's arguable if Solskjær is the right man to preside over the United overhaul. But he certainly needs a dressing-room free of Pogba, as it will significantly reduce the player-power factor and negative vibes. In 95 appearances over three seasons, Pogba has scored 24 goals and made 23 assists. He is dispensable and something between £120million and £130million should be good business.

ACROSS THE AISLE



P CHIDAMBARAM

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CRUEL DEATHS

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INSIDE TRACK



COOMALI KAPOOR

MODI'S CHOICES

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ODD CHOICE

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REAL-LIFE HEROINE

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MEGHNAD DESAI

NARENDRA MODI HAS secured for himself five or perhaps even ten years. He may be the first to equal Nehru's record by winning three elections in succession. But, he is a man in a hurry. This is why One Nation One Poll (ONOP) has been taken up at an early stage in the Modi 2.0 era.

The first constitution of India was the 1935 Government of India Act. It had strong states and a weak Centre. After the

HISTORY HEADLINE

When the Cup first came home



SYED KIRMANI

BEFORE THE 1983 Cricket World Cup, every member had different hopes and dreams. I thought, if we just qualified for the knockouts, that would be a big achievement. We were in the group of the reigning world champions, West Indies. They had won it on the previous two occasions, 1975 and 1979. We had beaten them in an ODI in Berbice before the World Cup. I was the vice-captain on that tour. Kapil Dev, who was the captain, went to the dressing-room and stayed there for some time due to an injury or something and I was leading the side. And we won very comprehensively and then defeated them for the second time in the first match of the 1983 World Cup. From thereon, belief came in the dressing room that we could win the World Cup. We started to believe in our strengths. It was a big boost.

We were the minnows of the tournament and some of our opponents were a little complacent as well. Then came the very important match against Zimbabwe. We had beaten them earlier in the first leg of the league phase. But we also lost a couple of group league matches. So the Zimbabwe game became a must-win affair. The game wasn't televised. I was very relaxed. Wicket-keepers were not considered as all-rounders until MS Dhoni came and changed the perception.

We batted first and I was getting ready for a shower followed by breakfast. Suddenly someone shouted from outside the dressing-room: 'Kiri pad up'. I realised it was a serious call. In a preparing myself for a big shower and a big breakfast. I went to the dressing-room window and saw the scoreboard. It was 17 for five. My towel dropped (tongue-in-cheek); my mouth agape. I don't know how I finished my shower and breakfast, because very soon I found myself walking out to bat. It was somewhere around 140 for eight, by the time I walked in.

I walked up to Kapil, who was standing there, his head down. It was a 60-over game and we still had 35 overs left in our innings. I told Kapil, "Listen Kaps, we are in a do-or-die situation. We just cannot sit and die". "*Maar ke mame ka hai* (we will go down hitting)", he said. I inspired him saying that "You are the best hitter in the

India defeated the West Indies by 43 runs to lift the 1983 World Cup

Indian team. I will take singles and will give you strike. You will try to hit every delivery." He said, "*Kiri bhai humko aur 35 overs khelna hai* (we still have to play 35 overs). I will try my best." He went on to score 175, which till this day remains the best ODI innings ever played. I have never seen any other batsman play like that in such a situation. Certainly, that was the greatest innings played in the history of the World Cup. I did my bit, gave him support. It was excellent partnership batting in fact.

When our partnership was flourishing, everybody sat tight outside the dressing-room. We played full 60 overs. We had an unbroken 126-run partnership. He was 175 not out and I was 24 not out. We reached the semifinal and it was history after that.

I took a brilliant catch to dismiss David Gower, who was England's X-factor. We won the match comprehensively. Throughout the tournament, till we reached the final, we were overlooked by the fans. We were the minnows. Reality dawned on the local fans and media after we reached the final. They started to belt out, "the weakest team in the competition is looking to surprise the whole world."

On the eve of our very first match we had a team meeting, where Kapil said, "Listen gentlemen, you are all seven seniors, you don't need my guidance. You will have to guide me." It was a big statement which gelled the team. We improved as a team as the tournament progressed, although we didn't have any support staff. Of course, we had a bit of luck. But luck only helps you when you do your job with sincerity.

Even after we were all out for 183 in the final, we weren't looking back. We had nothing to lose. Kapil said, "Let's go and give our best." We had already overachieved. We decided to put our best foot forward.

Gordon Greenidge departed early. Vivian Richards came at No 3 and the way he started, it felt like the match was going to end inside 20 overs. Then Madan Lal asked for an extra over from Kapil. He was punished by Richards in his previous overs. It proved to be a masterstroke. Richards mistimed a pull and Kapil ran from wide mid-on to deep mid-wicket and took a stunner. Once Richards left, West Indies started to panic. In fact, sometimes they panicked when their top-order failed — Gordon Greenidge, Desmond Haynes, Richards and Clive Lloyd. We sensed an opening. But I told my team mates not to relax. It wasn't over until Michael Holding was out.

We didn't know how to celebrate also. Our triumph was that unexpected. A cash-strapped cricket board didn't have enough money to give us proper cash rewards. Lata Mangeshkar did a concert to raise the fund. The BCCI collected in lakhs from the concert. We, the players, were given Rs 1 lakh each.

For me, there was a personal achievement as well. I was adjudged the best wicket-keeper of the tournament. The great Godfrey Evans came with then ICC president and handed me over the silver gloves and the silver ball, written below, "World's best wicket-keeper".

The writer, a former Test player, was part of the 1983 World Cup winning team

OUT OF MY MIND



MEGHNAD DESAI

Partition, the Constituent Assembly changed the scheme from a Confederation to a Union. The Centre was all powerful and states were to be its creatures.

The assumption then was that the Congress would be in power at the Centre and in all states. Each unit in the Union would follow the Westminster system and a majority in the popularly elected Chamber was required to form a government. Governments could be dismissed by a no confidence vote at the Centre and in the states. The implicit tension in a Union of many states and a Westminster test of legitimacy was not tested for the first four elections. Congress ruled everywhere (except Kerala in 1957).

From 1967 onwards, it has not been possible to hold all elections simultaneously. The five year cycle of government at the Centre was interrupted and two consecutive elections five years apart for Centre did not recur till 1999. At the state level, the pattern is bewildering with short lived governments, defections, President's Rule etc.

Over time, states have increased their power vis-a-vis the Centre except in financial matters. Regional parties are powerful at home but may be weak at the Centre. What keeps the Union together is the electoral freedom for states to go at their own pace.

Unless the BJP/NDA repeats the old Congress hegemony for a very long period, restoring simultaneous elections

across the Centre and states would require restrictions on the power of the Opposition to defeat a government in a confidence vote. This could be done only by ruling out no confidence motions completely at the state and the central level. For example, it could be legislated that if a government fell in midterm, it would not be replaced by another party, but by President's Rule till the date of the next ONOP.

Even if this was possible, the problem of the government at the Centre is insuperable. You can impose President's Rule at a state level, but who can impose Article 356 at the Centre? The President acts on the advice of the Council of Ministers. The Council is not likely to urge him to sign their death warrant.

A provision would have to be added that in case of losing a confidence motion, the incumbent government at the Centre must request the President to take over the reins of power till the due date of the next ONOP.

But while ONOP is doable with difficulty, is it worth it?

The advantage of ONOP is economy of effort, reduction in disruption of normal business, and uniformity. The risk is that truncating the democratic powers of legislature for the sake of marching in step may disturb the spontaneous unity which has sustained the Union, especially if the party in power at the Centre is not in power at the state level.

FIFTH COLUMN



TAVLEEN SINGH

Terminal healthcare

HOW MANY more children must die before we notice that our public health services are not just broken, they simply do not exist in whole swathes of India? I speak of the hospital of horrors in Muzaffarpur. I am haunted by the glazed eyes of children lying three and four to a bed with needles stuck in their tiny arms. So, although, many things happened last week that are more appropriate for a political column, I feel compelled to dedicate this column to Bihar's dead children.

The lives of Indian children are cheap. Experts estimate that 21 children die of preventable diseases every minute. They estimate that 61 of a thousand children born every year do not make it to their fifth birthday. So what was it about the deaths of more than 100 children this time that was somehow so much more horrible than usual? What was it that made it somehow worse than the Gorakhpur horror two summers ago that caused 63 children to die of this same Acute Encephalitis Syndrome because the hospital ran out of oxygen? I believe it is because India has changed. Things that were tolerated just three years ago no longer are. One of the things that is now completely intolerable is that India should have some of the best private hospitals in the world and, at the same time, some of the worst public hospitals.

What is no longer acceptable is that our politicians and high officials should be permitted criminal neglect of government health services, simply because they never have to use them. So the first reform that the Prime Minister should order is to make it compulsory for all officials, elected and unelected, to use only government hospitals. When they see their own sick children lying crammed four to a bed on grimy sheets in filthy, crowded hospitals, conditions will immediately improve. When their wives and daughters are forced to sit on the unwashed floors of government hospitals, hoping and praying that their children somehow manage to survive, conditions will immediately improve.

They will probably improve last in Bihar because it has traditionally been governed by political leaders who lack basic humanity. And, because the vast majority of the people of Bihar are so mired in extreme poverty that they are forced to forget horrific tragedies like the one six years ago in the village of Dharmashati Gandaman when 23 healthy children died because of a poisonous midday meal. That horror also happened on the watch of the man they call 'Sushasan Babu' (Mr. Governance) and the people forgave him so quickly that he became chief minister again in 2015.

This time let's hope that even if Nitish Kumar quickly forgets the criminal negligence of his government, the Prime Minister does not. If Narendra Modi in his second term gives healthcare the kind of intense concentration he gave the Swachh Bharat campaign in his first term it is possible that Indian children will finally stop dying of preventable diseases. The excuse that healthcare is a state subject no longer works. Modi has chief ministers today governing almost every major Indian state, so, if he orders them to make the radical changes that are needed in primary healthcare, they will be forced to make them.

They can also be ordered to widen the meaning of Swachh Bharat by taking it beyond sanitation. The disease that killed the children in Bihar is caused by mosquitoes who breed, as everyone knows, in stagnant water. If Swachh Bharat volunteers can extend their activities to teaching people about the dangers of dirty water, as they have done with poor sanitation, more and more rural Indian children could soon start living beyond their fifth birthday.

There are other reforms that are urgently needed. For a start something needs to be done to end the license raj in medical education that prevents desperately needed new medical colleges from being built. If governments cannot find the money to build them, then they must allow private investment. Why should there be such a desperate shortage of medical colleges that young Indians wanting to enter the medical profession are forced to go to other countries to study medicine?

In my personal opinion, though, the step that can bring about the most change is to make it compulsory for political leaders and high officials to use only government hospitals, clinics and primary health centres. Why should they be allowed excellent private health services when it is they who are directly responsible for creating the abysmal facilities that India's poorest, most vulnerable citizens are forced to rely upon? It is time as well to totally ban Indian officials from flying off to Europe and the United States for medical procedures that are now available in India. If these bad old habits continue in the 'new India', there will be no new India.

Follow Tavleen Singh on Twitter
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Two sides: “Libra may have a few things working in its favour. But going by the opposition to the idea, it is not going to be smooth sailing.” Representations of virtual currency in front of the Libra Logo • REUTERS/DADO RUVIC/ILLUSTRATION

Libra unveiled

What is Facebook’s plan to empower billions? What is Libra’s technology? Is this cause for worry?

SRIRAM SRINIVASAN

The story so far: On June 18, Facebook announced that it is going to launch a global digital currency by the first half of 2020. The currency has been named Libra. It will be run by the Libra Association, a Geneva-based entity that has over two dozen founding partners, including Facebook, Mastercard, Visa, Uber and the Vodafone group. Almost immediately, concerns were raised by some lawmakers, commentators and even the co-founder of Facebook, Chris Hughes, who is now one of the foremost critics of the social media network he helped create.

Why does the world need Libra?
A white paper released by the Libra Association says its mission “is to enable a simple global currency and financial infrastructure that empowers billions of people”. The point it makes is this: in a world with cheap data and smartphones, about 1.7 billion adults are still outside the organised financial system in the world. This, despite a billion of them having mobile phones and nearly half a billion having Internet access.
The reasons for this are high fees, lack of access, and absence of documentation. Libra is being pitched as a solution to this. The promise is of financial inclusion on a global scale.
The white paper says: “Moving money around globally should be as easy and cost-effective as – and even more safe and secure than – sending a text message or sharing a photo, no matter where you live, what you do, or how much you earn.”

It is apparently being built on the block chain technology. How similar is it to Bitcoin?
It is true that Bitcoin and Libra are both based on block chain technology, which refers to a form of distributed ledger – not centralised – of transactions. These are created by complicated math functions that make them almost incorruptible. But beyond this, there is very little in common between Bitcoin and Libra.

Libra is an initiative of 28 influential corporate entities. Bitcoin, which the world first came to know of in 2008, is seen as a product of libertarian values. Its founder, whose identity remains a mystery to this day, is referred to as Satoshi Nakamoto.
In *Bitcoin: The Future of Money?*, Dominic Frisby imagines what would happen if Bitcoin becomes somehow globally preferred: “In a flash, the ability for a government to fund itself through the manipulation of money disappears. You can’t obfuscate bitcoin supply – inflation is transparent. You can’t ‘quantitatively ease’ bitcoins... Central banks and private banks can’t create bitcoins when it suits them, and government can’t print bitcoins. It all means you don’t have to pay the price for the mistakes of governments and banks.”
Libra is going to be nothing like Bitcoin. The association white paper says, “We believe that collaborating and innovating with the financial sector, including regulators and experts across a variety of industries, is the only way to ensure that a sustainable, secure and trusted framework underpins this new system.”
Those are just some of the differences.

Though Bitcoin has come a long way, it has remained a niche currency. Why should Libra’s fate be any different?
Bitcoin, though built on a sound technological base, has had to encounter challenges relating to regulation across the world. Governments of the world, including India, have been wary of it functioning outside the ambit of organised finance. With huge swings in value, it remains one of the most volatile currencies.
Libra immediately has a few things working in its favour. A currency, to be a success, needs to have acceptability amongst many people. Facebook, with its over 2 billion users, and its partners could tick this box. Also, the Libra Association is promising to play by the regulatory rule book.
Plus, to make it a relative stable currency, not prone to wild fluctuations, the creators of Libra are backing this up with a reserve of real assets. Still, going by the opposition to the idea, it isn’t going to be a smooth sail for Libra.

Why is Libra being opposed?
Bloomberg has reported that the French Finance Minister, Bruno Le Maire, has called on the Group of Seven central bank governors to “prepare a report on Facebook’s project for their July meeting. His concerns include privacy, money laundering and terrorism finance”.
Markus Ferber, a German member of the European Parliament, has also been reported as saying that Facebook could become a “shadow bank” and that regulators should be on high alert.
Facebook’s co-founder Hughes, terming the digital currency “frightening”, has said it is a shift of power from central banks towards multinational corporations.

Why is the litchi toxin causing deaths?

Why is Methylene Cyclopropyl Glycine lethal for malnourished children? What can be done?

R. PRASAD

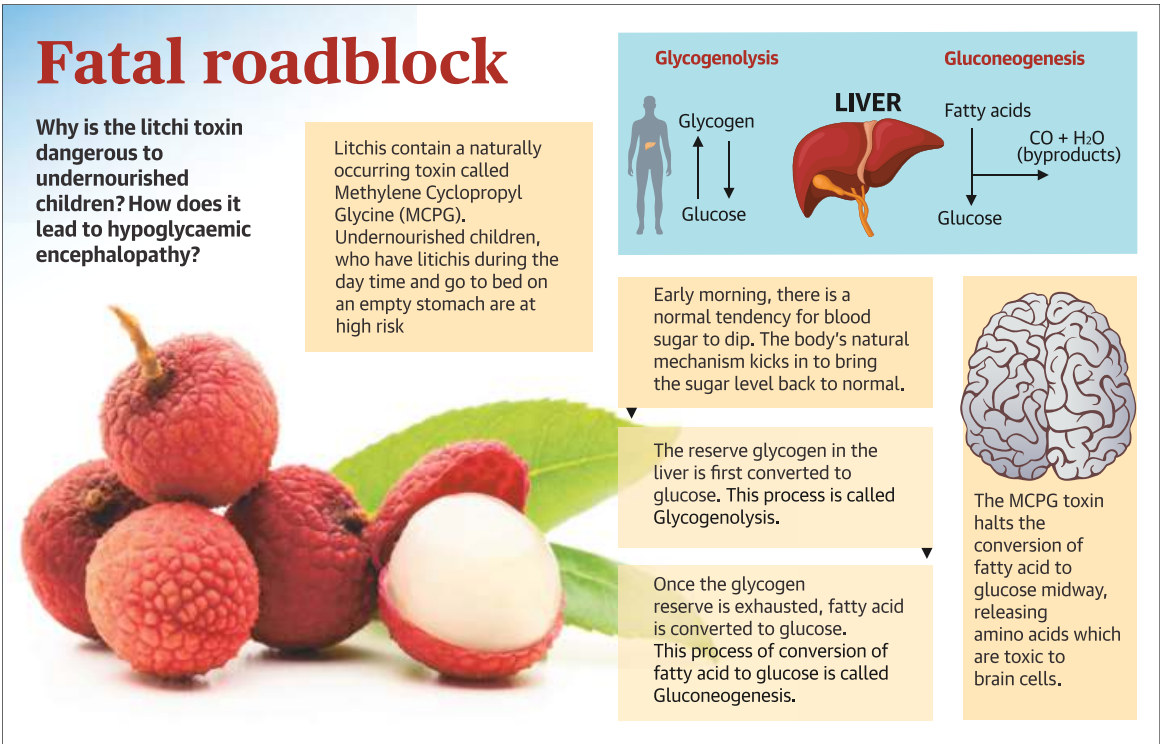
The story so far: Acute encephalitis syndrome (AES) in Bihar’s Muzaffarpur, Vaishali, Sheohar and East Champaran districts has so far claimed the lives of over 100 children. More than 400 children with AES have been admitted to various hospitals. Most of the deaths have been attributed to low blood sugar level (hypoglycaemia).

What is acute encephalitis syndrome?
AES in short, it is a basket term used for referring to hospital, children with clinical neurological manifestations which include mental confusion, disorientation, convulsion, delirium or coma.
Meningitis caused by virus or bacteria, encephalitis (mostly Japanese encephalitis) caused by virus, encephalopathy, cerebral malaria, and scrub typhus caused by bacteria are collectively called acute encephalitis syndrome.
While microbes cause all the other conditions, encephalopathy is biochemical in origin, and hence very different from the rest. There are different types of encephalopathy. In the present case, the encephalopathy is associated with hypoglycaemia and hence called hypoglycaemic encephalopathy.

Is encephalitis different from hypoglycaemic encephalopathy?
Yes. The two conditions show very different symptoms and clinical manifestations.
Fever on the first day is one of the symptoms of encephalitis before the brain dysfunction begins. While fever is seen in children in the case of hypoglycaemic encephalopathy, fever is always after the onset of brain dysfunction (actually due to the brain dysfunction). And not all children exhibit fever. Some children have no fever, while others may have mild or very high fever.
The blood sugar level is usually normal in children with encephalitis but is low in children with hypoglycaemic encephalopathy.
In the case of encephalitis, fever (due to virus infection) for a day or two is followed by the onset of symptoms caused by the brain getting affected. However, in hypoglycaemic encephalopathy, children go to bed without any illness but manifest symptoms such as vomiting, convulsion and semi-consciousness early next morning (between 4 a.m. to 7 a.m.). At that time, the blood sugar level is low, hence the name hypoglycaemic encephalopathy. The most important difference between the two is the presence of white blood cells in the cerebrospinal fluid. In encephalitis, there are more white blood cells per unit volume of cerebrospinal fluid, which is a reflection of inflammation in the brain. In contrast, no increase in white blood cells is seen in hypoglycaemic encephalopathy as there is no inflammation in the brain.

What killed so many children in Bihar?
In a majority of cases, children died due to hypoglycaemic encephalopathy. According to a Press Information Bureau (PIB) release (June 18) , hypoglycaemia (low blood sugar level) was reported in a “high percentage” of children who died in Muzaffarpur. Unlike hypoglycaemic encephalopathy, encephalitis does not cause low blood sugar level so death in a high percentage of children couldn’t have been due to encephalitis.

Why has it affected only young children?
It is an observed fact that malnourished children between two to 10 years fall ill and die due to hypoglycaemic encephalopathy. It is not known why older children or adults do not suffer the same way. This clear discrimination by age is also a reason why the underlying cause of the illness cannot be a virus. A virus does not discriminate by age, and children younger than two years too are affected by Japanese encephalitis.
It has also been documented that most of the children



Hypoglycaemic encephalopathy can be easily treated. A full and complete recovery can be achieved if affected children are infused with 10% dextrose within four hours after the onset of symptoms

Is litchi fruit responsible for causing hypoglycaemic encephalopathy?
In 2012-2013, a two-member team headed by virologist Dr. T. Jacob John suspected, and confirmed the next year, a toxin found in litchi fruit that was responsible for causing hypoglycaemic encephalopathy. In 2017, an India-U.S. team confirmed the role of the toxin called methylene cyclopropyl glycine (MCPG).

Early morning, it is normal for blood sugar to dip after several hours of no food intake. Undernourished children who had gone to sleep without a meal at night develop hypoglycaemia. The brain needs normal levels of glucose in the blood. The liver is unable to supply the need. So the alternate pathway of glucose synthesis, called fatty acid oxidation, is turned on. That pathway is blocked by MCPG.
Litchi does not cause any harm in well-nourished children, but only in undernourished children who had eaten litchi fruit the previous day and gone to bed on an empty stomach.

Why is the toxin more dangerous for undernourished children?
In well-nourished children, reserve glucose is stored as glycogen (glucose polysaccharide) in the liver. Whenever the glucose level goes down, glycogen is broken down into glucose and circulated in the blood for use. But undernourished children lack sufficient glycogen reserve that can be converted into glucose. Therefore, the natural mechanism in undernourished children is unable to correct the glucose level in blood, leading to hypoglycaemia.
Normally, when glycogen reserve in the liver is exhausted or is not sufficient, the body converts the fatty acid (non-carbohydrate energy source) into glucose. But in the presence of the litchi toxin, the conversion of fatty acid into glucose is stopped midway. As a result, no glucose is generated and the low blood glucose level is not corrected by the body.

How will Jet’s insolvency process play out?

Will potential buyers be interested in capitalising on the airline’s brand value and try to relaunch the carrier?

PRASHANTH PERUMAL J.

The story so far: Jet Airways, the troubled private airline that has failed to meet its huge debt obligations, was admitted to the National Company Law Tribunal (NCLT) on Thursday. This happened after a consortium of lenders led by State Bank of India (SBI) that had lent money to the airline over the years approached the NCLT to begin insolvency proceedings. Shares of the airline soared more than 120% on Thursday after news broke that the airline has been admitted by the NCLT for bankruptcy proceedings.
In accordance with the procedures laid out under the Insolvency and Bankruptcy Code, 2016, the court ordered an interim resolution professional to take control of Jet Airways. The professional appointed by the court will now look at ways to salvage the most value out of the airline so that the money can be used to pay back lenders.

Why did Jet Airways fail?
It was founded by Naresh Goyal in 1992, and began flying a year later. It was one of the earliest private entrants into India’s airline industry after the government slowly began to liberalise the economy. The opening up of the airline industry to more private companies in the ensuing years caused a boom in air travel in the country. At the same time, greater competition put increasing pressure on airlines to either deliver better services to justify their high prices, or cut costs to operate more efficiently as budget airlines. Jet, which was unable to adapt to changing market conditions, suffered losses for many consecutive years. The unpredictability of the price of oil in the global market also played a role in messing up its cost calculations. In the first quarter of financial year 2018, Jet posted a loss of ₹1,323 crore.
Since that huge loss, its management has tried to pump additional money into the airline to meet its operating costs and has also announced various aggressive measures to cut down costs. But all this may have come a little too late. Lenders, seeing the writing on the wall, have refused to keep throwing good money after bad just to keep the airline afloat. Kingfisher and Sahara are two other private airlines which failed under the pressures of competition. Air India, which is again burdened by a huge amount of debt like Jet, was another prominent loser in



the battle for market share. But unlike Air India, Jet does not have the government to bail it out of its financial trouble.

What made lenders approach the bankruptcy court?
It is estimated that Jet may owe about ₹20,000 crore in the form of short- and long-term debt obligations to an array of lenders. A consortium of lenders that loaned money to Jet has already been in talks with some potential buyers such as Etihad (UAE) and Tata Sons who could invest capital in Jet in order to make the airline fully operational once again. However, these talks have failed to materialise into an actual deal given the high level of debt on Jet’s balance sheet. It is worth noting that buyers of troubled companies are generally reluctant to take responsibility for the debt of the troubled entity as it will affect their own return from the investment. The lender consortium led by the SBI, on the other hand, may believe that it can salvage more value from the failed airline through the insolvency proceedings carried out under the purview of the court.
Further, the lenders may also be able to gain greater control over Jet’s management by approaching court. Mr. Goyal’s resignation from the airline’s board in March may have been in expectation of unilateral action by the lender consortium to take it to the doorstep of the bankruptcy court. Mr. Goyal’s exit may give Jet’s lenders

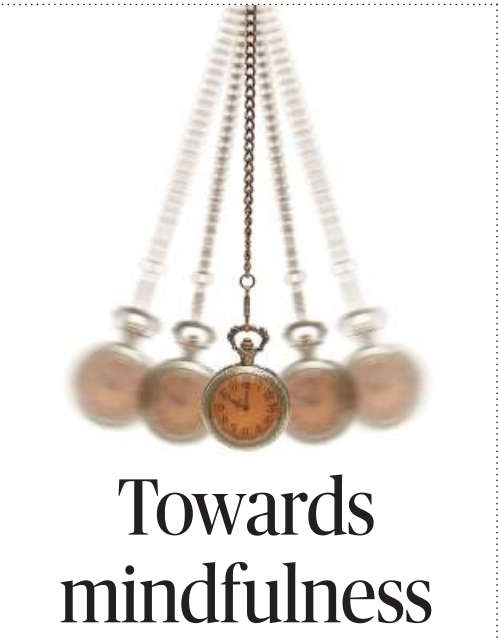
How does the toxin cause coma and even death in children?
The toxin acts in two ways to harm the brain and even cause death. Because of the toxin, the body’s natural mechanism to correct low blood glucose level is prevented thus leading to a drop in fuel supply to the brain. This leads to drowsiness, disorientation and even unconsciousness. When the toxin stops the fatty acid conversion into glucose midway, amino acids are released which are toxic to brain cells. The amino acids cause brain cells to swell resulting in brain oedema. As a result, children may suffer from convulsions, deepening coma and even death.

Can hypoglycaemic encephalopathy be prevented in undernourished children?
Yes, by making sure that undernourished children do not eat plenty of litchi fruit, ensuring that they eat some food and not go to bed on an empty stomach. Since 2015, the prevention strategy as recommended by Dr. Jacob John’s team has helped in sharply reducing the number of deaths from hypoglycaemic encephalopathy in Muzaffarpur. In 2017, the India-U.S. team published a paper corroborating these findings and recommendations.

Can hypoglycaemic encephalopathy be treated?
Yes, hypoglycaemic encephalopathy can be easily treated. A full and complete recovery can be achieved if children with hypoglycaemic encephalopathy are infused with 10% dextrose within four hours after the onset of symptoms.
Infusing 10% dextrose not only restores blood sugar to a safe level but also stops the production of amino acid that is toxic to brain cells by shutting down the body’s attempt to convert fatty acid into glucose.
Together with dextrose infusion, infusing 3% saline solution helps in reducing oedema of the brain cells. The concentration of ions in the fluid outside the brain cells becomes more than what is inside the cell; this causes the fluid from the cells to come out thus reducing oedema and damage to brain cells.
Using 5% dextrose, as is the norm in cases of general low blood sugar level, may help children with hypoglycaemic encephalopathy recover from hypoglycaemia, but the accumulation of amino acid is not turned off. And so, even if children survive, they will have brain damage.
If dextrose infusion is not started within four hours after the onset of symptoms, the brain cells may not recover but will die. As a result, even if they survive, children suffer from various aspects of brain damage – speech getting affected, mental retardation, muscle stiffness/weakness and so forth.

the confidence to infuse more money in case they decide to make the airline fully operational. The removal of the old management may also make Jet more endearing to buyers who prefer to wrest full control over it. It is worth noting that Jet shares soared on Thursday after the company was admitted to the NCLT. This suggests that investors expect value to be extracted out of Jet through the bankruptcy proceedings.

What lies ahead for the airline and its lenders?
Jet Airways is the first airline company in India to be admitted to undergo bankruptcy proceedings under the Insolvency and Bankruptcy Code, 2016. In contrast to other companies that have previously undergone bankruptcy proceedings under the bankruptcy code, Jet has very few assets, especially when compared to the size of its debt obligations. Many of the airline’s aircraft have already been seized by lenders after Jet stopped making payments. This leaves banks such as the SBI with very little to salvage from the airline, so it is very doubtful whether Jet’s lenders will be able to make any significant recovery of their debts just by selling off its assets.
The resolution professional in charge of Jet may thus want to keep the airline running as a going concern so that it might fetch the best value for lenders in the long run. Potential buyers may be interested in capitalising on the airline’s brand value and trying to re-launch the carrier by infusing fresh capital. Buyer interest, however, will depend largely on the amount of debt that lenders are willing to write off. The sale of Air India earlier this year failed to attract any bids due to the airline’s heavy debt burden that the lenders were unwilling to write off before the sale. If no buyer shows interest in purchasing Jet as a going concern, the only option left may be to sell each of Jet’s assets individually. Jet will then cease to exist as a company.



ASHWIN SHANKER

Towards mindfulness

It happened during yet another terrible day at work. I was frustrated with my boss, who simply wouldn't listen to my suggestions to better the code we were cracking, and would favour my partner's opinion over mine. Despondent thoughts crept into my mind – the politics, the favouritism, the bullying, all of which seem to come to no end. I thought I was about to explode, and I quickly retreated to the wash-room. I closed the door behind me and pulled the lid down to sit on the commode. I wanted to tear up, but the rage wouldn't let me give in to my vulnerability.

It was at that moment when I observed the slow ticking of the second hand of my watch.

It was the right kind of rhythm that my mind needed amid the chaos around my work life.

I thought about how the deliberate and ir-reverent movement of time, captured in this tiny device, would have witnessed both the happiest and the saddest periods of my life. The slow, rhythmic movements of the second hand tell me that this too shall pass. All I had to do was to hold on.

Regardless of how uplifting or upsetting that particular moment is in our life, there is no option but to accept the fact that things could change for the better or for the worse in the very next second. The moment cannot be controlled, but the mindset can be.

The calming realisation woke me up from my mindless slumber, and as I walked back to my desk I realised that most people around me are living their lives asleep.

I am glad that I listened to the timeless advice that my watch gave me, instead of reacting to my impulses. The ticking helped cut off the emotional time bomb.

The second hand is all about bringing your mind from a state of chaos to one of order. The minute hand will, however, sharpen your focus by bringing your attention to a dial that almost looks stationary, but is also moving forward, every minute. It has a hypnotic effect.

Have you ever wondered how many times a day you check the time? A study by a U.S. newspaper showed that Americans on an average check their watch once every 12 minutes. What if you could convert those moments into those of mindfulness?

By simply observing how each second passes by, we could reach a certain calm state. Then every moment would not be just about knowing what time it is, but about what best we could make of that time gifted to us.

Zen master Osho believed that by simply observing and moving our attention to one thing, we could raise our state of self-awareness; it morphs to a form of mindfulness.

Remember that mindfulness can never be something to be achieved or something to be desired for, because every desire has a chance of being a disappointment if not met.

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BADDAM ARAVINDA REDDY

A few years back I used to experience thumping palpitations in my heart whenever I climbed steps. This condition came about suddenly without any advance warning. I consulted a noted physician in my town, and after doing blood and other tests he diagnosed my problem as rheumatic heart disease. He prescribed drugs and warned me that I had to be on life-long medication. I was totally depressed. Friends and relatives suggested that I should consult another doctor for a second opinion. The second doctor was a cardiologist. He ordered an echocardiogram test and found a lump of tissue in my left atrium. I had left atrial myxoma. After the tumor was surgically removed, my problem was gone.

Not long ago I purchased a piece of land in a bustling town. The purchase decision was made without much thought, on the advice of a friend.

Those days real estate prices were shooting up by the day and I was in a tearing hurry to get on to the real estate bandwagon. After the purchase was made, I realised that the land had no proper access and that the seller had a previous agreement with another buyer. With great difficulty and some financial loss I could finally get rid of the land.

Daniel Kahneman, economist and psychologist, a Nobel prize winner, in his book, *Thinking Fast and Slow*, slots the human thinking process into two categories. System 1 thinking wherein the brain takes snap and intuitive judgments based on limited knowledge. System

2 thinking is a deliberate thinking process in which lot of information is gathered and options are considered. If we analyse the two cases mentioned above, the first case was an outcome of System 2 thinking. Options were searched and the better option was chosen. The second case is an example of System 1 thinking. A snap judgment was made on the basis of a limited amount of information and this led to lot of trouble. System 1 thinking was best suited when human beings were wandering in the African savanna. He had to make a quick judgment whether the figure lurking behind a bush was a lion or a harmless deer. In his daily life he had neither the time nor the security to

think through things. But modern life affords humans the luxury of security, time and abundant information to use System 2 thinking. Unfortunately for many of us, System 1 thinking is the default thinking mode. We use it constantly and make many mistakes.

Rolf Dobelli, the Swiss author, in his book *The Art of Thinking Clearly*, puts together a hundred

biases in human thinking which lead to wrong judgments. The list of biases include the contrast effect, the fear of regret, loss aversion, reciprocity, the anchor effect, the sleeper effect, story bias, the halo effect, the availability bias and so on.

The common theme running through all these biases is snap judgments made intuitively on limited information. Most of our purchases of branded goods are influenced by the halo effect. Our minds are mesmerised by the aura built around them. We purchase them without examining quality parameters.

Knowing full well that System 1 thinking leads us to make mistakes we can't free ourselves from System 1 thinking. From morning to evening in our daily life we have to make hundreds of judgments. We can't sit on each event and ponder over options. If we do that, we'll be stuck. Many of our decisions are snap decisions and most of the time it is ok with these decisions. When it's a big event such as choosing a life-partner, choosing a career, leaving a job, buying a home, making a large investment or any instance of substantial stake, we have to sit up and play System 2 thinking.

There is no guarantee that when we use System 2 thinking, we'll get the best outcomes. In spite of the time and effort put into System 2 thinking, sometimes the result may be contrary to expectations. A big black swan may come up to thwart our expectations. In such cases, we have to console ourselves by remembering that the world is its own master and that we cannot control it. Life could throw up surprises. We have to take them in our stride and move on.

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ILLUSTRATION: J.A. PREMKUMAR

A lone golfer waiting for a weekend game

What could have been a blissful time on the course...

T.P. KANNAN

After a busy week in the office, the least that a golfer worth his salt may look forward to at the weekend is a round of golf. Blissful four hours, devoid of the bane of the stressful office and domestic preoccupations. The blue sky above, just green grass below, a cool breeze...

But try getting a game-slot on a Saturday or Sunday on your own. This is what will happen.

You couldn't book one because the slot booking rules demanded that you give at least three players' names, but you are a loner. You go to the course around 1.30 and tell the marshal you would like to play. He asks you to wait as there are several four-ball groups. One three-ball, the last group, is scheduled to tee off

at 2.34 p.m., and you may perhaps join them.

You sit on a bench under the shade watching team after team tee off. The first few minutes of watching are interesting – two OBs, one water hazard, two hitting the trees and one powerful air shot with intermittent fairway shots. But as time passes you get restless. The shade is not of much help. It's a hot day. The penultimate group on the tee box leaves. And the last group you are to join is nowhere to be seen.

The tee box is now deserted. You are sitting there all alone on the bench getting anxious, with only a skinny dog that is enjoying an afternoon nap under a nearby tree for company. The breeze seems to have stopped. Exasperated, you go up to the marshal, who hates coming out of his cabin, and ask, "Where are they?"

He looks towards the car park through the window and announces, "They've arrived, sir." Ah, finally! You get up with a sigh of relief, flex your muscles and, pulling out the

driver, take practice swings. The three senior gentlemen, all well past their seventies, are however in no hurry to reach the tee box. They are in fact always the last to tee off. With no group behind, they play the game at their own leisurely pace. While walking they talk about their grandchildren, the annual baby-sitting trips to San Jose or Atlanta or New Jersey, President Trump and local politics, stopping in between to say 'good shot' when one of them hits a

100-yard drive. "Good shot! Straight and long. Must be easily 100 yards." "What do you mean 100 yards? It must be a minimum of 280 yards. I can't even see the ball." "That's because you have cataract."

Presently they are strolling towards the first tee box. Looking at their tired walk, one would think they have just finished playing 18 holes.

The marshal walks up to them and asks, "Sir, that gentleman over there, he is alone and wants a game. Can he now join you?"

They stop where they are, to take a good look at you, now doing your pre-game stretching exercise – you in your early-40s, neatly tucked T-shirt with matching shorts, branded golf shoes and black cap with a premier logo. They also see your new expensive golf bag leaning majestically on its stand. As they watch, you take a practice swing with your arms fully stretched and the

hip turning ninety degrees. The club hits your back as you complete the swing. A typical pro-like golf swing.

They exchange glances with 'Are-you-thinking-what-I-am-thinking?' kind of expression on their faces. Decision made but still they had a question. "What is his handicap?" one of them asks.

"He says twelve," replies the marshal.

The marshal starts towards you. Seeing him come, you climb up the tee box and place the tee, not wanting to lose a minute more after the one-hour wait. You are all geared up to hit the tee shot. You see the threesome approaching you, and giving them a friendly smile, you extend your hand. "Good afternoon, gentlemen. I am..."

That's when the marshal would interrupt you to say, "Sorry sir, their fourth ball is joining them after two holes. And at weekends you cannot play alone."

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ILLUSTRATION: SREEJITH R. KUMAR

Live and let live: some thoughts on a sustainable future

Humans are not what they imagine themselves to be

VIDULA CHOPRA RASTOGI

Anyone who has ever bought a plant from a nursery, watered it every day and watched in dismay as it failed to thrive, knows that gardening isn't easy. Even if you manage to grow a plant successfully, growing food is another ballgame altogether. Vegetables such as bitter melon and tomato grow almost like weeds, but others are trickier. They have varied water needs, soil requirements and temperature and sunlight preferences. In the event you get all of this right, you still need to protect them from pests. Finally, after weeks or months of care and patience, your plants may yield just a few kilograms of vegetables.

Recently, I watched in astonishment as a vine took root in my balcony, sprouted



ILLUSTRATION: SATWIK GADE

leaves and filled up the entire length of my planter in a matter of days. Flowers blossomed, and before long I spotted a tiny pumpkin, as big as an avocado. The children were beside themselves with excitement.

We watched it grow each day, and I helped it along by cutting back the vine and snipping off the browning leaves. When we finally cut it off, it weighed a good 4 kg.

In our home of seven, the fruit of our labour didn't last long, but the children were

convinced it tasted better than any they had ever tasted. Not a crumb was wasted.

If only we looked at all food in the same manner, for every fruit or vegetable that makes its way to us has been grown painstakingly by some farmer somewhere. One bad monsoon can ruin a crop, but we always have food on our tables and find it difficult to imagine that a day may come when we may not. The truth is, that day may arrive sooner than we think.

There was a book I read to

my daughter, titled *Millions of Cats*. It's an old classic, printed as far back as 1928. Although the book's subject matter deals with aesthetics, a few lines stood out in my mind. A very old man was returning home with millions of cats. They came to a pond. Each cat took a sip, and the pond was gone. When they were hungry, each ate a mouthful of grass on a hill, and not a blade was left.

Humans have been around for an estimated two lakh years by some accounts. Think about it. It took thousands of centuries to reach the level of a billion people, and today we are at 7.5 billion. Have we ever wondered just how many people earth can take? How many can it feed before there's just a mouthful left for each of us?

We presume we have an endless supply of food, but the truth is that the quality of our soil is deteriorating thanks to the large-scale use of pesticides and toxins that enter the soil and water through garbage disposal.

Dead zones – areas in the ocean that can no longer sustain growth – are gradually increasing. Species are growing extinct at an alarming rate. More and more of marine life are being found with plastic in their bodies. Fish is getting progressively unsafe to eat and pregnant women are cautioned against eating many forms of seafood because of concerns about the mercury level in them. If our water is growing unfit to support marine life, how will it support us?

We buy things we don't need, often tire of them, and throw them away, without a thought to all the resources it took to make them. The numerous artefacts we gift each other make no sense, serve no purpose and destroy the environment. Everything, from fast fashion to fast food, is a burden the earth shouldn't have to bear.

We can do a lot to help – not just the earth but ourselves – by gardening, composting, planting trees, avoiding single-use plastic

such as straws and plastic water bottles. Eating locally grown, organic foods and reducing meat consumption will go a long way in addressing environmental concerns.

A few nights ago, when debating the advantages and disadvantages of a vegetarian diet, a friend declared that, much like the beautiful lion, we are at the top of the food chain and can eat whatever we want. The survival-of-the-fittest argument is old and tired. We don't eat meat for survival, we eat it for pleasure. But that aside, there is a fundamental difference between lions and humans. The lion is a predator. It takes what it needs without destroying the environment. On the other hand, a tapeworm lives in our intestine, sucks nutrition and slowly destroys us – and itself.

It's time we realised that we should change; we're not the magnificent predators we imagine ourselves to be. We're actually the parasites.

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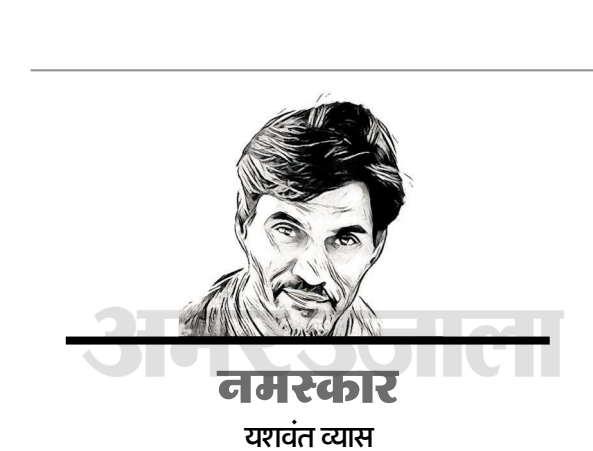
नई दिल्ली
रविवार, 23 जून, 2019

तिब्बत की हकीकत दिखाता एक फिल्मकार



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तिब्बत की संवेदनशीलता को देखते हुए किसी फिल्मकार के लिए तिब्बत की हकीकत बताना आसान काम नहीं है। इसके बावजूद पेमा सेदेन अपनी फिल्मों में समकालीन राजनीति या दलाई लामा का जिक्र किए बगैर तिब्बतियों के दमन को स्वर दे पा रहे हैं, तो यह बहुत बड़ी बात है।



गन्ना, लीची, बच्चे, श्वान आदि-इत्यादि

अपने क्या कभी गन्ना काटा है? बीड़, मराठवाड़ा की मजदूरिनें अपने पति के साथ मिलकर ठेकेदार से एक करार करती हैं। एक टन गन्ने काटने के ढाई सौ रुपये। कुल चार से पांच महीनों का काम जिसमें तीन सौ टन काटकर मिले पैसों से साल भर उनकी गृहस्थी चलेगी। इसलिए एक दिन भी छूट जाए तो क्या हो? और वह भी जब, मासिक धर्म के चलते हो तो क्या हो? उन चार दिनों के बदले पांच सौ रुपये रोज की पेनल्टी लगेगी और पैसा कट जाएगा सो अलगा। तो मजदूरिन क्या करे? वह कोख के उस हिस्से से ही मुक्त हो जाती है, जिसके चलते जीवन का यह चक्र उसके जीवन को जीवन बनाने के लिए बनाता है। गांव के गांव - जहां औरतों ने गर्भाशय निकाल दिए हैं। सर्जरी के लिए भी ठेकेदार एडवांस देने को तैयार बैठा है। उधार कटाओ, मुक्त हो जाओ।

गन्ना कट रहा है। मिलों में जा रहा है। शक्कर बन रही है। आपकी जीभ की मिठास में जो शक्कर आती है, उसमें एक कोख की चीख भी होती है। पर



चीख के एक तरफ गन्ना है, दूसरी तरफ लीची है। मीठे से मीठे का भाग दो तो कुल कितना मीठा बचा? सयाने कहते हैं मुजफ्फरपुर में भूखे बच्चे लीची-मीठ भी आती हैं। रिपोर्टर ‘चमकी’ से त्रस्त आईसीयू में घुस गए हैं, डॉक्टर कांप रहे हैं, बच्चे बेहोश हैं, मांए रो रही हैं, सरकारें भरे पेट लीची खा रही हैं। भरे पेट खाने पर लीची ज्यादा मीठी और अतिरिक्त तौर पर स्वादिष्ट लगती है। तब आपको अस्पताल, बीमारी, गरीबी, डॉक्टर, इंतजाम, मृत्यु, जीवन आदि पर उत्कृष्ट विचार आते हैं। भूखों ने गलती की। भूखे हमेशा गलती करते हैं, क्योंकि वे भूखे हैं। वे पेट भर लेते तो लीची जैसी लजीज चीज को बदनाम करने से बच जाते।

उधर गन्ने की मिठास ये है कि मांएं कोख हटवा रही हैं, इधर लीची की मिठास ये है कि जो कोख से दुनिया में आ गए, वे मरकर लौट रहे हैं। ये अजन्मों से जन्मे हुए सच की दरंती है, जिसने सीना चाक कर दिया है। मगर सीना चाक करने के मुहावरे को उड़ाकर सेर भर ज्ञानियों ने सवा सेर मिट्टी लेकर मन के कुम्हारों का आंगन देख लिया है। सरकारें उस चाक पर अपने ज्ञान के बर्तन बनाए जा रही हैं।

उधर कुछ सवा सेर ज्ञानी हैं वे शिल्पग्राम के ‘बुटीक’ किस्म के चाक लेकर राजधानी में सुराहियां बनाने बैठ गए हैं। बुद्धि के रेस्टोरेंट में ये जनता से जुड़ी मिट्टी के मार्केटियर हैं। सुराहियों में विचारधारा का ठंडा पानी है, पियो और द्रव्नात्मक भौतिकवाद से ऊपर उठ जाओ।

एक सुबह बीड़ में होती है, गन्ने के खेतों के बीच। एक सुबह मुजफ्फरपुर में होती है, अस्पताल की देहरी पर। एक सुबह अलवर में होती है, तार-तार बच्ची की शक्ल में। एक सुबह दिल्ली में भी होती है। चिंतक पर चिंता का ‘ओवरलोड’ है। लोभी गार्डन से हवाखोरी करके तृप्त हुए श्वान को खिलाता हुआ चिंतक, फौजियों के साथ ड्यूटी पर तैनात, योग करते श्वान पर लतीफा सुनाता है और हे-हे करके क्रांति का उबला हुआ नाश्ता करता है। अब वह बलात्कार, लूट, मौत, भूख, मुठभेड़ सबको पहले विचारधारा की टेस्ट-ट्यूब में डालेगा और मनमाफिक रंग आने पर राष्ट्र पर खतरे का बुलेटिन जारी करेगा।

दो सयाने रो रहे हैं, अध्‍यक्ष इस्तीफे पर अड़े हैं। उन्हें मना लें, पीछे देश देखें। दो दीवाने रो रहे हैं, सीबीआई बिठा दी है, उसके खिलाफ आंदोलन सैट कर लें, पीछे देश देखें। दो अज्ञानी रो रहे हैं, देश में गन्ना है, देश में लीची है, देश में श्वान हैं, देश में बच्चे हैं, देश में औरतें हैं, देश में ये देश है और यही देश है। इसे देखें, पीछे कोई और देश देखें।

बेचारे ‘अज्ञानी’ फील्ड में हैं। वही तो फील्ड में होंगे। ज्ञानी तो बक्से में बैठते हैं और लीची खाते हैं। चैनल से उतर ट्विटर पर उड़ते हैं फिर गन्ने का रस पीकर मधुशाला का फोटो ट्वीट करते हैं।

गन्ना काटती औरत, लीची खाते भूखे बच्चे, निष्ठा के साथ सन्नद्ध श्वान - यह सब तो आदि-इत्यादि हैं।

बोलिए -

ऊँ पूर्वमदः पूर्णमिदं पूर्णत्वपूर्वमुदच्यते।

पूर्ण्याय पूर्णमादाय पूर्णमेवावशिष्यते॥

तिब्बती फिल्मकार और लेखक पेमा सेदेन इन दिनों शर्मिंदा महसूस कर रहे हैं। वर्षों तक उन्होंने चीनी के साथ-साथ अपनी तिब्बती भाषा में बेहद सहजता से कहानियां और फिल्मों की पटकथाएं लिखीं। लेकिन बाद के दिनों में फिल्मों और विज्ञापनों की भारी व्यस्तता के बीच उनके पास सिर्फ उस चीनी भाषा में लिखने का ही विकल्प रह गया, जो न केवल उनकी दूसरी भाषा है, बल्कि कभी-कभी वह तिब्बती पर चीनी भाषा को तरजीह भी देते रहे हैं।

अपनी मातृभाषा तिब्बती की उपेक्षा का तीव्रतर भाव हाल के दिनों में उनमें तब आया, जब उन्होंने खुद को एक ऐसी किताब के लोकार्पण के अवसर पर मंच पर पाया, जो उन्हीं की चीनी भाषा में लिखी पुस्तक *थालों* थी, जिसका किसी ने तिब्बती में अनुवाद किया था। किसी दूसरे व्यक्ति ने मेरे उपन्यास का मेरी मातृभाषा में अनुवाद किया, जो सुनने में बेहद अजीब लगता है,’ *जिंगा* और *थालों* जैसी बेहद चर्चित फिल्मों के मुदुभाषी निर्देशक पेमा सेदेन ने हाल ही में एक इंटरव्यू के दौरान कही।

खुद को दोषी मानने की बात एक ऐसे व्यक्ति के मुंह से सुनी जा रही है, जिसके व्यक्तित्व

और कृतित में उसकी तिब्बती पहचान केंद्रीय स्थान रखती है। और उनकी यह स्वीकारोक्ति उस विरोधाभास के बारे में भी बताती है, जिसका सामना चीन में प्रशिक्षित तिब्बती फिल्मकारों की नई पीढ़ी को रोज ही करना पड़ता है। उनचास साल के पेमा चीन में काम करने वाले ऐसे पहले तिब्बती फिल्मकार हैं, जिसने तिब्बती भाषा की एक पूरी फिल्म की शूटिंग चीन में की है। वह प्रसिद्ध बीजिंग फिल्म एकेडेमी से ग्रेजुएट होने वाले पहले तिब्बती फिल्मकार भी हैं।

वह अपनी तरह के अकेले फिल्मकार हैं, जो मौजूदा दौर में विरल है। आर्ट फिल्म बनाने वाले वह ऐसे निर्देशक हैं, जो सेंसर करने वाली चीन की तानाशाही व्यवस्था में भी उतनी ही सहजता से काम करते हैं। आज भी वह ऐसी कहानियों पर फिल्म बनाते हैं, जो एक और आम दर्शकों को संबोधित होती है, तो दूसरी तरफ चीन की कम्युनिस्ट सत्ता पर बांध दी गई हदबंदियों से बाहर होती हैं। वह लगातार फिल्में बना पा रहे हैं, तो इसलिए कि अपनी फिल्मों में वे राजनीतिक संदर्भों को परोक्ष रूप से ले आते हैं। बावजूद इसके कि विदेशों में रहने वाले अनेक तिब्बती उन पर दबाव बनाते हैं कि वह



तिब्बत पर हो रहे चीनी दमन के विरोध में मुखरता से अपनी बात फिल्मों में रखें। हालांकि उनकी सभी फिल्मों की पु्ठभूमि तिब्बत या तिब्बती इलाके हैं, जो कि चीन में बेहद संवेदनशील विषय है। लेकिन उन फिल्मों में दलाई लामा का जिक्र नहीं है, जिन पर चीनी तिब्बत की आजादी के लिए गोपनीय ढंग से काम करने का आरोप लगाते हैं। ऐसे ही पेमा

सरकार के भीतर सरकार

आज हम जिस मुख्य चुनौती का सामना कर रहे हैं, वह नीति निर्माण नहीं है। आज जो मुख्य चुनौती है, वह नीति बनाने को लेकर नहीं है। यह नीति के कुशल, किफायती और उत्कृष्ट कार्यान्वयन में है।

हर सरकार तब हैरत में पड़ जाती है, जब उसका सामना किसी गंभीर संकट से होता है। इसमें किसी न किसी की तो गलती होती है, लेकिन कोई जिम्मेदारी नहीं लेता। आखिर में जिम्मेदारी सरकार के मुखिया यानी गृहमंत्री या प्रधानमंत्री पर ही आती है। हालांकि गहरी जांच से पता चलेगा कि वह पहले व्यक्ति नहीं हैं, जिन्हें जिम्मेदार ठहराया जाना चाहिए।

कूट मौतें

इंसेफेलाइटिस के प्रकोप ने बिहार के मुजफ्फरपुर में 140 बच्चों को लील लिया है, जिस पर गौर किया जाना चाहिए। केंद्रीय स्वास्थ्य मंत्रालय के मैनेजमेंट इन्फर्मेशन सिस्टम के मुताबिक जिले में स्थित सभी 103 प्राथमिक स्वास्थ्य केंद्रों और एकमात्र सामुदायिक स्वास्थ्य केंद्र को पांच में से शून्य रेटिंग मिली थी, क्योंकि वे मूल्यांकन के लिए अनिवार्य आवश्यकताओं (चिकित्सा अधिकारी, नर्स और आया) को पूरा नहीं करते थे। मुजफ्फरपुर के श्रीकृष्ण मेडिकल कॉलेज और अस्पताल की बाल चिकित्सा इकाई, जहां प्रभावित बच्चों का इलाज किया गया था, बाल चिकित्सा से संबंधित आईसीयू के रूप में अर्हता प्राप्त करने के मापदंड पूरा नहीं करती। इन तथ्यों के आधार पर किसे जिम्मेदारी उठानी चाहिए? कोई इसके लिए तैयार नहीं, इसलिए हम एक छोटे (और स्वादिष्ट) फल को जिम्मेदार ठहराएंगे, जिसे लीची के नाम से जाना जाता है! डॉक्टर कहते हैं कि लीची का सिर्फ उन बच्चों पर बुरा असर होता है, जिन्होंने रात को भोजन नहीं किया। तो उन बच्चों ने रात को भोजन क्यों नहीं किया? इसलिए क्योंकि वे गरीब हैं और उन्हें भोजन नहीं मिल सका। क्या कोई चीज इससे भी अधिक हताशाजनक और पीड़ादायक हो सकती है? (2008 और 2014 के दौरान इंसेफेलाइटिस से 6,000 मौतें हुईं।)

अभी कुछ दिन पहले गुजरात में वडोदरा के नजदीक एक होटल के सेंटिक टैंक की सफाई करते समय सात सफाई कर्मचारियों की मौत हो गई। यह पहला मौका नहीं था, जब ऐसी त्रासदी हुई और दुखद है कि यह आखिरी बार नहीं है। सेंटिक टैंक की सफाई कोई रॉकेंट साइंस नहीं है। इसकी सफाई के लिए मशीनें उपलब्ध हैं और केरल के एक स्टार्ट अप ने इसका एक भारतीय संस्करण तैयार किया है। यदि किसी वजह से सीवर और सेंटिक टैंक की सफाई के लिए कर्मचारियों की नियुक्ति जरूरी ही हो जाए, तो इसके लिए विशेष तरह के कपड़े, मास्क और ऑक्सीजन सिलेंडर उपलब्ध हैं। ऐसे किसी उपकरण की न तो कमी है और न ही गुजरात के सबसे



पी चिदंबरम

पूर्व केंद्रीय मंत्री

अमीर नगर निगमों में से एक सूरत की वित्तीय क्षमता से बाहर की चीज है, इसके बावजूद सात गरीब व्यक्तियों को मरने दिया गया। (2011 से 2018 के दौरान भारत के सभी राज्यों में कुल 114 सफाई कर्मचारियों की मौत हो गई।)

आहत करने वाली उपेक्षा

एक और आहत करने वाला अविश्वसनीय आंकड़ा है: दिल्ली में रोजाना औसतन चार लोगों की सड़क हादसों में मौत हो जाती है। आप कल्पना कर सकते हैं कि चार लोग कल मारे जाएंगे, चार परसों और इसी तरह से चार के औसत से लोग रोजाना अकेले दिल्ली में मारे जाते हैं। पूरी दुनिया में एक साल के दौरान हवाई हादसों में मारे जाने वालों की संख्या इस आंकड़े का छोट्टा-सा हिस्सा भर होती है! आखिर हवाई यात्रा के लिए तो कड़े नियम हैं, लेकिन सड़क यात्रा के लिए शिथिल नियम क्यों हैं? (2011 से 2017 के दौरान दिल्ली में सड़क हादसों में 12,724 लोगों की मौत हो गई।)

क्या आपने कभी दिल्ली के बारापुला प्लाईओवर से होकर यात्रा की है, जिस पर दिल्ली सरकार का पीडब्ल्यूडी विभाग 'गर्व' करता है और जिसे तैयार होने में बरसों लग गए? यह एक औसत प्लाईओवर है, इसकी डिजाइन भी औसत है, यहां का सफर भी औसत ही है और इसका निर्माण भी बहुत खराब है। जरा रास्ते में वाहन के दोनों ओर की दीवारों पर नजर डालें, तो पता चलेगा कि ये या तो चिपट गई हैं या टूट गई हैं, ऊर्चाई असमान है, स्लैब उखड़ गए हैं, बहुत ही खराब ढंग से प्लास्टर और रंग-रोगन किया गया और कुल मिलाकर यह बहुत बदसूरत है। इसके बावजूद यह सभी गुणवत्ता परीक्षण पास कर गया और ठेकेदार को थुगतान भी कर दिया गया और 2010 में प्लाईओवर का उद्घाटन भी हो गया। अधिक दिन नहीं हुए जब इसे मरम्मत के लिए बंद करना पड़ा।

इरादे और अमल

इन सारे मामलों में, और आप ऐसे दूसरे मामलों पर भी

विचार कर सकते हैं, कोई नीतिगत नाकामी नहीं थी। किसी भी सरकार की नीति होती है, स्वास्थ्य सुविधाओं और अस्पतालों का निर्माण तथा संसाधनों और कर्मचारियों का इंतजाम करना; शहरों और कस्बों में गुणवत्ता युक्त ढांचे का निर्माण करना और सैद्धांतिकरण इत्यादि। विधायिका और कार्यपालिका (मंत्रीगण) नीति बनाते हैं और स्वाभाविक रूप से चाहते हैं कि उस पर प्रभावी तरीके से अमल हो। लेकिन इरादे और अमल के बीच बड़ा अंतर है। क्यों? हम इसका जवाब देने में हिचकते हैं, लेकिन कहना जरूरी है : सरकार यानी गवर्नमेंट (जिसमें 'जी' कैपिटल है) के भीतर एक और गवर्नमेंट (स्मॉल 'जी') है। इस स्मॉल-जी गवर्नमेंट ने बिग-जी गवर्नमेंट के साथ ही, कम से कम भारत में, लोगों को भी विफल कर दिया है। दो विरोधाभासी उदाहरणों से मैं इसे स्पष्ट करता हूं: नोटबंदी एक बड़ी नीतिगत भूल थी; जिन मंत्रियों ने इस नीति पर विचार किया और बिग-जी गवर्नमेंट का निर्माण किया उन्हें इसकी जिम्मेदारी लेनी चाहिए। दूसरी ओर जीएसटी एक अच्छी नीति है। इसके बावजूद इसने नोटबंदी जैसी परेशानी पैदा की, तो इसकी जिम्मेदारी स्मॉल-जी गवर्नमेंट को उठानी चाहिए। स्वच्छ भारत एक अच्छी नीति है, लेकिन राज्यों और गांवों में खुले में शौच करने की स्थिति से संबंधित गलत आंकड़े अंकित हैं और यह स्मॉल जी-गवर्नमेंट की धोखेबाजी की ही दर्शाता है। उज्ज्वला एक अच्छी नीति है, लेकिन एक वर्ष में तीन सिलेंडर बदलने जाने की दर स्मॉल-जी गवर्नमेंट की नाकामी है।

हम जब वोट देते हैं, तो हम लोग बिग-जी गवर्नमेंट के लिए वोट देते हैं। वहां एक स्मॉल-जी गवर्नमेंट भी होती है, जिस पर हम लोगों का कोई बका नही होता। उसके चयन, नियुक्ति, प्रशिक्षण, क्रमिक विकास, पदस्थाना, मूल्यांकन या पदोन्नति में हमारी कोई भूमिका नहीं होती। हम इसे ऐसे ही नहीं चलने दे सकते। हमें स्माल-जी गवर्नमेंट को फिर से गढ़ना होगा। जिस तरह से हम लोग बिग-जी गवर्नमेंट और उस पर काबिज होने वालों को हर पांच साल में पुरस्कृत करते हैं या दंडित करते हैं, उसी तरह से हमें हर पांच साल या उससे पहले स्माल-जी गवर्नमेंट और उस पर काबिज होने वालों को दंडित या पुरस्कृत करने का रास्ता तलाशना होगा। आज हम जिस मुख्य चुनौती का सामना कर रहे हैं, वह नीति निर्माण नहीं है। आज जो मुख्य चुनौती है, वह नीति बनाने में नहीं है। यह नीति के कुशल, किफायती और उत्कृष्ट कार्यान्वयन में है।

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हो जाते हैं। खाने-पीने के बाद फेंके जाने वाले प्लास्टिक भी पहाड़ के लिए संकट का कारण बन गया है। अगर आज हमने कोई ठोस निर्णय नहीं लिया, तो पहाड़ में भी वही स्थितियां पैदा हो जाएंगी, जो मैदानी इलाकों में हैं।

यह कितनी बड़ी बिड़बनना है कि पर्यटक हिमालय में पानी की बोयलें लेकर आते हैं। जो हिमालय गंगा, यमुना ब्रह्मपुत्र और तमाम नदियों को पानी पिलाता है, वह भी पर्यटकों को पानी की बोतल लेकर क्यों चढ़ना पड़ता है? ऐसे में, इस सवाल का खड़ा होना लाजिमी है कि आखिर हम हर सौ मीटर पर अपने ही पानी को फिल्टर करके पर्यटकों को पानी क्यों नहीं पिला सकते। पानी के इस व्यापार को हम अपने हिस्से में क्यों नहीं रख सकते? उससे दो बड़े फायदे होंगे। एक तो बड़े रोजगार के रूप में पानी हमारे बीच में होगा। और दूसरा यह कि बोतलों के कचरे से हम मुक्त हो जाएंगे। हमें यह भी सोचना होगा कि पर्यटकों को अगर पहाड़ों पर आकर चिपस ही खाने हैं और कोकाकोला ही पीना है, तो फिर पहाड़ की पहचान कैसे बनेगी। बेहतर होगा कि पहाड़ जो तमाम तरह के फलों व अनाज के उत्पादक भी हैं, उन्हीं के उत्पाद पर्यटकों को उपलब्ध कराए जाएं। इससे हमारा रोजगार बढ़ेगा और हमारे संसाधनों के रास्ते खड़े होंगे और साथ में इस कुड़े-कचरे से भी हम मुक्त हो जाएंगे।

इस अव्यवस्था का एक बड़ा कारण यह भी है कि हमने आज तक पर्यटन कोशाल घर गांव के बीच में विकसित नहीं किया। हम एक टास्क फोर्स बना सकते हैं, जिससे रिकल डेवलपमेंट ट्रेनिंग से रोजगार के लिए भटक रहे युवाओं के रोजगार का यह एके माध्यम बने। ये बड़ी चुनौतियां हैं, जिन पर बड़ी गंभीरता से शासन और आम आदमी को सोचना पड़ेगा। आज अगर हम इसका लाभ नहीं उठा पाए, तो पर्यटक जिस उत्साह से हमारे बीच में आते हैं, उनको हम हिमालय के बारे में हमें समझा पाएंगे और न ही खुद समझ पाएंगे कि हम कहां पर किस तरह से विफल हुए। सच तो यह है कि पर्यटन में कड़े कानूनों की व्यवस्था भी करनी होगी, ताकि हिमालय और दर्शनार्थी सुरक्षित रह सकें।





दैनिक जागरण

कड़ी मेहनत का कोई विकल्प नहीं

राहुल की जुमलेबाजी

पता नहीं राहुल गांधी को यह आभास हुआ या नहीं कि योग दिवस पर उनकी ओर से जो तंज भरा ट्वीट किया गया उसकी कैसी खराब प्रतिक्रिया हुई, लेकिन बेहतर यह होगा कि उनके करीबी उन्हें बताएं कि उन्होंने किस तरह एक अवांछित टिप्पणी करके यह उम्मीद ध्वस्त कर दी कि एक और करारी पराजय के बाद वह अपनी रीति-नीति में सुधार करने में सक्षम होंगे। उनके अर्कचक्र ट्वीट से यही जाहिर हुआ कि उन्हें योग दिवस की महत्ता के साथ देश की समृद्ध विरासत और गरिमा की भी परवाह नहीं। निःसंदेह राहुल गांधी के अलावा अन्य अनेक लोग भी ऐसे हैं जिन्हें यह रास नहीं आया कि नरेंद्र मोदी की एक पहल पर संयुक्त राष्ट्र ने योग दिवस को अंतरराष्ट्रीय स्तर पर मनाने का फैसला किया और देखते ही देखते ही वह दुनिया भर में लोकप्रिय हो गया, लेकिन आम तौर पर ऐसे लोग अपनी नापसंदगी इसलिए प्रकट करने से बचते हैं, क्योंकि वह इससे परिचित हैं कि योग मानव समाज को एक अप्रतिम देने हैं और उससे भारत की प्रतिष्ठा भी जुड़ी है। अगर राहुल गांधी को योग दिवस पर होने वाले आयोजन पसंद नहीं तो वह चुप रह सकते थे, लेकिन मोदी सरकार पर तंज कसने की लालक में उन्होंने यह ध्यान रखना जरूरी नहीं समझा कि वह अपनी फजीहत ही कराएंगे। क्या इससे खराब बात और कोई हो सकती है कि जब दुनिया भर में योग दिवस मनाया जा रहा था तब देश की सबसे पुरानी पार्टी के अध्यक्ष ने उसका उपहास उड़ाना बेहतर समझा? ऐसा करते समय उन्होंने यह भी ध्यान नहीं रखा कि वह मोदी सरकार के साथ सेना का भी निगदर करते हुए दिखेंगे।

आखिर किसी राष्ट्रीय दल का अध्यक्ष, जो प्रधानमंत्री भी बनना चाहता है, योग को लेकर ऐसी सस्ती और हल्की टिप्पणी कैसे कर सकता है? क्या सेना के जवानों संग योग करते कुतलों की फोटो के अलावा उन्हें और कुछ ऐसा नहीं दिखता जिस पर वह जुमलेबाजी करने का अपना शौक पूरा कर सकते? आखिर ऐसी कोई फोटो नए भारत का परिचायक क्यों नहीं हो सकती? योग दिवस पर राहुल गांधी का कटाक्ष भरा ट्वीट उनके खराब हास्यबोध के साथ उनकी सतही राजनीतिक समझ को भी बयान करता है। यह ट्वीट न केवल यह रेखांकित करता है कि राहुल गांधी को मोदी सरकार के साथ उसके नए भारत के नारे से भी चिढ़ है, बल्कि यह भी कहता है कि उन्हें अब तक यह अहसास नहीं हो सका है कि कांग्रेस को इतनी करारी पराजय का सामना क्यों करना पड़ा? शायद इसी अहसास के कारण वह यह साबित करने की कोशिश करने में लगे हुए हैं कि नरेंद्र मोदी ने नफरत फैलाकर सत्ता हासिल कर ली। जब सत्तापक्ष प्रचंड बहुमत से लैस हो और राष्ट्रीय दल के रूप में केवल कांग्रेस ही उसे चुनौती देने में थोड़ा-बहुत सक्षम दिखती हो तब विपक्ष की अगुआई करने वाले राहुल गांधी के लिए तो यह और जरूरी हो जाता है कि वह कहीं अधिक धीर-गंभीर रहें और बेहद जिम्मेदारी से खुद को प्रभावी बनाने के तौर-तरीके अपनाएं। अफसोस की बात है कि राहुल गांधी ने ठीक इसके उलट काम किया।

उत्तराखंड की अपेक्षाएं

हिमालयी राज्यों के लिए नीति आयोग में अलग प्रकोष्ठ का गठन किया जा चुका है। उम्मीद की जानी चाहिए कि विषम भौगोलिक क्षेत्र के साथ ग्याविवर्णीय बंदिशों और सीमित आर्थिक संसाधन से जुड़ा रहे हिमालयी राज्यों के बारे में अब नीतिगत स्तर पर फैसले किए जा सकेंगे। प्रधानमंत्री नरेंद्र मोदी हिमालयी राज्यों के संदर्भ में उनकी जरूरतों पर जोर देते हुए विशेष नीतियों का समर्थन कर चुके हैं। नीति आयोग में गठित यह प्रकोष्ठ उसी दिशा में एक कदम माना जा रहा है। हिमालयी राज्यों के बारे में लंबे अरसे से विशेष नीति नियोजन की पैरवी की जाती रही है। विषम परिस्थितियों और क्षेत्रफल की वजह से इन राज्यों में बुनियादी ढांचे पर अलग तरीके से फोकस किए जाने की दरकार है। पर्यटन, बागवानी, परंपरागत फसलें, हस्तशिल्प के साथ ही ऊर्जा के पारंपरिक और गैर पारंपरिक स्रोतों के विकास को प्रोत्साहित कर इन राज्यों को आत्मनिर्भर बनाने की दिशा में ठोस कदम उठाए जा सकते हैं। जिन बुनियादी क्षेत्रों में विकास की संभावनाएं हैं, उन्हें अभी तक राष्ट्रीय नीति का हिस्सा बनाया नहीं जा सका है। इन सभी पर्वतीय राज्यों खास तौर पर उत्तराखंड को केंद्र की सत्ता पर दोबारा आसीन मोदी सरकार के पहले बजट से काफी उम्मीदें हैं। केंद्रीय वित्त मंत्री निर्मला सीतारमण के साथ बजट पूर्व चर्चा में राज्य सरकार ने अपनी जरूरतों को रखा भी है। पर्वतीय क्षेत्र होने की वजह से यहां निर्माण कार्यों की लागत अपेक्षाकृत अधिक है। यही वजह है कि केंद्र पोषित योजनाओं में पर्वतीय राज्यों के लिए अलग मानक निर्धारित किए जाने की पुरजोर पैरवी की जाती रही है। प्रधानमंत्री आवास योजना के क्रियान्वयन में अड़चन आवास निर्माण की ज्यादा लागत है। राज्य सरकार ने इस लागत को 1.30 लाख रुपये से बढ़ाकर दो लाख रुपये और ग्रामीण क्षेत्रों में इस योजना को कामयाब बनाने के लिए मनरेगा के तहत अतिरिक्त मानव दिवस सृजित करने की मांग की है। प्रधानमंत्री ग्राम सड़क योजना में ग्रामीण आबादी का मानक 250 से घटकर 150 किए जाने के साथ ही इस योजना में रेषेचे को भी हिस्सा बनाने की पैरवी की गई है। वर्ष 2021 में हरिद्वार में होने वाले महाकुंभ और राष्ट्रीय खेलों के आयोजन के लिए भी राज्य केंद्र से वित्तीय मदद की उम्मीदें बांधे हुए हैं।

महामारी बनती असंतुलित खुराक

जुलुल त्वास

ुनिया के विभिन्न क्षेत्रों में रहने वाले लोग यदि अपने भोजन को संतुलित कर लें तो उन्हें बड़ा ायदा होगा। दुनिया में बीमारियां के बोझ पर कए गए एक विस्तृत अध्ययन में कहा गया है कि ाोजन के संतुलित न होने की वजह से कई तरह ी बीमारियां फैल रही हैं। इस अध्ययन में 195

एक अनुमान के अनुसार दुनिया में होने वाली पांच मौतों में से एक मौत के लिए अपूर्ण या गलत खुराक जिम्मेदार है

सरकारी नीतियों में सहयोग स्थापित करके दुनिया लोगों के स्वास्थ्य में सुधार करने के लिए र्मावित प्रयास तत्काल शुरू किए जाने चाहिए। अमेरिका में वाशिंगटन यूनिवर्सिटी के टिएट्यूट ऑफ हैल्थ मेट्रिक्स एंड इवोल्यूशन डायरेक्टर डॉ. क्रिस्टोफर मरे ने कहा कि दो शर्कों से चल रही बहस में नमक, चीनी और इंसुलिन पर मुख्य ध्यान दिया जाता है, लेकिन इस पर जोर दिया गया है कि सभी देशों रस्थ खाद्य वस्तुओं के उत्पादन, वितरण अ वन को बढ़ावा देने के लिए व्यापक हस्तक्ष ी आवश्यकता है। इस अध्ययन में 195 दे ्रमुख खाद्य वस्तुओं और भौतिक तत्वों

उपभोग का आकलन कर पता लगाने की कोशिश हुई कि कैल्शियम, हृदय रोगों और मधुमेह जैसे गैर-संक्रामक रोगों से होने वाली मौतों पर असंतुलित आहार का क्या असर पड़ा था। अध्ययन में 1990 से लेकर 2017 के बीच रुझानों पर नजर रखी गई। इस अध्ययन से पहले जनसंख्या के स्तर पर असंतुलित भोजन के स्वास्थ्य संबंधी प्रभावों का आकलन करना मुश्किल था, क्योंकि विभिन्न देशों में आहार के सेवन को वर्गीकृत करने में तमाम पेचीदगियां हैं। नए अध्ययन में आहार के 15 तत्वों पर ध्यान केंद्रित किया गया। इनमें एक आहार में फल-सब्जियों, मोटे अनाज, फलियों, सूखे मेवों, दालों, दूध, रेशों, कैल्शियम, सीफूड ओमेगा-3 फैटी एसिड्स और पोलोअनसेचुरेटेड फैट्स की मात्रा कम थी और दूसरे आहार में प्रोसेस्ड मीट, चीनी युक्त पेय पदार्थों, ट्रांसफैटी एसिड्सऔर सोडियम की मात्रा बहुत ज्यादा थी। 2017 में हुई 1.1 करोड़ मौतों का कारण असंतुलित भोजन बताया गया है। विश्व में 2017 में हुई आहार से संबंधित मौतों में आधी से अधिक मौतें ऐसे आहार से हुई थीं जिनमें सोडियम अधिक और मोटे अनाज तथा फल की मात्रा कम थी। (लेखक स्वतंत्र टिप्पणीकार हैं)

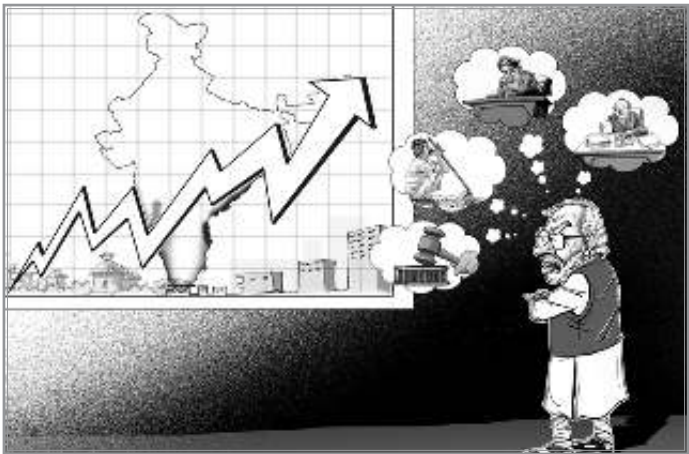
संजय गुप्त

तेजी से उभरते किसी भी देश में एक सक्षम न्यायिक तंत्र भी होना चाहिए। अगर न्याय समय से न मिले तो फिर वह बेमानी हो जाता है



मोदी सरकार की दूसरी पारी की शुरुआत हो चुकी है। अगले पांच साल में यह सरकार किस तरीके से विकास और सामाजिक सौहार्द की दिशा में काम करेगी, इसकी झलक राष्ट्रपति के अभिभाषण में साफ दिखी। भाजपा ने 2019 के अपने चुनावी घोषणा पत्र में जो मुख्य बातें रखी थीं लगभग उन सबका उल्लेख राष्ट्रपति के अभिभाषण में दिखा। इस अभिभाषण के जरिये प्रधानमंत्री मोदी ने एक तरह से घोषणा पत्र के प्रति अपनी संकल्पबद्धता फिर से प्रकट की। चुनाव नतीजों के बाद मोदी ने यह जो कहा था कि उनकी सरकार सबका साथ, सबका विकास और सबका विश्वास के आधार पर चलेगी उसे अगर राष्ट्रपति ने भी रेखांकित किया तो इससे सरकार की प्रतिबद्धता ही प्रकट होती है। भारत में हर नागरिक को एक समान दृष्टि से देखने और बिना भेदभाव उसके विकास में सहलक बनने की बात भी भाजपा के घोषणा पत्र में थी। तत्काल तीन तलाक पर नया विधेयक इसी घोषणा के अनुरूप है। पिछली बार वह विधेयक संसद से पारित नहीं हो सका था, लेकिन सरकार ने अध्यादेश लाकर यह साफ कर दिया था कि वह इस मसले पर अपने कदम पीछे खींचने वाली नहीं। मोदी सरकार जिस तरह देश की सुरक्षा को शीर्ष पर रखने के साथ ही एनआरसी पर जोर दे रही है उससे यही पता चलता है कि यह चुदा भी सरकार की प्राथमिकता सूची में है। यह तब है कि सरकार की प्राथमिकता वाले कई मुद्दे कुछ राजनीतिक दलों को रास नहीं आने वाले। इसकी

गुष्ट तीन तलाक संबंधी विधेयक पर कांग्रेस और वामदलों की आपत्ति से होती है। यह स्पष्ट है कि सरकार ऐसी आपत्तियों की परवाह करने वाली नहीं। उसे करनी भी नहीं चाहिए, क्योंकि वह इन्हीं मुद्दों के सहारे भारी बहुमत से जीत कर आई है। इस समय कई सेक्टर आर्थिक मंदी से ग्रस्त दिख रहे हैं। इसके कई कारण हैं, लेकिन एक बड़ा कारण करीब तीन माह लंबी चुनाव प्रक्रिया रही। यह किसी से छिपा नहीं कि चुनावी आचार संहिता सरकारी कामकाज को लगभग टप करने का काम करती है। प्रधानमंत्री मोदी एक अर्से से यह कहते रहे हैं कि बार-बार के चुनावों से देश को छुटकारा मिलना चाहिए, क्योंकि इसके कारण शासन संचालन बाधित होता है। पांच साल के कार्यकाल में ढाई से तीन महीने लोकसभा चुनाव में निकल जाते हैं और फिर विधानसभा चुनावों में भी अच्छा-खासा समय खपता है। लोकसभा चुनाव बाद रह-रह कर तीन या चार विधानसभाओं के चुनाव एक साथ होते रहते हैं। हर चुनाव प्रक्रिया लगभग एक माह का समय लेती है। इस दौरान भी शासन-प्रशासन के काम रुक जाते हैं। भारत जैसे विकासशील देश में जहाँ कई पुराने नियम-कानूनों में बदलाव करने और प्रशासन पर सतत निगाह रखने की जरूरत होती है वहाँ अगर पांच साल के कार्यकाल में शीर्ष पर रखने के साथ ही एनआरसी पर जोर दे रही है उससे यही पता चलता है कि यह चुदा भी सरकार की प्राथमिकता सूची में है। यह तब है कि सरकार की प्राथमिकता वाले कई मुद्दे कुछ राजनीतिक दलों को रास नहीं आने वाले। इसकी



अवधेश राजपूत

में चुनाव आवश्यक हैं, लेकिन यह ठीक नहीं कि बार-बार के चुनाव विकास गति धीमी करने का कारण बनें। इसी धीमी गति के कारण भारत कई विकासशील देशों से पीछे है। यह साफ है कि राष्ट्रपति के अभिभाषण में एक साथ चुनावों पर बल इसीलिए दिया गया, क्योंकि वे समय की मांग हैं। इसी मांग पर जोर देने के लिए प्रधानमंत्री ने बीते दिनों संवदनीय बैठक बुलाई। यह अजीब है कि कई दलों ने इस बैठक में भाग लेना भी जरूरी नहीं समझा।

राष्ट्रपति के अभिभाषण में इसका भी उल्लेख है कि मोदी सरकार देश को पांच लाख ट्रिलियन डॉलर यानी करीब साढ़े तीन सौ लाख करोड़ रुपये की अर्थव्यवस्था बनाना चाहती है। इस समय भारत की अर्थव्यवस्था लगभग दौ सौ लाख करोड़ रुपये के आसपास है। अगले पांच साल में इस लक्ष्य को हासिल करने के लिए अर्थव्यवस्था में तमाम सुधार भी करने होंगे और मौजूदा आर्थिक चुनौतियों का सामना भी करना पड़ेगा। इसी के साथ किसानों की आय दोगुनी करने के लक्ष्य पर भी एएफ सिर ध्यान केंद्रित करना होगा। किसानों में यह भरोसा जगना चाहिए कि

यह लक्ष्य उनके करीब आ रहा है। राष्ट्रपति के अभिभाषण में इसका भी खास तौर पर उल्लेख किया गया कि मोदी सरकार लोगों को इस तरह सशक्त करेगी ताकि वे न तो सरकार के बोझ के तले दबें और न ही सरकार की कमी को महसूस करें। इसके लिए लालफीताशाही को कम करने और तकनीक के उपयोग से जनता को सरकारी सुविधाएं मुहैया कराने की दिशा में आगे बढ़ना होगा। बेहतर होगा कि मोदी सरकार देश को आगे बढ़ाने की कोई रूपरेखा बनाकर उसे जनता के सामने पेश करे। इस रूपरेखा में कानून एवं व्यवस्था में सुधार को भी शामिल किया जाना चाहिए, क्योंकि हम इसकी अनदेखी नहीं कर सकते कि पुलिस का ढांचा और उसकी कार्यशैली कैसी है? पुलिस भ्रष्टाचार से भी ग्रस्त है और वह लक्ष्य के अभाव का भी सामना कर रही है। बात केवल पुलिस की ही नहीं, सीबीआई, ईडी और अन्य अनेक सरकारी एजेंसियों की भी है। प्रधानमंत्री ने अपने कार्यालय के अधिकारियों को संबोधित करते हुए कहा था कि उन्हें प्रभावी नहीं, बल्कि कार्यकुशल और दक्ष होने की जरूरत है। फिलहाल इसकी कमी ही दिखाई पड़ती है।

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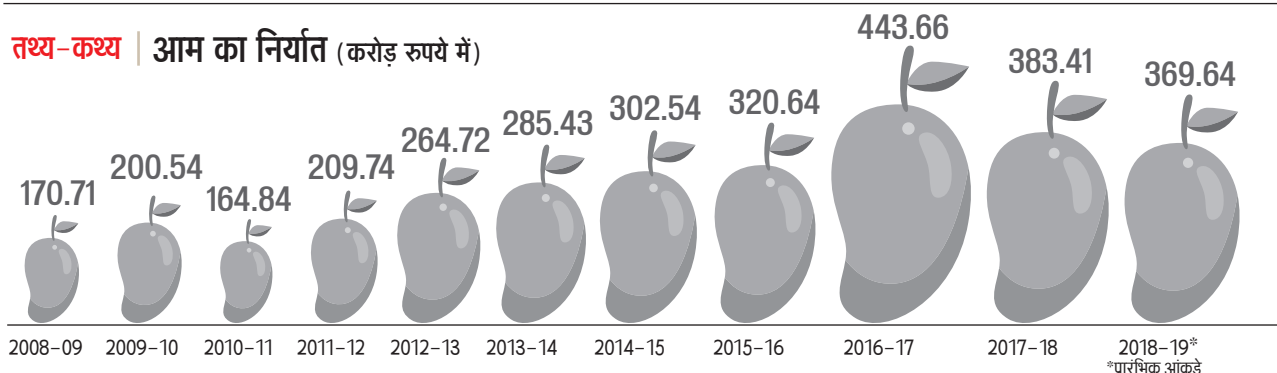
सेवा

मनुष्य के मन में सेवा भाव का होना अति आवश्यक है। सेवा मानव जीवन की शोभा है और सही अर्थों में यही ईश्वर की सच्ची अराधना भी है। मनुष्य सेवा भाव से ईश्वर तुल्य हो जाता है। ईश्वर सभी से प्रेम एवं सबके प्रति समभाव रखते हैं और उन मनुष्य भी उनके बराबर मार्ग पर चलता है तो वे उससे बहुत प्रसन्न होते हैं। सेवा के लिए उठे हाथ उतने ही महान होते हैं, जिनने ईश्वर की प्रार्थना में उठने वाले हाथ होते हैं। दूसरों की सेवा करने वाले जीव पर ईश्वर की सदैव कृपा बनी रहती है। हमारी सेवा से खुश होने वाले लोग हमें प्यार, स्नेह, आशीर्वाद और दुआएं देते हैं, जिससे हमारे कष्ट अभावी हो जाते हैं। ईश्वर भी हमें कष्ट सहन करने की असीम शक्ति प्रदान करते हैं।

सेवा मनुष्य को सरल और निःस्वार्थ बनाए रखती है। सेवा से मनुष्य के मन में कभी यह विचार नहीं आता है कि किसी चीज पर केवल उसका ही अधिकार है। सेवा में मनुष्य अपने पास उपलब्ध प्रत्येक वस्तु को दूसरों के साथ निःस्वार्थ बांटता है। सेवा का मतलब भी यही है कि दूसरों में भी हम स्वयं को देखें और उसके साथ थी वैसा ही व्यवहार करें, जैसा हम अपने साथ करते हैं। जब हम खुद के लिए कष्ट-दुख नहीं चाहते हैं तो हमें भी दूसरों के दुखों में उनका सहारा बना चाहिए। वसुधैव कुटुंबकम की भावना का हम जितना विस्तार करेंगे, हमारे जीवन में उतनी सुख-शांति और समृद्धि फैलेगी। जब तक हम सुख-दुख में एक-दूसरे से नहीं जुड़ेंगे, तब तक मानव जीवन की सार्थकता भी सिद्ध नहीं होती है। महात्मा गांधी का कहना था कि मेरी एक प्रबल कामना है कि मैं कम से कम एक व्यक्ति का दुख कम कर सकूँ। ज्यादातर मनुष्य यही सोचते हैं कि यदि उन्हें दुनिया की सारी सुख-सुविधाएं मिल जाएं तो उनका जीवन स्वर्ग बन जाए। यदि उन्हें वे सुविधाएं मिल भी जाएं तो भी उनका जीवन स्वर्ग नहीं बन सकता है। सुविधाएं मिलने के बाद उनका मन और ज्यादा अशांत हो जाता है, क्योंकि भौतिक चीजों में क्षणिक सुख ही होता है। मन की सच्ची शांति भौतिक सुखों से नहीं, बल्कि मनुष्यों के बीच में रहने से मिलती है। जब हम भौतिक सुविधाओं को त्यागकर दूसरों के दुख-दर्द को कम करने की कोशिश करते हैं, तभी हम असीम सुख और संतुष्टि प्राप्त कर सकते हैं।

शंभूनाथ पांडेय (पूर्व नैसैनिक)

तथ्य-कथ्य | आम का निर्यात (करोड़ रुपये में)



तारीफ के बाद ट्रांसफर का झटका

मंत्रालय के बड़े, मझोले व छोटे अधिकारियों के साथ मंत्री जी की पहली बैठक थी। शुरुआत बड़े जोश के साथ हुई। सभी को कहा गया कि सभी बेहिचक अपने सुझाव दें। यहां कोई छोट-बड़ा नहीं। इस पर एक युवा अधिकारी ने गजब का उत्साह दिखाया। सुझावों की झड़ी लगा दी। मंत्री जी को भी यह उत्साह बहुत पसंद आया। उन्होंने सार्वजनिक तौर पर पीठ थपथपाए और यहां तक कहा कि ऐसे ही अधिकारियों की जरूरत है। बैठक आगे बढ़ी। भी एक सुझाव दिया। निश्चित तौर पर यह बहुत ही बेतरतीब सा सुझाव था। सभी पुराने दिग्गज चुप रहे, लेकिन उक्त अधिकारी ने उत्साह में इसे खारिज कर दिया कि ऐसे सुझाव प्रायोगिक नहीं हैं। पल भर में पूरा मामला पलट गया। मंत्री जी ने उसी समय उक्त अधिकारी का ट्रांसफर कहीं और करने का निर्देश दिया। बैठक समाप्त हुई। अब वह अधिकारी ट्रांसफर रुकवाने की जुगाट पिड़ाता घूम रहा है।

छुड़ी में गंवा दिया दफ्तर

कृषि भवन में इस बार मंत्रियों की संख्या बढ़ जाने से उनके

राजरंग

बैठने की समस्या हो गई है। नए दफ्तर तलाश और बनाए जा रहे हैं। इसी अभियान में कई अफसरों के दफ्तर गुप्त हो गए। यही नहीं, बल्कि उनके कमरों के नंबर तक गायब हो गए। हुआ यूं कि कुछ अफसर गर्मी की छुट्टियों पर गए थे, जिससे उनके दफ्तर में ताला लगा हुआ था। इसी बीच नए मंत्रियों के लिए कमरों की तलाश हो रही थी। एक नायब मंत्री को वही तालाबंद कमरा भा गया। तत्काल आदेश हुआ और कमरे खाली करा लिए गए। अब वहां तो डेफोड चल रही है, ताकि नए नायब मंत्री का ऑफिस सजाया जा सके। छुड़ी से लौटे अफसर की यह देखकर सांसें अटक गईं। उन्होंने अपने आला आफसरों को इसकी सूचना दी। पता चला, उन लोगों के पास अब यह विभाग नहीं है। इसका दायित्व किसी और बड़े मंत्री और अफसर को दे दिया गया है, लेकिन हेरनी तो यह है कि उसी विभाग के बड़े मंत्री भी अपने लिए तैयार किए गए ऑफिस में बैठने को गजी नहीं हैं। उनके लिए आवंटित ऑफिस के बाहर नेम प्लेट तक नहीं लगा पाई है।

देरी का नुकसान

लोकसभा चुनाव की हार से उबरने की कांग्रेस की कोशिश शुरू होने से पहले ही पार्टी अध्यक्ष के इस्तीफे की मांस में फंस गई है। पार्टी के तमाम दिग्गज नेता जहां अध्यक्ष का इस्तीफा स्वीकार किए जाने के पक्ष में नहीं हैं, वहीं राहुल गांधी अपने इरादे से पीछे हटने को तैयार नहीं। इस रस्साकशी में कांग्रेस की पूरी सियासत ठहर सी गई है। ऐसे में पार्टी के इस मुखिल द्वाद में इस्तीफे पर जोर देने के राहुल के फैसले से अक्सर न्यायदा अहममत कोई है तो वह है सोनिया गांधी।

उन्होंने राहुल को यह समझाने का प्रयास भी किया है कि ऐसा हुआ तो आने वाले समय में पार्टी का निर्वंरण गांधी परिवार के हाथ से निकल जाएगा। बताया जाता है कि एके एंटनी समेत दस जनपथ के कुछ चुनिंदा बड़े नेता सोनिया की राय से सहमत हैं और राहुल को मनाने की कोई उम्मीद नहीं छोड़ना चाहते। इसीलिए इस्तीफा स्वीकार कर कांग्रेस के नए अध्यक्ष की ताजपोशी के फैसले में देरी हो रही है। बहरहाल अंदरूनी रस्साकशी की वजह चाहे जो हो कम से कम इसे कांग्रेस की सियासी फायदा तो नहीं मिल रहा।

खुद हुए हैरान

सरकारी काम-काज के वाक्ये तो आपने तमाम सुने और देखे होंगे। मगर यहां हम एक ऐसे अलहादा वाक्ये का जिक्र करेंगे जिसे जानकर आप खुद हैरान रह जाएंगे। हुआ यूं कि पिछले दिनों इसीलिए इस्तीफा स्वीकार कर कांग्रेस के नए अध्यक्ष की ताजपोशी के फैसले में देरी हो रही है। बहरहाल अंदरूनी रस्साकशी की वजह चाहे जो हो कम से कम इसे कांग्रेस की सियासी फायदा तो नहीं मिल रहा।

हनु गुप्त, प्रधान संपादक-संजय गुप्त, जागरण प्रकाशन लि. के लिए- नीतेन्द्र श्रीवास्तव द्वारा 501, आई.एन.एस. बिल्डिंग,रफी मार्ग, नई दिल्ली से प्रकाशित और उबरी के द्वारा डी-210, 211, सेक्टर-63 नोएडा से मुद्रित, संपादक (राष्ट्रीय संस्करण) -विष्णु प्रकाश त्रिपाठी * न हेतु पी.आर.बी. एक्ट के अंतर्गत उत्तरदायी। सम्पत्ति विवाद दिल्ली न्यायालय अधीन ही होंगे। हवाई शुल्क अतिरिक्त।



दूसरी नजर

- पी चिदंबरम**

हर सरकार उस वक़्त सकती मे पड़ जाती है, जब कोई गंभीर संकट उसके समक्ष खड़ा हो जाता है। गलती किसी की हो, लेकिन जिम्मेदारी कोई नहीं लेगा। आखिरकार, मामला सरकार के प्रमुख- मुख्यमंत्री या प्रधानमंत्री के पास आकर रुक जाता है। हालांकि गहराई से जांच करने पर पता चलेगा कि वह कोई पहली/ पहला व्यक्ति नहीं है, जिसे जिम्मेदार ठहराया जाए, बल्कि शासन की संसदीय प्रणाली अलग तरह से चलती है।

क्रूर मौतें

बिहार के मुजफ्फरपुर जिले में दिमागी बुखार से अब तक हुई एक सौ सत्रह मौतों का जिक्र प्रासंगिक है। केंद्रीय स्वास्थ्य मंत्रालय के प्रबंधन सूचना तंत्र के अनुसार जिले में सभी एक सौ तीन प्राथमिक स्वास्थ्य केंद्रों और एकमात्र सामुदायिक स्वास्थ्य केंद्र को रेटिंग में पांच में से शून्य मिला था, क्योंकि इनमें से कोई भी केंद्र मूल्यांकन के लिए आवश्यक जरूरतें (जैसे चिकित्साधिकारी, नर्स/ दाई) पूरी नहीं करता था। मुजफ्फरपुर में श्रीकृष्ण मेडिकल कॉलेज अस्पताल का शिशु रोग विभाग, जहां पीड़ित बच्चों का इलाज चल रहा है, आइसीयू के लिए निर्धारित मानकों को पूरा नहीं करता है। इन तथ्यों को देखते हुए किसे ये जिम्मेदारी लेनी चाहिए? कोई नहीं लेगा, इसलिए हम छोटे-से स्वादिष्ट फल लीची को इसके लिए दोषी ठहरा देंगे! डॉक्टरों ने कहा कि जिन बच्चों ने रात में खाना नहीं खाया था, उन्हीं पर लीची खाने का असर पड़ा है। और भगवान के लिए सोचिए, रात में उन्हींने खाना क्यों नहीं खाया? क्योंकि वे गरीब हैं और उन्हें खाना मिलता ही नहीं है। क्या इससे ज्यादा विध्वंसकारी और दर्दनाक कुछ हो सकता है? (2008 से 2014 के दौरान दिमागी बुखार से छह हजार मौतें हुई थीं।)

कुछ दिन पहले गुजरात के वडोदरा शहर में सेप्टिक टैंक खाली करने के दौरान सात सफाई कर्मचारियों की मौत हो गई। ऐसा हादसा कोई पहली बार नहीं हुआ था और दुख की बात यह है कि ऐसा आखिरी भी नहीं होगा। सेप्टिक टैंक की सफाई कोई रॉकेट विज्ञान नहीं है, इस काम के

लिए मशीनें हैं और केरल में एक स्टार्ट-अप ने इसका भारतीय संस्करण (बंदीकूट) तैयार कर दिया है। जब सीवर और सेप्टिक टैंकों की सफाई के लिए सफाई कर्मियों को उतारना जरूरी ही हो, तो उन्हें विशेष कपड़ों, मास्क और आक्सीजन सिलेंडरों की जरूरत होती है। इनमें से एक भी उपकरण ऐसा नहीं है जिसे वडोदरा जैसा नगर निगम, जो गुजरात के सबसे अमीर निगमों में से है, पैसे की वजह से खरीद न पाए। फिर भी सात गरीब लोगों को मर जाने दिया गया। (2011 से 2018 के बीच भारत के सभी राज्यों में एक सौ चौदह सफाई कर्मचारी इसी तरह मारे गए।)

हेरानी भरी लापरवाही

स्वस्थ कर देने वाले आंकड़े और भी हैं। दिल्ली में रोजाना औसतन चार व्यक्ति सड़क हादसे में मारे जाते हैं। आप सोच सकते हैं कि कल फिर चार मारे जाएंगे, फिर अगले दिन चार और इसी तरह हर दिन अकेले दिल्ली शहर में रोजाना चार लोग सड़क हादसों का शिकार होते रहेंगे। दुनिया भर में पूरे साल में जितने लोग हवाई दुर्घटनाओं में मारे जाते हैं वह तो इसका एक हिस्सा भर हैं ! क्यों हमने हवाई यात्रा के लिए इतने कड़े कानून बनाए हैं और सड़क यात्रा के लिए इतने कमजोर कानून? (2011 से 2017 के बीच दिल्ली में सड़क हादसों में बारह हजार सात सौ चौबीस लोग मारे गए थे।)

क्या आप कभी दिल्ली में बारापुला पुल से होकर गुजरे हैं, जिस पर दिल्ली सरकार का पीडब्ल्यूडी विभाग ‘गर्व’ करता है और जिसे बनने में कई साल लग गए? यह पुल औसत दर्जे का है, डिजाइन भी इसका औसत ही है, इस पर यात्रा भी औसत ही है, लेकिन इसके निर्माण की गुणवत्ता बहुत ही खराब है। इस पुल पर बनी सड़क के किनारों की दीवारों नजर भर डाल लें, टूटी-उखड़ी हुई मिलेंगी, इसकी ऊंचाई में कोई समानता नहीं है, स्लैब तक नहीं जुड़े हैं, बहुत ही भद्दे तरीके से इन पर प्लास्टर और पेंट कर दिया गया है, और पूरी तरह से बदसूरत। फिर भी गुणवत्ता परीक्षण में इसे पास कर दिया गया, ठेकेदार को भुगतान हो गया (संभवतः ससम्मान) और 2010 में इस पुल का उद्घाटन हो गया। बहुत ज्यादा वक़्त नहीं लगेगा जब इसे मरम्मत के लिए बंद कर दिया जाएगा।

इरादे और अमल

इनमें से कोई भी मामला- और दूसरे मामलों के बारे में भी आप सोच सकते हैं- ऐसा नहीं

था, जो नीतिगत नाकामी का शिकार हुआ हो। किसी भी सरकार की नीति स्वास्थ्य सुविधाओं और अस्पतालों का निर्माण करने और उन्हें स्टाफ तथा अन्य सुविधाओं से युक्त बनाने के लिए है, सफाईकर्मियों द्वारा सीवर साफ करने की प्रथा को खत्म करने के लिए है, यातायात नियमों को लागू करने और सुरक्षा सुनिश्चित करने के लिए है, गुणवत्ता पूर्ण निर्माण कार्य के लिए है और शहरों-नगरों को सुंदर बनाने के लिए है, आदि। विधायिका या कार्यपालिका (उदाहरण के लिए मंत्री) नीति बनाते हैं और स्वाभाविक तौर पर चाहते हैं कि उस नीति पर अमल अच्छे से हो। लेकिन इरादे और अमल में भारी अंतर होता है। क्यों? हमें यह कहते हुए हिचकिचाहट होती है, लेकिन इसे कहा जाना चाहिए- सरकार के भीतर एक और सरकार होती है, और इस दूसरी वाली सरकार ने पहली वाली सरकार को उसी तरह निराश किया है जैसे आमजन को, खासतौर से भारत के मामले में तो।

मैं दो परस्पर विरोधी उदाहरणों के साथ बात को बताता हूं। नोटबंदी एक बड़ी नीतिगत गलती थी, जिन मंत्रियों ने इस नीति की कल्पना की और इसे अंजाम दिया, पहली वाली सरकार को इसकी जिम्मेदारी लेनी चाहिए। दूसरी ओर, जीएसटी एक अच्छी नीति थी। अगर नोटबंदी की तरह ही यह भी परेशानी का बड़ा कारण बनी तो इसकी दोषी दूसरी वाली सरकार है।

स्वच्छ भारत एक अच्छी नीति है। लेकिन खुले में शौच मुक्ति के राज्यों और गांवों से जो फजी आंकड़े आए, वह दूसरी वाली सरकार का किया-धरा है। उज्ज्वला अच्छी नीति है, लेकिन साल भर में तीन सिलेंडर बदलने की नाकामी दूसरी वाली सरकार की है।

जब हम वोट देते हैं तो हम पहली वाली सरकार को वोट देते हैं। दूसरी वाली सरकार पर हमारा कोई नियंत्रण नहीं होता है। उसके चयन, भर्ती, प्रशिक्षण, मूल्यांकन, नियुक्ति, तैनाती या पदोन्नति के बारे में हमें कुछ नहीं कह सकते। इसे चलते रहने देना संभव नहीं। हमें दूसरी वाली सरकार को नए सिरे से तैयार करना होगा। जैसे हम पहली वाली सरकार और इसके कर्ताभर्ताओं को हर पांच साल में ईनाम या सजा देते हैं, वैसे ही हमें दूसरी सरकार वालों को हर पांच साल या और जल्द ईनाम या सजा देने का उपाय करना होगा।

असल चुनौती, जिसका आज हम सामना कर रहे हैं, नीति बनाने की नहीं है। यह नीति को दक्षतापूर्ण, आर्थिक रूप से कामयाब बनाने और उत्कृष्ट तरीके से लागू करने की है।

शिक्षा की आधार-त्रयी

जगमोहन सिंह राजपूत

यह सामान्य समझ है कि संवेदनशील आयु में अध्यापक ही बच्चे के व्यक्तित्व को दिशा देते हैं। वे ही अनगढ़ बालक यानी व्यक्ति को ‘व्यक्तित्व’ में बदल देते हैं। ऐसा तभी संभव होगा जब अध्यापक में वे सभी ज्ञान, गुण और कौशल विद्यमान हों, जो वह बच्चे में प्रस्प्टुटि होते देखना चाहता है। उसे बच्चे के मनोविज्ञान, उसकी सामाजिक और सांस्कृतिक पृष्ठभूमि, परंपरा तथा पारिवारिक स्थिति से पूर्णरूपेण परिचित होना होगा। माना जाता है कि जन्म के समय बच्चा अनेक ईश्वरीय उपहार लेकर आता है, जिनमें कल्पना की उड़ान, विचारों की शक्ति, जिज्ञासा की प्रवृत्ति तथा सर्जनात्मकता का कौशल सम्मिलित होता है। भारत की प्राचीन संस्कृति में प्रारंभ से ही यह भी स्पष्ट कर दिया जाता रहा है कि बच्चे के जन्म लेते ही तीन ऋण भी उसके साथ जुड़ जाते हैं: पितृ ऋण, ऋषि ऋण, और दैव ऋण! इसका तात्पर्य परिवार तथा समाज के प्रति, ज्ञान देने वालों के प्रति तथा प्रकृति के प्रति कर्तव्य भाव को प्रारंभ से ही जागृत करना था। इसी सोच से भारत में कर्तव्यबोधक समाज की संरचना आगे बढ़ी।

शिक्षा बच्चों को यह तैयारी कराती है कि जो वरदान लेकर प्रत्येक व्यक्ति पृथ्वी पर आता है, उनका उपयोग उसे ऋण चुकाने में कैसे करना है! इन दोनों के समन्वय- यानी ईश्वरीय वरदानों का ऋण उतारने में उपयोग- से

सामान्यतया जीवन का दर्शन, उद्देश्य, लक्ष्य, कार्य-पद्धति, उपलब्धियां निर्धारित होती हैं और जीवन यात्रा आगे बढ़ती है।

हर सभ्यता की अपनी विशिष्ट ज्ञान परंपरा विकसित होती है, आगे बढ़ती और वहीं अपनी गतिशीलता से लोगों और समाज को गतिशील बनाए रखती है। वही जीवन को समझने और संतोषप्रद ढंग से जीने के लिए प्रेरित करती रहती है। इसके लिए विद्या, गुरु, शिक्षा, अध्यापक, परिवार, समाज को अपने अपने निर्धारित उत्तरदायित्व निभाने पड़ते हैं। प्राचीन भारत में ज्ञानार्जन परंपरा को अग्रेषित करने वाले साधक और चिंतक, मनुष्य और प्रकृति की संवेदनशील पारस्परिकता के महत्त्व को समझने के लिए घोर साधना और मनन-चिंतन करते थे। चूंकि अपनी आवश्यकताओं का निर्धारण करना और उसकी पूर्ति के लिए प्रकृति के संसाधनों का उचित उपयोग करना मनुष्य की हर कर्तव्य बनता था, इसलिए यह उसी का उत्तरदायित्व था कि उसकी पीढ़ियां दैव ऋण- मानव और प्रकृति के संबंध- के महत्त्व को समझें और तदनुसार अपने आचरण का निर्धारण करें। इसका अर्थ प्रकृति के प्रति आदर तथा सम्मान का भाव जगाना था। विश्व की कुछ सभ्यताओं में दर्शन अलग था: प्रकृति के सारे संसाधनों को मनुष्य के सुख-भोग के लिए निर्मित किया गया है, इसलिए इसका भरपूर उपयोग करो!

इस प्रकार सभ्यताओं के विकास में दो प्रवृत्तियां पैदा हुईं: एक तरफ अपरिग्रह, दूसरी ओर अपरिमित उपयोग और संचयन! परिणाम स्वरूप विश्व आज जलवायु परिवर्तन, पर्यावरण प्रदूषण, ग्लोबल वार्मिंग जैसी समस्याओं से जुझ रहा है। ऐसा तब हो रहा है जब मनुष्य की ज्ञान विज्ञान और प्रकृति के रहस्यों की समझ में अप्रत्याशित बढ़ौतरी हुई है। शिक्षा का अभूतपूर्व प्रसार हुआ है, मगर वह मनुष्य की प्रकृति के साथ पारस्परिकता की संवेदनशील समझ उत्पन्न नहीं कर सकी है। संसेक्स और निप्टी बढ़ते हैं, कितने ही चेहरों पर चमक आ जाती है। मगर ऐसे भी करोड़ों लोग हैं, जो भूखे सोते हैं। वे अंतिम पंक्ति में खड़े लोग हैं, जो पीने के पानी के लिए मोहताज हैं। आज वैज्ञानिक यह गणना करने लगे हैं कि अगर सब कुछ ऐसा ही चलता रहा तो यह पृथ्वी कितने वर्ष और जीवित रहेगी! वैश्वीकरण का युग सभ्यताओं के सम्मिश्रण का समय है, चमक-दमक से प्रभावित होने का समय है। इसलिए भारत में भी पारिवारिक संबंधों, अपनी संस्कृति और अपरिग्रह को भूलने वाले लगातार तेजी से बढ़ रहे हैं।

इस आत्मघाती प्रवाह के ठहराव और दिशा परिवर्तन की संभावना का स्रोत केवल एक है: शिक्षा। इस परिदृश्य के गहन विश्लेषण के आधार पर टिकी शिक्षा नीति ही कारगर हो सकेगी? मनुष्य अधिकतर समस्याएं स्वयं पैदा करता है। वह समाधान भी निकाल लेता है। दैव ऋण और पितृ ऋण से जुड़े कार्य-क्षेत्रों में जो कुछ किया जा सकता है वह ऋषि ऋण यानी ज्ञान-प्राप्त कर और उसमें संवर्धन कर मिली क्षमता से निर्धारित होता है। इसका सीधा प्रयोजन यह है कि शिक्षा का संचालन हर स्तर पर कर्मट, सक्षम, संवेदनशील और अनुकरणीय व्यक्तित्व वाले व्यक्ति ही करें। वर्तमान व्यवस्था में अधिकार और निर्देशन नौकरशाही के पास है, सारी विफलताओं का दारोमदार अध्यापक का ही मान लिया जाता है। यह तब संभव था जब व्यवस्था गुरुकुल जैसी प्रणाली में संचालित होती थी। कुलगुरु किसी दबाव में कार्य नहीं करता था। अगर कोई दबाव था तो वह था नैतिकता के दायरे में रह कर सतत अध्ययनशील बने रहना और नए ज्ञान की खोज में आलस न करना, ज्ञान के सर्जन और वितरण में कोई कोताही न करना। गुरु परंपरा में किसी भी प्रकार के आदेशों का पालन नहीं करना पड़ता था। संसाधनों की चिंता नहीं करनी पड़ती थी। आज भी ऐसे अध्यापक हैं, जो सहृदय, संवेदनशील, कर्मट और सत्य-शोधक माने जाते हैं। मगर सरकारी तंत्र और नौकरशाही में इन गुणों का महत्त्व शायद कभी अल्पवाद स्वरूप ही समर्थन और प्रोत्साहन पाता हो! ऐसे अध्यापक अनुकरणीय माने जाने चाहिए, ऐसों को ढूंढ़ा जाना चाहिए, उन्हें हर स्तर पर नेतृत्व संभालने के लिए तैयार किया जाना चाहिए। शिक्षा दर्शन के अध्ययन और आध्यात्मिकता के प्रबोधन के क्षेत्र में जीवन लगाने वाले आचार्य फ़िरीट जोशी ने एक वैकल्पिक संकल्पना प्रस्तुत की थी। शिक्षक जिन गुणों को विद्यार्थी में विकसित करना चाहता है,

पहले वह उन्हें स्वयं समझे, वे उसके अपने व्यक्तित्व में कितने उभरे हैं, यह जाने और उसके बाद विद्यार्थी को उन्हें खोजने और ग्रहण करने में सहायक बने। ये तीन तत्व हैं: ‘इल्युमिनेशन’, ‘हीरोइज्म’ और ‘हारमनी’। इन्हें आधार-त्रय माना जा सकता है। इनमें से पहले- प्रदीप्ति/ प्रबोधन; यानी ‘इल्युमिनेशन’- के अंतर्गत जीवन के लक्ष्य, महत्त्व और मूल्यों की समझ का विकसित होना, प्रेरणास्पद कार्यों और अग्रसर होना, जीवन दर्शन का विस्तार और उसकी सार्थकता की पहचान, सर्जनात्मकता और सेवा के आनंद की अनुभूति, जैसे महत्त्वपूर्ण अवयव सम्मिलित होते हैं। जैसे जैसे ज्ञान बढ़ता है, अतिरिक्त प्रबोधन बुद्धि तत्व को प्रज्वलित करता है। इसकी आभा में जीवन के हर क्षेत्र में वैचारिकता और सर्जनात्मकता के नए द्वार खुलते जाते हैं, सेवा और सद्भाव अतिरिक्त आनंद प्रदायक बन जाते हैं।

इसके साथ जब दूसरा तत्व ‘हीरोइज्म’- ऊर्जावान वीरोचित व्यक्तित्व- जुड़ जाता है तब लक्ष्य प्राप्ति में विश्वास बढ़ता जाता है। उर्जावान व्यक्ति जब बुद्धितत्त्व से निर्देशित होता है, सेवा के महत्त्व से प्रेरणा लेता है, सम्यक कर्तव्य निर्वाह में संलग्न रहना चाहता है, तभी वह पूरी लगन के साथ लक्ष्य को संपूर्णता में प्राप्त करता है। ऐसा व्यक्ति अधिक से अधिक कार्य करना चाहता है, उसे इसमें भरपूर आनंद और संतुष्टि प्राप्त होती है। ऐसा वातावरण बन जाता है, जिसकी संकल्पना शिक्षा शास्त्र से संबंधित हर पुस्तक और प्रतिवेदन में की जाती रही है: बच्चे की संपूर्ण प्रतिभा विकास के लिए उन्हें आनंददायक, संवेदनशील तथा अपनत्व भरा वातावरण मिलना ही चाहिए।

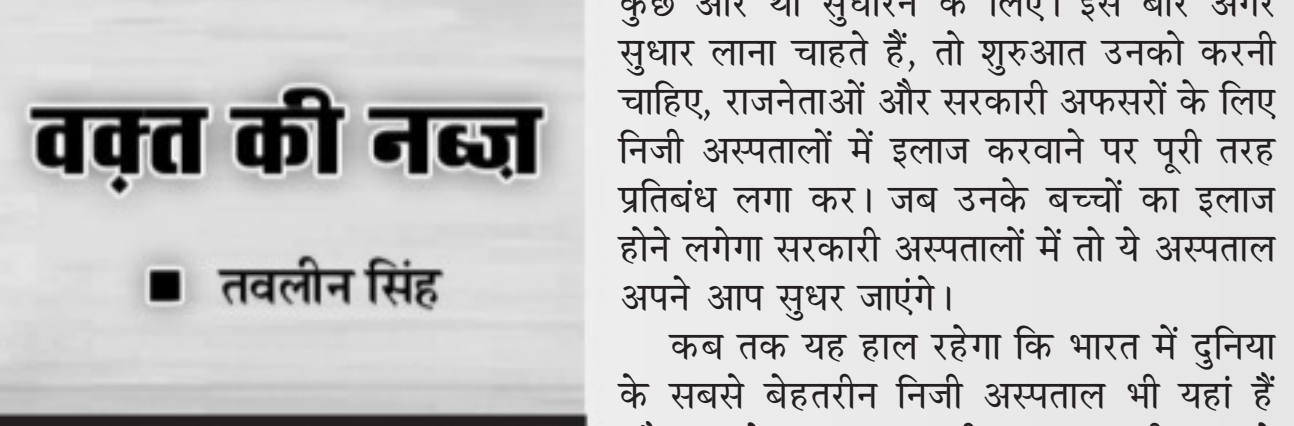
प्रबोधित और उर्जावान व्यक्ति ही समाज और प्रकृति के साथ तीसरा तत्व- समन्वय- ‘हारमनी’- स्थापित करने में सक्षम हो जाता है। प्रबुद्ध उर्जावान व्यक्ति समन्वय की प्रक्रिया में भी अपने ज्ञान तथा कौशल के स्तर को लगातार बढ़ाता रहता है और यह बौद्धिक प्रखरता उसकी लगनशीलता, त्याग, कर्मठता, तथा परिष्करण से संभव होती है। प्रबोधन, नायकत्व तथा सामंजस्य वे तीन तत्व हैं, जो अध्यापक और विद्यार्थी दोनों को परिभाषित करते हैं, इसलिए यही शिक्षा नीति का मूल आधार बनने चाहिए।

बच्चों को मरते देखना हमेशा कठिन होता है। जब मरते हैं लापरवाही के कारण तो कठिनाई बढ़ जाती है सी गुना। मुजफ्फरपुर के उस अस्पताल में जो एक सौ सत्तर बच्चे मरे हैं पिछले हफ्ते वे जिंदा होते, अगर बिहार सरकार ने अपनी स्वास्थ्य सेवाओं को लेकर इतनी लापरवाही न बरती होती। जिस श्रीकृष्ण मेडिकल कॉलेज के अस्पताल में बच्चे मरे हैं, उसमें पीने के पानी तक की सुविधा नहीं थी। ऊपर से गंदगी इतनी थी अस्पताल के गलियारों और बरामदों में कि इलाज का नाम लेना ही ऐसी जगह में पाप होगा। कैसे बचते बच्चे? भारत के बच्चों की जानें वैसे भी इतनी सस्ती हैं कि विशेषज्ञों का अनुमान है कि अपने देश में इक्कीस बच्चे हर मिनट मरते हैं। हर वर्ष एक हजार में से इकसठ बच्चे ऐसे हैं, जो अपने पांचवें जन्मदिन तक जीवित नहीं रह पाते और जो मरते हैं ऐसी बीमारियों के कारण जो लाइलाज नहीं है।

ऐसा नहीं कि मुजफ्फरपुर के उस अस्पताल के डॉक्टरों ने विशेष तौर पर लापरवाही दिखाई। ऐसा भी नहीं कि जिस गंदगी को हमने उस अस्पताल में देखा वह खास थी। यही हाल आपको दिखेगा सरकारी अस्पतालों में बिहार और उत्तर प्रदेश में हर जगह। मेरी आदत है कि जब भी किसी गांव या छोटे शहर में पहुंचती हूं, तो जरूर देखने जाती हूं वहां के स्कूल, अस्पताल या स्वास्थ्य केंद्र। अक्सर इनको देख कर शर्म आती है। उत्तर प्रदेश में मैंने ऐसे अस्पताल देखे हैं, जिनकी दीवारें और छतें गिर चुकी हैं। उनमें न मरीज होते हैं न डॉक्टर। ये वे अस्पताल हैं, जिसके निर्माण से विधायक, सरपंच और सांसदों ने पैसा बनाए है। जिन अस्पतालों में इलाज हो रहा होता है, वहां इतनी लापरवाही से होता है कि गरीब लोग भी निजी अस्पतालों में जाने की कोशिश करते हैं।

निजी तौर पर मुझे सरकारी स्वास्थ्य सेवाओं को इतना बेहाल देख कर तकलीफ इसलिए होती है क्योंकि चालीस वर्ष पहले जब मैंने पत्रकारिता में पहला कदम रखा, तो मैंने दिल्ली के अस्पतालों पर कई लेख लिखे थे। इमरजेंसी का दौर था। राजनीतिक चीजों पर लिखने की इजाजत नहीं थी,

सो हम लोग इस किस्म के मुद्दे उठाने की कोशिश करते थे, जो सामाजिक लगते थे ऊपर से, लेकिन अंदर से राजनीतिक हुआ करते थे। इन लेखों को लिखने के लिए मैंने दिल्ली के तकरीबन हर सरकारी अस्पताल में इमरजेंसी कक्ष में कई घंटे बिताए और करीब से देखा उनका हाल। अफसोस के साथ कहना पड़ता है कि मुजफ्फरपुर के उस अस्पताल को देख



उम्मीद करते हैं कि इस बार प्रधानमंत्री नहीं भुलाएंगे उन मासूम बच्चों को, जो मुजफ्फरपुर के उस अस्पताल में मरे हैं। इस बार परिवर्तन यह देखने को मिला कि गरीब माता-पिता भी समझ गए हैं कि उनका अधिकार है सरकार से बेहतर सेवाएं मांगना।

क़र ऐसा लगा मुझे जैसे चालीस सालों में हमारी स्वास्थ्य सेवाओं में कोई सुधार नहीं हुआ है।

न समस्याएं बदली हैं और न ही वे अधिकारी और राजनेता, जिनको हमने जिम्मेदारी दी है इस देश के लोगों को सेहतमंद रखने की। फर्क आया है अगर तो सिर्फ यह कि अब निजी टीवी चैनल खुल गए हैं कई सारे और जब बच्चे मरने लगते हैं किसी अस्पताल में तो टीवी पत्रकार पहुंच जाते हैं राजनेताओं से पहले। दुनिया को जानकारी मिल जाती है उस अस्पताल के हाल की। बाद में शर्मिदा होकर पहुंचते हैं आला अधिकारी और राजनेता। बड़े-बड़े वादे करने के बाद अपने काफिलों में रवाना हो जाते हैं। इस बार भी ऐसा ही हुआ और होता ही रहेगा। इस बार लेकिन अगर प्रधानमंत्री चाहते हैं तो उसी व्यापक पैमाने पर परिवर्तन ला सकते हैं देश की स्वास्थ्य सेवाओं में, जिस तरह स्वच्छ भारत आंदोलन शुरू करके लाए हैं पिछले पांच वर्षों में।

कैसे कैसे मनोहर दृश्य!

अंत में वह शुभ दिवस आया, जिस दिवस कलियुग में धर्मयुग का ‘लाइव लाइव’ अवतरण हुआ।

जय श्रीराम! जय श्रीराम!

कैसे कैसे मनोहर दृश्य दिखे कि जीवन धन्य हो गया। कलियुग में कृतयुग का आनंद आ गया!

सबका कल्याण हुआ। इतने दिन बाद रामराज्य आया।

‘दैहिक दैविक भौतिक तापा’ किसी को नहीं ब्यापा, लेकिन ब्यापा तो मुजफ्फरपुर के बीमार बच्चों को ब्यापा कि वे न कह सके, न सुन सके जय श्रीराम और सीधे स्वर्ग सिधार गए।

जय श्रीराम का जादू ऐसा चला कि सबकी धार्मिक भावनाएं जाग कर संसद में धार्मिक नारे लगाने लगीं।

औरवैसी बोले : जय भीम, जय मीम तकबीर, अल्लाहो अकबर।

एक बोले जय काली, जय हिंद। दूसरे बोले इंकलाब जिंदाबाद।

एक ने कहा भारत माता की जय। वंदे मातरम्, तो दूसरे ने कहा हर हर महादेव! धर्म आकर संसद में बिराज गया। सभी धर्मभाव से भर कर भद-भद मेजें बजाते रहे। शाम तक बहसीले लोग बहसों में व्यस्त हो गए कि पंथनिरपेक्ष संसद के नए शपथ समारोह में क्यों गूँजा ‘जय श्रीराम’?

कुछ बोले कि इंग्लैंड की संसद में हर बात पर ‘जीसस’ ‘जीसस’ होता है, अगर अपने यहां कुछ ‘जय श्रीराम’ हो गया तो क्या गुनाह? हमारे लिए तो ‘अल्लाहो अकबर’ भी है ‘जय श्रीराम’!

इधर धर्म बरसता रहा, उधर मुजफ्फरपुर के अस्पताल में बच्चे पट-पट कर मरते रहे। खबर चैनलों के रिपोर्टर

और एंकर चीखते रहे कि यह क्या हो रहा है, दवाई कहां है, डाक्टर कहां है? कि मुख्यमंत्री क्यों कुछ नहीं कर रहे? इसी बीच यूपी सरकार ने कहा कि विश्वविद्यालयों और विद्यालयों को स्वच्छ किया जाएगा! अब कहीं भी ‘टुकड़े टुकड़े गैंग’ टुकड़े टुकड़े नहीं कर पाएगा! न कोई राष्ट्र-विरोधी गतिविधि कर सकेगा। सबको शपथ लेनी होगी कि वे कभी भी किसी भी राष्ट्र-विरोधी गतिविधि में शामिल नहीं होंगे।

संसद में राष्ट्रपति जी का सुदीर्घ भाषण हुआ। पांच साल का सरकार का ‘रोड-मैप’ दिया कि भारत बनेगा पांच अरब डॉलर की महान अर्थव्यस्था! सभी देवगण राष्ट्रपति के भाषण को ध्यान से सुनते रहे। कुछ आपस में बातें करते रहे। कुछ इधर उधर देखते रहे! बालाकोट स्ट्राइक का जिक्र जब आया, सबसे अधिक देर तक मेजें बजती रही!

इस बीच कैमरों ने दिखाया कि राहुल देखते रहे अपने मोबाइल को ठीक करने की पूरे चौबीस मिनट और जब औपचारिकता में मम्मी सोनिया ने मेज थपथपाई तो राहुल ने हाथ के इशारे से बरजा कि न बजाएं मेज!

राहुल-ठोकू एंकरों को मौका मिल गया राहुल को ठोके का कि यह कैसा संसदीय शिष्टाचार था कि मम्मी को टोका!

एक चैनल की बहस में एक राहुल भक्त ने राहुल को यह कह कर बचाया कि वे तो अपनी बीमार मां का हाल पूछ रहे थे!

हैं न कमाल की व्याख्या!

लेकिन ठीक अंतरराष्ट्रीय योग दिवस पर कलियुग इस बार राहुल के ट्वीट में आ बिराजा और जो काम दिव्या स्पंदना जी का हुआ करता था, उसे शायद राहुल ने ही पूरा कर दिया। सेना के कुत्तों के योगाभ्यास के चित्र को ट्वीट कर लिख दिया- ‘नया भारत’ अर्थात कटाक्ष किया

कि यह नया भारत है!

एक भक्त एंकर को लगा कि यह तो ‘नए भारत’ की तौहीन का इरा रही है, इसलिए उसने एक ‘प्रो-पैनलिस्ट’ की राहुल के इस ‘कुत्ता-ट्वीट’ का मतलब पूछा, तो उसने जिस अंग्रेजी में इस ‘कुत्ता-ट्वीट’ को अर्थाया उसे न लिखा और सुना जाए सो ही बेहतर, क्योंकि उसके बाद बहस में ऐसा कुत्ता-कुत्ता हुआ कि एंकर को कुत्तार्थ करने वाले का माइक खामोश करना पड़ा!

नई दिल्ली

