

Outwitting image recognition

PARMY OLSON

Last year, engineers at ZeroFOX, a security startup, noticed something odd about a fake social-media profile they'd found of a well-known public figure. Its profile photo had tiny white dots across the face, like a dusting of digital snow. The company's engineers weren't certain, but it looked like the dots were placed to trick a content filter, the kind used by social networks like Facebook to flag celebrity imitations.

They believed the photo was an example of a new kind of digital camouflage, in which a picture is altered in ways that leave it looking normal to the human eye but cause an image-recognition system to misclassify the image.

Such tricks could pose a security risk in the global rush among businesses and governments to use image-recognition technology. In addition to its use in social-network filters, image-recognition software shows up in security systems, self-driving cars, and many other places, and tricks like this underscore the challenge of keeping such systems from being fooled or gamed.

One senior technology executive says groups of online attackers have been launching "probing attacks" on the content filters of social-media companies. Those companies have ramped up their efforts to eliminate banned content with expanded content filters. "There's a bunch of work on attacking AI algorithms, changing a few pixels," the executive says.

A spokesman for Facebook said the company was aware of users trying to trick its image-recognition systems, a technique it refers to internally as "image and video content matching." Such users were often trying to sell banned items like drugs or guns in Facebook groups or on ads, but most approaches were rudimentary, the spokesman said.

Facebook struggled to handle another low-tech form of adversarial attack in April, when millions of copies of the live-streamed video of the gunman who killed 51 people in two mosques in Christchurch, New Zealand, kept getting uploaded to the site. Facebook blamed a "core community of bad actors." Their methods were rudimentary and involved slightly editing the videos or filming them and re-uploading new copies, so that Facebook couldn't rely on the digital fingerprint it had assigned the initial video. Facebook also struggled because its image-recognition system for flagging terrorist content had been trained on videos filmed by a third person, not a first-person perspective the gunman had used, the spokesman said.

Facebook has expanded its use of artificial intelligence in recent years. While the company has hired 30,000 human content moderators, it relies primarily on AI to flag or remove hate speech, terrorist propaganda and spoofed accounts. Image recognition is one form of AI typically used to screen the content that people post, because it can identify things like faces, objects or a type of activity.

Google has said it also plans to increasingly rely on using AI-powered software to block toxic content on YouTube. It has hired 10,000 people to help moderate content, but wants that tally of human workers to go down, according to a senior official from the company. A growing body of science shows image-recognition systems' vulnerability to adversarial attacks. One example comes from an experiment from September 2018, where academics took a digital photo of crack cocaine being heated up in a spoon and slightly modified its pixels. The image became a little fuzzier to humans, but was now classified as "safe" by the image-recognition system of Clarifai Inc.

Clarifai is a New York-based content-moderation service used by several large online services. Clarifai said its engineers were aware of the study, but declined to comment on whether it had updated its image-classification system as a result. "We found that even though AI and deep learning have been making great advancements, deep-learning systems are easily fooled by adversarial attacks," says Dawn Song, the University of California, Berkeley, professor who worked on the drug-photo experiment. Deep-learning neural networks, a type of computer system that's loosely inspired by the human brain, underpins most image-classification systems.

Researchers also have shown that image-recognition systems can be fooled offline. In April, researchers at KU Leuven, a university in Belgium, tricked a popular image-classification system by holding a small, colorful poster, about the size of a vinyl-record album cover, in front of them while standing before a surveillance camera. The special poster made the person holding it invisible to the software.

In a 2018 experiment, Dr Song's team put several black-and-white stickers on stop signs to fool image-classification systems into thinking they were speed-limit signs. The academics didn't test self-driving car systems in this experiment, but said that the attack's success pointed to the risks of using such software. The tools to trick image-recognition systems are easy enough to find online. Wieland Brendel, a machine learning researcher with the University of Tübingen in Germany, has gathered one collection of programming code that can be used to carry out adversarial attacks on image-recognition systems. He acknowledges that anyone could use the code to trick content filters on social-media sites "in principle," but adds: "That was never the goal. Any technique can be used in positive or negative ways."

Source: The Wall Street Journal

The business of appropriate housing

Minds are bound to work overtime puzzling out why Mr Modi is sending Mr Shah before he reaches the top to where Vajpayee paused on the way out



WHERE MONEY TALKS

SUNANDA K DATTA RAY

The Sangh Parivar may well feel a twinge of anxiety as Amit Shah moves to a more spacious bungalow and his new garden sprawls over nearly an extra acre of fruit and flower. For to the extent that their activities are not without the law, they must see themselves as falling within the home minister's jurisdiction. They aren't "termites" but can easily be regarded as such by the long-suffering public.

In the ancient world of Hindu values Narendra Modi extols, Mr Shah's exaltation might have been signified by some mark of

traditional honour. A title, perhaps, like "Brahmarishi" or "Rajguru". Or, maybe, an additional string to the sacred thread or, even, the right to wear one. Colonialism didn't change anything. Neither did a fiercely egalitarian Constitution. Nor the trite and tiresome chatter of TV anchors trotting out superfluous superlatives about the world's supposedly biggest democracy.

As the US Senator Adlai Stevenson once said, India has representative government but not democracy. Birth and status matter in a society that remains profoundly hierarchical. Only the outward symbols of the pecking order have changed, as they have done often enough during the "1,200 years of ghumami" to which Mr Modi once referred.

Take, for, instance the simple matter of the size of an office and the carpet covering its floor. Older New Delhi hands recall the tale of an officer who was installed in a room that was more sumptuous than his rank warranted because nothing else was available. He wasn't at all surprised when a servitor turned up with a large pair of scissors and snipped six inches off each of the four sides of the carpet. That reminder of his true entitlement cut the officer down to size.

Of course, no one would dream of reducing the grounds of the bungalow Atal Bihari

Vajpayee once occupied. But minds are bound to work overtime puzzling out why Mr Modi is sending Mr Shah before he reaches the top to where Vajpayee paused on the way out.

Given Hindu society's timeless ranking, the better informed among British members of the Indian Civil Service devised the theory that Indians saw their Anglo-Saxon rulers as another layer on the existing many-tiered power structure. Right or wrong, the men who operated the British Raj made full use of these gradations with the difference between knighthoods and British orders on the one hand and "native" titles (Rai Bahadur, Khan Sahib etc) on the other replicated in the distinction between King's and Viceroy's Commission.

Traces of the last might still be discerned not just in the difference between President's Commission and Non-Commissioned Officers but in the titles – subedar, havaldar, naik – still in use for the latter. It persists in the civil service in the great divide between officer and subordinate, and in the perquisites of rank in organisations like the railways. India's army may have done away (in theory at least) with batmen and given them a grand Sanskrit-sounding professional appellation, but a railway general manager still travels (when he travels by rail instead

LUNCH WITH BS ► KIRAN MAZUMDAR-SHAW | CHAIRPERSON | BIOCON

The First Lady of biotech

Mazumdar-Shaw talks to Pavan Lall about her new venture, curing cancer and the perils of a divisive society

I like to spend a lot of time on the beach. Scuba diving. Snorkeling. But that's when I have a little time, Kiran Mazumdar-Shaw confesses. When they do happen, these rare trivial pursuits don't usually lead her further than the Maldives or Thailand — destinations close to India. The founder and chairperson of Biocon, India's largest bio-pharmaceutical company, is hosting a lunch for *Business Standard* at Biocon's Dining Hall, called what else, Fine Dine.

Outfitted in a silk waistcoat with a dark dress, the 60-something entrepreneur is a Bengalar native. She was schooled in Bishop Cotton Girls' School, and later at Melbourne University. Best known for manufacturing insulin at affordable prices for a country where diabetes is rampant, her road ahead involves far serious maladies, I am to learn.

Fine Dine feels part a modern Richmond Road restaurant and part country club adorned with paintings by artists such as Basuki Dasgupta. It has several large windows that open to a lot of sunshine and greenery. As we step in, I am greeted by elegant teak furniture and prompt service. Light vegetarian fare is the order of the day. Lunch starts with a clear sweet corn soup, followed by a main course of dry paneer masala, crisp, puffy *phulkas*, plain yogurt, a cucumber and tomato salad, mint pilaf, a sunshine-yellow dal fry, rounded off by bananas for dessert. The table is set — plates are laid out with portions of each of these. I learn "Biocon omelettes", the second course, are an in-house specialty.

We get down to business. Shaw, who wears the twin credo of capitalism and philanthropy with aplomb, explains that "I want people to understand that we have never been a me-too company and have

done what is right and innovative, and that's how we succeeded in tackling diabetes, cancer", in an adamant tone.

Being the daughter of the managing director and chief brewmaster of United Breweries meant that Shaw is a Bangalorean at heart. It also meant that there was some inclination to follow a similar career path. No surprise when it surfaces that her postgraduate degree was in Malting and Brewing from Ballarat College, Australia. So why the shift from liquor to health-care, industries that are poles apart? Her answer is, she shifted to pharma after first using fermentation science for enzymes and then leveraging the same technology for biopharma. In other words, it was the process of science that intrigued her both the times.

As lunch progresses, Shaw adds that she tells her pharma colleagues that they are in a humanitarian business — like it or not, patients come first and if patients are the focus, profits would come naturally. "The high-value, low-volume pharma model that caters only to the West is totally flawed," she opines. "If you take the analogy of mobile phones affordable drugs can be world-changing."

A waiter brings in the famous omelettes, spherical and infused lightly with vegetables without a trace of oil, like everything else on the table. They're pre-sliced into quarters, cooked almost like spanish-style quesadillas and I help myself to one. It's near perfect. Shaw agrees. So, what's new for her in that area? "When it comes to important lifesaving therapies in business terminology it's always the

US, Europe, and the Rest of the World and that is absolutely wrong. It should be the US, Europe and Most of the World — because around six billion of the 7.5 billion people that inhabit the world are in Most of the World, and therein lies the inequity."

Take blood cancer. There are cures in the West where T-cells, part of the immune system that get fooled into inaction by cancer cells, are now being extracted and reprogrammed so that they swing into action when put back and do their job. The technology, called the CAR-T-cell therapy, is a form of immunotherapy used to fight cancer but the procedure costs around \$500,000 and the hospital charges would add up to another \$500,000. Shaw stops for a spoonful of her dal. "In India, no one can afford that." So she spearheaded the creation of a brand new company called Immuneel formed on philanthropic capital and with an initial platform of about \$25 million with a view to bringing affordable oncology treatment to India.

Others involved in the venture include Kush Parmar, an investor and managing partner at San Francisco-based life sciences venture 5AM Ventures, and Siddhartha Mukherjee, oncologist and author best known for this book *The Emperor of All Maladies: A Biography of Cancer*.

I peel a banana as I think... Biocon, Syngene and now another company. Shaw seems to hear me and says, "Yes, I know, I need another

While it's clear that Shaw is philanthropic — committing to donating a majority of her fortune to charity and setting up specialty cancer care hospitals and treating cancer patients at her own cost — she also has iron beliefs and can't be swayed easily



ILLUSTRATION BY BINAY SINHA

answer. Shaw's mother could easily feature in it. Well into her 80s she's an entrepreneur who runs her own dry-cleaning service, goes to work every day and is a role model whom she talks to daily. While it's clear that Shaw is philanthropic — committing to donating a majority of her fortune to charity and setting up specialty cancer care hospitals and treating cancer patients at her own cost — she also has iron beliefs and can't be swayed easily.

For example, her heart goes out to the plight of exploited women in the hinterland of Rajasthan and those that are "trafficked" from the north-east to Punjab. "That is the result of a divisive society that doesn't educate women," she rues, saying it's important that our country and government tackle these issues. Friendship is also a strong part of her. "I don't turn my back on friends," she says. Liquor tycoon Vijay Mallya, who she's known for decades and is wanted by the government, is one example. "He built a successful brewing business which created jobs and investments, and if he had committed a crime I would not support him," she says.

How does Shaw think medicine will change India 20 years into tomorrow? She pauses, then says "There would be many, but key would be a paradigm shift in the treatment of cancer. Stem cell therapy and 3D bio-printing would allow human body parts to be replaced with laboratory-grown organs with costs coming down exponentially."

All of this sounds wonderfully utopian. And what of Biocon and her company's growth plans, the foray into biologics, immuno-oncology and the drug molecules? "I have promises to keep... and miles to go before I sleep," Shaw smiles as she escorts me out.

Could doomsday be upon us?



PEOPLE LIKE THEM

GEETANJALI KRISHNA

The NITI Aayog recently reported that by next year, 21 Indian cities will run out of groundwater. With this year's monsoon expected to be below par, pre-monsoon rain lowest in 65 years and 43.4 per cent of the country already reeling under drought conditions (as per the real-time drought monitoring platform Drought Early Warning System) — could doomsday finally be upon us? Perhaps. However, the newly formed ministry for water resources and related issues Jal Shakti could help postpone this eventuality by implementing proper policies to harvest rainwater, regulate groundwater usage and most importantly, recharge groundwater through rural ponds and

reservoirs. Let me tell you the story of a pond in Lalpur village of Mohanlalganj block in Lucknow to illustrate how.

Till 2017, Lalpur's pond was a water-body choking with sewage and garbage. It stank so much that even animals did not go near it. Its bed had become hard with years of accumulated dirt, so its water could not recharge the water table. But when I visited Lalpur last month, I saw a very different picture. The pond was relatively clean, the stink had disappeared and so had most of the garbage. A kingfisher was swooping on the water surface and fishing nets indicated that the pond was actually being used for fishing. What had changed?

A December 2017 intervention by WaterAid India and Lucknow-based NGO Vatsalya had trained the villagers to empty the pond, clean its bed and create four levels on it. Today, the highest level stores dirty water that drains from the village. Solid contaminants settle at the bottom and the relatively cleaner water on the top decants to the second level, and so on. By the time the water decants to the third and fourth levels, it can be used in irrigation, pisciculture and animal husbandry.

The impact of the pond cleanup is discernable already. "Earlier, we used to find water at a depth of 40 feet here," a resi-

dent, Hari Shankar Verma, told me. "Now it's available at 30 feet." This agrarian community has profited by the improved availability of water. Some farmers have started planting a third crop of *mentha arvensis* (wild mint) between the two main crops of wheat and rice. Its short growing time and high yields make it a good option to supplement agricultural revenues, but it requires a lot of irrigation. "Till last year, marginal farmers like me who depend on rains for irrigation, couldn't have successfully planted this crop," said Verma, standing in a lush field full of this fragrant herb. Now, they can. Last year, Verma extracted 18 litres of *mentha* oil from the crop grown on a *bigha* of farmland. "I was able to sell it at about ₹900 per litre," he says.

The Lalpur case is easily replicable across rural India where wetlands and ponds have been traditionally used to collect rain and groundwater. Cleaning their beds and employing natural filtration methods is a relatively inexpensive way to recharge underground aquifers today — and could ensure greater water availability in future. If the new ministry does not act on this now, Prime Minister Narendra Modi's promise of providing piped drinking water to every household by 2024 could end up as nothing more than a pipe dream.



PEOPLE LIKE US

KISHORE SINGH

If you wake early, as I often do, you get to see some extraordinary winged creatures that disappear as soon as the sun has skirted the horizon. The ones that frequent our balcony are tiny with long beaks and midnight blue feathers that I am tempted to describe as hummingbirds. They feed on blossoms on trees but never on the silly sort of flowers my wife grows in pots. Because they are rarely still, I haven't been able to take their pictures, though I did manage to photograph a tiny green bird with a black slash around the eyes that seemed to enjoy posing and wasn't the least bit nervous. It was sitting on a fence against a backdrop of

figus leaves, so it's difficult to spot even in the picture, which is why I can tell my pre-dawn peregrinations are turning me into a naturalist.

As the sun rises, so does my acquaintance with the neighbourhood's avifauna. Red-wattled lapwings set off alarm calls, screeching like streetfighters. I tried to explain to my daughter that they were calling "Did you do it" on a rapid loop, to which she suggested I was suffering from a hangover. She's either tone deaf or bereft of a romantic bone in the body. At least the call of the koel — or I might mean the brainfever bird — is musical. It can be excessive though, which might be why some people find it annoying.

The neighbour's house attracts a family of peacocks that strut and preen on the parapet, which annoys my wife because we only get monkeys who are prone to trashing her greenhouse. Because of our proximity to the river, I can spot the occasional kingfisher, which I remember used to be more plentiful in my childhood. The river is the reason for the number of eagles we see soaring in the air currents looking to spot any prey they can find in the fields. My *maali* says he keeps the water level in the lily pool low so they

don't make off with the koi carps, but I think he's just lazy and couldn't be bothered filling it as frequently as it keeps evaporating in the heat. The pool attracts dragonflies, but these days it's bees you see staggering around drunk — they seem partial to some of the creepers that bloom abundantly in the harsh sun.

There are other species of birds I can never tell because they're dowdy and, therefore, uninteresting. A mousy one with a long tale often hangs around, but it's the return of the sparrows after an absence of several years that is particularly heartwarming as they peck on seeds, or insects, picking their way across the lawn. My son's balcony, though, is infested by pigeons, some of whom roost on his air-conditioner, and their hygiene habits being disgusting, he must resort to having the gas refilled every few weeks.

What's turned me into a birdwatcher? Well, dear reader, I wake early to go for a walk my son insists on imposing on me, while he snoozes in bed. My remedy has been to put on jogging tracks and shoes, throw some water on my clothes, and pretend to slump exhaustedly in a chair as I wait for the newspapers to be delivered — while nature takes its course.

WEEKEND RUMINATIONS

T N NINAN

Change or *status quo*?

The elections are over, and it is time to assess the interpretations of the outcome. The message from the voter is said to be anti-elitist; an expression of hope by the aspiring; endorsement by beneficiaries of the Modi government's programmes; and a victory of the culturally rooted over the deracinated. It may be all that and more, but in the story-line of seminal change it is instructive to see whom the victors are targeting — and whom they are not.

We have left behind the Left vs Right debate. The Left has been decimated, and there is no serious market-orientation to take its place. Rather, those presiding over an under-performing, unequal system intend to mollify losers with more welfareism. When the newly elected Lok Sabha members' median wealth is about ₹5 crore, and average wealth ₹20.9 crore, the majority of those elected belong to the wealthiest 0.1 per cent of the adult population. From these plutocrats' perspective, welfareism, combined with mobilisation around religion, encourages palliatives, not structural change.

What about feudalism and dynasties: *naamdars* vs *kaamdars*? The rhetoric struck home because of the Narendra Modi vs Rahul Gandhi binary. But we also have Varun Gandhi, Harsimrat Kaur (assets declared: ₹40 crore), Dushyant Singh (address: City Palace, Dholpur), Rajkumari Diyakumari (address: City Palace, Jaipur) and sundry others who have all been elected as members of the ruling alliance.

On the positive side, the idea of the aspirational *kaamdaar* extends to business, with the celebration of thousands of start-ups. The new India believes with Deng that to become rich is glorious. And so, despite demonetisation, people in business feel safe with Mr Modi. The *naamdars* to be targeted are only political rivals, and safe targets on the fringe like Vijay Mallya and Nirav Modi.

What does this mean? That amidst the narrative of change, what we have is a deeply conservative preservation of the *status quo*. Substantive change is reserved for Lutyens Delhi-ites in their new avatar as the Khan Market gang — a term originally coined for parliamentarians who preferred the upscale market's restaurants to the more basic fare of the Parliament House canteen. But in using the term, Mr Modi neatly transposed it to mean the post-colonial generation that prospered in, indeed owned, the Nehru-Gandhi era. An ideologue from the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS) then said this "gang" will be "discarded" from the media, culture and academia. We may see no storming of the Bastille, but we do want to invade the India International Centre.

Why is this fading group, hopelessly unprepared for battle, so important? Because it still perpetuates the old idea of India, its syncretism the exemplar of a tolerant ethic in a civilisation that seeks to protect the weak, not celebrate strength. That narrative has to be uprooted, along with Constitutional ideas borrowed from the European Enlightenment, and colonial arrangements imposed by England-educated barristers, all of it to be replaced with homegrown, ie pre-Islamic and naturally pre-colonial, values that await serious articulation. The *de facto* reality of everyday governance has already changed; *de jure* change must follow and no one must stand in the way.

Under attack, Babar's de-legitimised *aulad* have retreated into frightened silence, while some among Macaulay's great-grandchildren have become like Rubashov, the jailed commissar of the people in Arthur Koestler's mid-century classic, *Darkness at Noon*: Ready to "remove his oppositional attitude and to denounce publicly his errors". Not because they might have to face one of the "agencies" (that is still reserved mostly for the chaps who were up to no good), but for fear of becoming irrelevant. Living in Delhi without mattering is worse than being in Dante's sixth circle of hell, reserved for heretics.

But if Mr Modi's extraordinary popularity, hard-earned, is to be the pivot for a swing to an Indian version of a strongman system (like Singapore, we already throw people in jail for insulting a leader), with criticism drowned out by abusive trolls, confusion between homegrown myth and scientific fact, an RSS worldview in history books, street-level storm-troopers indulged by the police, and appropriately manned institutions bending to the political wind, we run the danger of throwing out the baby and retaining the bathwater.

ILLUSTRATION BY BINAY SINHA



It's just not cricket, MS

Dhoni shouldn't take his regiment to the pitch. Sportsmen bring glory for their nations by playing to win, not as ambassadors for their militaries

We cannot question the old truism that while politics divides, sport unites. Even more so in the season of the ICC World Cup, which India has won twice in the past.

There is a qualification to this: It unites, but only the partisan. We as Indians are united behind our team, as are others behind theirs. That's what brings us to the controversy over Mahendra Singh Dhoni sporting on his big wicket-keeping gloves the "*Balidaan*" (supreme sacrifice) dagger, the insignia of the Indian Army's formidable special forces.

The International Cricket Council (ICC), which oversees the game, has objected to this. Under the rules of the ICC, as of any other significant international sports body, there are restrictions on religious, national or commercial symbols or logos a player can display on his body or livery.

The logos, for example, are of sponsors, deals from whom are approved by the ICC and the respective nation's associations. The permitted national symbols can be worn. Anything customised is a no-no. Anything military is definitely out. It is a field of sport, not military combat.

The Board of Control for Cricket in India (BCCI) says it has appealed to the ICC to let him be. Popular opinion is behind Dhoni's gloves. Think about it: Team India in the World Cup, Dhoni and our valiant special forces who not so long ago carried out the post-Uri surgical strikes, immortalised somewhat more colourfully more recently by that Vicky Kaushal movie. Which Indian would argue on the other side of this irresistible triple-magnet of nationalism?

But someone must do so and say the ICC is right. Dhoni should remove the insignia. A field of sport, competitive enough, should have no place for what symbolises killing or getting killed. That's why some of us must dare to swim against the tide, particularly those of us who love the sport and also want India to win. If our sporting nationalism is questioned, so be it. It might be comforting to borrow the old line from Jesus Christ: Father, forgive them, for they (those accusing us of being unpatriotic) do not know what

they are doing.

Let us first list the arguments from the "nationalists" and their trumpeters in the commando-comic channels already running nutty hash-tags like #DhoniKeepTheGloves. First, we must respect the armed forces. Second, India is being bled by the Pakistanis so a statement must be made wherever they're present. And third, you cannot deny an individual his choice, especially because Dhoni is an honorary lieutenant colonel with the special forces and has earned his "dagger and wings" after making the parachute jumps to qualify. You can't deny him his regimental insignia.

The third is answered easily: His regiment isn't playing cricket for India. And when the regiment fights the bad guys for India, its troops do not wear

the BCCI's crest, or that of Hockey India or Indian Olympic Association, although all of them represent the pride and glory of India.

That we must respect the armed forces and their sacrifices is accepted. But what follows, that this statement, as also the protest against what the Pakistanis are doing in Kashmir, should be made by our cricketers in Lord's, Old Trafford or the Oval and so on, is nonsense. Protests are made by politicians and diplomats, wars are fought by soldiers. Sportsmen bring glory for their nations by playing to win, not by becoming brand ambassadors for their militaries while wearing their sporting uniform.

Because it is a game two can play. If an Indian turns out in his Army's colours, so can — or will — the Pakistanis. A game of cricket, which only one of them can win, will take on the hues of a military contest. The spirit will immediately travel to the crowds, which are guaranteed to be predominantly Indian and Pakistani. This will turn sport into enmity, reminiscent of the bitter contests between warring Iran and Iraq in a distant past.

"At the international level sport is frankly mimic warfare," wrote George Orwell in his prescient 1945 essay "The Sporting Spirit". He goes on to say that the "significant thing is not the behaviour of the play-



NATIONAL INTEREST

SHEKHAR GUPTA

Stage set for the cricket coach



VIEWPOINT

DEVANGSHU DATTA

Team games tend to be driven by coaches, psychologists and back-room statisticians. American football is an extreme example. Squad formation and team selection are driven by statistics. The number-crunching indicates the best bang for the buck and the optimal team composition. The coach decides on strategy (again relying on stats), and calls every set-piece play. Basketball is similar. Football and hockey are more free-flowing but even there, strategy is coach-driven. Captains play symbolic roles.

Cricket is an outlier. This is partly because it is an unusual format, as a

sequence of head-to-head set-pieces. Two persons are centre stage; the other eleven play supporting roles. An individual, batsman or bowler may have far greater influence than a Messi or a Magic Johnson.

The second reason why captains dominate cricket strategising is tradition. Tradition endows the captain with responsibility for on-field decisions. There is no apparent reason why a coach cannot use technology to ring bowling changes, tweak field settings, or ask batsmen to change pace. Indeed, the 12th man does pass on instructions, in a time-honoured, cumbersome way. But it caused huge controversy when Hansie Cronje wore an earpiece on-field to confer with Bob Woolmer back in the 1999 World Cup and it's never happened since.

Still, the role of statistics and coaching has increased exponentially. Squad formation is driven by number-crunching in T20. The opposition is studied in detail to figure out the strengths and weaknesses. Bowling and fielding changes are micro-managed, with games sliced up over to over. Weather, pitch and historical performances are analysed to target "par scores" and to plan chases. Batsmen bat to a plan, bowlers bowl to a plan. Field settings are micro-managed to cut down

every specific batsman's shot-making preferences.

Traditionally, selection involved picking the four best bowlers, the best keeper and the best five batsmen plus all-rounder, or the best six batsmen. But modern limited-over selection is driven by strategy. A model that assesses 350 as par score will also indicate playing two sloggers who bowl, rather than a quality bat and a quality bowler. A team may even gamble on just three specialist bowlers. A team may play an average off-spinner to target opposition lefties, rather than play a quality left-arm spinner. A team may open with a spinner to target an opener shaky against spin.

This sort of use of "sabermetrics" started with baseball many decades ago. American baseball teams found better value for money via number-crunching, rather than "scouting". Statisticians could find undervalued players, who slotted together better as teams. Number-crunching also helped teams develop better playing strategies.

Cricket inevitably went the same way once the money flowed in. Given that video analysis is now easily married to silicon muscle, fine-tuning has improved. All the IPL teams, and most of the World Cup

squads, include statistical geeks, and sports psychologists providing inputs. Some of this analysis creeps into the public domain, as stats and graphics start streaming on to viewers' screens.

The 2019 champions, whoever they are, will be deserving winners. The format is among the fairest that can be devised. The Australia-New Zealand 1991-92 World Cup had a similar format, but it was vitiated by a really stupid rain-rule.

There is very little to choose between four squads, or even five, in terms of skill. There will probably be at least one team making the semis on the basis of a better run rate, and any one of the semi-finalists will be good enough to win the trophy.

The team that wins will be the one that has picked the optimal strategy, deployed the cleverest tactics, and executed plans with the least nervous hiccups. Finding the right plans will, of course, go beyond statistics in requiring an understanding of what each player can do, and maximises the team's collective strengths and targets the opposition's weaknesses best.

Although the captains retain lots of agency, the coach and the backroom will contribute far more than ever before to this process. This World Cup is, therefore, likely to be much more a clash of plans than of talent. WC2019 might well be remembered as the one where the coaches took over.

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Modi, Sitharaman, Keynes and Fisher



LINE AND LENGTH

T C A SRINIVASA RAGHAVAN

Towards the end of the second decade of the 20th century, two events occurred, leading to the creation of modern macroeconomics. One was the Communist revolution in Russia in 1917; the other was the end of the Great European War in 1918. The overall consequence of these two events was a huge depletion of European capital by 1920, which till then had financed global economic growth.

All European governments were virtually bankrupt in 1920. America, however, prospered because European capital had found its way to New York. The Americans, however, didn't know how to deal with so much money. So they went into a decade-long binge-and-boom,

which ended in bust in October 1929.

As a result, by the end of 1930 all major western economies had gone bust. In the 1930s, therefore, in the face of the Communist threat and the economic disaster, two broad strands of macroeconomic thought emerged.

One was due to John Maynard Keynes, who, in 1936, said governments had what amounted to a moral duty to spend money — even if they didn't have it — to put cash into people's pockets. This would increase aggregate demand and put some wind into the sails of the stalled economic boats.

Fisher's diagnosis

The other strand was less political. It was due to a now virtually forgotten but very great thinker called Irving Fisher. He said credit booms were inevitably followed by a bust because the real value of the debt went up when prices and incomes fell precipitously due to excesses of different kinds.

So, when debts don't get repaid, banks go bust. When banks go bust, credit dries up. When credit expansion declines, the economy slows. When the economy slows, incomes and prices fall. And so on in an expanding circle.

The best way to tackle this problem, he said, was to somehow get the real value

of the debt back to the (lower) level at which it was contracted. The problem, of course, was how to do this: By debt relief or by "fiscal stimulus", ala Keynes.

The former didn't appeal to the bankers but the latter appealed hugely to the politicians. Typically, they said let's do both, and that is what the world has been doing since about 1970.

India, in particular, has emerged as a world champion in this. Its politicians have been unctuously writing off debt and exuberantly pumping in money. Some of both has stuck to their fingers.

When the music stops

But now the money pump has seized up and debt relief has reached its limits. Like the European governments a hundred years ago, the Indian government is very broke. As the saying goes, "*Na rahega paisa, na bajega baja*". Narendra Modi's boat is not only stuck in the doldrums, it is also taking on water.

The new finance minister can look at the sky and wait — or do something completely new to put the wind back into the sails of the economy. The question is what.

I have been saying for the last 25 years, to no avail naturally, that the only government asset that is politically unproblematic is land. Unlike with the public

sector enterprises, labour doesn't come embedded in it. It is, therefore, easy to sell or lease.

But it won't. For example, in south and central Delhi, it is re-developing almost a thousand acres for its employees who will pay around 10 per cent of their basic salaries as rent, amounting to perhaps ₹5 crore a year. It has thus frozen the value of that land instead of unlocking it. If it had sold it to builders — like Donald Trump, say, because Indian builders are broke — its fiscal problems would have vanished for at least a decade if not more.

My bureaucrat friends tell me that they have blocked the idea in the past — one defence minister had thought about selling military land — because of corruption fears. But it is different now. Whatever else the prime minister is accused of, corruption is not one of them.

That is why he must set up the equivalent of a disinvestment commission, a sort of Treuhandanstalt if you like, to identify which of its land can be redeveloped, not just in Delhi but all over India. (Treuhandanstalt, or trust agency, was the body set up by the East German government in 1990 to supervise the privatisation of the public sector.)

All other avenues are closed. Neither Keynes nor Fisher can come to the rescue.

ers but the attitude of the spectators: And, behind the spectators, of the nations who work themselves into furies..." Our sportsmen and women have contested against Pakistan, lately with much greater success than in the past, while displaying an unforgiving, "take-no-prisoners" fighting spirit, but only in the game. During and after the game, the two teams have been friendly and sporting, even humouring each other's families and children.

At this juncture, fortunately, there isn't a war actually on — Balakot was a tiny skirmish that cost no lives and almost four months ago. In 1971, while a full-fledged war was being fought, Sunil Gavaskar and Zaheer Abbas played together as members of the 'Rest of the World' team touring Australia. This, when the IAF was routinely carrying out bombing runs over Karachi.

Again, in 1999, the two teams played in the World Cup in England on the day (night in India) of the fiercest fighting in Kargil. Hands were shaken, anybody who tripped and fell was helped along, as with tying the shoe-laces of rival batsmen. You didn't want either side bringing in Tiger Hill here.

Military symbols, uniforms with their lanyards and epaulettes, medals, strings and finery, bands, marches and style are all heady. They also come loaded with baggage where success or failure could look like victory or defeat in a war. In any game of sport — including the India-Pakistan league match on June 16 in Manchester — one side will win, but the other will lose. Will it be then like your army lost that battle? And what if both sides brought their "armies" on their sleeves into Old Trafford? The British will run short of police to be able to manage the crowds then.

At which point, we return to Orwell. "I am always amazed when I hear people saying that sport creates goodwill between the nations, and that if only the common peoples of the world could meet one another at football or cricket, they would have no inclination to meet on the battlefield," he wrote and used the example of the 1936 Berlin Olympics. He was both right, and wrong.

Human civilisation has moved way forward since the World Wars and the Cold War. Frequent sporting contact has become an antidote for toxic old enmities. It allows players, their fans, their families and friends to learn more about each other, build people-to-people linkages, sometimes even help vent their frustrations with each other through sport.

I do appreciate that today this view is neither wildly popular nor so politically correct. But, from Olympics to ping-pong, from basketball to cricket, from soccer to hockey, brutally competitive sport has helped smoothen the edges of militarised hostilities, and helped heal scars on our minds.

We certainly appreciate an individual's special devotion to the Army, particularly as he also exhibits that by serving it in an honorary capacity. Dhoni, for example, went to accept his Padma award in his full special forces' regalia, including the maroon beret. It was a perfectly good gesture. The Rashtrapati is also the supreme commander of the armed forces.

He doesn't have to take his regiment to the pitch. He will never be short of killer instinct behind the stumps. He could still feel the inspiration of that "dagger" in his palms each time he catches a batsman out of his crease. Insignias or not, Dhoni's will remain the deadliest pair of gloves behind the stumps.

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Jane Eyre: Reader, she dances with him

EYE CULTURE

ROSLYN SULCAS

"You are feeling trapped, like the walls are closing in," said the ballet mistress, demonstrating a sequence of frantic, elbow-jutting arms. "Keep the legs low, it's not about the height, it's about wanting to get out of here."

Devon Teuscher, Misty Copeland and Isabella Boylston, the American Ballet Theater principals who are all cast in the title role in Cathy Marston's "*Jane Eyre*," opening at the Metropolitan Opera House on Tuesday, listened intently as they copied the movements and tried to absorb the intentions behind them. It was February, and an early rehearsal for the full-length ballet, based on Charlotte Brontë's 1847 novel.

With its first-person narrative and intense focus on an interior consciousness, Brontë's novel isn't an obvious candidate for a ballet. But Ms Marston, 43, a British choreographer who has slowly forged a reputation for her ability to create narrative works, seems undaunted by the challenges of transmuting literary complexity into dance.

It was the strength and unpredictability of Jane's character that attracted her, she said, adding that she was often drawn to strong women as protagonists, including Mrs Alving in Ibsen's "*Ghosts*," Cathy in "*Wuthering Heights*" and Queen Victoria — all characters around whom she has created ballets.

Jane, she added, "is a kind of early feminist, fighting both the world and questioning her own emotions and reactions." "*Jane Eyre*," to a score by Philip Feeney that incorporates music by Schubert, Felix Mendelssohn and Fanny Mendelssohn, was first created for Northern Ballet in England in 2016. It has proved a game changer for Ms Marston.

British critics praised the clear storytelling in "*Jane Eyre*," Ms Marston's craft and her innovative physicality. This Jane is "emancipated from the conventional tropes of the ballet heroine," Judith Mackrell wrote in *The Guardian*.

After years of relative obscurity, Ms Marston was suddenly on the radar. Helgi Tomasson, the director of the San Francisco Ballet, invited her to create a work ("*Snowblind*") for the company's "Unbound" festival last year; she also made a full-length ballet, "*Victoria*," about the queen, for Northern Ballet. A new piece for the Royal Ballet is scheduled for February 2020.

"It's funny how things slowly trickle through," Ms Marston said over coffee at

the Royal Opera House in London recently. "Once you have a couple of big companies backing you, others follow suit."

She acknowledged that the pressure on ballet directors to find and feature female choreographers, hasn't hurt. "The woman thing is certainly part of it," she said. "And I think that companies know that narrative ballets often end up being productive for all in the end, and I have a lot of experience with narrative ballets by now."

Kevin McKenzie, the director of American Ballet Theater, said he first heard about Ms Marston after "*Snowblind*" was commissioned. "Then her name kept coming up," he said. "I liked that she was a storyteller at heart and the sound of her process." Still, when he met her after her stint in San Francisco, "I had to be blatantly honest and say I had never seen anything she had done."

After that meeting, Ms Marston sent Mr. McKenzie videos of her work, including one of "*Jane Eyre*," which he found "unusual and fascinating." He asked her to create a new one-act ballet for Ballet Theater's fall 2020 season. Then a crisis loomed. A full-evening program planned for this year's Met season fell through. Mr. McKenzie thought of "*Jane Eyre*." "I told Cathy that if she could figure out how to stage the ballet in a short time, let's do it," Ms Marston didn't hesitate. "You have to grab the moment," she said firmly.

Her interest in choreography began early. She took part in workshops and looked up to older students like Christopher Wheeldon and David Dawson, who were making choreographic inroads. There was certainly a glass ceiling, she said.

"I wasn't the ballerina type, and I didn't get offered a place in the company," she said. "The fact that I was a choreographer, and had won the school's choreographic prize, didn't make a difference, whereas I think for a man it probably would have."

Instead, she joined the Zurich Ballet in Switzerland, later moving to companies in Lucerne and Bern. She continued to make dances and in 2001 returned to Britain, determined to focus on choreography. There she created "*Ghosts*," her first full-length work, in 2005.

"*Ghosts*" led to an offer to direct the Bern Ballet, where she worked from 2007 to 2013, choreographing more than a dozen works, but also commissioning pieces. It was, she said, "a huge wake-up call about what it means to be a director."

Premji's lasting legacy is of munificent money

Wipro's outgoing chairman defines for India Inc what giving and compassionate capitalism means

AS AN INDIAN BUSINESS leader, Azim Premji has always punted against the current. He was one of the first, if not the pioneering, leaders of the country's IT revolution, transforming Wipro from a vegetable oil and other consumer products company he inherited from his father, which totalled \$2 million in sales in 1966, to a multi-billion dollar group with earnings chiefly from IT. Steering the group away from a business where margins were relatively secure to what was, in the 1970s and 1980s, still uncharted territory surely requires more than just gumption and a taste for risk—a gift of vision, perhaps? Independent India's early years didn't see many second-generation industrialists demonstrate comparable vision. In 1979, a year after India expelled IBM for re-selling refurbished computer hardware at steep prices to government departments, Premji saw an opportunity, and Wipro became one of the first feathers India's fledgling IT industry sprouted. As technology investments poured in globally towards the end of 1990s, Wipro and Premji, respectively, saw their market cap and net worth skyrocket. In the meanwhile, Wipro and its leadership gathered global acclaim for the high-quality talent hired and the exceptional training opportunities they provided.

There is no denying that Wipro is no Infosys or HCL, but Premji's leadership is not only about how big he made Wipro. As he steps down as Wipro's chairman—he will take on a non-executive role on the board—the story of his leadership must also recount what else he did along the way and how. Placing the right bets at the right time earned Premji an enviable personal fortune, but there has never been even an of extravagance in his life within or outside Wipro's boardroom. Recognised for his modesty and high ethical conduct as a business person—something that can't be said of all his peers in corporate India—Premji's defining legacy will be his philanthropy. Having established the Azim Premji Foundation, a non-profit, in 2001, he has already pledged \$21 billion of his personal wealth as part of the Giving Pledge which has seen the likes of Warren Buffet and Bill Gates donate significant parts of their wealth for work on bettering the future of the planet. With the Foundation, Premji had intended to improve the quality of elementary education in rural India. The Foundation has now helped tens of thousands of schools in the country access computer-aided education. It also sponsors the Azim Premji University that is focussed on academic work that can help uplift the oppressed classes.

While many business leaders, from India and elsewhere, have committed to giving away large portions of their wealth, Premji remains a singular donor. Even when, in March this year, he bequeathed a fresh chunk to the Premji Foundation, the Indian Philanthropy Report, brought out by Bain and Company, noted that excluding Premji's donations, large-ticket donations by India Inc had fallen 4% since 2014 even though the proportion of those with a net-worth of over \$50 million had grown by 12%. A spotless reputation of leadership and giving aside, Premji has also challenged the paradigm on inheritance. His son, Rishad Premji, succeeds him as Wipro's executive chairman, but Premji senior largely leaves the latter to create his own wealth.

Be careful with GST arrests

Curbing evasion a must, but need to check tax terror

AT ₹1.14 LAKH CRORE for March 2019, GST collections for the month were 10% higher than those a year ago, and the highest since India started collecting this tax in July 2017. To that extent, we have a rosy picture of GST collections being on a firmer footing as more and more firms are getting GST-compliant. Yet, if the picture were so idyllic, there wouldn't be a shortfall of ₹1 lakh crore in central GST collections alone in FY19. Indeed, there could be a large shortfall in FY20 GST also, if the March 2019 collections aren't replicated or even increased over the next 11 months. While it is theoretically possible that future tax rates will at least equal this, it remains true that GST collections are usually higher at the end of each quarter—smaller firms file their returns every quarter—and also at the end of the financial year; the impact for March 2019 was even higher because that was also the last month to claim tax credits for FY18.

Should there be a large shortfall in FY20, it will be because of the fairly large tax evasion that continues to take place, possibly also because invoice-matching continues to be in abeyance; a combination of the hardware system not being fully ready and the government not being too keen to upset taxpayers before the election was the main reason for this. Indeed, while GST collections rose by just 9% in July 2018 to March 2019 over the same period a year ago, nominal GDP rose by 11.5%. And this is despite the fact that, over the same period, the number of tax-filers rose by as much as 24%. Given this points to fairly large-scale tax evasion, it is not surprising that the government has approached the Supreme Court asking for permission to arrest people for GST evasion, provided there is enough proof of this. While it is not clear how SC will rule on this, in a related case, the Telangana High Court had held that a person can be arrested in case the authorities felt there was tax evasion, and when this ruling was challenged before the Supreme Court, it was upheld.

The power of arrest, however, needs to be used with great care since it can just as easily become a source of corruption as well as tax terrorism; given the possibility of arrest, most are likely to pay what the taxman wants and then go into appeal. So, while various tax departments have, in the past, laid out principles for such arrest, and the arrest can also only be ordered by very senior officials, the review process needs to be more stringent and should involve tax professionals who do not work with the government. Indeed, apart from keeping a 24x7 watch over such cases, the tax department must examine the rationale given for arrests and also keep in mind the success of the tax demands made; if most tax demands fail to stand the scrutiny of the judicial process, then using the power of arrest only adds to tax terror.

Dying BUSTARD

The lack of action by states has now brought the Great Indian Bustard to the verge of extinction

THE GREAT INDIAN Bustard (GIB) is on the verge of being declared functionally extinct—its numbers have now dwindled to just 150, falling by 100 since 2011. The GIB, at present, is native to just two Indian states, Rajasthan and Gujarat—in Gujarat, the last surviving sub-adult male flew away this year, which means a complete collapse of the bird's feeble presence in the state is imminent. The Thar Desert and the grasslands had been home to these birds for years now. However, a lack of political will on the part of the states' administration, and development projects like windmills and power lines have caused the avian species to teeter on the edge of extinction. The Centre's push to conserve the bird came only after the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) categorised the bird as "critically endangered" in July 2013. But, the conservation efforts never took off and development is proving to be the last straw.

No efforts have been made to conserve the grasslands—the natural habitat of GIBs—nor has there been an effort to put the power transmission lines underground to prevent bird-collision. Flying into power transmission lines and windmills is a major factor behind the bustard's decline. Ex situ conservation to increase the numbers of the endangered species has been attempted and the tips of the blades of wind turbines have been coloured to make them visible to the birds at night; but there is a great deal of uncertainty over the results of such efforts. Another issue, to which there is no easy solution in sight, is the fact that farmers have successfully caused locust infestations to crash—and locusts and grasshoppers are an essential part of the bustard's diet. Also, many bird-deaths have occurred due to the bustards eating locusts killed by pesticides. With one of the fastest mass extinctions in the history of the planet underway, the bustard faces a slim chance against the march of agriculture and development.

"When governments permit counterfeiting or copying of American products, it is stealing our future, and it is no longer free trade."

SO SAID THE US President Ronald Reagan, commenting on Japan after the Plaza Accord was concluded in September 1985. Today resembles, in many respects, a remake of this 1980s movie, but with a reality-television star replacing a Hollywood film star in the presidential leading role and with a new villain in place of Japan.

Back in the 1980s, Japan was portrayed as America's greatest economic threat—not only because of allegations of intellectual property theft but also because of concerns about currency manipulation, state-sponsored industrial policy, a hollowing out of US manufacturing, and an outside bilateral trade deficit. In its standoff with the US, Japan ultimately blinked, but it paid a steep price for doing so—nearly three "lost" decades of economic stagnation and deflation. Today, the same plot features China.

Notwithstanding both countries' objectionable mercantilism, Japan and China have something else in common: They became victims of America's unfortunate habit of making others the scapegoat for its own economic problems. Like Japan bashing in the 1980s, China bashing today is an outgrowth of America's increasingly insidious macro-economic imbalances. In both cases, a dramatic shortfall in US domestic savings spawned large current-account and trade deficits, setting the stage for battles, 30 years apart, with Asia's two economic giants.

When Reagan took office in January 1981, the net domestic saving rate stood at 7.8% of national income, and the current account was basically balanced. Within two and a half years, courtesy of Reagan's wildly popular tax cuts, the domestic saving rate had plunged to 3.7%, and the current account and the

Many quarters are heaving sighs of relief as leaders familiar with each other have retained power; a great impetus for RCEP prospects

THE LAST THREE months have been an electorally active period for the Asia-Pacific. Several major countries of the region have had elections for their top offices. The verdicts from all have been in favour of the incumbent parties and their top leaders. This has important implications for progress on major regional initiatives, such as the Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership (RCEP). There are also implications on how countries from the region might develop strategies for addressing the increasingly adverse impacts of the US-China trade war.

General elections were held in Thailand, Indonesia, India, and Australia, and mid-term elections were held in Philippines, during March-May 2019. Despite a reasonably good performance by the opposition, the Thai election results fell short of a decisive mandate. Subsequent events point to a coalition backed by the military being the front-runner for assuming office. The situation would be broadly similar to what has been prevailing in Thailand for the last five years. The Indonesian Presidential election was almost as intense and bitterly fought as the Parliamentary elections in India. The preliminary results were challenged and disputed. Nearly a month after the elections, incumbent President Joko Widodo, or Jokowi, was announced the winner by the General Election Commission. This gives Jokowi a second five-year term in office in the world's third largest democracy. The long and grueling Indian elections returned incumbent Prime Minister Modi and the BJP-led NDA to power with a comfortable majority. The margin of the BJP victory took many political analysts by surprise. But this surprise element was nothing compared with that produced by the Australian election results. In an election widely described as 'unloseable' for the opposition Labour Party, incumbent Prime Minister Scott Morrison's liberal-national coalition was returned to office against all expectations. Finally, mid-



FIVE DEPUTY CHIEF MINISTERS

Andhra Pradesh, CM, YS Jaganmohan Reddy

Five of them will be designated as deputy chief ministers, each of whom will represent, SC (Scheduled Castes), ST (Scheduled Tribes), OBC (Other Backward Classes), minority and Kapu community

TRADE WARS

JAPAN AND CHINA BOTH BECAME VICTIMS OF AMERICA'S UNFORTUNATE HABIT OF MAKING OTHERS THE SCAPEGOAT FOR ITS OWN ECONOMIC PROBLEMS

Japan then, China now

STEPHEN S ROACH

Faculty member at Yale University
Views are personal



merchandise trade balances swung into perpetual deficit. In this important respect, America's so-called trade problem was very much of its own making.

Yet the Reagan administration was in denial. There was little or no appreciation of the link between saving and trade imbalances. Instead, the blame was pinned on Japan, which accounted for 42% of US goods trade deficits in the first half of the 1980s. Japan bashing then took on a life of its own, with a wide range of grievances over unfair and illegal trade practices. Leading the charge, back then, was a young Deputy US Trade Representative named Robert Lighthizer.

Fast-forward some 30 years and the similarities are painfully evident. Unlike Reagan, President Donald Trump did not inherit a US economy with an ample reservoir of savings. When Trump took office in January 2017, the net domestic saving rate was just 3%, well below half the rate at the onset of the Reagan era. But, like his predecessor, who waxed eloquently of a new "morning in America," Trump also opted for large tax cuts—this time to "make America great again."

The result was a predictable widening of the federal budget deficit, which more than offset the cyclical surge in private saving that normally accompanies a maturing economic expansion. As a result, the net domestic saving rate actually edged down to 2.8% of national income by late 2018, keeping America's international balances deep in the red—with the current account deficit at 2.6% of GDP and the merchandise trade gap at 4.5% in late 2018.

And that's where China assumes the role that Japan played in the 1980s. On the surface, the threat seems direr. After all, China accounted for 48% of the US merchandise trade deficit in 2018, compared to Japan's 42% share in the first half of the 1980s. But the comparison is distorted by global supply chains, which basically didn't exist in the 1980s. Data from the OECD and the World Trade Organization suggest that about 35-40% of the bilateral US-China trade deficit reflects inputs made outside of China, but assembled and shipped to the US from China. That means the made-in-China portion of today's US trade deficit is actually smaller than Japan's share of the 1980s.

Like the Japan bashing of the 1980s, today's outbreak of China bashing has been conveniently excised from America's broader macroeconomic context. That is a serious mistake. Without raising the national savings—highly unlikely under the current US budget trajectory—trade will simply be shifted away from China to America's other trading partners. With this trade diversion likely to migrate to higher-cost platforms around the world, American consumers will be hit with the functional equivalent of a tax hike.

Ironically, Trump has summoned the same Robert Lighthizer, veteran of

Like the Japan bashing of the 1980s, today's outbreak of China bashing has been conveniently excised from America's broader macroeconomic context

the Japan trade battles of the 1980s, to lead the charge against China. Unfortunately, Lighthizer seems as clueless about the macro argument today as he was back then.

In both episodes, the US was in denial, bordering on delusion. Basking in the warm glow of untested supply-side economics—especially the theory that tax cuts would be self-financing—the Reagan administration failed to appreciate the links between mounting budget and trade deficits. Today, the seductive power of low interest rates, coupled with the latest strain of voodoo economics—modern monetary theory—is equally alluring for the

Trump administration and a bipartisan consensus of China bashers in the US Congress.

The tough macroeconomic constraints facing a saving-short US economy are ignored for good reason: there is no US political constituency for reducing trade deficits by cutting budget deficits and thereby boosting domestic saving. America wants to have its cake and eat it, with a health-care system that swallows 18% of its GDP, defense spending that

exceeds the combined sum of the world's next seven largest military budgets, and tax cuts that have reduced federal government revenue to 16.5% of GDP, well below the 17.4% average of the past 50 years.

This remake of an old movie is disconcerting, to say the least. Once again, the US has found it far easier to bash others—Japan then, China now—than to live within its means. This time, however, the movie might have a very different ending.

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LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Dhoni's glove row

The familiar idiom is 'wearing your patriotism on your sleeve'. On a lighter note, M.S.Dhoni wears patriotism on his wicket-keeping gloves. This is not to undervalue his boundless love for the country and the services in any manner. The ICC's diktat to the famed cricketer to remove the army insignia sported by him during the India-South Africa match has caused a furore in India. The clamour for BCCI to flex its muscles to force the ICC to reverse its decision is growing louder. It is hardly surprising it is made an emotional issue in the present time when nationalist sentiment is running high. By the way, while the controversy over the insignia is blown up, far weightier issues like water crisis and economic slowdown are relegated to the background. We are all his big fans does not necessarily mean that we don't have the option of disagreeing with (or disapproving of) all that he does and saying that he should go by the rule book. The rule clearly states that no other logo other than a manufacturer's is allowed on equipment and clothing while playing ICC matches. All those who see nothing wrong in Dhoni sporting the insignia can say in justification is that it is not a commercial endorsement. While it is true that Dhoni is an Honorary Lieutenant Colonel in the Territorial Army, he is not in the playing field in that capacity, but as an international cricket player. An internationalist - a player who takes part in a sports competition against another country - is supposed to promote internationalism. It cannot be said that the display of Balidaan badge embossed with a regimental dagger serves this purpose. We need to act for the permeation of a spirit of goodwill in international relations. Sportspersons should continue to play the vital role of uniting all nations by a sense of common humanity even while achieving national glory for their nations.

— G David Milton, Maruthancode

Write to us at feletters@expressindia.com

Indo-Pacific is ‘priority theatre’ for the US

THE SHANGRI-LA DIALOGUE 2019, hosted by the International Institute for Strategic Studies, was the 18th Asia Security Summit that brought together defence ministers and top-ranking military personnel of 30-odd countries, including the US and China, in Singapore. Seen as an American-centric meet where the US announces its security policy for the region, the US stoked anticipation saying that it would unveil a new vision for the Indo-Pacific.

The meet came in the midst of the ongoing Sino-US trade war and was a highly anticipated event, given the participation of both the (acting) US Secretary of Defense Patrick Shanahan and China’s defence minister General Wei Fenghe. In fact, for the first time, China sent its defence minister to the meet.

This set the stage for, if not the “clash of civilisations,” as the US State Department’s director of policy planning Kiron Skinner famously said a few weeks ago, then surely restating the power equation between an established power, the US, and a rising, resurgent and somewhat recalcitrant China.

Much of what the US unveiled at the Shangri-La Dialogue was neither random nor surprising. If anything, it was in line with the recent tenor of the American policy towards China. The National Defense Strategy (2018) honed the idea of China as a ‘strategic competitor’, a ‘revisionist power’ and ‘authoritarian actor’ (along with Russia), and signalled the US’s commitment to ‘compete, deter and win’ in the complex environment.

The new vision, marked by clarity and simplicity, reiterates that the US is a Pacific power, a resident Asian power, and that the US ‘pivot’ is here in Asia to stay—with the Indo-Pacific identified as the ‘priority theatre’ of the American strategy. According to the Indo-Pacific Strategy Report (2019), seven of the 10 largest standing armies are in the region, as are six nuclear powers; the region also hosts nine of the 10 busiest ports, US foreign direct investment is \$1.3 trillion, and two-way trade is \$2.3 trillion. The Indo-Pacific accounts for 60% of global GDP.

In addition to being identified as ‘priority theatre’, the critical bottom line of the US vision was the reaffirmation of the Indo-Pacific as Free and Open Indo-Pacific (FOIP). This had been announced earlier, in 2017, by President Donald

The new American vision, marked by clarity and simplicity, reiterates that the US is a Pacific power, a resident Asian power, and that the US ‘pivot’ is here in Asia to stay—with the Indo-Pacific identified as the ‘priority theatre’ of the American strategy



ILLUSTRATION: ROHNIT PHORE

Trump at the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation summit (APEC) in Vietnam. By reaffirming FOIP and spelling out that it is inclusive, embracing ‘shared security order’ based on a ‘rules-based international order’, the US emphasised rules and norms that are global, universally-accepted and not American (nor Chinese) in spirit.

The US stressed respect for sovereignty and independence, and adherence to international rules and norms including the freedom of navigation and overflight and resolution of disputes through peaceful means. With simmering disputes in Northeast Asia, South China Sea, East China Sea and critical shipping routes at stake, Shanahan said, “No one nation can—or should—dominate the Indo-Pacific,”—an oblique reference to China?

Shanahan’s speech called out actors in Asia that “undermine the system by using indirect, incremental actions and

ANURAG VISWANATH

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rhetorical devices to exploit others economically and diplomatically, and coerce them militarily” with a new “toolkit of coercion.” This toolkit of coercion implies contentious and controversial actions that include deploying weapons in disputed areas, interfering in domestic politics of other nations, ‘predatory economics’ and theft of intellectual property right—all of which make it easy to guess who the actor is.

One of the important components of the new strategy is the \$60-billion Better Utilization of Investments Leading to

Development Act (BUILD Act), passed by the Senate and the House of Representatives (in 2018). This will create a new US development agency, the US International Development Finance Corporation (USIDFC). This is likely to unleash investments in the low and middle economies of Asia under the rubric of ‘Strengthen Alliances and Attract New Partners’, as the National Defense Strategy (2018) mentioned.

The Indo-Pacific Strategy Report (2019) came on the heels of Shanahan’s speech. The report, ‘Prepared-

ness, Partnerships, And Promoting A Networked Region’, reiterated and emphasised the “Inter-state strategic competition, defined by geopolitical rivalry between free and repressive world order visions” as the primary concern for US national security.

Clearly, the overall US strategy goes beyond protecting immediate US interests, but rather has its eyes on the future. Pre-emptive and preventive, it consolidates and concretises the US as a formidable bulwark against competition and contest in the region.

In all this, the US is trying hard not to come across as a ‘global policeman’, but it turns out this is hard sell. In the last few decades, the American policy has been conveniently negotiating Asia (including India) with blinkers on. In China, it has brushed aside an ‘inconvenient truth’ or two such as human rights (remember Tiananmen, 1989, or China’s ban on aca-

demics such as Perry Link, Andrew Nathan and others who worked on controversial subjects in China?). Hundreds of cases of self-immolation in the Tibetan region of China in the mid-2000s and destruction of large-scale monasteries haven’t mattered either. Neither has state persecution in Xinjiang. But these were the times of economic bonhomie.

The US as a ‘global policeman’ comes without free lunch. For the region, the stoic reminders are pages from the Vietnam War (1955-75) writ with the tragic episode of Agent Orange—the herbicide used by the US Army to decimate forest cover decimated people instead. The American actions have been suspect in Cambodia, too, where the Khmer Rouge killed more than a million people in the 1970s. Beyond the region, the recent disappearance of journalist Jamal Khashoggi is a reminder of the US turning a blind eye—when it wants to.

The Indo-Pacific has much to thank China for. Not just manufacturing prowess (that has come at a huge environmental and human cost to China) and trade, but also for stirring waters in a way that neither Japan nor South Korea could do or did.

To take one example, China’s Belt and Road Initiative (2013) indirectly spurred the BUILD Act and the Japanese initiatives of Asia-Africa Growth Corridor (AAGC, 2017) and Partnership for Quality Infrastructure (PQII, 2015).

China, with \$60 billion for the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC), \$930 million (in investments) to the Philippines (2018), \$50 billion to Africa (the Forum on China-Africa Cooperation in September 2018) and foreign aid to Africa leaning more towards grants and interest-free loans, has reinvented ‘aid’ as a formidable soft power tool.

For the countries of the Indo-Pacific, the question is: Who is the greater danger, or the greater evil? As alignments, networks and partnerships show, the writing is emerging on the wall.

There is global consensus that China prematurely departed from the dictum ‘bide its time’ before its time. But the Chinese are masters of pragmatism and know when to advance and when to retreat—just as Sun Tzu’s ‘The Art of War’ describes. This pragmatism showed up in General Wei’s Q&A session during the Shangri-La Dialogue where he indicated that “China is the biggest developing country... and does not want to vie for the number one position,” suggesting introspection and the possibility of a retreat to China ‘biding its time’.

DATA DRIVE

Paring tax targets

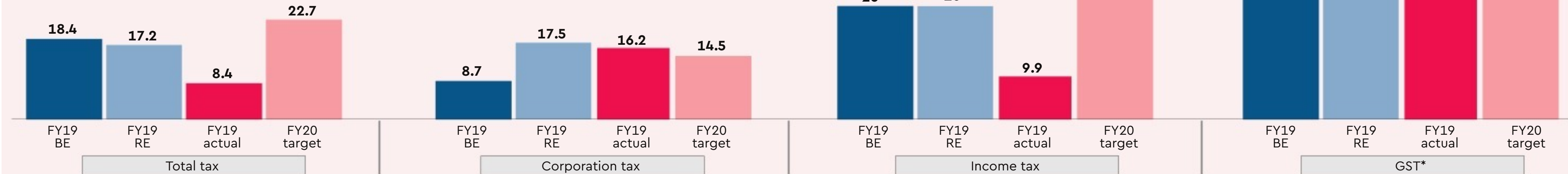
GIVEN THAT OVERALL tax collections grew just 8.4% year-on-year in FY18 as compared to the 18.4% budgeted, later revised to 17.2%, the government will have to tone down the tax revenue target for this financial year. A sputtering economy—GDP growth has slipped to a 20-quarter low of 5.8% in January-March 2019—cannot generate 23% growth in gross tax revenue as targeted in the Interim Budget, or a 34% growth in personal income tax.

The provisional estimates for FY19 show a shortfall of ₹1.7 lakh crore from the revised estimates, with personal income taxes and GST collections contributing to most of the shortfall. The government will have to pare the tax targets in line with the nominal GDP growth rate, which may increase the fiscal deficit.

In order to meet the fiscal deficit target of 3.4% in FY19, the government reduced the total expenditure by ₹1.5 lakh crore from the revised estimates, of which revenue expenditure was slashed by ₹1.3 lakh crore. Most of revenue expenditure trimming was on account of lower food subsidy bill. The government will have to resort to higher disinvestment and telecom spectrum auction in order to mop up more funds for spending.

Tax collections fall short

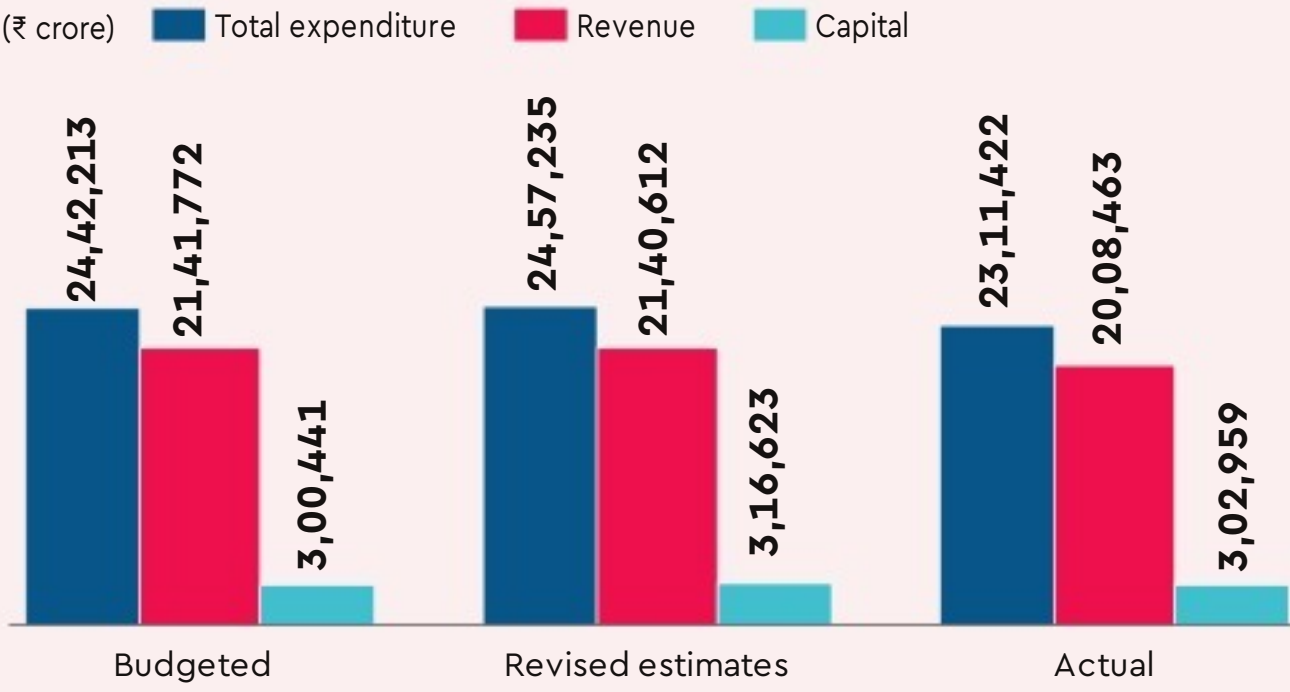
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Highest tax rate kicks in early

Taxable income in ₹; Tax rate in %				
Nil	10%	20%	30%	
2000-01	50,000	50,001 - 60,000	60,001 - 1,50,000	Over 1,50,000
2005-06	100,000	1,00,001 - 1,50,000	1,50,001 - 2,50,000	Over 2,50,000
2007-08	110,000	1,10,001 - 1,50,000	1,50,001 - 2,50,000	Over 2,50,000
2008-09	150,000	1,50,001 - 3,00,000	3,00,001 - 5,00,000	Over 5,00,000
2009-10	160,000	1,60,001 - 3,00,000	3,00,001 - 5,00,000	Over 5,00,000
2011-12	180,000	1,80,001 - 5,00,000	5,00,001 - 8,00,000	Over 8,00,000
2012-13	200,000	2,00,001 - 5,00,000	5,00,001 - 10,00,000	Over 10,00,000
2014-15	2,50,000	2,50,001 - 5,00,000	5,00,001 - 10,00,000	Over 10,00,000
2017-18	2,50,000	2,50,001 - 5,00,000	5,00,001 - 10,00,000	Over 10,00,000
		5%	20%	30%

Total expenditure cut by ₹1.5 lakh crore in FY19



Tax buoyancy drops to a 9-year low



Tax-to-GDP ratio, too, slips in FY19



Most tax returns come from income up to ₹2.5 lakh

Taxable income in ₹; Tax rate in %		
Salary	No. of returns	Sum of salary income (₹ cr)
Up to 2.5 lakh	3,06,24,673	63,558
2.5 to 5 lakh	79,56,997	3,01,205
5 to 10 lakh	80,51,310	5,54,700
10 to 50 lakh	30,96,823	5,17,261
50 to 1 crore	97,120	65,885
Above 1 crore	41,457	91,878
Total	4,98,68,380	15,94,487

The only mantra

Policy must pray to one god — formal jobs



MANISH SABHARWAL

CONTINUITY & CHANGE

Neighbourhood first remains India's foreign policy priority, but the emphasis has shifted from SAARC to BIMSTEC

AS PRIME MINISTER Narendra Modi begins his second innings in diplomacy this week with a visit to Maldives and Sri Lanka, his foreign minister Subrahmanyam Jaishankar has chosen Bhutan as his first foreign destination. If Modi brings a bigger political mandate and loads of self-assurance to India's international relations in his second stint, Jaishankar's impressive diplomatic skill promises to turn PM's political will into concrete outcomes for India. That Jaishankar served three years as foreign secretary during Modi's first term and enjoys PM's trust and confidence means Delhi now has a formidable team to direct Indian diplomacy. In his first public remarks as foreign minister a day before he left for Thimphu, Jaishankar gave a preview of where India's foreign policy might be headed. There are elements of continuity as well as prospects for significant change.

Jaishankar has signalled that he will continue to sustain the legacy of his predecessor, Sushma Swaraj, in putting the welfare of Indians abroad at the very top of the Foreign Office's agenda. Over the last few years, Swaraj has transformed the relationship between Indian missions abroad and the common man. If the embassies and consulates were once seen as aloof and unhelpful, they are today viewed as the first resort for distressed Indians in distant lands. Continuity is also visible in Jaishankar's renewed emphasis on "neighbourhood first". But there is no mistaking that the expansion of the geographic scope of what Delhi means by neighbourhood. Jaishankar confirmed that the invitation to the leaders of a Bay of Bengal forum for prime minister's inauguration is a shift away from a narrowly defined South Asia with its multitude of structural problems. The BIMSTEC is replacing SAARC as the primary forum for India's regionalism. Delhi's interest in the Bay of Bengal and the PM's enduring focus on Indian Ocean island states underlines the emerging maritime dimension of India's neighbourhood policy.

Modi's diplomacy has every reason to bask in the massive support for an assertive foreign policy seen during the elections. But no country, however powerful, can control all the external variables shaping the foreign policy environment. Jaishankar's remarks show that Delhi is acutely conscious that international landscape for Indian diplomacy is no longer predictable; nor is it benign. Delhi, according to Jaishankar, will not be daunted by the new strains in the global economic order and the new Cold War between the US and China. If South Block's default bias is to hide behind slogans of non-alignment and "strategic autonomy", the new team is confident that Delhi can secure India's interests in this complex environment. The new boldness on "what" India wants to do in the world during Modi's second term is now matched by "how" it wants to do it. Jaishankar has underlined the importance of overcoming weaknesses like project implementation in other countries, preventing bureaucratisation of the relations with neighbours, and improving inter-ministerial coordination.

SLIPPERY SLOPE

NBFC crisis could accentuate contagion risk in financial sector. Cabinet committee on investment and growth must address it

THE WOES OF non-banking finance companies and housing finance companies continue to reverberate through the financial system. A few days ago, Dewan Housing Finance Corporation defaulted on its interest obligations. Its short-term rating has been cut to default. Financial conditions have worsened with spreads of NBFC bonds rising significantly in the recent past. At one level, the argument can be made that lenders are re-evaluating their risk. That the market is discriminating between the better rated NBFCs and those whose balance sheets appear problematic. And, that an intervention at this stage will create problems of moral hazard. But, there is genuine concern that the DHFL default can "accentuate contagion risk in the financial sector", as noted by the investment house CLSA in a note. This needs to be addressed.

A possible solution is for the RBI to open a special borrowing window to provide liquidity to NBFCs/HFCs. As was done during the financial crisis of 2008, the central bank, under sections 17 and 18 of the RBI act, can provide short term liquidity to NBFCs, till financial conditions normalise. But, the RBI doesn't seem inclined towards this route, presumably because it will be difficult to differentiate between NBFCs. It could also nudge banks to increase their lending to NBFCs. To this effect, it has already eased norms for maintaining risk weights on bank lending to NBFCs. Further easing of systemic liquidity could boost flows to NBFCs. The question is will risk-averse banks lend? Part of the problem is that the difficulty in differentiating between illiquid NBFCs from those that are insolvent. To address this, some have advocated for an asset quality review to reveal the true state of NBFCs' books. While this will address issues of information asymmetry, such a move may end up prolonging the crisis. Perhaps, the RBI could identify systemically important NBFCs and backstop them through banks.

But the larger issue of resolution of financial firms remains. Situations such as the current one warrant swift resolution so that problems remain contained. Perhaps, the newly formed cabinet committee on investment and growth could contemplate bringing back the FRDI bill, with modifications to address contentious issues like the bail-in clause and deposit insurance.

FAST AND FURIOUS

The bouncer is the surprise weapon in this World Cup

IT BEFITTED THE fast-bowling legacy of Joel Garner and Malcolm Marshall that an English cricketer of Barbadian descent, Jofra Archer, whipped up the short-ball revolution in this World Cup in the opening match against South Africa. Short-balls have caught unsuspecting batsmen unawares this World Cup. There was little foreboding of such an exigency. After all, they had stepped into the English summer with the promise of truckloads of runs, given how the de-venomed surfaces have behaved of late. No other grounds in the world had seen such a frequent incidence of 300s and 400s — England managed 481 against Australia last year in Nottingham — in the last five years. But bowlers, armed with the daring, muscle and ruthlessness to bang the ball short, unencumbered to see batsmen writhing in pain or quivering in fear, have ensured that those runs that are to be made are tough, sweat-soaked runs.

If a Barbadian can, so can their continental cousins from Jamaica, the land of Michael Holding, Courtney Walsh and arguably the most brutish exponent of the short-ball, Patrick Patterson. None of their successors — Andre Russell, Oshane Thomas and Sheldon Cottrell — carry that ring of raw intimidation, but they've shown they can be as hostile as their vaunted predecessors with the short-ball, as the Pakistan batsmen were subjected to. So was Australia's top-order, which was perhaps a better denominator of short-pitch bowling's value. Bred as they are on hard Australian surfaces, they're supposed to cope.

Not that the worth of a short-ball needed spotlighting. In fact, it's not a mere delivery, it's a statement. The most macho, unsubtle statement of intent in the game. And as the World Cup rolls on, the winner could be not only the one that can dish out the most sustained spell of high-class short-pitch bowling, but the one that can also handle it most efficiently too.

THE BHAGWAD GITA has important advice for policy entrepreneurs: "What lies between us and our greatest goals are not obstacles, but clearer paths to lesser goals." Jobs are a lesser goal than wages. India's problem is not unemployment — this has bounced in the low and narrow range of 4-7 per cent for 50 years — but employed poverty. Our traditional labour market shock absorbers — farm employment and self-employment — are dying because kids born after 1991 are unaccepting of self-exploitation and recognise the wage premiums, identity, dignity, soft skills, apprenticeship effect, and financial inclusion of formal jobs. I'd like to make the case that policy should pray to one god — formal jobs. And since goals decide strategy, our focus areas become clear.

India's 6.3 crore enterprises only convert to 12 lakh GST registrants, 10 lakh provident fund payers, and 19,500 companies with a paid up capital of Rs 10 crore or more because of our regulatory cholesterol — 58,000-plus compliances, 3000-plus filing, and 5000-plus changes every year. We need massive ease-of-doing business that rationalises (cuts down ministries, compliances, and filings), simplifies (adopts a universal enterprise number and one labour code) and digitises (adopts a paperless, presenceless and cashless process for all employer compliance by shifting from uploads to websites to an API architecture with straight-through-processing). All jobs change lives in ways that no subsidy can but formal jobs in formal enterprises have many externalities.

India's labour laws have an insane reverse payroll wedge — employers are forced to deduct 40 per cent-plus of gross wages from *chithi waali* salary (gross wages) for employees with monthly wages up to Rs 25,000. Yet, *haath wali* salary (net wages) are only 9 per cent lower for employees with monthly wages above Rs 25,000. This wedge murders formalisation and confiscates property from the poor; all wages belong to employees in a cost-to-company world. Fixing this wedge needs competition; EPFO is the world's most expensive government securities mutual fund (300-plus basis points for administration fees) and Employees' State Insurance

India can't be ruled from Delhi. China building infrastructure and moving 400 million people off farms wasn't the child of Beijing but 200 mayors competing for investment. While there may be something such as India's capital market, land and labour markets are local. A hundred mayors and 29 chief ministers matter more than one prime minister for job creation.



KHALED AHMED

THERE ARE MORE countries than ever before who hate America today under President Donald Trump. He has alienated Europe on NATO and the rest of the world doesn't know which side he is on. He is against China and some argue that he should also be against Russia to retain a foothold within a scared European Union. Because the main enemy is China, Trump favours India, the rising economic power in the world. He has taken on Iran and finds it easy because Iran is pitted against "fellow-Muslim" Arabs across the Gulf.

Trump wants Iran choked. He wants the world to not buy its oil. American sanctions were in place from way back but exemptions were made for eight importers of Iranian oil that included India and China. Some of the "exemptees" have quickly "adjusted" by stopping their imports while the others are in the process of kowtowing to Trump. He asked India to comply — the help rendered by the US on the Masood Azhar issue was Trump's bargaining chip — and India has submitted, forgoing its deserved status of the big nation of the region. Next, Trump wants to squeeze India on trade.

If the Saudis are happy that they have got Trump to squeeze Iran, they will soon realise that the US president is not so kind. He will demand that Saudi Arabia and the UAE go back to producing more oil to make up for the shortfall that will be caused by the sanctions on Iran. The Saudis were putting a lid on oil production to prevent it from going cheap.

WE GOT TRUMPED

US president has exploited the discord between nations to his country's advantage

Aligned with Trump, the Arabs do not mind that the US has approved Israel's move to shift its capital from Tel Aviv to Jerusalem — all this while the Palestinians are being thrashed by the Israeli army.

The world — perhaps only the Islamic world — deserves Trump. Muslims are fighting each other in the states they inhabit even as these states take on each other — Iran and the crumbling states next door like Iraq and Syria are good examples. The Arabs triggered a new inferno by staging the Arab Spring of 2011. The Spring started going wrong from day one and the toppling of the Muslim dictators didn't lead to the halcyon days of democracy but more trouble, except, perhaps, in Tunisia — even though its youth formed the largest number of IS warriors in Iraq-Syria.

Trump doesn't mind General Sisi ruling Egypt, the most populous Arab state. Egypt has just passed a constitutional amendment after a referendum on April 22, advancing President Sisi's one-man rule. After all, his dictatorship was ushered in by millions of Egyptians demonstrating against the oppressive but elected government of President Muhammad Morsi of the Muslim Brotherhood that was beginning to go after the large minority of Coptic Christians in the country.

The Economist reflected thus on why the Muslims can't live with democracy: "Secular Arabs and their friends in the West now argue that because Islamists tend to regard their rule as God-given, they will never accept that

a proper democracy must include checks, including independent courts, a free press, devolved powers and a pluralistic constitution to protect minorities."

Pakistan Prime Minister Imran Khan, after promising the "State of Medina" to Pakistanis, is trying to mend fences with India — the neighbour Pakistan has bothered over the years with its revisionism on Kashmir and by using non-state actors for crossborder terrorism. Since Pakistan had used this strategy against Afghanistan as well, Khan has his task cut out. He has gone to Iran saying he is going to stop the cross-border attacks against it. (One Iranian Baloch terrorist called Abdolmalek Rigi entered Pakistan and was educated in madrasa Jamia Banuria in Karachi, the alma mater of Masood Azhar. His outfit then killed Iranians inside Iran.)

Pakistan is trying to get out of the mess it got into by fighting the Soviets in Afghanistan and bringing hard Islam upon itself. Imran Khan can't do it without adopting the rhetoric of the Islamists that brought down the Arab Spring. India is better placed to face up to the vagaries of Trumpism but it has unfortunately lifted the lid off its own "religious revival", negating its pluralist past. Pakistan has suffered at the hands of religion. Will India have to take a long route to normalcy before peace prevails in South Asia, Trump or no Trump?

The writer is consulting editor, Newsweek Pakistan

JUNE 8, 1979, FORTY YEARS AGO

BHASKARA LAUNCHED INDIA'S SECOND SATELLITE — Bhaskara — was hurled into space at 4 pm from a Soviet cosmodrome. The satellite, named after the ancient Indian astronomer, is functioning normally, according to telemetry data received at ground stations in Sriharikota, Ahmedabad and Bangalore in India and Bears Lake, near Moscow, shortly after the successful launching. The 444-kg experimental satellite, designed and built ISRO contains sophisticated instruments for carrying out remote-sensing experiments over India using TV camera and microwave radiometers. The launching of Bhaskara has been hailed by Indian and Soviet leaders as an-

other important milestone in Indo-USSR cooperation in space research.

NO SECOND APPEAL

RESPONDING TO THE prime minister's letter to the chief justice of India on the arrears of court cases running into hundreds of thousands, the judiciary has come out with the specific suggestion that there should be only one appeal in any suit or proceeding. The letter, written before the recent chief justices' conference, said: "The number of appeals should be reduced to the minimum and the hearings should be so regulated that adjournments are cut down as much as possible."

FARMERS' LOBBY WINS

THE HUNDRED-DAY-OLD Banarasi Das ministry managed to survive today in the Uttar Pradesh Vidhan Sabha by surrendering to the farmers' lobby, which threatened to vote it down on the demands for grant of the transport ministry if the tractor-trolley tax was not abolished. For 45 minutes, the fate of the ministry hung in the balance as it faced certain defeat with the farmers' lobby, constituted mostly of the BLD members, refusing to pass the demands. In the absence of Das, Rama Shankar Kaushik, minister for health and excise, and Madhukar Dighe, minister for finance and parliamentary affairs, tried to quell the revolt.



Welfare policy and Modi 2.0

Welfare in Modi’s first term was about grand announcements and ambitious targets. The real challenge of building a high quality 21st century welfare state awaits



YAMINI AIYAR

HOUSING, SANITATION, GAS connections (Ujjwala), direct benefit transfers (DBT), income support (PM-Kisan) — contrary to early indications, the Narendra Modi government’s first term proved to be far more welfare-ist than was expected of a government that campaigned on the slogan of minimum government. With the benefit of hindsight, many pundits now argue that it is this medley of schemes that convinced voters to give the Modi government a resounding encore. Regardless of the many mysteries of the Indian voter, there is no argument that these schemes will remain the hallmark of Modi 1.0.

In their implementation, these schemes had all the ingredients of Modi’s political style — grand announcements, ambitious targets, tight centralised monitoring and outreach — resulting in an accelerated pace of activity. But they also brought to the fore deeply contested questions about the architecture of the welfare state, its functions and capability. The effectiveness of welfare policy under Modi 2.0 will rest on how it navigates this terrain and its willingness to invest in building state capacity.

First, on the relationship between technology, income support and bureaucracy. Technology lay at the heart of the Modi 1.0 welfare project. Early in its tenure, the government embraced Aadhaar and DBT with gusto. And in its last few months, it began the transition to basic income support through PM-Kisan. Underlying this approach is the assumption that technology can substitute for an incompetent and corrupt welfare bureaucracy. Moving money directly to beneficiary accounts removes bureaucratic layers and tightens monitoring, thus improving efficiency and curbing corruption.

But recent studies show that rather than reducing bureaucracy, getting the DBT architecture right requires significant bureaucratic intervention. From opening accounts to promoting financial literacy and facilitating bank transactions, local bureaucrats are critical to DBT.

Importantly, targeted programmes like PM-Kisan require bureaucrats to identify eligible beneficiaries. To do this, critical data like land records and socio-economic caste census needs to be regularly updated and disputes between claims of citizens and official records should be negotiated.

Getting the DBT architecture right, as I have argued in joint work with economists Shrayana Bhattacharya and Lant Pritchett, requires bureaucrats to engage citizens and co-ordinate across departments — a skill that Indian bureaucrats simply do not possess.

Countries like Brazil and Mexico have invested in large cadres of social workers at the local government level to do just this. But in the rush to bypass bureaucrats through DBT and transfer cash directly into bank accounts, this crucial investment has been ignored. The success of welfare programmes in Modi 2.0 will depend on willingness to recognise that building a competent welfare bureaucracy, even if its only task is to move money, will require empowering local governments with skills and resources.

But responsive governments require active citizen participation. Digitised efficiency risks casting citizens as passive recipients of government largesse rather than active



DHANMANJIRI SATHE

THE INDIAN ELECTORATE has spoken and spoken clearly. The BJP, with Narendra Modi as the prime minister, will be at the helm of affairs for the next five years. The economic issues facing the new government have been discussed at length. One such chronic problem has been unemployment.

Pervasive unemployment is a result of long-term policy focus on capital and skill intensive industrialisation. Even after the economy was opened up in 1991, the policy focus did not shift towards labour-intensive industrialisation. This should have happened as India is a labour abundant economy. But industrialisation policy, de facto, continued to prefer capital and skill intensive industrialisation, keeping the employment generation low.

Why has the employment question been neglected?

The first possible reason could be that the voters do not exert enough pressure on political parties in asking for jobs. In the more recent elections, the focus has been increasingly on corruption in high places and what kind of “social security” the party will give to the people if elected. Also, the electoral discourse is animated by announcements with respect to distributing free consumables like



CR Sasikumar

claimants of rights. This is not romantic activism. Technology, by its very nature, creates centralised systems that are distanced and bewildering for ordinary citizens in ways not different to the frustrating everyday encounters readers of this newspaper have with call center agents.

Digitised welfare systems genuinely risk closing off spaces for citizens to complain, protest and demand accountability when rights are denied. The centralised, tightly-monitored push for meeting targets adds to this challenge. Consider the many documented instances of using coercive threats (cutting ration and electricity) to meet Swachh Bharat goals. This is not to argue against administrative efficiency, rather to highlight risks that need resolution. A balance needs to be struck between efficiency gains through centralised control and responsiveness through decentralised, citizen-centric governance. Striking this balance will be a critical challenge for Modi 2.0.

Second, with Ayushman Bharat, Modi 1.0 took a significant step towards engineering an architectural shift in India’s welfare system, away from direct provisioning (government running hospitals and schools) towards financing citizens (through income support and health insurance) and regulating private providers. But can a state that struggles with routine tasks regulate a sector as complex as healthcare? Consider this. In the United States, medicare employs 6,000 staff to cover 44 million beneficiaries who handle insurance audits, pricing, and anti-trust cases.

The staffing requirement, at equivalent levels in Uttar Pradesh alone, would amount to 10,000 employees. Importantly, in a sector like health where predatory practices are rife, well-functioning government hospitals are a necessary check and balance. Regulation cannot be a substitute for investing in public systems. Ayushman Bharat must be complemented with a concerted focus on strengthening public hospitals.

Third, on Centre-state relations in welfare policy, rationalising the 400-plus central government welfare schemes and restoring them to their rightful place — states — re-

Countries like Brazil and Mexico have invested in large cadres of social workers at the local government level to do just this. But in the rush to bypass bureaucrats through DBT and transfer cash directly into bank accounts, this crucial investment has been ignored. The success of welfare programmes in Modi 2.0 will depend on willingness to recognise that building a competent welfare bureaucracy, even if its only task is to move money, will require empowering local governments with skills and resources.

mains an important unfulfilled promise of Modi 1.0. This multiplicity of central schemes has served to entrench a silo-driven, one-size-fits-all approach that is inefficient as it fails to capture state-specific needs. The proposed expansion of PM Kisan and the possible transition to a quasi-universal basic income make the need to rationalise existing schemes, and address overlaps and complementarities with existing schemes like MGNREGA, even more pressing.

But, sensible rationalisation needs a coherent framework. The World Bank’s social protection analysis calls for developing a national social protection strategy with a core basket of schemes that states can adapt to their needs. Greater flexibility to states was also recommended by the Niti Aayog’s chief ministers sub committee report in 2016. Implementing these recommendations will require a radical shift in the role of the central government away from designing and controlling schemes to strategic thinking and supporting states. There are obvious trade-offs with administrative efficiency from centralised schemes that will need to be negotiated. Can Modi 2.0 fulfill the long-awaited promise of cooperative federalism?

Finally, no government can afford to ignore India’s learning crisis. Yet this was one of the most under-prioritised areas in Modi 1.0’s welfare agenda. The newly-released national education policy emphasises the urgent need to ensure all students achieve foundational literacy and numeracy. This needs to be adopted and implemented in mission mode.

Welfare in Modi’s first term was about grand announcements and ambitious targets. But the difficult task of building a high quality, 21st century welfare state awaits Modi 2.0. India doesn’t need new schemes, rather it needs consolidation and balancing between competing welfare strategies. Getting this right will require significant investments in state capacity. This is the welfare challenge for Modi 2.0.

The writer is president and CEO, Centre for Policy Research

WHAT THE OTHERS SAY

“If Trump wants to stop the latest Syrian butchery, he will have to do more than tweet.” — THE WASHINGTON POST

Election isn’t the ideology

Elections are only a means to an end for the RSS’s millennial project



AAKASH JOSHI

IS THE CULTURAL nationalism espoused by those that follow the ideologies of V D Savarkar and M S Golwalkar one that has an essential connection to democracy? Or, to ask the more fundamental question, is majoritarian politics at its core democratic?

In his article ‘Election is the ideology’ (IE, May 28), Vinay Sitapati makes a compelling case to answer these questions in the affirmative. Hindu nationalism, he argues, emerges around the same time as the British colonial government first began to provide limited franchise to Indians (with the Government of India Act of 1919), and given that India is a society “composed of groups with identities” rather than one of “individuals with interests”, “the logic of democracy began to be seen through the prism of demographics”.

But democracy is not just about who wins an election. It is, equally, about the sort of public those that seek to rule create, on the road to power.

There is, of course, an intrinsic (even necessary) connection between majoritarianism and democracy — both are based in the ultimate analysis on the legitimacy that winning an election provides. Yet, there is — or ought to be — something more to democratic politics than merely the logic of electoralism. And there certainly is more to Hindutva than winning elections.

Among the Hindu nationalist organisations that emerged in the 1920s, the RSS and its offshoots today hold the greatest sway. The core of the RSS remains, by and large, aloof from electoral politics and like the other ideologically-driven movement that emerged in India in 1925 — the communists — there is a purity of purpose associated with this distance from power. The idea of the Hindu Rashtra is more than just that of a “Hindu vote-bank”. It is a conception of history, nationhood and citizenship that is the antithesis of Sherlock Holmes’ famous dictum — it twists facts to suit theory, rather than theory being determined by facts.

There is, for example, no doubt that the RSS and its subsidiaries have worked tirelessly over the last century to create a Hindu nation from an assortment of castes and tribes. Yet, is the ultimate aim of the Hindu Rashtra merely a vote-bank that encompasses all Indians other than Muslims and Christians? Unlike the Congress, or various other political formations, power is not an end in itself for the Sangh — it is the means to propagate and further a particular kind of

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

ASSUMING WEAKNESS

THIS REFERS TO the editorial, ‘A Ticket to Ride’ (IE, June 5). A scheme that subsidises women in public transport is antithetical to the idea of gender equality. Any special reservation or subsidy for a target group implies that such a group is weaker than the rest. Gender inequality rests on the notion that women are weaker and a subsidy would inevitably endorse such a belief instead of jettisoning it. It is only by erasing the assumption of inequality that true equality can be achieved.

Ahona Chakrabarty, Kolkata

RAJNATH OMITTED

THIS REFERS TO the report, ‘All in a d’y’s work: Morning order omits Rajnath from key panels, he is in by night’ (IE, June 7). It was wrong of the government to notify Home Minister Amit Shah in all eight cabinet committees (CC) and Defence Minister Rajnath Singh in only two CCs. An impression has been created that Shah is in a dominant position. It is not clear what prompted the PM to shift Singh from the position of home minister he held in the earlier cabinet. Singh is far more senior than Shah.

MC Joshi, Lucknow

OPPOSITION NEEDED

THIS REFERS TO the article, ‘Lessons from the verdict’ (IE, June 7). Given the indifferent state of the economy and the record level of unemployment, the 300-plus seats won by the BJP cannot be based on the performance of the government during 2014-2019 but entirely on the hopes the electorate has for the coming five years. A disjointed and lacklustre Opposition will not be able to hold the government to account. A stronger Opposition is needed.

R Narayanan, Navi Mumbai

society, where individuals are both product of and vehicles for “cultural nationalism”.

Organisationally and ideologically, the separation between the RSS and BJP is telling. The latter has, on the one hand, as Sitapati puts it, “catered to Hindu castes microscopically while painting the Muslim as the broad brushed ‘Other’” and on the other, its discourse has become increasingly intolerant — think “Congress mukt Bharat”, “urban naxal” and, of course, “anti-national”. The ideological core of the Sangh, though, has behaved differently since its political wing attained a majority in the Lok Sabha. Take for example Sarsangchalak Mohan Bhagwat’s statement ahead of the Bihar elections in 2015, calling for a review of reservations at a time when the BJP was doing its best to build alliances across castes. Or the invitation to and then the celebration of former President and Congress stalwart Pranab Mukherjee’s address at a flamboyant RSS function in Nagpur by the top leadership of the Sangh.

Another clear sign of the priorities of the RSS is its disproportionate engagement with the Marxist-Leninist left. Electorally, the communist parties are hardly a challenge to the BJP, except perhaps in Kerala. Yet, academics, universities and intellectuals who are often barely a light shade of pink are accused of being anti-state actors, or alienated from “Bharatiya culture” and holding a “fascistic and dogmatic worldview” (‘Most intolerant of them all’ by Manmohan Vaidya, IE, June 26, 2018). The explanation for this obsession with what is now a minor political force is not, cannot be, electoral. It comes from the desire for a hegemony that is also intellectual, social and cultural.

With political power, this road to dominance is far smoother. It can be done through re-writing textbooks or through pliant vice chancellors. It can use the media, and it can use cinema. It can make freedom fighters of collaborators, patriots of assassins, rewrite history, science and geography, even medicine. But not all it does is with the next election in mind. The project has a timeline that goes far beyond the half-decade cycle.

None of this is to say that the Hindu right is in any sense aloof from political power, or that the Sangh has not been united on the ground in creating arguably the most successful contemporary election-winning machine. But to state that two decisive Lok Sabha wins have completed the millennial project, that “the Hindu Rashtra is here” is premature. That project will continue to fight for dominance in the realm of ideas, food habits, literature, economics, cinema and all the myriad ways in which “cultural nationalism” can be imagined. Equally, for those that wish to oppose such total hegemony, the resistance cannot be limited merely to elections.

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LETTER OF THE WEEK

VALUE OF ENGLISH

THIS REFERS TO the editorial ‘Tongue twisted’ (IE, June 4). English has played an important role in globalisation. The exhortation to promote languages other than English at the work place is regressive. The government should understand that English is also a skill to keep people and firms afloat in the global market. In India most quality science books and newspapers are available in English. Attempts to devalue English language in India could disconnect the country’s youth from the rest of the world.

Amiyavrat Kumar, Navi Mumbai

ARTS AND SCIENCE

THIS REFERS TO the article, ‘An invitation to the liberal arts’ (IE, June 7). The recent trend in education system of India shows that we are still driven by the traditional ambition of producing doctors and engineers. The subjects with social and political importance and politics have become a tool for securing good marks up to class 10 and are forgotten thereafter. The prestige associated with the “science stream” is because it’s scope is vast and a science student can at any time pursue the subjects of her choice. This is not the case for humanities or commerce students. This problem needs to be addressed so that students can follow their aptitude and aspiration, not just “follow the stream”.

Piyush Verma, Delhi





Itinerary symbolism

The second Modi government sends a powerful 'neighbourhood first' message

In a reaffirmation of New Delhi's 'Neighbourhood First' policy, Prime Minister Narendra Modi's first visit abroad is to the Maldives and Sri Lanka, while S. Jaishankar wraps up his first visit abroad as Foreign Minister to Bhutan. Leaders of several neighbouring countries were invited to Mr. Modi's swearing-in ceremony. This is the first state visit by Mr. Modi to Male, which he had visited briefly for the swearing-in of President Ibu Solih in November 2018. A series of agreements are expected during the visits, including the implementation of an \$800 million Line of Credit to the Maldives. The projects include a cricket stadium, water purification and sewerage systems, as well as a Coastal Surveillance Radar System and a Composite Training Centre for the Maldives National Defence Force. This follows the Indian practice of fulfilling the needs of neighbouring countries that they themselves identify, much as it has done in Afghanistan. The Prime Minister's visit to the Maldives aims to send a three-pronged message: to continue high-level contacts between close neighbours, assist as development partners, and strengthen people-to-people ties. For Sri Lanka, Mr. Modi's message is one of solidarity in the aftermath of the Easter Sunday terror attacks and the communal violence that followed, as well as a commitment to continue bilateral cooperation on joint development projects agreed to in 2017. He will be the first international leader to visit Colombo since the attacks, and his visit sends a powerful message as Sri Lanka tries to recover from the trauma.

The atmospherics today are in contrast to the comparatively trickier relationship with the previous governments in Male and Colombo during Mr. Modi's first tenure. In 2015, Mr. Modi had cancelled a visit to Male at the last minute following concerns over then-President Abdulla Yameen's crackdown on Opposition parties. Similar misgivings had cropped up regarding former Sri Lankan President Mahinda Rajapaksa's regime. China's inroads into the region had formed a common thread straining ties with both countries. India protested when the Yameen government signed a free trade agreement with Beijing, and granted China land for development. It made its displeasure clear over the many infrastructure projects Mr. Rajapaksa granted to Chinese companies under heavy Chinese loans. Deeper concerns arose from the Chinese naval presence in both Male and Colombo. Now, the situation has turned. Governments in both countries have changed. Besides a charm offensive, India has chosen to mute its opposition to their continued cooperation with China on the Belt and Road Initiative. It also comes from a realisation in Delhi that at a time when factors such as the U.S.-China trade tussles and tensions in West Asia pose uncertainties, strong neighbourhood ties can provide much comfort.

Unconscionable switch

The ease with which 12 Congress MLAs have defected to the TRS raises troubling questions

Telangana Assembly Speaker Pocharam Srinivas Reddy's decision to endorse the merger of a 12-member group of legislators from the Congress with the ruling Telangana Rashtra Samithi may be technically justified under the Tenth Schedule of the Constitution. They constitute the requisite two-thirds of the 18-member Congress Legislature Party. But this orchestrated decimation of the Opposition in the 120-member legislature does not bode well. With this, the TRS's strength has gone up to 103. It had won 88 seats in the 2018 elections, but three MLAs – an Independent and one each from the Telugu Desam Party and the All India Forward Bloc – defected to its fold recently. These actions seem aimed to reduce the Opposition's ability to act as a check. Defections are not uncommon despite the stringent conditions of the anti-defection law. But coming so soon after the Assembly elections, and devoid of a point of principle, they raise disturbing questions about the ideological and programmatic cohesiveness of the Congress. MLAs need not be tied to party *satraps* and should assert their individuality in law-making – but it is dishonesty to switch sides after being elected on a party ticket when the only plausible objective is to grab the loaves of power. That there is no ideological distinctiveness to political representation in States such as Telangana has made it possible for defections to happen rampantly. In an ideology-lite polity, the MLAs seem to see no benefit in meaningfully representing their constituents, and find it rewarding to align with the ruling party for the purposes of patronage.

The anti-defection law, that calls for disqualification unless defecting legislators are part of a group that constitutes at least two-thirds of the legislative strength of a party and that merges with another party, was enacted to prevent such machinations. However, defectors have found ways to work around the law to avoid disqualification. Dramatic shifts in allegiances by elected MLAs have been a concern in Andhra Pradesh and Telangana, among other States. In many cases, even if the two-thirds rule has been flouted, the authority given to the Speaker, who is invariably from the ruling dispensation, has enabled dubious calls. This decision-making structure has also allowed blatant defections to be ignored, as seen in Goa and Manipur, among other States. In such cases, the Speaker has acted less as a constitutional authority and more as a partisan party loyalist. It is time to reconsider the anti-defection law's procedural implementation and to vest the power on decisions over mergers of groups and disqualifications of legislators with an institution such as the Election Commission. This could well bring about a more strict and objective implementation of the anti-defection law.

The great Indian celebration

The country's politics has changed, and new analytical tools are required to understand it



SHIV VISVANATHAN

The American sociologist, C. Wright Mills, known for classic works like *The Power Elite*, dubbed the years of the Dwight D. Eisenhower presidency (1953-61) as the great celebration. The United States was celebrating its sense of dominance even as the Cold War and the McCarthy era were gnawing its entrails. Something of the hypocrisy and the complacency of the time haunts the India of today. We seem to belong to the future, yet the more outdated we become as a country. The Narendra Modi government seems to celebrate a series of ironic events as a great victory. The very scale of its electoral score and the puniness of the Opposition seem to have unhinged it.

Lost pluralism

We celebrate democracy at the very moment that our majoritarianism has destroyed our sense of pluralism. The dissenting, the marginal, the minority seem to have no place in the juggernaut rolling before us.

We are hailing a nation state where ideas march in uniform, where the jingoism of the masses is labelled as patriotism.

We hail an alliance between corporate power and the nation state dubbed as development without realising that such a theory of growth has no ethical space for the idea of the Anthropocene. We

have confined the challenge of climate change to the dustbin of dissent, indifferent to the vulnerability of our tribals or of our coastlines. Our piety as a Third World nation state has emptied our ethics as a civilisation. The emptiness of our Swadeshim has destroyed the creativity of our Swaraj, our ability to see locality and planet as one whole.

We pretend that we are in pursuit of a knowledge economy, when our sense of knowledge has lost meaning as a culture and become totally instrumental. At the very moment we are being out-thought and outfought by the West and by China, we claim a priority for our ancient civilisation as a knowledge economy. We have a regime which is committed to an ancient past, but is clueless about the problems it confronts in the future.

Yet the drum beat of this election has made us think that India has arrived on the world stage. It is a piece of news our intellectuals are afraid to challenge lest they be seen as anti-national. The question is, how do we challenge such a situation when we celebrate the very things that are driving us to the world of mediocrity?

The general tom-tomming that the Congress has been put in its place, that liberalism is dead, that Marxism is as stale as yesterday's newspaper makes one feel that India was suffering from a deep sense of inferiority. We saw ourselves as victims of history. Where else would politicians spend time rewriting the Battle of Haldighati as if a victory then was more critical than any battle in the future. India today feels as if it has won a victory against the Nehruvian mo-



ANUJ ARORA

del that had haunted it. We feel that we have exorcised ourselves and this victory is the psychological beginning to a new India. It is this psychological state that we need to understand. We seem to think that we have outgrown our past illusions. The electoral score is literally presented as a catharsis, a purging of the past where a renaissance India emerges ready for a global future. An India tired of being a failure.

Reading the popular mind

We face the irony not that Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Bharatiya Janata Party president Amit Shah were successful psephologists, but that they were such brilliant readers of the contemporary Indian mind. For all our talk of our great nationalism movements, our sense of civilisation, Mr. Modi realised the sense of puniness that haunted our minds. The Congress of Sardar Patel, Jawaharlal Nehru and Indira Gandhi was too arrogant to think of such a state. It could have thought of the poverty of the peasant, but not the poverty of philosophy, the little mindsets that haunted us. It is true we were aspirational, yet our sense of being aspirational hid our self doubts.

This election has created a new mindset, whereby we look confi-

The spirit of 1989, from Tiananmen to Prague

It is a reminder that where non-violence is practised, democracy is honoured



RAMIN JAHANBEGLOO

The recent commemoration of the 30th anniversary of the violent suppression of China's Tiananmen Square protests is a good occasion to look back on the year 1989 and the non-violent movements for democracy which changed our world. It is a fact that the non-violent movements in Central and Eastern Europe in 1989 ended the confrontation between East and West and strengthened the possibility of a "new international order" based on the extension of democracy around the globe. As a result of the victory of non-violent campaigns in Poland (with the Solidarity movement) and in Czechoslovakia (with the Velvet Revolution), the technique of non-violent transformation of authoritarian and semi-totalitarian regimes into liberal democracies turned into a global cross-cultural phenomenon.

In other words, the self-empowerment strategies of non-violent civic actors of 1989 had a great im-

pact on those around the globe who believed in a genuine process of democratisation. Let us not forget that the past 30 years have witnessed an unprecedented flowering of non-violent experiences. In many areas of the world, such as Latin America, North Africa and West Asia, where armed struggle was once seen as the only path to freedom, non-violent campaigns are now considered institutionalised methods of struggle for democratic invention and democratic governance.

Good governance

One of the important tasks that was set by the non-violent movements of 1989 was the provision of "good governance". For these movements and their leaders like Czechoslovakia's Václav Havel, the real test of democracy was not only in the peaceful process of transition, but also in the non-violent consolidation of democratic institutions. For the advocates of non-violence in 1989, democracy was not just "an institutional arrangement for organising the political society" but a new attitude and approach towards the problem of power. For example, from the point of view of a 1989 leader such as Havel, the concept of power should go hand in hand with res-



REUTERS

pensibility. As he pointed out, "Politics is an area of human endeavour that places greater stress on moral sensitivity, on the ability to reflect critically on oneself, on genuine responsibility, on taste and tact, on the capacity to empathise with others, on a sense of moderation, on humility."

In a Gandhian manner, the spirit of 1989 affirmed that the challenges and difficulties of democratic governance needed to be confronted through self-rule, self-control and the soul force. Undoubtedly, for all the non-violent actors of 1989, the twin practices of self-discipline and empathetic service seemed necessary in order to control an unjust and inappropriate power.

This is actually what was suggested by the student-led democracy movement in China. For the

dent having acquired the feathers, the plumage of those who conquered us. Before one reacts in ire, remember no regime has been more colonial than the present. It is as if the whole country was waiting for a few certificates from the advanced nations. India has dressed itself in the plumage of nationalism, development and science, pretending that this millenarian arrival was India's first step to the future. In an ironic way India became Modi and Modi became India. We have transformed ourselves into a mimic nation.

Let us face it. The ideas of our elite, our liberals, our Marxists, our celebrations of the plural and civilisational had no sense of those who felt left out. The latter felt they had not joined history, that the bandwagon of the nation state, development had taken them nowhere. Mr. Modi realised the sense of loss and resentment, the need for recognition. It was a cultural envy, a bit like his attempt to take the place next to Gandhi in the KVIC (Khadi and Village Industries Commission) calendar. This sense of being left out haunted us as a nation. Mr. Modi harnessed this envy, found the right epidemic of hate and legitimised it. The Other had to be recreated and defeated, and 2002 became the myth for that inauguration. Riot or mob lynching became a moment of history. Every rioter felt he was conquering history. Violence became the rite of passage by which we recovered our lost sense of masculinity.

But recovering masculinity is not enough. It needs a framework of legitimisation and communalism expanded into patriotism. Majoritarianism became the new nation-

alism.

The electoral analyses presented are antisepic, almost rituals of avoiding analysis. There is a banal sociology which either shows that political parties did not matter or a hosanna to leadership. It fails to confront the collective psyche or the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS) ability to convert folk psychology into mass psychology. Attempts to read it like a chartered accountant reading election counts is irrelevant. It was like watching an epidemic or an avalanche. The RSS had a deeper sense of the resentment that was local to India, and it sublimated this violence to the Other with the right categories such as nation, security and patriotism. It understood the power of the irrational and harnessed it. Mr. Shah's sociology of the nukkad had more creative power than the official sociology textbooks. As defeated activists and scholars, we can watch it voyeuristically, sense an India we need to understand.

There is space

Now Mr. Modi is Lutyens' Delhi, and we need to understand the consequence of it. We need a different set of insights to critique him. The challenge of the future will lie in our ability to invent a different democracy, and not get caught in the banality of policy critique or a critique of choices, where law and order displaces democratic inventiveness. Our idea of India is still hospitable to impossible possibilities.

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

Chinese students, the process of democratisation was a way to change the Communist power over society into a power from within it. As another leader of the 1989 movements, Adam Michnik, declares, "The real struggle for us is for the citizen to cease to be the property of the state."

Truly, civic actors and freedom animators such as Adam Michnik and Václav Havel did not learn to love democracy and non-violence blindfolded and with their heads lowered. They believed that democracy can be practised only when we can look at it clearly and critically. Accordingly, it was in their minds that the Berlin Wall began to crumble. As the spirit of 1989 dawned in Beijing, the Polish people, and the Czechs, Slovaks, Romanians, Hungarians, Lithuanians, Estonians, Ukrainians and Russians came to understand that the empowerment of civil society and the collective ability to rule democratically were the essential constituents of non-violent transition to democracy.

Ironically, on the same day (June 4, 1989) that the Polish Communists were defeated for the first time in elections in a Communist state, the Chinese pro-democracy movement was crushed by the tanks in Tiananmen Square. Para-

doxically, both Communist China and post-Communist Poland turned to market economy and a wild rush for wealth. But the lesson of 1989 remained intact and more relevant than ever.

It's still afloat

As a matter of fact, it took shape once again in the spirit of young Egyptians and Tunisians who shook Arab history though the tactics of non-violent resistance. Certainly, the spirit of 1989 was non-violence in the making. And today, we can find the same spirit of 1989, what we can call a Gandhian moment of history, in Algeria, Sudan, Iran, Indonesia, the U.S. and many other countries around the globe. It shows that the dream of 1989 which accompanied the Chinese students of Tiananmen, the workers of Poland and the civic actors of Prague is not over. It shows that where non-violence is practised, democracy is honoured. Moreover, the spirit of 1989, which took shape in the year of all freedoms, is a reminder that democracy is a system based on trust in human action and the fact that the impossible could become possible.

Ramin Jahanbegloo is Director, Mahatma Gandhi Centre for Peace, Jindal Global University, Sonipat

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

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

The language narrative

The natural bonding one has with the mother tongue, and the conditions warranting learning of a language other than one's mother tongue have been juxtaposed with the attempt to impose the three-language formula by the overzealous BJP (Editorial page, "Language, the opening move", June 7). Perhaps the party thought it had successfully fired its first salvo at the States down south. That the BJP has touched a raw nerve has been proved beyond doubt by the enormity of the opposition to the imposition of Hindi, in Tamil Nadu especially. Moves like these will only further widen the divide between the party and the people of Tamil Nadu who have already rejected the illusions of nationalism and Hindutva.

G.B. SIVANANDAM, Coimbatore

■ If only 30% of India's population speaks Hindi, it is absolutely clear what it is as far as the remainder is concerned. It is the English

language which connects and unites non-Hindi speaking States. At this juncture, the importance of English cannot be ignored. This is an issue that we cannot gloss over especially when the States were formed on the basis of language. The Central government should stop unpleasant surprises such as the draft National Education Policy.

ANTONY C.J., Purnanattukara, Muthuvara, Kerala

■ The article reminded me of an incident, in 1966, when I had travelled to Chennai, to take part in the All-India National School Games, as the captain of my State TT team (Uttar Pradesh). As soon as the train pulled into Madras Central, the bogies were set upon by anti-Hindi agitators. As a child of 14 years, I was left traumatised. The team manager was able to gather his wits and rush us out to a place near the YMCA. Next day, when travelling in a bus, we were intercepted, asked to get down and caned heavily for no fault of ours. The attackers could not understand our language,

Hindi, nor could we theirs –Tamil. We were in confinement for the rest of the night. I could communicate just a bit in English and gathered that we were being punished because we had been heard talking in Hindi. We were released the next day when we told the police that we had come to participate in the national games that morning to be inaugurated by the leader M. Bakthavatsalam. I feel it should be left to a person to learn Hindi. English is a must as the major language in every State.

AHMAD RAIS SIDDIQI, New Delhi

Rebooting the Congress

Some of the regional parties are doing a great disservice to the nation by trying to obliterate the Indian National Congress. Unfortunately, the entire political and social space in this country is being overtaken by religion, which is difficult to reverse. The BJP appears to have become a beneficiary of this. It is also unfortunate that the middle class in India, which greatly benefited from the leftist

policies of the Congress party and its liberalisation and globalisation policies since the 1990s, is deserting it and heading for the BJP. The nation has a stake in the revamping of the Congress party as a strong alternative to the BJP in the interests of Indian democracy (OpEd page, 'Parley', "Is this the end of the road for the Congress party?", June 7).

P. PERRAJU SARMA, Visakhapatnam

■ The Congress can ill afford to be headed by a sulking president at a time when the entire organisational structure is crumbling rapidly. That its leadership could not prevent as many as 12 of its 18 MLAs in Telangana from switching over to the ruling TRS betrays the pathetic state of its leadership. The fissures between the Rajasthan Chief Minister and the State party president too reflect poorly on the leadership's ability to manage internal dissent. Infighting in Karnataka too has shown the party in a bad light. At the same time, this is the opportune moment for a change in leadership

starting from the top. S.K. CHOUDHURY, Bengaluru

M.S. Dhoni's gloves

Can we keep politics out of sport and sports bodies? The BCCI is already a victim of external action and now to inject non-existent and unwarranted emotion into the matter of an Army insignia is unnecessary ('Sport' page, 'Dhoni's tribute draws ICC's censure', June 7). The rest of us are as patriotic as the persons breathing fire and venom but following the rules in this case does nothing to affect our dignity. The general election is over and done with. Politicians play games but that is neither sport nor sporting.

T.C. NARAYAN, Bengaluru

■ Mahendra Singh Dhoni being a part of an international cricket team is under the rules and regulations of the International Cricket Council and is bound to follow those rules. As long as one works for an employer or an organisation, one is bound to

follow its rules and regulations and follow the policies laid down. No one can raise any objection. In the same manner, Dhoni has to obey ICC rules.

THOMAS KOSHY, Chennai

■ The familiar idiom is 'wearing your patriotism on your sleeve', which M.S. Dhoni seems to have taken to heart.. This is not to undervalue his boundless love for the country and the services in any manner. The furore in India over the issue is hardly surprising as it is being made out to be an emotional issue at a time when nationalist sentiment is running high. Dhoni is on the playing field in his capacity as an international cricket player. An internationalist is supposed to promote internationalism. It should not be forgotten that we are an organic part of the international community and need to act for the permeation of a spirit of goodwill.

G. DAVID MILTON, Maruthancode, Tamil Nadu

MORE LETTERS ONLINE: www.hindu.co/opinion/letters/

It is the last Friday of Ramzan and lying on a blue rexine bed that is standard in private nursing homes, with an intravenous tube (IV) and a catheter attached to him, Mohammad Qasim, 29, has the anguished look of a man who is weary of carrying the burden of his name. As his cousins rush out of the nursing home to offer Alvida Juma (jumu'atul vida) namaz, tears course down Qasim's cheeks. He says, "I cannot even get up to offer my prayers, and this is more painful than the bullet lodged inside me."

Three days after the spectacular verdict of the 2019 general election that gave Prime Minister Narendra Modi a second term, Mohammad Qasim was shot at for being a Muslim in Kumbhi village. It falls under the jurisdiction of Cheria-Bariyarpur police station in Begusarai district, Bihar.

Looking back, it would appear that the atmosphere had already been vitiated by politicians in the run-up to the general election. Hindutva poster boy and Union Minister Giriraj Singh won the Begusarai Lok Sabha seat by defeating CPI candidate Kanhaiya Kumar, a former president of the Jawaharlal Nehru University student union; Rashtriya Janata Dal candidate Tanvir Hussain came a distant third. Campaigning for the polls, Singh repeatedly hit the headlines with controversial statements. "My ancestors died and were cremated... but you need a yard of land even after you die. If you say you cannot chant Vande Mataram, this nation will never forget you," he had said in the course of an election rally. He had also demanded the Election Commission of India impose a ban on the use of green flags. This was not the first time Singh had courted controversy in his attempts to create a wedge between religious communities.

String of violence
The past five years of the Narendra Modi government have seen a spate of lynchings across north India. A potent cocktail of religion, the issue of gau rakshak and intolerance towards other faiths appears to be fuelling the violence. Almost every act is caught on camera and quickly disseminated on social media which amplifies it. Politicians from the ruling dispensation have kept their silence. Just a few days ago one such gruesome act was captured on camera where, in Uttar Pradesh, a group of men are seen beating daily wage labourers for eating meat.

Qasim is a stout man who walks with a pronounced limp. Along with other members of his community, he weaves quilts for a living during the winter and supplements his income by doing odd jobs in the summer. He says, "My younger brother suggested that I sell detergent door-to-door and I agreed. I had to support my family, after all." Borrowing money from friends and relatives, Qasim bought a moped for ₹25,000 and started selling detergent. An additional ₹800 was spent on getting a microphone fitted to the moped. The microphone blared promotional jingles exhorting people to purchase Qasim's 3 kg detergent powder for just ₹100. On a normal day, Qasim's earnings touched ₹300.

Selling detergents for a lark
May 26 was just another usual day with much of the celebrations that followed the verdict of the general election having quietened down. Qasim had left home early to escape the heat and hoping to get some business done, persuading housewives to buy his detergent before they shut their doors for noon. May is a brutal summer month with most people preferring to stay indoors.

Qasim reached Kumbhi village, 10 km from his home. He recounts, "I had just parked my moped outside a paan shop, when suddenly a man [later identified as Rajiv Yadav] ordered me to switch off the mike. I turned it off immediately. He asked my name and upon hearing it, told me to go to Pakistan. 'You should be in Pakistan or...', and he looked up at the sky. In a split second, he whipped out his katta (country revolver) and fired at me."

As Qasim slumped forward, a number of bystanders stood by and watched. None came forward to his aid. Qasim was barely conscious to realise that he was losing blood. The bullet had hit him on the left shoulder and, as doctors would later find out, it had not exited. After what seemed like hours, a woman came forward to dress his wound with a cloth. Someone else came forward with a towel and took him to the village sarpanch's house. The sarpanch, Raja Ram Sahni, offered to take Qasim to the local police.

By this time, news of the shooting had spread like wildfire in the neighbouring villages. Qasim's family members decided to rush him to the government hospital in Begusarai town some 30 km away from Khumbi, only to be told by the doctors to admit him in the State capital, Patna. Says Qasim's cousin, Mohd Mohd Mithun Alam, "It was at that time that some people had come to the government hospital in Begusarai to record Qasim's statement." His younger brother Mohd Javed, who is also physically challenged, adds, "We thought he could die of bleeding, so we requested the doctor to refer him to a local doctor in town. He then referred Qasim to a private nursing home."

The police visited the nursing home at 2 p.m. to record the statement. Says



Ignition point: "A deadly cocktail of religion, the issue of gau rakshak, and intolerance towards other faiths appear to be fuelling the spate of violence across north India." Mohammad Qasim's wife, Rehana Bibi, with their three children at their home at Khanjahanpur village ■RANJEET KUMAR

A thread of fear and hate

Street thugs have taken advantage of the post-election triumphalism to stage attacks on minorities in parts of north India. **Amarnath Tewary** and **Ashok Kumar** tell the stories of two victims



Qasim, "I apprised the bara babu (in-charge of police station) of all the details of the incident telling him categorically that I was shot at for being a Muslim, but the FIR said I was shot at due to some scuffle." He asks, "How could I have a scuffle with the accused whom I was not acquainted with? I put my thumb impression on the FIR without knowing what was written in it." However, at one place in the FIR (no: 77/19 dated May 26), Qasim's statement that he was shot at for being a Muslim does find a mention. Following the registration of the FIR, a case against the accused, Rajiv Yadav, was lodged under Sections 341 (punishment for wrongful restraint), 342 (punishment for wrongful confinement) and 307 (attempt to murder) of the Indian Penal Code and Section 27 of the Arms Act (punishment for using arms).

The accused was said to have been drunk at the time of the incident – Bihar is a dry State. He was arrested on May 30 and sent to jail. Says Niraj Kumar Singh, in-charge of Cheria-Bariyarpur police station: "He is a local criminal and has also been involved in illegal liquor brewing and selling... he is accused in four other cases as well."

However, the Begusarai Superintendent of Police, Awkash Kumar, expressed ignorance about Qasim's claim that he was shot at for being a Muslim. He said, "I do not know why he says so... we'll investigate this but our investigations show that he was shot following a scuffle over the purchase of his detergent."

But the shooting incident became prime time news and was amplified by social media. Kanhaiya Kumar tweeted, "In Begusarai, a Muslim hawk was shot at saying he should go to Pakistan. In order to promote such crimes, all such leaders are guilty who day and night spread hatred for political virtues. We're not at peace until the perpetrators are punished."

All India Majlis-e-Ittehadul Muslimeen leader Asadudin Owaisi too tweeted, "Qasim almost lost his life for literally just saying his name. But sure, I am 'fear mongering'. Where does Rajiv's brazenness come from? BJP's leadership has constantly demonised us and associated us with Pakistan. We're not human in their eyes, we're target practice."

Giriraj Singh too did not take long to respond. He told a news channel: "Owaisi has a habit of sowing hatred.

The land of Begusarai is peaceful. I urge Owaisi to let the people of Begusarai continue to live in peace. This is Modi-ji's (PM Narendra Modi) raj and here, only peace will prevail." But local Rashtriya Janata Dal leader Imtiyaz Ali, State Communist party leader Arun Mishra and social activist Pushpraj, who visited Qasim in hospital, admitted that "after the Lok Sabha poll, the atmosphere of Begusarai has communally become toxic and people like Rajiv Yadav have started taking advantage of it".

Meanwhile, the doctor treating Qasim says he is "out of danger now" but the bullet is still embedded in his left shoulder. Says Dr. Ashok Kumar, "We'll review his condition after two to three days and take a decision on whether to go for an operation to take out the bullet or to leave it there... it causes no danger if it remains there." Qasim's family has spent ₹1.15 lakh on his treatment. Says Qasim's younger brother, "Ornaments of our wives have been mortgaged and we've also taken a loan from people... villagers and relatives have also donated nearly ₹10,000 but we're in deep debt."

In the distance, Qasim's new moped stands piled with detergent packets waiting to be sold. After the incident, most of the villagers in Khanjahanpur, to which Qasim belongs, have stopped hawking their goods for a living. The village has a substantial Muslim population engaged in petty trade, which appears to have taken a hit.

Another city, another beating
For a few weeks in the run-up to Eid-ul-Fitr every year, Mohammad Murtaza would hire a couple of tailors on daily wages to handle the increased load of work. Working in the narrow confines of a shop which is 10 ft by 5 ft, Murtaza, along with three other tailors, toiled away, furiously pedalling their sewing machines. All of them slept in the shop, which is an illegal unit operating from the basement of a house in the Jacobpura area of Gurugram. Shops such as these are common in this area.

Murtaza had migrated to the Millennium City in 1996, then a sleepy, dusty town on the outskirts of Delhi, in search of a livelihood. He worked with many well-known tailors in the city for over two decades before he could set up his own shop three years ago.

He had called his son Amir, who worked as a mason in Bengaluru, to assist him. Most often, it was the bigger tailors who outsourced their work to him. This year Murtaza called his distant cousin, Mohammad Barkat Alam, 25, from Bihar's Begusarai district to learn the tricks of the trade. He thought the man would also be an extra hand in the festive season.

Looking back at the incident of May 25, Murtaza, who looks much older than his 45 years, with his grey dishevelled hair and stubble – is deeply perturbed by the turn of events over the past few days. Says Murtaza, referring to



Be it the protests against meat shops, mostly run by the Muslims, the offering of Namaz in open spaces or the attack on a Muslim family in Bhondsi recently, the intolerance towards Muslims seems to be on the rise in Gurugram.

HAZI SHAHZAD KHAN, Chairman, Muslim Ekta Manch

Alam, "It has not even been a month and he has already invited so much trouble for himself and all of us. The police and the media have all got involved. I had called him to teach tailoring for a better living, but will now send him back after Eid. That too will not be easy as he is now involved in a legal tangle."

This is what had happened. New to the city, Alam was returning to the shop from the local Jama Masjid, about 100 m away, on May 25 around 10 p.m. through a narrow alley when a few young men on a motorcycle and on foot allegedly accosted him and told him to remove his skull cap. They told him that he was not allowed to wear the skull cap in this area. When Alam protested, one of them slapped him and hit him on the head, displacing the cap. An altercation



Mohammad Qasim being treated at a private nursing home, in Begusarai. His mother, Aklima Bibi, (green saree) and grandmother, Gandoura Bibi, look after him. ■RANJEET KUMAR

broke out. Though there is no evidence to confirm or deny it, Alam claimed that his tormentor asked him to chant "Bharat Mata Ki Jai" and "Jai Shree Ram", and threatened to feed him pork if he didn't obey his command.

Recalls Alam, "It was not too late for a summer night and there were many people around. Some safai karamcharis were also working nearby. But no one intervened. They just laughed. The man punched me and hit me with a stick lying on the road. I tried to push him back and run but he held on to my kurta and tore it. I just started weeping. The men walked away."

Alam is yet to tell his mother about the incident and is not sure how she will take it.

Murtaza, however, feels that things would not have come to such a pass had Alam exhibited a little restraint. "He is young blood and the man was drunk. The man said something and he reacted. Had Alam acquiesced to what the man wanted him to do, there would have been no trouble. He had only threatened to feed him pork, and not actually done so. I have encountered such situations many times, but the matter never reached the police station," he argues.

Millennial city no more
Murtaza, though, concedes that a lot has changed in and around the locality over the past couple of years. A thriving meat market that was a stone's throw from his shop and had been running for decades shut down two years ago following protests by Hindus. It all started some years ago with protests during Navratri by some Hindu outfits and the few shops were forced to down their shutters permanently. Says Murtaza, "The Hindus objected to the presence of shops close to the temple, though the shops and the temple had co-existed for decades." He rues how he has to walk a longer distance now to buy meat from the Jama Masjid market. In fact, the meat shops and dhabas in the Jama Masjid market too were forced to shut down during Navratri in October last for the first time but were reopened a day later after the police intervened, he recounts.

Alam grumbles how despite being a victim, he has been at the receiving end of the law agencies and the media. He breaks down on a couple of occasions in dejection. On fast for around 20 days and beaten up, Alam had to sit in the police station till the early hours of Sunday after the attack while the police completed the legal formalities. He was called to the station the following day to identify the culprits, though none was arrested. Alam says he kept sitting in the station for four hours and was let off only after a community leader intervened.

He is saddened by the narrative now being falsely built by the police and the media to discredit him. A host of reports appeared in a section of media over the past few days, with reference to the

closed-circuit television footage of the incident, and about some insignificant details of the attack. The reports claimed that his skull cap was just touched by the accused and did not fall to the ground and that he was assaulted by one and not two persons. Some reports also claimed that his "kurta" was not torn, though a scuffle is evident in the footage. The police also said Alam could have been tutored to make a false statement with regard to the chants of "Jai Shree Ram" and "Bharat Mata Ki Jai" when there was still no evidence to support it.

The chairman of the Muslim Ekta Manch, Hazi Shahzad Khan, says while the incident has been dissected to disseminate insignificant details, no one seems to be talking about the moot point – that a young man belonging to a minority community has been targeted for his religious identity and prevented from practising his religion with freedom, as guaranteed in the Constitution. Khan says this is not the first time this has happened and that there have been a series of incidents in Gurugram over the past three years or so creating fear in the minds of the minorities.

He says, "Be it the protests against meat shops, mostly run by the Muslims, the offering of Namaz in open spaces, the cutting off of a Muslim man's beard or the attack on a Muslim family in Bhondsi recently, the intolerance towards Muslims seems to be on the rise in Gurugram."

Independent film-maker Rahul Roy, who is a part of the civil society group, Nagrik Ekta Manch, says the emergence of Hindutva vigilante groups in Gurugram is linked to the creation of a new political voice and the building of a constituency of support around issues which are both emotive and offered possibilities of breaking through caste/clan social divisions. For a new set of political actors to break this stranglehold of old networks and claim leadership positions required the setting up of new political projects. Cow protection and anti-Muslim hate amplification are time-tested ingredients that have for long ensured very high success rates in mobilising people.

Says Roy, "The administration has completely failed to address the genuine problems of Muslim and Christian residents when it comes to issues such as places of worship and burial grounds. The campaign by the vigilante groups to stop the Friday Namaz in public spaces was partially successful and the administration provided legitimacy to these groups and their leadership by setting up parallel negotiations with the Muslim community and the vigilante groups."

On his part, Murtaza says his family back in Begusarai have been staunch supporters of the Bharatiya Janata Party and had been voting for the party. He consoles himself that his nephew returned home to tell his story. Alive.

बिज़नेस स्टैंडर्ड

वर्ष 12 अंक 96

बदलाव या यथास्थिति ?

चुनाव समाप्त हो गए हैं और अब वक्त है नतीजों का विश्लेषण करने का। कहा जा रहा है कि लोगों ने बुर्जुआवाद के खिलाफ मतदान किया है और मोदी सरकार की योजनाओं के लाभार्थियों ने अपना समर्थन जताते हुए अपनी आकांक्षाओं को वोट के रूप में प्रकट किया है। यह भी कहा गया कि यह उन लोगों की जीत है जिनकी सांस्कृतिक जड़ें गहरी हैं जबकि उथले लोगों की हार हुई है। हो सकता है ये सब सच हों लेकिन बुनियादी बदलाव की इस कथा में यह देखना जानकारीपरक होगा कि

विजेता किसे निशाना बनाते हैं और किसे नहीं ?

हम वाम बनाम दक्षिण की बहस को बहुत पीछे छोड़ चुके हैं। वाम जड़ से उखड़ चुका है और इसकी जगह लेने का कोई गंभीर बाजारोन्मुखी प्रयास भी नहीं हो रहा। बल्कि कमजोर प्रदर्शन वाले, असमान तंत्र पर काबिज लोग पराजितों को और अधिक कल्याण योजनाओं की मदद से मनाना चाहते हैं। नवनिर्वाचित लोकसभा के सदस्यों की संपत्ति का माध्य 5 करोड़ रुपये है। उनकी औसत संपत्ति 20.9 करोड़ रुपये है। चुने गए नेताओं

में से अधिकांश सबसे अमीर 0.1 फीसदी तबके से ताल्लुक रखते हैं। इन संपन्न लोगों की दृष्टि से देखें तो धर्म के आधार पर लोगों की लामबंदी के साथ लोक कल्याण का मिश्रण तात्कालिक बदलाव को अंजाम देता है, न कि ढांचागत।

सामंतवाद और वंशवाद का क्या: नामदार बनाम कामदार ? यह जुमला नरेंद्र मोदी बनाम राहुल गांधी के कारण चल निकला लेकिन वरुण गांधी भी तो हैं, हरसिमरत कौर (घोषित परिसंपत्ति: 40 करोड़ रुपये), दुष्यंत सिंह (पता: सिटी पैलेस धौलपुर), राजकुमारी दियाकुमारी (पता: सिटी पैलेस जयपुर) और तमाम अन्य लोग जो सत्ताधारी गठबंधन की ओर से जीतने में सफल रहे हैं।

सकारात्मक पहलुओं की बात करें तो आकांक्षी कामदार का विचार कारोबार तक जाता है जहां हजारों स्टार्टअप का उत्सव है। नया भारत तंग श्याओ फिंग की तरह इस बात पर यकीन करता है कि अमीर होना अच्छा है।

यही कारण है कि नोटबंदी के बाद भी कारोबारी, मोदी के साथ सुरक्षित महसूस करते हैं। जिन नामदारों को निशाना बनाया जाना है वे केवल राजनीतिक प्रतिद्वंद्वी हैं। माल्या और नीरव मोदी जैसे दूर बैठे लक्ष्य भी सुरक्षित निशाना हैं।

इसका क्या अर्थ हुआ ? दरअसल बदलाव की बातों के बीच भी हम अत्यंत रूढ़िवादी अंदाज में यथास्थिति के शिकार हैं।

महत्त्वपूर्ण बदलाव लुटियन की दिल्ली में रहने वालों के नए अवतार के लिए आरक्षित हैं। यह नया अवतार खान मार्केट गैंग का है। यह जुमला ही उन सांसदों के लिए था जो संसद की साधारण कैंटीन के बजाय महंगे रेस्तरां में बैठना पसंद करते हैं। परंतु नरेंद्र मोदी ने इसका इस्तेमाल उपनिवेशवाद के बाद की ऐसी पीढ़ी के लिए कर दिया जो नेहरू–गांधी के युग में फलीफूली। तब आरएसएस के एक विचारक ने कहा था कि मीडिया, संस्कृति और

अकादमी से इस गैंग को खत्म किया जाएगा। खुद ब खुद खत्म हो रहा यह समूह जो लड़ाई के लिए तैयार तक नहीं है, वह इतना महत्त्वपूर्ण क्यों है ? क्योंकि यह अभी भी भारत के पुराने विचार की बात करता है। यह विभिन्न प्रकार की आस्थाओं और मान्यताओं की रक्षा

करने वाली ऐसी सहिष्णु सभ्यता की बात करता है जो कमजोरों की रक्षा करना चाहती है, न कि मजबूती

का जश्न मनाना। इस भावना को नष्ट किया जाना है। साथ ही अंग्रेजों के यहां पढ़े बैरिस्टरों द्वारा बनाए संविधान और उनके द्वारा थोपी औपनिवेशिक व्यवस्था को इस्लाम और उपनिवेश काल के पहले की देसी व्यवस्था से बदलना होगा। बाबर की अवैध संतानें खुद पर हुए हमले के बाद खामोश हैं। मैकाले के परपोंतों में से कुछ आर्थर कसलर की किताब डार्कनेस एंट नून के जेल में बंद चरित्र रूबाशोव की तरह

हो गए हैं जो अपने विरोधी विचार को खत्म करने को तैयार था और अपनी गलतियों की सार्वजनिक आलोचना करता था। सबसे बड़ी आशंका अप्रासंगिकता की है। दिल्ली में बिना किसी मकसद के रहना दांते के नर्क के छठे चरण में रहने जैसा है जो धर्म विरोधियों के लिए आरक्षित था। अगर मोदी की अप्रत्याशित लोकप्रियता, भारत में ताकतवर और रसूखदार के शासन की बुनियाद बनी रही है (सिंगापुर की तरह हम नेताओं का मजाक उड़ाने वालों को जेल में डाल ही रहे हैं), आलोचना करने वालों को गाली देने वाले ट्रोल आड़े हाथ ले रहे हैं, देसी मिथकों और वैज्ञानिक तथ्यों में घालमेल और भ्रम हो रहा है, इतिहास की किताबों में आरएसएस का नजरिया पढ़ाया जा रहा है, मजबूत संस्थान राजनीति के सामने घुटने टेक रहे हैं। इन बातों के बीच जोखिम उत्पन्न हो गया है कि कहीं हम ऐसी गलती न कर बैठें जिससे बचा जा सकता था।



विनय रिब्ला

आर्थिक नीति को चाहिए अवधारणात्मक ढांचा

शासकीय संस्थान निर्माण की व्यावहारिक समस्याओं के अलावा हमें आर्थिक नीति को लेकर एक अवधारणात्मक ढांचे की भी आवश्यकता है। विस्तार से जानकारी प्रदान कर रहे हैं अजय शाह

देश में आर्थिक नीति के अगले पांच वर्ष शुरू हो चुके हैं। ऐसे में शासकीय क्षमता का निर्माण करना आवश्यक है जहां विभिन्न संस्थान समस्याओं का पता लगाएं और जरूरी प्रतिक्रिया दें। इसके अलावा आर्थिक नीति का एक बौद्धिक ढांचा भी आवश्यक है। यह लंबी अवधि की योजना बनाने में सहायक सिद्ध होता है। राज्य का प्रभाव नियमों से बढ़ता है, न कि विशेषाधिकारों से। मौद्रिक नीति के क्षेत्र में हम ऐसा देख भी चुके हैं। ढांचे की मौजूदगी सरकार के विभिन्न असंबद्ध अंगों द्वारा उठाए जाने वाले व्यावहारिक कदमों में सामंजस्य कायम करने में सहायता करता है।

अब आर्थिक नीति का परिदृश्य पांच वर्ष का है। 2014 और 2015 की तरह यह लंबी अवधि की परियोजनाओं को प्रोत्साहन देगा। पिछली अवधि की तीन सबसे बड़ी उपलब्धियां थीं वस्तु एवं सेवा कर, मुद्रास्फीति को लक्ष्य बनाना और दिवालिया संहिता। इन तीनों की शुरुआत एकदम आरंभिक दैन में हो गई थी। उसी तर्ज पर कुछ अन्य बड़ी बदलावकारी परियोजनाओं की शुरुआत 2019–20 में होनी चाहिए।

देश में जो सबसे बड़े अवरोध हैं उनमें राज्य क्षमता सबसे बड़ा अवरोध है। एक

आदर्श सरकारी ढांचा वह है जो रोज बदलती दुनिया की समझ रखता हो, उन समस्याओं के बारे में समझ रखता हो जो सामने आती हैं, मूलभूत हल को पहचान सकता हो, वैकल्पिक उपायों पर बहस–मुबाहिसा कर संपाधिक कम दबाव वाले विकल्प की तलाश कर सके और चुने गए उपाय का प्रभावी क्रियान्वयन कर सके। बात चाहे कर नीति की हो, कर प्रशासन की, खाद्य सुरक्षा की, वायु गुणवत्ता की या दिल्ली–मुंबई औद्योगिक कॉरिडोर की, बुनियादी चुनौती है ऐसी सांस्थानिक क्षमता की स्थापना करना।

वक्त का तकाजा है कि ऐसे तार्किक उपायों पर काम करने और समस्या निवारण करने में सक्षम संस्थान बनाने पर जोर दिया जाए। इसके अलावा एक और काम करने की आवश्यकता है: आर्थिक नीति को लेकर एक अवधारणात्मक ढांचा तैयार करना होगा। बाजार अर्थव्यवस्था में भारत सरकार की क्या भूमिका है ? किस प्रकार की संस्थागत मशीनरी निर्मित करने की आवश्यकता है ? समय के साथ इन संस्थानों और राज्य का जो हस्तक्षेप हुआ उनका लक्ष्य क्या होगा ? सन 1990 के दशक में जो कुछ किया जा रहा था, उसे लेकर स्पष्टता थी। तब से अब तक हालात बहुत बदल चुके हैं। ऐसे में नए

ढांचे की आवश्यकता है।

यह कई स्तरों पर काम करता है। सबसे सहज तरीके से देखें तो यह आर्थिक नीति को लेकर दीर्घ लक्ष्य तय करता है। आंकड़े कमजोर होने पर नीति नियोजन को दिशा देता है। कई कदमों के राजनीतिक निहितार्थ से संचालित होने का जोखिम भी हमेशा रहता है। विशेषाधिकार के स्थान पर नियमों को तरजीह मिलनी चाहिए। सारे फैसले सरकार द्वारा लेने से उसका प्रभाव बढ़ता है, ऐसा विचार सही नहीं है। बानगी के तौर पर पुराने जमाने में मौद्रिक नीति विशेषाधिकार थी।

केंद्रीय बैंक को जो ठीक लगता वह करता। परंतु अब वह अधिक प्रभावी हो गई है क्योंकि केंद्रीय बैंक के हाथ मुद्रास्फीति को लक्ष्य बनाने से बंधे हैं। अब आरबीआई खुदरा महंगाई को चार फीसदी रखने संबंधी कदम उठाता है। निजी तौर पर लोगों को पता है कि भविष्य में कुछ खास परिदृश्य में आरबीआई किस प्रकार काम करेगा। विशेषाधिकार समाप्त करने से मौद्रिक नीति की क्षमता में इजाफा हुआ है।

वृहद आर्थिक और वित्त क्षेत्र में मौद्रिक नीति ढांचा अच्छी स्थिति में है। अब आगे चुनौती मुद्रास्फीति के लक्ष्य पर मजबूती से टिके रहने की है। सन 1992–2011 में वित्तीय

इसी प्रकार कर नीति में लंबी अवधि की सोच आवश्यक है ताकि दीर्घावधि की निवेश योजनाएं आकार ले सकें। अगर कर नीति में हर वर्ष उतार चढ़ाव आएगा तो अनिश्चितता उत्पन्न होगी और निजी निवेश मुश्किल होगा। इस नजरिये से देखें तो सरकार के लिए 2019 में बेहतर होगा कि वह आने वाले पांच बजटों की रूपरेखा तैयार कर ले।

भविष्य में कर नीति में बदलाव की ये प्रतिबद्धताएं निजी कंपनियों के लिए निश्चितता बढ़ाएंगी, जिसका सकारात्मक असर निवेश पर देखने को मिलेगा।

अंतिम तौर पर बात करें तो नीति निर्माताओं को समझदारी का परिचय देना होगा और रोजमर्रा की दिक्कतों को हल करने का प्रयास करना होगा। लेकिन इसके साथ–साथ आर्थिक नीति के मोर्चे पर समन्वय भी आवश्यक है। इसके लिए चुनिंदा बड़े विचारों पर काम करना होगा। इससे नीतिगत जोखिम कम होगा और तयशुदा लक्ष्य प्राप्त करने की दिशा में सहायता मिलेगी।

(लेखक नई दिल्ली स्थित नैशनल इंस्टीट्यूट ऑफ पब्लिक फाइनैंस एंड पॉलिसी में प्रोफेसर हैं।)

इंडियन म्यूजिक इंडस्ट्री के अध्यक्ष एवं सीईओ ब्लाइज फर्नांडिस ने कहा, 'धारा 31डी उस समय लाई गई, जब प्रसारण रेडियो बुनियादी ढांचे की लागत और लाइसेंस फीस के बोझ तले दबा हुआ था। आज यह 3,000 करोड़ रुपये का उद्योग है, लेकिन रॉयल्टी के रूप में केवल 60 करोड़ रुपये का भुगतान करता है।

यह रॉयल्टी म्यूजिक कंपनी, लेखकों, कंपोजरों और प्रकाशकों के बीच वितरित होती है।' उन्होंने कहा कि संगीत के लगभग हर बड़े बाजार–अमेरिका, पश्चिमी यूरोप के ज्यादातर हिस्से, दक्षिण कोरिया आदि में इंटरैक्टिव सेवाओं के

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औद्योगिक नीति एवं संवर्धन विभाग ने सितंबर, 2016 में कौरीराइट पंजीयक को एक मेमो

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मीडिया मंत्र

वनिता कोहली-खांडेकर

संगीत उद्योग वृद्धि की राह पर अग्रसर है और उसे अपने राजस्व का आधे से अधिक हिस्सा डिजिटल से प्राप्त हो रहा है

भेजा था। इसमें कहा गया था कि धारा 31डी के प्रावधान इंटरनेट प्रसारण पर भी लागू होते हैं। यह महज एक मेमो है, लेकिन इसने बहुत सी समस्याओं का पिटारा खोल दिया। ऐसा लग रहा था कि कोई भी ऐप रेडियो प्रसारकों की तरह कोई भी संगीत इस्तेमाल कर सकता है। ऐसे में अदालत यह कहने को आगे आई कि वे ऐसा नहीं कर सकते हैं।

भारतीय संगीत उद्योग को करीब 70 फीसदी राजस्व डिजिटल या स्ट्रीमिंग/डाउनलोडेड म्यूजिक से प्राप्त होता है। डिजिटल विज्ञापन लगातार 28 फीसदी की ऊंची दर से बढ़ रहा है। हालांकि सबस्क्रिप्शन राजस्व भी इजाफा हो रहा है। खरीदार के बाजार में अगर इंटरैक्टिव सेवाओं को 2 फीसदी की वैधानिक लाइसेंस फीस पर मंजूरी दी जाती है तो संगीत के लिए डिजिटल वृद्धि का पूरा फायदा चला जाता है। पारदर्शिता के लिए या तो लाइसेंस स्वैच्छिक होना चाहिए या वैधानिक लाइसेंसिंग के तहत रॉयल्टी की दरें 2 फीसदी से बढ़ाकर 10 से 15 फीसदी की जाएं। वैधानिक बनाम स्वैच्छिक लाइसेंसिंग से संबंधित तर्क–वितर्कों के अलावा इसमें एक बड़ा बिंदु है। इंटरनेट से मीडिया की बदलाव आ रहे हैं, उनका सबसे पहले असर संगीत पर दिख रहा है। यह सबसे नाजुक मनोरंजन उत्पाद है, जो किसी भी बदलाव से सबसे पहले प्रभावित होता है। सबसे बड़ा बदलाव 1990 के दशक के अंतिम वर्षों में कंप्रेशन तकनीकी था। उपभोक्ताओं को अपराधी करार देने से लेकर नैपस्टर जैसी फाइल साझा करने वाली कंपनियां पर मुकदमेबाजी के तर्कों के तहत कोरोबार के प्रत्येक प्रयोग से शेष मनोरंजन उद्योग ने अहम सबक सीखे हैं। वैश्विक संगीत उद्योग का राजस्व 1999 में 225 अरब डॉलर था। 2014 में घटकर 14.1 अरब डॉलर पर आ गया। हालांकि उसके बाद इसमें सुधार आया है। तब से यह उद्योग वृद्धि की राह पर अग्रसर है और उसे अपने राजस्व का आधे से अधिक हिस्सा डिजिटल से प्राप्त हो रहा है। भारत में ओटीटी सेवाओं से फिल्म एवं टेलीविजन उसी तरह के बदलाव के चरण में प्रवेश कर गए हैं, इसलिए संगीत क्षेत्र के घटनाक्रम को देखने से इसे समझने में मदद मिलेगी।

कानाफूसी

अधीनस्थ खबरदार!

मध्य प्रदेश के गुना जिले की उपजिलाधिकारी शिवानी गर्ग ने पिछले दिनों अपने कर्मचारियों को एक रोचक आदेश दिया। उन्होंने आधिकारिक व्हाट्सऐप समूह पर लिखा, ‘सभी पटवारी, राजस्व निरीक्षक, नायब तहसीलदार और तहसीलदार ध्यान दें। अगर किसी ने अवर जिलाधिकारी को शराब पिलाई या मुर्गा खिलाया तो मैं उसके खिलाफ कार्रवाई करूंगी। मैं आपके खिलाफ अपने वरिष्ठ अधिकारी को अनुचित लाभ पहुंचाने का आरोप भी प्रस्तावित करूंगी।’ यह संदेश वायरल होने के बाद उन्होंने स्पष्टीकरण दिया कि उक्त अधिकारी लगातार उनके अधीनस्थों से ऐसी मांग किया करते हैं। इससे परेशान कर्मचारियों ने जिलाधिकारी को ज्ञापन भी सौंपा था। बहरहाल, प्रदेश शासन ने उक्त खबर सार्वजनिक होने के बाद अधिकारी का स्थानांतरण कर दिया।

योग दिवस की थीम

केंद्र सरकार ने इस वर्ष अंतरराष्ट्रीय योग दिवस के लिए एक नई थीम तैयार की है। सरकार इस अवसर पर आयोजित कार्यक्रमों के माध्यम से पर्यावरण के अनुकूल वस्तुओं के इस्तेमाल को बढ़ावा देना चाहती है। आयुर्वेद, योग एवं प्राकृतिक चिकित्सा, यूनानी, सिद्ध और होमियोपैथी (आयुष) मंत्रालय ने इस अवसर पर जन जागरूकता बढ़ाने और लोगों को पर्यावरण के अनुकूल वस्तुएं इस्तेमाल करने के लिए प्रेरित करने के वास्ते एक प्रपत्र तैयार किया है। इसमें मंत्रालयों से आग्रह किया गया है कि वे बाजार में जहां तहां बिक रही सस्ती पीवीसी मैट का इस्तेमाल नहीं करें। उसके मुताबिक इन मैट का पुनर्व्रक्रण संभव नहीं है और इनमें तमाम तरह के प्रदूषक तत्व शामिल हैं। उसने विभिन्न मंत्रालयों से यह भी कहा है कि वे जूट, रबर और अन्य उत्पादों से बनी मैट इस्तेमाल करें। मंत्रालय ने कहा है कि विभिन्न सरकारी संस्थाएं, योग संस्थान और योग शिक्षक भी इस बारे में जागरूकता फैलाने में सहायता कर सकते हैं।



आपका पक्ष

रिजर्व बैंक के

सराहनीय कदम

रिजर्व बैंक ने रीपो दर में 25 आधार अंक की कटौती कर दी है। उसने इस साल तीसरी बार कटौती की है। इस तरह रीपो दर में कुल 75 आधार अंक की कटौती हुई है। यह वह दर है जिस पर रिजर्व बैंक अन्य बैंकों को ऋण देता है। रिजर्व बैंक द्वारा रीपो दर घटाए जाने के बाद यह अब 5.75 प्रतिशत रह गई है। रिजर्व बैंक का मुख्य उद्देश्य ग्राहकों को लाभ देना है। यानी जिन ग्राहकों ने बैंकों से लंबी अवधि के लिए जैसे आवास ऋण या वाहन ऋण लिया है उनको मासिक किस्त में कमी लाना है। लेकिन इसका फायदा ग्राहकों को तब ही मिल सकेगा जब ऋण देने वाला बैंक ग्राहकों के लिए ब्याज दर में इसी अनुपात में कटौती करेगा। कई बार देखा गया है कि



रिजर्व बैंक दरों में कटौती तो करता है लेकिन इसका फायदा ग्राहकों को नहीं मिल पाता है।

बैंक यह कहते हुए पल्ला झाड़ लेते हैं कि उनका एनपीए काफी अधिक है तथा इससे जो लाभ होगा इससे उसकी भरपाई की जाएगी। वहीं कुछ बैंक नए

रिजर्व बैंक ने गुरुवार को रीपो दर में 25 आधार अंक की कटौती की है

ग्राहकों को ही कम ब्याज दर का लाभ देते हैं। मौजूदा ग्राहकों को इसका लाभ नहीं देते हैं। ऐसे में

पाठक अपनी राय हमें इस पते पर भेज सकते हैं : संपादक, बिजनेस स्टैंडर्ड लिमिटेड, 4, बहादुर शाह जफर मार्ग, नई दिल्ली - 110002. आप हमें ईमेल भी कर सकते हैं : lettershindi@bmail.in
उस जगह का उल्लेख अवश्य करें, जहां से आप ईमेल कर रहे हैं।



दैनिक जागरण

समय को बर्बाद करना अपने जीवन को बर्बाद करने के समान है

संघीय ढांचे का निरादर

पश्चिम बंगाल की मुख्यमंत्री ममता बनर्जी ने नीति आयोग की आगामी बैठक में शामिल होने से इन्कार करके यही साबित किया कि वह अभी भी चुनाव के दौर वाली मानसिकता से मुक्त नहीं हो सकी हैं। शायद उन्हें इसकी परवाह नहीं कि प्रधानमंत्री की अध्यक्षता वाले नीति आयोग की बैठक का बहिष्कार करके वह पश्चिम बंगाल के हितों की ही अनदेखी करेंगी। यह वही ममता बनर्जी हैं जो एक समय अपने नेतृत्व वाले राजनीतिक मोर्चे का नाम संघीय मोर्चा रख रखी थीं ताकि राज्यों के अधिकारों को प्राथमिकता देती हुई दिख सकें, लेकिन आज वह संघीय ढांचे की भावना के खिलाफ खड़ी होना पसंद कर रही हैं। ऐसा लगता है कि उन्हें जनादेश को स्वीकार करने में मुश्किल हो रही है। वह उन चंद मुख्यमंत्रियों में शामिल थीं जिन्होंने मोदी सरकार के शक्तग्रहण समारोह में शामिल होने से इन्कार किया। यह भी ध्यान रहे कि वह चुनाव प्रचार के दौरान नरेंद्र मोदी को न केवल प्रधानमंत्री मानने से इन्कार कर रही थीं, बल्कि उनसे फोन पर बात करना भी जरूरी नहीं समझ रही थीं। इसकी भी अनदेखी नहीं की जा सकती कि वह कई केंद्रीय योजनाओं को लागू करने से भी इन्कार करती रही हैं। इनमें आयुष्मान भारत योजना भी है और देश के पिछड़े जिलों के विकास की भी योजना।

राजनीतिक खुन्स में जनकल्याण और विकास की केंद्रीय योजनाओं से अपने राज्य को वंचित रखना सस्ती राजनीति के अलावा और कुछ नहीं। यह एक तरह की जानिवरोधी राजनीति भी है। मुश्किल यह है कि ऐसी सस्ती और जानिवरोधी राजनीति का परिचय अन्य अनेक दल भी देते रहते हैं। यह किसी से छिपा नहीं कि बीते दिनों द्रमुक नेताओं ने हिंदी थोपे जाने का हल्ला मचाकर किस तरह सस्ती राजनीति का प्रदर्शन किया। हिंदी के नाम पर द्रमुक और कुछ अन्य दलों के नेता किस तरह जनता को गुमराह कर रहे थे, इसका पता इससे चलता है कि तमिलनाडु उन राज्यों में प्रमुख है जहां हिंदी को पठन-पाठन का हिस्सा बनाया गया है। बहुत दिन नहीं हुए जब आंध्र प्रदेश के तत्कालीन मुख्यमंत्री चंद्रबाबू नायडू ने सीबीआई को राज्य के मामलों की जांच करने की इजाजत देने से इन्कार कर दिया था। आंध्र प्रदेश के बाद पश्चिम बंगाल ऐसा करने वाला दूसरा राज्य बना था। आखिर ऐसे मनमाने फैसले लेने वाले नेता किस अधिकार से संघीय ढांचे को मजबूती देने की जरूरत जता सकते हैं? पता नहीं ममता बनर्जी चंद्रबाबू नायडू के राजनीतिक पराभव से कोई सीख लेंगी या नहीं, लेकिन किसी भी मुख्यमंत्री को वह शोभा नहीं देता कि वह संकीर्ण राजनीतिक हितों को इतनी अहमियत दे कि राज्य के हित पीछे छूटते हुए दिखें। लोकसभा चुनावों के समय राहुल गांधी की तरह नीति आयोग को खत्म करने का वादा कर रही ममता बनर्जी को इस आयोग की रीति-नीति से शिकायत हो सकती है, लेकिन इसका यह मतलब नहीं कि वह उसकी बैठकों में शामिल होने से इन्कार करें। नीति आयोग को निष्प्राभावी संस्था बताते हुए उन्होंने योजना आयोग को बहाल करने की मांग की है। यह तय है कि ऐसी मांग करते समय वह इससे भली तरह परिचित होंगी कि ऐसा नहीं होने जा रहा है।

अपराध पर अंकुश जरूरी

बिहार में तेजी से बढ़ते अपराध पर यदि अंकुश नहीं लग पा रहा तो निश्चय ही यह बेहद चिंताजनक है। आप दिन होने वाली बड़ी-छोटी आपराधिक घटनाएं बताती हैं कि भले ही कानून-व्यवस्था बनाए रखने के मोर्चे पर लंबे-चौड़े दावे किए जा रहे हों, लेकिन अपराधियों के हीसले पस्त नहीं हो रहे। राजधानी सहित विभिन्न जिलों में लगातार बढ़ रही हत्या, लूट, डकैती, अपहरण सहित अन्य तरह की गंभीर आपराधिक घटनाओं पर तत्काल अंकुश जरूरी है। इसके लिए पुलिस तंत्र की गहन समीक्षा के साथ ही अपराधियों से साटगांट रखने वाले पुलिस कर्मियों को चिन्हित करना होगा। वैसे पुलिस मुख्यालय इस दिशा में काम कर रहा है। हाल के दिनों में कई दागी पुलिसकर्मियों और अधिकारियों के खिलाफ कार्रवाई हुई है। अपराध नियंत्रण को लेकर जिलों के पुलिस अधीक्षकों को अक्सर दिशा-निर्देश भी जारी किए जाते हैं। फिर भी अपराध पर अंकुश नहीं लग पा रहा। ऐसे में पुलिस मुख्यालय को और भी कठोर कदम उठाना पड़ेगा। देखा जाए तो बड़ी आपराधिक घटनाओं में अपवाद छोड़कर अधिकांश में जांच के नाम पर पुलिस सिर्फ खानापूरी करती नजर आती है। यही कारण है कि पुलिस के प्रति आम लोगों में निराशा का भाव ज्यादा है। कहीं-कहीं तो यह आक्रोश में भी तब्दील होते देखा जा सकता है। कानून-व्यवस्था बनाए रखने के रास्ते में यह एक बड़ी बाधा है। इस स्थिति में परिवर्तन लाए बिना कानून का राज स्थापित नहीं किया जा सकेगा। पुलिस की कार्यशैली में अपेक्षित बदलाव और क्षमता में वृद्धि भी काम आवश्यक नहीं है। आज के दौर में जब अपराधी नए-नए तरीके और तकनीक अपना रहे हैं तो पुलिस को भी उनसे पार पाने के लिए बेहतर प्रशिक्षण और संसाधन से लैस करना होगा। अभी पुलिस के पास आधुनिक संसाधनों एवं तकनीक का अभाव और बेहतर प्रशिक्षण की कमी एक बड़ी समस्या है। पुलिस की चुनौती लगातार बढ़ रही है, जबकि वह इस हिसाब से तैयार नहीं दिखती। अगर अनिवार्य नियंत्रण के लिए इस स्थिति में बदलाव किया जाना समय की मांग है।

हमारे समय में ‘अंधेर नगरी’

मैंने अपने एक शिक्षक को सवाल किया कि ‘अंधेर नगरी’ आज के समय में हम क्यों पढ़ें? सर ने सवाल दागा कि मैं पृष्ठता हूँ कि क्यों न पढ़ें? बात तो सही है कि क्यों न पढ़ें। अंधेर नगरी नाम से ही स्पष्ट है कि ऐसी नगरी है जिसमें अंधेरे हैं। अंधेर का अर्थ अगर आप केवल उजाले की अनुपस्थिति से लगाएंगे तो ठीक-ठीक नहीं समझ पाएंगे। यहाँ अंधेर का मतलब गड़बड़, निराशा और ऐसी स्थिति का होना है जिसमें वह सब होता है जिसे नहीं होना चाहिए। यानी अव्यवस्था ही व्यवस्था के रूप में स्वीकृत है। आजकल जिसे हम न्यू नॉर्मल कहते हैं, वह दरअसल एबनॉर्मल है, लेकिन उसे कोई मानने को तैयार नहीं। यह ‘अंधेर नगरी’ एक रूपक में बदल जाता है और इसका विस्तार नगर तक सीमित न रहकर समस्त देश हो जाता है। और आज के दौर में जब अंधेर नगरी के रूपक के नजरिए से अपने देश को देखते हैं तो इस रूपक का नवीन अर्थ हमारे सामने खुलता जाता है और इसकी सीमाओं का भी पता चलता है।

भारतेंद्र हरिश्चंद्र ने ‘अंधेर नगरी चौपट राजा’ नाटक अंग्रेजी शासन के दौर में लिखा था। यह वह दौर था जब हिंदी में नाट्य लेखन शैशवावस्था में था, भारतेंदु नाटक के इर्द-गिर्द हिंदी समाज

फिर से

‘अंधेर नगरी’ में अंधेर का मतलब गड़बड़ी, निराशा और ऐसी स्थिति का होना है जिसमें वह सब होता है जिसे नहीं होना चाहिए

में राजनीतिक और समाज सुधार की चेतना के प्रसार को केंद्रित रखे हुए थे। वे नाटक लिखते थे, अभिनय करते थे, रंग मंडलियां तैयार करते थे... विविध स्तरों पर सक्रिय थे। ‘अंधेर नगरी’ के लिखे जाने तक वे ‘भारत दुर्दशा’ लिख चुके थे जिसमें वे आधुनिक भारत की चिंताजनक स्थिति को व्यंग्य और यथार्थ के जरिये दिखा चुके थे। लेकिन 1876 में ड्रामैटिक परफॉर्मेंस एक्ट भी लागू हो चुका था। नाटक और नाट्य प्रदर्शनों पर अंग्रेजी शासन की नजर थी। नाटकों पर प्रतिबंध लगना शुरू था। नाटककार सीधे-सीधे अंग्रेजी शासन की आलोचना करने के बजाय रूपक के जरिये अंग्रेजी शासन के सच को बयां करने की युक्तियां खोज रहे थे। ‘अंधेर नगरी’ को भी ऐसी ही युक्ति में गिना जा सकता है। इस युक्ति के

जरिये भारतेंदु ने लोक प्रचलित प्रहसन को अपनी प्रतिभा से समासामयिकता में ढाल कर ऐसे नाटक में तब्दील किया जो अपने दौर में तो लोकप्रिय हुई ही, प्रकाशन और पहले मंचन के बाद से ही प्रासंगिक बनी रही। दुख की बात है कि आज भी सामयिक साहित्यिक प्रयास हमारे सामने नहीं है जिसमें आज के सच का निरूपण हो और वह जनता तक संघेपीय हो? अगर नहीं है तो हमें ‘अंधेर नगरी’ की शरण में जाना ही होगा उसे पढ़ना होगा, मंचित करना होगा, क्योंकि वह बाजार और राज्य दोनों की हकीकत बयान करता है। आज यही दोनों नियायक शक्तियां हमारे जीवन पर हावी होने की लगातार कोशिश कर रही हैं।

‘अंधेर नगरी’ को ऐसे दौर में पढ़िए जहां बाजार में हर चीज बाजारू है, वस्तु का मोल उसकी गुणवत्ता के हिसाब से नहीं है और इस अंधेर नगरी में बुनियादी सवालों को कोई सुनने वाला नहीं है कि गरीब की बची खुची संपत्ति को कैसे लूट रहा है? कहाँ तो राजा का दावा है कि उसके वहाँ ऐसा न्याय होगा जैसा यम के यहाँ भी नहीं, लेकिन इस न्याय व्यवस्था में नागरिकों का हाल क्या हो गया है?

(साभार : रंग विमर्श ब्लाग में अमितेश)



कैप्टन आर विक्रम सिंह

भारत के विचार के साथ अल्पसंख्यक वर्ग का सामंजस्य बैठाना आसान न था, लेकिन हिंदुओं की भीड़ में पहचान गुम न हो जाए इसलिए मजहब को और मजबूती से पकड़ लिया गया

लोकसभा चुनाव परिणाम हमारे अल्पसंख्यक समाज के लिए आत्मचिंतन का एक अवसर हैं। इस पर विचार करने की जरूरत है कि आखिर इस जनादेश में अल्पसंख्यक समाज की क्या भूमिका रही? हमें इस प्रश्न पर अपने यहाँ की सांप्रदायिक पृष्ठभूमि को देखते हुए विचार करना होगा। इस क्रम में यह भी देखना होगा कि विश्व में वे कौन से देश हैं जिन्होंने अपनी सांप्रदायिक समस्या का समाधान कर लिया है? जब अरब सेनाओं ने संपूर्ण अरब क्षेत्र पर विजय के बाद ईरान को रख किया तो वहाँ का प्राचीन धर्म ही समाप्त हो गया। इसी के साथ वहाँ कोई सांप्रदायिक समस्या बची ही नहीं। पाकिस्तान में आजादी के समय 22 प्रतिशत हिंदू थे। आज 1.5 प्रतिशत ही बचे हैं। बांग्लादेश में 1947 में 28 प्रतिशत हिंदू थे। आज 8 प्रतिशत रह गए हैं। इंडोनेशिया में 87 प्रतिशत, मलेशिया में 62 प्रतिशत मुस्लिम हैं। शेष समाज बौद्ध, हिंदू, ईसाई आदि इतनी अल्पसंख्या में है कि इन देशों में भी कोई सांप्रदायिक समस्या नहीं है। स्पष्ट है कि आज जिन देशों में यह समस्या नहीं है तो वहाँ इसका मुख्य कारण जनसांख्यिकी के अनुपात का पूरी तरह से एक धर्म के पक्ष में होना है। जहाँ समस्या है, उममें प्रमुख है चीन के उद्धार मुस्लिमों वाला इलाका और म्यांमार का रोहिंग्या क्षेत्र। चीन ने समाधान के लिए प्रशिक्षण केंपों का सहारा लिया है। 1933 में उइगर और चीनी आबादी का अनुपात जो क्रमशः 77 और 5.5 प्रतिशत था, वह 2015 में 45 और 42

प्रतिशत हो गया है। स्पष्ट है कि चीनी शासक जनसांख्यिकी में परिवर्तन के माध्यम से समस्या का समाधान करते मालूम पड़ रहे हैं। म्यांमार में रोहिंग्या मुसलमानों की संख्या 10 लाख थी। 2015 से वहाँ उत्पीड़न का क्रम प्रारंभ हुआ और 9 लाख रोहिंग्यों ने भागकर बांग्लादेश, फिर चोरी छिपे भारत में भी शरण ली है। अंतरराष्ट्रीय स्तर पर म्यांमार की बड़ी आलोचनाएं हो रही हैं, किंतु उन्होंने अपनी समस्या का, जैसा उनकी समझ में आया, समाधान कर लिया।

भारतीय राजनीति की आज की मजहबपरस्ती के बहुत पहले इतिहास के लंबे दौर में अन्य देशों के समान अपनी सांप्रदायिक समस्या के समाधान के अवसर आए थे, लेकिन सक्षम नेतृत्व के अभाव के कारण समाधान के रास्ते नहीं बने। समाधान की जो सूरतें बनीं वे स्थगित होती गईं। मुगल साम्राज्य के पराभव के बाद यदि दिल्ली में मराठा साम्राज्य स्थापित हुआ होता तो आज भारत में बहुत-सी अन्य समस्याएं तो होतीं, लेकिन कोई हिंदू-मुसलमान समस्या न होती। पानीपत की तीसरी जंग में मराठों की हार और फिर भारत में बढ़ते ब्रिटिश वर्चस्व ने समाधान को स्थगित कर दिया। यदि 1857 के विद्रोह में अंग्रेजों की पराजय हो जाती तो फिर आंतरिक सत्ता संघर्ष इस सांप्रदायिक समस्या का भी समाधान कर देता, लेकिन ब्रिटिश विजयी हुए और समाधान की स्थितियां नहीं बनीं। फिर बदलते हुए घटनाक्रम में सांस्कृतिक पुनर्जागरण, आधुनिकता के रुझान, अंग्रेजों की सांप्रदायिक संतुलन की नीति आदि ने इस सांप्रदायिक



अवधेश राजपूत

विवाद को तब तक के लिए स्थगित कर दिया जब तक ब्रिटिश खुद इसमें भागीदार नहीं हो गए। अंग्रेजों की सक्रिय भागीदारी 1905 में बंगाल के सांप्रदायिक विभाजन से सामने आती है। यहाँ से आगे हिंदू-मुस्लिम हित बड़े स्पष्ट रूप से एक-दूसरे के विरुद्ध खड़े दिखते हैं। वह समस्या जिसे 1707 में औरंगजेब की मौत के बाद से ही समाधान की दरकार थी, स्थगित होत-होते 1940-47 में भारत विभाजन के मुहने पर लाकर खड़ी कर दी गई। ‘दो राष्ट्रों के सिद्धांत’ के तहत एक नकली देश की सूरहें बनाकर सांप्रदायिक समस्या का समाधान पुनः स्थगित कर दिया गया।

अविभाजित भारत में मुस्लिम आबादी 33 प्रतिशत थी। आजादी के आंदोलन में आखिरकार यह तय हुआ कि हिंदू मुसलमान साथ नहीं रह पाएंगे। पाकिस्तान निर्माण के मूल में भारतीय राष्ट्रीयता का अस्वीकार है। पाकिस्तान बनने के बाद भारत की 15 प्रतिशत मुस्लिम आबादी को सहअस्तित्व का दर्शन विकसित करना चाहिए था, लेकिन देश विभाजन के बाद भारत में पाकिस्तानी सोच का विकास हुआ। जब

कहीं धर्मपरिवर्तित समाज को उसके इतिहास, संस्कृति से काट दिया जाता है तो फिर वहाँ का इतिहास उसका नहीं रहता। इतिहास के नायक आपके शत्रु हो जाते हैं। संस्कृति का अस्वीकार हो जाता है। गैरमुल्की सोच के प्रभाव से अपना ही देश दारुल हरब हो जाता है। भारत के मुख्य भाग से विभाजन के बाद मात्र 16 प्रतिशत लोग ही पाकिस्तान को रुखस्त हुए। पाकिस्तान पर बनवाने के बाद अधिकांश अल्पसंख्यक समाज एक मजहबी खुमार के साथ भारत में रह गया, जबकि इस अल्पसंख्यक समाज को अपने को पाकिस्तानी सोच से पूरी तरह से बाहर लाने का काम करना था। यह काम इसलिए नहीं हो सका, क्योंकि हमारी राजनीति उसे वोत बैंक के रास्ते पर ले आई, जिसके कारण गलत पहचान बनाए रखना फायदे का सौदा हो गया।

भारत के बड़े नेताओं खासकर गांधी और नेहरु ने आजादी के आंदोलन में अल्पसंख्यक समाज की भागीदारी सुनिश्चित करने के लिए तुर्की के खलीफा को हटाए जाने को अपना मुद्दा बना लिया। भारत के विचार के साथ अल्पसंख्यक वर्ग का सामंजस्य बैठाना आसान

वक्त की मांग है पुरुष आयोग का गठन



क्षमा शर्मा

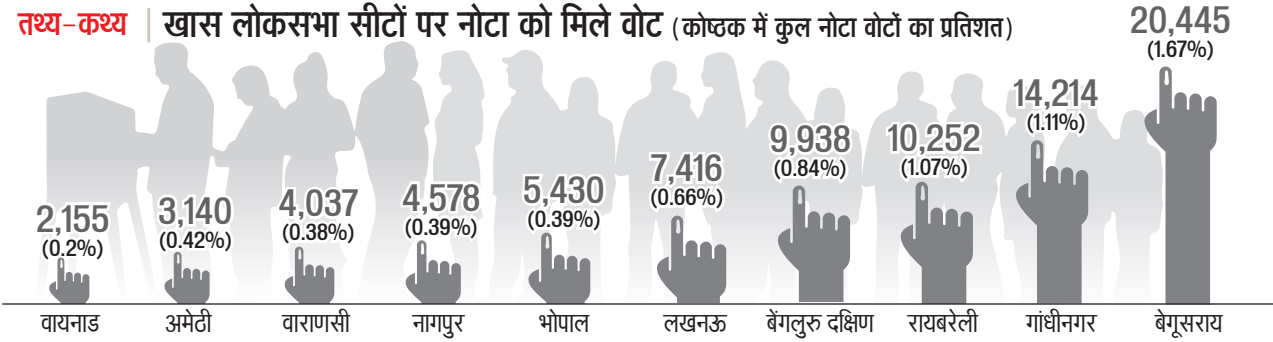
मानव अधिकार स्त्री-पुरुष, दोनों के होते हैं और कानून का काम सभी के मानव अधिकारों की रक्षा करना है

मानव अधिकारों की रक्षा करना है। अफसोस कि स्त्रियों के लिए जो कानून बने हैं वे इतने एकपक्षीय हैं कि वे औरतों को देवी और सदा सच बोलने वाली और पुरुषों को खलनायक के तौर पर पेश करते हैं। वे एकपक्षीय कानून पुरुषों के घर की औरतों को भी पितृसत्ता का प्रतीक मानकर सताने का काम करते हैं। इसीलिए जेंडर न्यूट्रल कानूनों की मांग उठने लगी है। जो भी अपराधी हो-स्त्री या पुरुष उसे सजा मिले। कानून का काम अपराधी को सजा देना ही होना चाहिए। उसकी लाठी से निरपराध को क्यों सताया जाए?

हाल में मीडिया के एक हिस्से में मैन टू अभियान चला। मैन टू अभियान चलाने में अग्रणी भूमिका अभिनेत्री पूजा बेदी ने निभाई। उन्होंने कहा कि अब वक्त आ गया है कि पुरुषों के अधिकारों की बातें भी होनी चाहिए। आखिर वह हम जमाना नहीं जिसे पितृसत्ता के वर्चस्व का पर्याय माना जाता हो। अब महिलाओं को भी पूरे अधिकार हैं। इसके बावजूद महिलाएं जब चाहें तब खुद को शक्तिशाली कहती हैं और जब चाहें तब बेचारी दिखाने लगती हैं। उदाहरण के तौर पर लिव इन में रहने वाली महिलाएं, जो रिश्ता टूटने पर दुष्कर्म का आरोप लगा देती हैं। जबकि अदालतें सहमति से

संबंध को दुष्कर्म नहीं मानती। पूजा बेदी ने मी टू के दिनों का उदाहरण देते हुए कहा कि उन दिनों पीआर एजेंसीज सक्रिय हो गई थीं। वे फिल्म जगत में जगह बनाने को आतुर लड़कियों को सलाह दे रही थीं कि वे नामी-गिरामी लोगों पर ऐसे आरोप लगा दें। इससे उनकी चर्चा होगी और काम मिलेगा। उन्होंने राष्ट्रीय महिला आयोग के आंकड़े देकर यह भी बताया कि अप्रैल 2013 से जुलाई 2014 तक दुष्कर्म के जितने मामले दर्ज कराए गए उनमें से 53.2 प्रतिशत झूठे पाए गए। एमसीआरवी के आंकड़ों में भी बताया गया है कि देहज से संबंधित दस प्रतिशत केस झूठे होते हैं। उनके अनुसार उच्चतम न्यायालय ने भी यही कहा कि जो कानून महिलाओं को उनके पति और समसुलत वालों से रक्षा के लिए बनाया गया था उसे समसुलत वालों और पति से बदला लेने के लिए इस्तेमाल किया जा रहा है। पूजा बेदी ने मांग की कि वक्त आ गया है कि महिला कमीशन की जर्ज पर पुरुष कमीशन भी बनाया जाए ताकि निरपराध पुरुष भी अपनी बात कह सकें, क्योंकि उनकी बात कोई नहीं सुनता-न मीडिया, न सरकार और न ही समाज। वे बरी होने के बाद भी अपना झेलने को मजबूर होते हैं। उनका परिवार तहस-नहस हो जाता है। अपने देश में हर वर्ष औसतन 94 हजार पुरुष आत्महत्या करते हैं। यह संख्या औरतों के मुकाबले छह प्रतिशत अधिक है। आत्महत्या का बड़ा कारण पारिवारिक और वैवाहिक विवाद होता है। इस पर महिला अधिकारों की एक प्रवक्ता ने बड़ी मासूमियत से कहा था कि पुरुष ऐसा इसलिए करते हैं, क्योंकि वे अवसाद का शिकार हो जाते हैं। क्या इसकी जांच-पड़ताल की जरूरत नहीं कि आखिर कोई अवसाद का शिकार क्यों होता है?

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युनाव नतीजों ने दिख नया संदेश

लोक गायिका मालिनी अवस्थी ने अपने आलेख ‘राजनीतिक सबक सिखाने वाले नतीजे’ में जातिवादी राजनीति के गणित को तोड़ने वाली सामाजिक केमिस्ट्री की जो बात की है, वह देश को नया राजनीतिक संदेश दे रही है। देश के विभिन्न प्रदेशों में जातिवाद और संप्रदायवाद से उपजे क्षेत्रीय राजनीतिक दलों ने पिछले तीन दशकों से अपने सांप्रदायिक और जातिवादी गणित से केंद्र में बहुमत की सरकार नहीं बनने दी। 2014 में पहली बार देश की जनता ने क्षेत्रीय दलों के इस जातिगत गणित को तोड़कर केंद्र में पूर्ण बहुमत वाली भाजपा नीत राजग सरकार स्थापित की। बहुमत युक्त मोदी सरकार की सबका साथ-सबका विकास से समन्वित राष्ट्रहितैषी नीतियों ने देश के आम जनमानस को इतना प्रभावित किया कि 2019 का आम चुनाव ही मोदीयम हो गया। इस आम चुनाव में भाजपा के पक्ष में जाने वाले पचास प्रतिशत वोट ने यह साबित कर दिया कि मोदी सरकार की जनहितैषी नीतियों से देश संतुष्ट है। मोदी के पक्ष में बन रहे सामाजिक रसायन को कांग्रेस सहित सपा, बसपा और राजद जैसे बड़े क्षेत्रीय राजनीतिक दल समय रहते भांप नहीं पाए। ये दल इसी मुगलाल में रहे कि जनता परिवर्तन चाहती है। अपने चुनावी गणित को जनता के सामने रखते हुए इन विपक्षी दलों से एक और चुक हो गई कि इन्होंने सत्तारूढ़ भाजपा सरकार का नीतिगत विरोध न करके मोदी के साफ-सुथरे विधिकत्व पर कीचड़ उछाला। यह चूक इनको इतनी भारी पड़ी कि जनता ने विपक्ष की इस बकवास को नकारते हुए मोदी के पक्ष में झुमकर मतदान किया और अकेली भाजपा को बहुमत से बहुत ओगे 303 सीटों पर ले जाकर खड़ा कर दिया। देश की जनता द्वारा मोदी के राष्ट्रसेवी व्यक्तित्व के प्रति व्यक्त किया गया विश्वास अकल्पनीय था। इस जन-विश्वास से

मेलबार्क्स

यह संदेश प्रसारित हुआ है कि अब देश को जातिगत विकृत राजनीति नहीं, अपितु भ्रष्टाचार मुक्त विकास चाहिए। ऐसे में अभी भी परिवारवाद, जातिवाद और संप्रदायवाद की विकृत राजनीति में जकड़े विपक्षी दलों को इस नए राजनीतिक संदेश से सबक लेने की जरूरत है।

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पर्यावरण को भी सुधारें

मोदी सरकार-2 सबका साथ सबका विकास सूत्र को लेकर देश के चहुँमुखी विकास की लक्ष्य बनाकर काम कर रही है। देश में गरीबी, बेरोजगारी, भ्रष्टाचार और जनसंख्या वृद्धि ये चार प्रमुख समस्याएं मुंह बाए खड़ी हैं। इससे तो निपटना ही है, किंतु उससे भी ज्यादा विकराल समस्या बढ़ते प्रदूषण की है। इस पर भी आज ही ध्यान देने की जरूरत है। अगर आज ध्यान नहीं दिया तो कल वाली पीढ़ी किसी भी अग्रज को माफ नहीं करेगी। जब उसे सांस लेने के लिए भी ऑक्सीजन खरीदना पड़ेगा। जैसे आज बोतल बंद पानी खरीदना पड़ रहा है। सड़कों का विकास हो, पर सीमेंट कंक्रीट के जंगल का नहीं। विशाल अट्टालिकाएं बनें पर उसके साथ ही वहां हरियाली की सीमा भी निश्चित की जाए, कारखानों का उत्थान हो किंतु उससे फैलने वाले प्रदूषण को रोकने की व्यवस्था भी हो। करोड़ों की संख्या में पेड़-पौधे रोपे जाएं, वे कागजी न होकर वास्तविक हों साथ ही उनकी सही देखभाल भी हो। बरसात के पानी को रोकने, तालाबों व नहरों के निर्माण आदि के काम भी युद्ध स्तर पर हों तो जल संकट से तो मुक्ति मिल ही सकती है साथ ही खेती और नए लगे पेड़ पौधों को सींचने के लिए पानी की भरपूर व्यवस्था भी हो सकती है। हरा-भरा गांव होगा तो हरा-भरा

काम नहीं था, पर हिंदुओं की भीड़ में पहचान गुम न हो जाए इसलिए मजहब को और मजबूती से पकड़ लिया गया। वंदे मातरम का विरोध करना, राष्ट्रीय प्रतीकों का असम्मान करना, अपने असल इतिहास एवं संस्कृति को भूले रहना, विभाजन के बाद फिर से अलगाव की भावना को हवा देना यह तो फर्ज नहीं था। राष्ट्रीयता की भावना मजहब विरोधी नहीं है। अल्पसंख्यक वर्ग द्वारा राष्ट्रवाद को सम्यक महत्व न दे पाना, देश के विभाजन को अर्थहीन कर देता है।

पाकिस्तान से अब तक हुए चार युद्ध इस विभाजित मानसिकता की उपज हैं। हर युद्ध आम्रंग्ण था समस्या के समाधान का, लेकिन हमें ऐसा नेतृत्व नहीं मिला जो कश्मीर जैसी सांप्रदायिक समस्या को अंतिम समाधान तक ले जाता। दोष नेतृत्व का भी नहीं है, क्योंकि जैसा समाज होता है उसे वैसा ही नेतृत्व भी मिलता है। हम उन्हें नेता मानते रहे जिसकी सोच कभी समाधान की रही ही नहीं। समस्या के स्थगन को वे समाधान मानते रहे। ये हम ही हैं जो आजादी की जंग में कभी भागत नहीं लड़े, चंद्रशेखर आजाद जैसे क्रांतिकारियों के साथ नहीं खड़े हुए। हमने उन्हें फासी चढ़ने दिया। जेल तोड़ कर आजाद नहीं कराया। फिर आंसू बहाते रहे। गुलामी की संस्कृति का भार हमारी आत्मा पर बहुत भारी रहा है। इसी गुलाम मानसिकता से पैदा समझौतापरस्ती देश को सांप्रदायिक समस्या की जिम्मेदार है। पाकिस्तान ने इस मनोवैज्ञानिक-सांप्रदायिक समस्या को जीवित रखा है। राष्ट्रवाद का कोई मध्य मार्ग नहीं होता। यदि आप राष्ट्रवादी नहीं हैं तो फिर आप राष्ट्रविरोधी हैं। प्रधानमंत्री मोदी की निर्णायक विजय के बाद राष्ट्रनिरपेक्षखंडित सोच वाले कैपें में खलबली है। समाधान का समय कभी भी घोषणा करके नहीं आता। राष्ट्र ने तो अपना निर्णय सुना दिया। अब मुश्किल फैसलों का-समाधान का कालखंड प्रारंभ होने को है।

(लेखक पूर्व सैनिक एवं पूर्व प्रशासक हैं) response@jagran.com



सच्चा जीवन

जो व्यक्ति ईश्वर को कभी नहीं भूलता और सदैव अपने कर्तव्यों को निष्ठापूर्वक निभाता है और बदले में जो मिल जाए उसी में संतुष्ट हो जाता है, वही सच्चा और सुखी है। बुद्ध ने कहा कि कामी व्यक्ति अनेक बार मरता है। जितनी कामना, उतनी बार मृत्यु। संतोषी जीवन है और असंतोषी मृत्यु। संतोष का मतलब है कि अपने कर्म को पूरे उत्साह से करना और उससे जो भी फल मिले उससे संतुष्ट हो जाना है।

मनुष्य का सबसे बड़ा मित्र और सबसे बड़ा दुश्मन उसके विचार ही हैं। मनुष्य को यह जानना-समझना होता है कि कौन-सा विचार उसका मित्र है और कौन-सा शत्रु। सकारात्मक विचार अपने साथ कई दोस्तों को लाता है और नकारात्मक विचारों वाला व्यक्ति दुश्मनों से घिर जाता है। असल में सभी लोग जीवन को अपने-अपने नजरिए से देखते हैं, कोई कहता है कि जीवन एक खेल है, कोई कहता है कि जीवन ईश्वर का दिया हुआ उपहार है, कोई कहता है कि जीवन एक यात्रा है, कोई कहता है कि जीवन एक दौड़ है। हम जिस नजरिए से जीवन को देखेंगे, हमारा जीवन वैसा ही बन जाएगा, लेकिन सच्चा जीवन वही जो सकता है, जो अपने जन्म और मृत्यु के बीच के समय को भरपूर हास्य और प्रेम से भर दे।

अक्सर मनुष्य अपने भविष्य एवं अतीत के बारे में सोचता रहता है और इस चक्कर में वह वर्तमान को ही परवाह नहीं करता, जबकि जीवन वर्तमान में ही है। कल कभी नहीं आता, जो है वह आज और अभी है। जो समय बीत गया, उसे वाद करके मनुष्य को पछताना नहीं चाहिए। अगर अतीत में मनुष्य से कोई गलती हुई भी है तो उसे उससे सबक लेकर वर्तमान को श्रेष्ठ बनाने का प्रयास करना चाहिए। मनुष्य को भविष्य में आने वाले संकटों को देख घबराना नहीं चाहिए, क्योंकि जिस मनुष्य का वर्तमान आनंदित है, उसका भविष्य भी सुंदर होगा। वर्तमान को आनंदित बनाने के लिए मनुष्य को कोई भी कार्य शुरू करने से पहले उसके सभी पहलुओं पर गौर कर लेना चाहिए। जैसे वह यह कार्य क्यों करना चाहता है, क्या वह इसको अकेले कर पाएगा या उसे और लोगों की जरूरत पड़ेगी और इस काम के नतीजे क्या होंगे। बिना सोचे-विचार किए गए काम का नतीजा अक्सर दुख देता है।

आचार्य अनिल वत्स

शहर भी, हरा-भरा प्रदेश होगा तो हरा-भरा देश भी। जो आज तो सुकून देता किंतु कल भी सुकून भारी जिंदगी से सदै पीढ़ी को लबरेज कर देगा।

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हिंदी पर फिर हाय-तौबा

हिंदी के मुद्दे पर दक्षिणी भारत में उठे विरोध के स्वरों को दबाने के लिए केंद्र सरकार को जिस तरह त्रिभाषा फार्मूले की सिफारिश में संशोधन करना पड़ा, उससे यह स्पष्ट हो गया है कि देश में शिक्षा की दिशा तय करना भी दबाव की राजनीति से मुक्त नहीं है। अब विद्यार्थी छठी कक्षा में हिंदी, अंग्रेजी और क्षेत्रीय भाषा में से किसी एक विषय को छोड़ सकते हैं। जाहिर है, गैर हिंदी भाषी प्रदेशों में ज्यादातर बच्चे हिंदी को ही छोड़ेंगे। हिंदी देश में सबसे ज्यादा बोली जानेवाली भाषा है। अफसोस की बात है कि सुविचारित त्रिभाषा फार्मूले की सिफारिश पर सिर्फ इसलिए अमल नहीं हो पाएगा कि कुछ प्रदेशों के राजनीतिज्ञ इसके दूरगामी परिणामों को समझने के बजाय इसे अपनी आंखों की किरकिरी मानने की भूल कर बैठें हैं।

सुधिष्ठिर लाल कक्कड़, गुरुग्राम

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

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ब्रीफ न्यूज



झावियुमो ने सरकार का पुतला जलाया

रांची. राज्य में पानी बिजली की घोर संकट को लेकर झारखंड विकास युवा मोर्चा ने फिरयालाल चौक पर सरकार का पुतला दहन किया. नगर निगम, बिजली विभाग तथा राज्य सरकार के खिलाफ नारेबाजी हुई. झावियुमो के केंद्रीय अध्यक्ष उत्तम यादव ने कहा कि सरकार पानी-बिजली की समस्या सुलझाने में विफल रही है. मुख्यमंत्री रघुवर दास ने पिछले वर्ष जनता से दिसंबर 2018 तक 24 घंटे बिजली देने का वादा किया था. झावियुमो जिलाध्यक्ष राम मनोज साहू ने कहा कि अगर एक सप्ताह के अंदर सरकार ने पानी बिजली की समस्या को ठीक नहीं किया तो मजबूरन राज्य हित में सड़क पर उतरना पड़ेगा. इस मौके पर झावियुमो पंकज पांडेय, अशोक श्रीवास्तव, कन्हैया महतो,वज्रंज गुप्ता, मोनू विश्वकर्मा, साजिद उमर, गौरी शंकर प्रसाद, गुड्डू साहू आदि मौजूद थे.

दिल्ली में प्रदेश भाजपा की बैठक कल

रांची. प्रदेश भाजपा कोर कमेटी की बैठक नौ जून को दिल्ली में होगी. मुख्यमंत्री रघुवर दास, प्रदेश अध्यक्ष लक्ष्मण गिलुवा सहित आठ सदस्यीय कोर कमेटी के सदस्य पार्टी के राष्ट्रीय नेताओं के साथ बैठक करेंगे. इसमें सांगठनिक कामकाज को लेकर चर्चा होगी. उल्लेखनीय है कि पार्टी द्वारा संगठन के पुनर्गठन को लेकर सदस्यता अभियान चलाया जाना है. चर्चा है कि जिन राज्यों में विधानसभा चुनाव होना है, वहां को प्रदेश कमेटी को फिलहाल सांगठनिक कामकाज से दूर रखा जा सकता है. इधर, प्रदेश अध्यक्ष लक्ष्मण गिलुवा को लेकर भी अटकलें लग रही हैं. चर्चा है कि केंद्रीय नेतृत्व प्रदेश अध्यक्ष को लेकर कोई भी फैसला ले सकता है. हालांकि इस बात की संभावना ज्यादा है कि विधानसभा चुनाव के मद्देनजर कोई फेरबदल न हो. कोर कमेटी की बैठक में केंद्रीय मंत्री अर्जुन मुंडा, संगठन महामंत्री धर्मपाल, पूर्व सांसद रवींद्र राय, पूर्व केंद्रीय मंत्री जयंत सिन्हा और सुदर्शन भगत शामिल होंगे. सूचना के मुताबिक 11 जून को देश भर के संगठन महामंत्री के साथ भी पार्टी बैठक कर सकती है.

सचिवालय सेवा संघ चुनाव में 37 नामांकन

रांची. झारखंड सचिवालय सेवा संघ के चुनाव में कुल 37 प्रत्याशियों ने नामांकन दाखिल किया गया है. चुनाव 16 जून को होना है. अध्यक्ष के लिए रजेंद्र हेमराेम, विवेक आनंद बास्के, उपाध्यक्ष के लिए विनय कुमार वर्णवाल, रबी पूनम, गौतम सिंह, सुरेंद्र कुमार, अमित कुमार, दयानंद दास, घनश्याम प्रसाद, रजनीश कुमार व राजेश कुमार सिंह, महासचिव के लिए ध्रुव प्रसाद, पिकेश कुमार सिंह, सचिव पद के लिए मनोज कुमार, गगन प्रसाद, अश्विनी कुमार झा, दीप्ति शिखा हेंरेंज, श्रीकांत शर्मा, संयुक्त सचिव के लिए प्रदीप पासवान, अरुण प्रसाद, उमाशंकर मुंडा, सुमित कुमार मिश्रा, मणि कंचन मिंज, अवध किशोर भगत, मनीष कांत, पुष्पा लकड़ा, नितिन कुमार, संगठन सचिव के लिए शिशिर तिग्गा, नीलम श्वेता इंदवर, सखीलाल माझी, रजनीश कुमार शुक्ल, अरुण कुमार, राजीव रंजन तिवारी, स्नेह राज रवि, कोषाध्यक्ष पद के लिए अभिषेक पांडेय, सुबोध रंडा व रमन रंजन ने नामांकन दाखिल किया है.

कांग्रेस की बैठक आज

रांची. प्रदेश कांग्रेस कमेटी के जोनल को-ऑर्डिनेटर, जिलाध्यक्ष व एसटी, एससी, ओबीसी, युवा, महिला, अल्पसंख्यक, एनएसयूआइ व सेवादल के प्रदेश अध्यक्षों और चेयरमैन की बैठक शनिवार को होगी. प्रदेश कांग्रेस भवन में दिन के दो बजे से बैठक बुलाई गयी है. प्रदेश कांग्रेस के प्रवक्ता राजीव रंजन प्रसाद ने बताया कि बैठक में मुख्य रूप से प्रदेश प्रभारी आरपीएन सिंह, सह प्रभारी उमंग सिंधार, मैनुल हक, प्रदेश कांग्रेस अध्यक्ष डॉ अजय कुमार व कांग्रेस विधायक दल के नेता आलमगौर आलम उपस्थित रहेंगे.

बिहार के पूर्व राज्यपाल रांची पहुंचे

रांची. बिहार के पूर्व राज्यपाल डीवाइ पाटिल शुक्रवार को रांची पहुंचे. एयरपोर्ट पर पूर्व केंद्रीय मंत्री सुबोधकांत सहाय सहित अन्य कार्यकर्ताओं ने उनका स्वागत किया. इस अवसर पर राजन सिंह रजा, राजेश कच्छप, बिनोद, दीपक प्रसाद, सुरेश बैठा, ब्रूलेस तिकी, राकेश सिन्हा, रियाज राठौर, अभिजीत राज, प्रदीप गौरव, अरुण सिंह, पंकज सिंह, मेनू तिकी, रवि सहित आदि उपस्थित थे .

नंदकिशोर सिंह बने एसबीआइ के नए डीजीएम

रांची. भारतीय स्टेट बैंक प्रशासनिक कार्यालय में नंदकिशोर सिंह ने उप महाप्रबंधक व्यासराय एवं परिचालन के पद पर शुक्रवार को कार्यभार ग्रहण किया. श्री सिंह पूर्व में क्षेत्रीय प्रबंधक अहमदाबाद सर्किल में कार्यरत थे. पदोन्नति के बाद रांची अंचल के उप महाप्रबंधक के रूप में पोस्टिंग हुई है. सहायक महाप्रबंधक सामान्य बैंकिंग सुनील कुमार गुप्ता के साथ ही मुख्य प्रबंधक कार्मिक सविता कुमारी एवं बैंक के अन्य अधिकारियों ने नंद किशोर सिंह का स्वागत किया. साथ ही विश्वास जताया कि उनके मार्गदर्शन में एसबीआइ रांची नई ऊंचाइयों को प्राप्त करेगा.

स्वास्थ्य पर कार्यशाला आज

रांची. प्रेस क्लब एवं गोल्डन जिम के संयुक्त तत्वावधान में बच्चों और माताओं के लिए स्वास्थ्य पर शनिवार को कार्यशाला का आयोजन होगा. प्रेस क्लब में होनेवाले इस कार्यक्रम में बिरसा कृषि विभाग की बीपीटी यूनिट भी सहयोग करेगी. इस कार्यशाला में स्थायी जीवन शैली अपनाने पर जोर दिया जायेगा. इसके तहत ऑर्गेनिक किचन गार्डन, योग, एरोबिक्स आदि की जानकारी दी जायेगी. इन विषयों पर बीएयू के सिद्धार्थ जायसवाल जानकारी देंगे. गोल्डन जिम की रवींद्र कौर शारीरिक और मानसिक स्वास्थ्य पर जानकारी देंगी.

वार बच्चों का होगा मुफ्त ऑपरेशन

रांची. रांची जिला प्रशासन व झारखंड स्टेट लाइवलीहुड प्रमोशन सोसायटी के संयुक्त तत्वावधान में कटे होंठ व तालु के चार बच्चों का मुफ्त ऑपरेशन देवकमल हॉस्पिटल में किया जायेगा. शुक्रवार को उपायुक्त राय साहिबमालत रे ने बच्चों से मुलाकात की. योजना के तहत रांची में 17 बच्चों का चयन किया गया है. मौके पर झारखंड स्टेट लाइवलीहुड प्रमोशन सोसाइटी की शांति माई, सिविल सर्जन डॉ वीवी प्रसाद व डॉ अनंत सिन्हा मौजूद थे.

बैठक ● हनीवेल कंपनी को व्हाट्सऐप को आधार बना कर सॉफ्टवेयर डेवलप करने का दिया गया निर्देश

शहरी लोगों को एक ही पोर्टल पर सभी सुविधाएं

प्रमुख संवाददाता ► रांची

राज्य के शहरी नागरिकों को मिलनेवाली सभी सुविधाओं को एक प्लेटफॉर्म पर लाया जायेगा. नगर विकास विभाग के सचिव अजय कुमार सिंह ने निकायों द्वारा प्रस्त की जाने वाली सभी सुविधाओं के लिए एक पोर्टल तैयार करने का निर्देश दिया है. पोर्टल पर वाटर यूजर चार्ज, होल्टिंग टैक्स, ट्रेड लाइसेंस, सालिड वेस्ट मैनेजमेंट सहित अन्य टैक्स व सुविधाएं रगुलेट की जा सकेंगी. सचिव ने स्प्रो और रांची स्मार्ट सिटी कॉरपोरेशन में कमांड कंट्रोल एंड

- वाटर कनेक्शन लेने से लेकर पानी की शिकायत व बिल तक का स्टेटस अपडेट करने का निर्देश
- जलापूर्ति योजनाओं से लाभान्वित उपभोक्ताओं का डाटाबेस तैयार करने को भी कहा

कम्प्युनिकेशन सेंटर के लिए कार्य कर रही हनीवेल कंपनी को व्हाट्सऐप को आधार बना कर सॉफ्टवेयर डेवलप करने का निर्देश दिया है. रांची से इसकी शुरुआत होगी.

प्रोजेक्ट भवन में बैठक करते हुए नगर विकास विभाग के सचिव ने राज्य के शहरों में चल रही

कोल कंपनियों के पास पड़े हैं राजस्व के हजारों करोड़ सरकार को हर साल सात हजार करोड़ लेना पड़ता है कर्ज

- 2018-19 में झारखंड सरकार ने करीब आठ हजार रुपये कर्ज लिए थे

- 2017-18 में भी सात हजार करोड़ से अधिक की राशि लेनी पड़ी थी

विवेक चंद्र ► रांची

कोल कंपनियों के पास राजस्व के हजारों करोड़ रुपये पड़े होने के बावजूद राज्य सरकार को हर साल आरबीआइ से औसतन सात हजार करोड़ रुपये कर्ज लेना पड़ता है. वित्तीय वर्ष 2018-19 में झारखंड सरकार ने करीब आठ हजार रुपये कर्ज लिए थे. उसके पहले वित्तीय वर्ष 2017-18 में भी सात हजार करोड़ रुपये से अधिक की राशि राज्य को कर्ज के रूप में लेनी पड़ी थी. वित्तीय

वर्ष 2019-2020 में राज्य सरकार को आर्थिक तंगी से निबटने के लिए कर्ज लेने की जरूरत पड़ गयी है. चालू वित्तीय वर्ष में आरबीआइ से कर्ज लेने की शुरुआत लगभग 1,500 करोड़ रुपये से हो रही है. संभवतः जुलाई में आरबीआइ के ऑक्शन में राज्य सरकार कर्ज मांगेगी. **80,000 करोड़ से अधिक है कर्ज का बोझ** : उल्लेखनीय है कि राज्य गठन के बाद से राज्य सरकार पर कर्ज का बोझ लगभग 80,000 हजार करोड़ रुपये हो गया है. यह राज्य की कुल सकल घरेलू उत्पाद (जीडीपी) का 25 प्रतिशत है. जबकि, किसी भी समृद्ध राज्य के लिए कुल जीडीपी के तीन प्रतिशत से अधिक कर्ज नहीं होना चाहिए. इससे अधिक कर्ज लेनेवाले राज्य विकास की दौड़ में सबसे पिछड़े राज्य माने जाते हैं.



नोटिस का जवाब नहीं देती कोल कंपनियां

कोल कंपनियां लगान की राशि देने के लिए राज्य सरकार द्वारा दिये गये नोटिस का जवाब नहीं देती हैं. भू-राजस्व विभाग के निर्देश पर संबंधित अंचलों द्वारा गैरमजरूआ सरकारी भूमि पर खनन कार्य करने के लिए कई बार बकाया लगान और सेंस की मांग की गयी है. लेकिन, कोयला कंपनियों ने लगान चुकाने या जवाब देने की दिशा में कोई कार्यवाही नहीं की. राज्य सरकार द्वारा राज्य में खनन कार्य करने वाली कोल कंपनियों से बकाया राशि दिलाने के लिए केंद्र सरकार, कोल इंडिया और नीति आयोग से भी आग्रह किया है.

झारखंड मुक्ति मोर्चा ने राज्य सरकार पर साधा निशाना, कहा भूख से हुई मौत के मामले को रफा-दफा कर देती है सरकार

प्रमुख संवाददाता ► रांची



प्रेस को संबोधित करते सुप्रियो भट्टाचार्य.

● कहा, खाद्य आपूर्ति मंत्री किसी की जिम्मेवारी तय नहीं कर पाते हैं

भी विभागीय मंत्री बार-बार कहते हैं कि इसे बायोमेट्रिक से बाहर किया जायेगा, लेकिन करते नहीं हैं. आखिर यह कौन सा नियम है कि नेटवर्क नहीं रहेगा तो लोगों को राशन नहीं देंगे. **इस सरकार में दाना-पानी भी उपलब्ध नहीं** : श्री भट्टाचार्य ने कहा कि एक

राज्य में दाना नहीं मिल रहा है वहीं दूसरी ओर पानी भी उपलब्ध नहीं है. यानी दाना-पानी दोनों बंद है. रांची में पानी को लेकर चाकूबाजी की घटना घटी है जो इस सरकार के लिए शर्मनाक है. हाहाकार मचा है लेकिन सरकार को कोई मतलब नहीं है. सुप्रियो

कला को संग्रहित करना जरूरी : वीसी

रांची. युगांतर आर्ट्स एवं ह्यूमैनिटीज के तत्वावधान में डोकरा और टराकोटा पर आयोजित 12 दिवसीय कार्यशाला का समापन शुक्रवार को सिरदौली स्थित युगांतर भारती परिसर में हुआ. मुख्य अतिथि बीएयू के कुलपति प्रो परांविंद कौशल ने कहा कि विश्व के कई देश कला को संग्रहित करते हैं. ऐसा अपने देश में भी करने की जरूरत है. कृषि और कला को समानांतर रखकर भी कार्य किया जा सकता है. युगांतर आर्ट एंड ह्यूमैनिटीज के अनुरे प्रयास की सरहना की. युगांतर भारती के कार्यकारी अध्यक्ष अंशुल शरण ने घोषणा की कि संस्था के परिसर में आवासीय प्रशिक्षण शिविर का आयोजन होगा. इसमें नये कलाकारों को कला का प्रदर्शन करने में मदद मिलेगी. कलाकार हरेन ठाकुर ने कहा कि मानसिक और विज्ञुअल प्रदूषण का समाधान कलाकार के पास ही है. उन्होंने कहा कि फ्लेक्स के जरिये प्रदूषण फैलाया जा रहा है, इसे तुरंत रोकना जाना चाहिए. एसएन सिन्हा इंस्टीट्यूट के निदेशक समीर सिंह, दीपकर कर्मकार, रितेश झा, दिलीप ठोपांग, दिनेश सिंह,विश्वनाथ चक्रवर्ती उपस्थित थे.

कोयला खनन बंद कराया, तो देश में मच जायेगा हाहाकार

६ कोल कंपनियों से बकाया राशि मांगने के लिए राज्य सरकार ने कई प्लेटफॉर्म पर अपनी बात रखी है. नीति आयोग और कोल इंडिया का ध्यान भी इस ओर दिलाया गया है. निश्चित रूप से कंपनियों से बकाया राजस्व मिलने पर सरकारी खजाना ज्यादा समृद्ध होगा और उसका लाभ राज्य को मिलेगा.

- सुखदेव सिंह, विकास आ्युक्त, झारखंड

झारखंड देश में कोयला आपूर्ति का सबसे बड़ा केंद्र है. राज्य सरकार के आंकड़ों के मुताबिक देश का 60 फीसदी कोयला का उत्पादन झारखंड करता है. कोयला कंपनियों द्वारा लगान की राशि नहीं देने पर राज्य सरकार 50,000 एकड़ से अधिक सरकारी भूमि पर खनन बंद करा सकती है. लेकिन, उससे देश भर में हाहाकार मच जायेगा. यही वजह है कि राज्य सरकार 33,000 करोड़ से अधिक राजस्व बकाया होने के बावजूद सरकारी भूमि पर खनन कार्य बंद नहीं करा रही है. दूसरी तरफ कोल कंपनियां इसी बात का फायदा उठा रही हैं. यहां यह भी उल्लेखनीय है कि पश्चिम बंगाल और ओडिसा में कोल कंपनियों ने खनन के लिए इस्तेमाल की जा रही सरकारी भूमि के बदले राजस्व सरकारी खजाने में जमा कराया है .



रोड सेफ्टी पर आयोजित कार्यशाला में शामिल ड्राइवर .

तेज गति में वाहन नहीं चलायें चालक : माथुर

- **समाहरणालय में रोड सेफ्टी पर कार्यशाला**
- **70 ड्राइवरों ने भाग लिया, सभी को सर्टिफिकेट प्रदान किये गये**

संवाददाता ► रांची

राजधानी के यात्री व स्कूल बस ड्राइवर और ट्रक ड्राइवर के लिए सोमवार को समाहरणालय सभागार में रोड सेफ्टी पर कार्यशाला का आयोजन किया गया. कार्यशाला का आयोजन सोसाइटी ऑफ इंडियन ऑटोमोबाइल मैनुफैक्चर्स दिल्ली द्वारा पायलट प्रोग्राम फॉर ड्राइवर्स के तहत किया गया.

दिल्ली से आये अंकुर माथुर ने

ग्रामीण डाकसेवकों के लिए शुरू की गयी प्रतियोगिता का समापन 15 को

- इंडिया पोस्ट पेमेंट बैंक के कारोबार में वृद्धि करना लक्ष्य
- प्रतियोगिता में विजेताओं को नकद पुरस्कार के साथ मिलेगी प्रोत्साहन राशि

वरीय संवाददाता ► रांची

ग्रामीण डाक सेवकों के लिए कौन बनेगा बाहुबली प्रतियोगिता शुरू की गयी है. एक महीने तक चलने वाली इस प्रतियोगिता का समापन 15 जून को होगा. राज्य के आइपीपीबी के 22 केंद्रों पर ग्रामीण डाकसेवक को न्यूनतम 20 एकाउंट को पोस्ट ऑफिस के एसबी खातों से लिंक करना होगा. प्रतियोगिता में सिर्फ ग्रामीण डाक सेवक ही भाग ले सकते हैं. विभाग के स्तर पर जीडीएस के तहत कुछ शर्तें रखी गयी हैं. इनमें 100 रुपये की जमा धनराशि के साथ

ललित केडिया दोबारा अध्यक्ष बनाये गये

रांची. रांची सेनेटरी वेयर मर्चेंट्स एसोसिएशन (रासमा) की छठी वार्षिक आमसभा शुक्रवार को हरमू रोड स्थित सफायर हाइट्स में हुई. नये कार्यालय का उद्घाटन पूर्व अध्यक्ष बीपी भुवालका ने किया. रासमा के सत्र 2019-20 के लिए नयी कार्यकारिणी समिति का गठन किया गया. इसके बाद नये पदाधिकारियों अध्यक्ष चुने गये. इसी प्रकार ओमप्रकाश अश्वक्ष चुने गये. इसी प्रकार ओमप्रकाश सराफ सचिव, अनूप अग्रवाल कोषाध्यक्ष, अंजय सरावगी और राजीव खंडेलवाल उपाध्यक्ष, दीपक बुबना व शीतल ओहदर सह सचिव, मनोज बंका सह कोषाध्यक्ष व आदित्य भुवालका पीआरओ बनाये गये.

13 कार्यकारिणी सदस्य व 21 संरक्षक सदस्य बनाये गये हैं. चेंबर अध्यक्ष दीपक मारू, कुणाल अजमाजी, जगल किशोर मारू, आरके सरगवी, सज्जन सराफ, पवन शर्मा उपस्थित थे.



६ प्रतियोगिता का मकसद इंडिया पोस्ट पेमेंट बैंक (आइपीपीबी) की सेवाओं को बैंकों की तर्ज पर लोकप्रिय बनाना है. इस कार्यक्रम के बाद इससे कोयला बनाने के लिए कोयला खनन से संबंधित सभी कागजात और अपना ड्राइविंग लाइसेंस साथ रखने को कहा गया. कार्यशाला में कुल 70 ड्राइवरों ने भाग लिया. कार्यशाला में शामिल ड्राइवरों को सर्टिफिकेट दिये गये. कार्यक्रम में पीआइयू यूनिट के अभय कुमार व नवोदिता भी मौजूद थे.

ही एक हजार का डिजिटल ट्रान्जेक्शन अनिवार्य है. साथ ही इन खातों को डाक घर के बचत खाता से लिंक करना होगा. इसके तहत प्रतियोगिता में विजेताओं को नकद पुरस्कार के साथ 500 रुपये प्रोत्साहन राशि मिलेगी. राज्य स्तर पर इस प्रतियोगिता में लगभग

4 हजार ग्रामीण डाक सेवक भाग ले रहे हैं. इसके बाद स्किल इंडिया ट्रेनिंग के तहत ऑनलाइन परीक्षा में भाग लेना होगा. राष्ट्रीय स्तर पर जो भी टॉप टेन जीडीएस सबसे ज्यादा खाता खोलकर लिंक करेंगे, उनको दिल्ली में सम्मानित किया जायेगा.

जनता झामुमो के झांसे में आनेवाली नहीं है : भाजपा

वरीय संवाददाता ► रांची

भाजपा के प्रदेश प्रवक्ता प्रवीण प्रभाकर ने कहा है कि पूर्व मुख्यमंत्री और झामुमो के कार्यकारी अध्यक्ष हेमंत सोरेन मुंगेरिलाल के हसीन सपने देख रहे हैं. मुख्यमंत्री की कुर्सी का उनका सपना 2019 में पूरा नहीं होनेवाला है. जनता अब झामुमा के झांसे में नहीं आनेवाली है. जनता समझ चुकी है कि हेमंत सोरेन जनता की नहीं सत्ता की राजनीति करते हैं. श्री प्रभाकर ने कहा कि हेमंत सोरेन ने युवाओं को रोजगार देने का जुमला उछाला है, लेकिन इसका कोई रोड मैप उनके पास नहीं है. नरेंद्र मोदी और रघुवर दास ने योजनाओं के माध्यम से करोड़ों युवाओं को रोजगार और स्वरोजगार से जोड़ा है. हेमंत भूल रहे

हैं कि झारखंड में लोकसभा चुनाव में गुरुजी के गढ़ पर भाजपा का कब्जा हो चुका है. महागठबंधन धराशायी हो गया है. इधर भाजपा के प्रदेश प्रवक्ता राजेश कुमार शुक्ल ने कहा है कि झामुमो द्वारा बेरोजगारों को बेरोजगारी भत्ता देने की घोषणा हास्यास्पद है. यह कौरी कल्पना है. मुख्यमंत्री रघुवर दास के नेतृत्व में साढ़े 4 वर्षों में 1 लाख 25 हजार बेरोजगार युवाओं को सरकारी नौकरी मिली, जिसमें स्थानीय नीति के तहत 95 प्रतिशत से ज्यादा स्थानीय युवाओं को रोजगार मिला है. यह भी कहा है कि सिद्धांतविहीन और मुद्दाविहीन विपक्षी दल के नेता हास्यास्पद बयानबाजी कर रहे हैं, जिसको झारखंड की जनता समझ चुकी है तथा उनके बहकावे में आनेवाली नहीं है.

