**CHINESE WHISPERS** 

Naidu raps 'moving' members

vote was announced on the matter of

complained about ministers "trying to

"People in authority must be careful...

influence MPs" during the process.

Even individual members are not

supposed to move this side or that

member, they are at liberty to talk to

them before the voting process starts

and, that too, preferably outside the House." Naidu said. The voting

process on the Bill had ended in a

collecting voter slips from Telugu

House rules.

**New direction** 

Desam Party MPs. Only officials are

supposed to collect the slips, as per

Is the Trinamool Congress working

(Marxist) and the Bharatiya Janata

Party? A party meeting to be held

today (July 29) at Kolkata's Nazrul

Mancha has kicked off speculation

might be working in that direction.

All MLAs, district- and block-level

leaders are expected to attend the

booths. Word is that Trinamool will

appoint four whole-time members

per booth. The target is to appoint

the party's social media strategy.

**Powerless in MP** 

speech at the Academy of

action plan pertaining to

300,000 such members, who will not only identify and recruit new members but will also contribute to

Madhya Pradesh health minister Tulsi

Silawat was left red-faced when the

electricity supply tripped during his

Administration in Bhopal last week.

Silawat was presenting his ministry's

antimicrobial resistance. As the venue

plunged into darkness, officials fished

out their mobile phones to turn on

switching on their mobile flashlights

second time in a month that Silawat

faced such a situation. In June, when

supply had tripped. Indeed, since the

Congress government took charge of the power-surplus state in December

2018, unscheduled cuts have become

some light. Pictures of people

went viral in no time. This is the

he was discussing the problem of

outages in hospitals, the electricity

meeting. The state has 77,000

that West Bengal's ruling party

on a strategy to rope in party whole-

timers, a la Communist Party of India

furore after Bharatiya Janata Party member C M Ramesh was seen

side... If they want to talk to any

referring the Right to Information

(Amendment) Bill to a select

committee. The Opposition

Rajya Sabha Chairman M

(pictured) on

Friday pulled

up members,

ministers, who

were moving

about in the

House after a

including

Venkaiah

Naidu

some

# The Budget, the Survey and the trilemma

The Economic Survey correctly argues for investment-led growth. The Budget understandably wants to tap a cheap pool of global savings. But can these co-exist?



**INSIGHT** 

SAJJID Z CHINOY

wo big themes emerged from this year's Economic Survey and Budget — one explicit and the other more implicit. The Survey explicitly batted for re-stoking investment-led growth. This is foundational. As the contrasting experiences of Latin America and East Asia — as well as India's own experience in the mid-2000s — have revealed, strong growth can only be sustained when underpinned by private investment. Bursts of consumptiondriven growth are unsustainable because they inevitably spawn imbalances, either domestic (higher inflation) or external (wider current account deficits). An investment-led strategy therefore has to be the lynchpin for sustained 8 per cent growth.

Meanwhile, a key theme emerging from the Budget was a conscious strategy to rely on greater foreign savings. Hence the Budget enumerated a series of measures to attract more FDI, foreign portfolio investment, and issue a sovereign dollar bond. The motivation is unsurprising. With household savings declining in recent years (as households have dipped into savings to support consumption growth) and the public sector using up virtually all household financial savings, concerns about private sector crowding-out have progressively risen. On the flip side, the global interest-rate cycle has turned again in 2019 with G3 central banks expected to ease further. Why not tap cheap foreign savings to fill the gap?

While this may alleviate short-term domestic pressures, a medium-term strategy to harness foreign savings is incompatible with an investment-led strategy to drive domestic growth. Why is that? Because an investment-led strategy is necessarily an export-led strategy. Here's why.

#### **Investment & exports**

If the investment rate has to rise, the domestic savings rate must rise in tandem. If not, the current account deficit (which is just the investment-savings gap in an economy) will balloon, increasing macroeconomic uncertainty and choking off the very investment that is needed. However, if the savings rate has to go up, by construction, consumption to GDP will have to come down.

But if consumption to GDP is coming down why would the investment rate be presumed to go up? Why would entrepreneurs accelerate investment if consumption growth is slowing? Only if exports — the other driver of demand – are growing rapidly to make up the difference. And therein lies the key: That for any investment-led model to sustain, it must necessarily be driven by strong exports growth. Otherwise the model is internally inconsistent and unsustainable. Therefore no country has experienced close to double digitgrowth without investment and exports acting in concert.

This combination is exactly what drove India in the mid-2000s. Between 2001 and 2006, GDP growth averaged almost 8 per cent, and investment growth averaged 16 per cent a year. Guess what drove investment? Exports

- which grew 20 per cent a year in those years. In contrast, private consumption grew at 7.2 per cent — less than GDP

growth — such that consumption-GDP fell and the savings rate went up to help finance investment. India became China-like in the mid-2000s, till the global financial crisis hit.

We need an encore. For strong growth to sustain, India will need sustained investment. But for investment to be sustained (and financed at home) India will need exports to fire.

#### Exports & the exchange rate

And herein lies the tension. If growth is to be driven by exports, it's incompatible with an excessive reliance on foreign savings (and the associated capital inflows) that will put upward pressure on the exchange rate. There

strategy to harness

incompatible with an

domestic growth. Why

foreign savings is

investment-led

strategy to drive

investment-led

is that? Because an

is a casual belief in India that exchange rates don't matter for exports. However, as we have previously shown in an empirical analysis at the India Policy Form, exchange rates — along with global growth — are a crucial determinant of India's exports.

Export growth surged strategy is necessarily between 2005 and 2011, an export-led strategy growing at 14 per cent a year.

Since then, they have slumped to 4 per cent average growth. Some of this is, undoubtedly, because of both slowing global growth and deglobalisation. But, as we have shown in our IPF paper, some of the export slowdown is also attributable to the 20 per cent appreciation of the real effective exchange rate (REER) between 2014 and 2017. To be fair, there was little policymakers could have done to prevent the appreciation because it was the upshot of a large, positive terms of trade shock to the economy from lower crude prices along with strong capital inflows which — as theory suggests — should cause both actual and equilibrium real exchange rates to

As crude prices climbed back up,

the REER depreciated almost 10 per cent in 2018, but more than half of that depreciation has reversed in recent months. All told, therefore, the REER is still almost 15 per cent stronger than it was five years ago. Some could argue this is not worrying because it simply reflects higher productivity growth in India. But that hypothesis does not gel with the fact that India's underlying current account balance (ex oil and gold) has consistently worsened over the last five years — suggesting external competitiveness is increasingly under pressure. If the REER was reflecting productivity gains, competitiveness wouldn't be getting progressive threatened. A medium-term

#### The exchange rate & the trilemma

It will be hard enough to boost exports in a world of slowing growth and rising protectionism and nativism. What India doesn't need is for the exchange rate to compound the challenge. It's therefore

important for policy not to inadvertently induce further appreciation pressures. The real exchange rate is impacted by several factors: productivity differentials, terms of trade, government spending, and capital inflows/net foreign assets. Therefore, any policy that aggressively attempts to attract capital inflows risks inducing more appreciation. In 2017-18, for example, capital flows surged to 3.5 per cent of GDP pushing up the broad REER by almost 5 per cent that year alone.

But couldn't the RBI intervene to prevent appreciation? For starters, because the real exchange rate is driven by fundamentals, the central bank cannot meaningfully influence it over any length of time. Second, even when

exchange rate, the central bank comes up against the trilemma. With India's need for independent monetary policy, the more the capital account is open, the less control policymakers will have over the exchange rate. To be sure, sterilised intervention does give the RBI some degrees of freedom, but this is not without distortions. Over the last two months, for example, India has received strong capital inflows after the decisive May election result. On its part, the RBI has intervened aggressively to prevent a rupee appreciation. Much of this has been sterilised by paying forwards in the foreign exchange market. But this has also contributed to pushing up the forward premium, which will disincentivise corporates and importers from hedging, risking financial instability. Similarly, had the RBI intervened only through buying dollars in the spot market and then soaked out the liquidity through OMO sales, it would have pushed up domestic bond yields, and potentially attracted more "carry inflows". In other words, there's no free lunch.

attempting to influence the nominal

All told, therefore, a strategy that relies on foreign savings risks putting more upward pressure on the real exchange rate and impeding export growth, at a time when exports will have to catalyse investment.

So what should authorities do? First, don't resist rupee depreciation, particularly if the Chinese yuan is also depreciating, because India's greatest competitiveness concerns are vis-à-vis China. Second, avoid excessive reliance on foreign savings. Instead reduce total public sector borrowing so that more domestic savings are available to finance domestic investment. Once investment gets a fillip, savings will rise in tandem given their pro-cyclicality. Third, double down on factor market reform, infrastructure and transportation logistics to improve external competitiveness, and expand India's global export share, thereby creating the impetus for an investment revival.

All this won't be easy, but is unavoidable if we aspire for sustained 8 per cent growth.

The author is chief India economist, JP Morgan

# Rating agencies: Derated and now berated

The onus is on the CRAs to come out clean or face the wrath of the markets and live in shame



**BANKER'S TRUST** 

TAMAL BANDYOPADHYAY

**■** he findings of the interim report of a forensic audit by Grant Thornton, an audit, tax and advirm, engaged by the board of the disgraced Infrastructure Leasing and Financial Services Ltd (IL&FS) — detailing the gifts and favours that the senior professionals of credit rating agencies (CRAs) have allegedly enjoyed to keep a rotting company on a high pedestal exposed the soft underbelly of India's rating industry.

Till the findings of the report trickled down in the media, the CRAs were criticised for basking in the cool comfort of their offices, oblivious of the ground realities; they miserably failed in their due diligence and acted only when the writing on the wall was visible to the entire world. The alleged corrupt practices indulged in by the rating officials add a dirty dimension to this.

Both Icra Ltd and Care Ltd have asked their chiefs to go on leave till the investigations are complete. India Ratings and Research Pvt Ltd has said the senior director in its parent firm, Fitch Singapore, is no longer an employee even as Crisil Ltd has distanced itself from the IL&FS saga, saying it has nothing to do with it.

Let's take a look at the cultural roots of the CRAs. The big three — Crisil (1987), Icra (1991) and Care (1993) — have all been promoted by now-defunct development financial institutions — ICICI Ltd, IFCI Ltd and IDBI, respectively. The secretariat of then ICICI chairman H T Parekh followed an informal process of accepting gifts. Every Diwali and New Year gift was numbered and kept in the conference room of the office till they were distributed through a draw among peons, gardeners, canteen boys and weeners. The gifts were also sent to an orphanage at Girgaum, southern Mumbai. And, of course, the chairman's secretariat would send a "thank you' note to all senders, requesting them not to continue with the ritual in future. I am not aware of the processes followed by IFCI and IDBI.

In the beginning, the bosses of all the rating agencies represented the sponsors and eminent professionals were on their boards. The rating committees were constituted with members of the boards and care for ethics was an obsession. The late R Ravimohan, former MD and CEO of Crisil, once remarked: "Credibility is the most valuable asset on our balance sheet; unfortunately accounting standards do not permit recording and valuing the same.'

Other rating agencies such as Acuité Ratings & Research Limited (formerly SME Rating Agency of India Ltd, pro-

moted by Small Industries Development Bank of India and Dun & Bradstreet in 2005), Brickwork Rating India Pvt Ltd (2008), and India Ratings and Research (in early 2000 Fitch bought stake from Dun & Bradstreet Corporation and raised it gradually) by and large adopted the culture of the big three.

International tie-ups and technical assistance — Standard & Poor's for Crisil, Moody's Investor Service for Icra, Department for International Development, UK, for Acuite Ratings and Fitch group for India Ratings have given further impetus to governance and transparency. The boards of agencies have adopted governance policies defining conflict of interest, disclosure norms and rules for accepting gifts, favours and gratifications with predetermined monetary value. All these are documented and a part of the employee engagement rules and ethics policy the compliance officers (usually the company secretaries) are tasked with their implementation.

Apart from chocolates and dry fruits, office utility articles such as calendars, pens and pen stands, pots and plants, coffee table books feature in the permissible list but the employees are expected to return the gold-plated miniature Ganesha and Lakshmi idols, Montblanc pens, smart phones and iPads. Incidentally, the salary and emoluments (including stock options) of rating agency employees are on a par, if not better, than what the banking and finance industry offers.

Although the Grant Thornton report deals with only the IL&FS case, people familiar with the industry say at least for a few CRAs, the internal norms are relaxed and it is not difficult to find people from the rating fraternity enjoying cruise trips in Greece, Spain and Alaska. The



not-so-senior managers enjoy free stays at cottages in beach resorts (Goa), tea plantations (Coorg), wildlife sanctuaries (Jim Corbett National Park) and hill sta-(himla) courtesy the rated entities

Rating is a process-driven exercise; direct interactions with the entities being rated are restricted. As the rating symbol captures "timely payment of interest and principal", the emphasis is on free cash flows and the rated entity's ability to service debt obligations (both interest and principal). Typically, the CRAs follow an unwritten rule that a minimum of two people meet their clients (to weed out any subjectivity in their analysis) and the focus is on business model, competition and professional competence apart from parentage and succession planning among other things, while evaluating companies raising debt.

For all rating exercises (new as well as surveillance), apart from a primary analyst, there is a principal analyst and a relationship head as well as a sector specialist involved. All issues are discussed before a presentation is made to

the rating committee of directors for considering a fresh rating and continuation/revision (upward or downward). Now, it seems such a process could be sham and ratings can be influenced.

At the beginning of the century, for expanding their market share, a few CRAs had introduced an unsolicited exercise in the garb of visibility ratings or shadow ratings. They rated companies based on information available in the public domain. Such ratings were first informally shared with the companies and only after they were accepted, the rating exercise would start with an official mandate. The products fizzled out after the market regulator came down heavily on them even though it has been a global practice. That may be a not-so-proper business practice but the current problem is much deeper.

What needs to be done to cure the maladies? Should the salary and stock options of CEOs be ploughed back if they are found guilty? All raters need to go for Sadhguru's inner engineering (internal cleansing process) through a forensic review to purge the system if they want to address the huge trust deficit between the CRAs and the investor community.

Indeed, banks, NBFCs and other lenders have their own internal rating systems but they also need the certificates of the raters. Even the Insolvency and Bankruptcy Code stipulates investment grade rating from two agencies to move ahead with a resolution plan for bad debt of at least ₹500 crore and more. The onus is on the CRAs to come out clean or face the wrath of the markets and live in shame.

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

# **LETTERS**

the order of the day.

#### **Unsolved mystery**

This refers to "Wrapped in mystery" by Nivedita Mookerji (July 25). The speed at which Oyo Rooms and its founder Ritesh Agarwal are moving should draw the attention of regulators, financial institutions, investors and above all, the appropriate wing of the government. The validity of the WhatsApp message talking about "another financial scam waiting to explode" may not be justified as of now due to lack of evidence and may be brushed under the carpet in days to come. The mystery behind the speed of growth is really adding one layer above another.

The name of one investor — Lightspeed Venture — is also interesting. The speed of room acquisition, share buyback and IPO planning is raising the eyebrows of market watchers and the common people. Most surprising is that Oyo claims to be one of the largest hotel chains in the world with virtually negligible physical assets creation. I completely agree with Ms Mookerji that the modus operandi of the Oyo group and its founder has really left the audience perplexed. Let us not forget the rise and fall of Kingfisher Airlines, Barings Bank, Jet Airways and very recently, Nirav Modi and Mehul Choksi.

Sanjoy Dutta Kolkata

#### India calls the shots

This refers to "Why does India resist mediation on Kashmir?" by Aakar Patel (July 26). The topic has gained attention because of a comment by US President Donald Trump during Pakistan Prime Minister Imran Khan's visit to Washington. The columnist has come to the conclusion that the message sent abroad is that India fears outside diplomatic intervention due to some perceived weakness. The actual message sent out is that India is the decision-making power in this region and we do not need anybody to complicate the existing situation.

JK Achuthan Ernakulam

The Editor, Business Standard Nehru House, 4 Bahadur Shah Zafar Marg New Delhi 110 002 Fax: (011) 23720201 · E-mail: letters@bsmail.ir

# Tech that can silence mutations

It holds the potential to change the therapeutic landscape for many neurological and non-neurological conditions in future



TECH-ENABLED

**DEVANGSHU DATTA** 

heartbreaking post by Rohan Seth, a computer scientist based in San Francisco, is doing the rounds on social media. Seth and his partner, Jen, had a child, Lydia, about six months ago. Soon after birth, she started having seizures. They discovered after many tests that "a tiny random mutation in a critical gene is affecting her brain function, causing severe disabilities and suffering".

Faced with this situation, Jen and Rohan did their research and decided to "open source their baby in the hopes of saving her, and millions like her". They set up a non-profit and raised \$1.5 million to fund research. There is hope based on a new procedure and the parents hope there could be treatment within months.

The Seths discovered that there are only two other persons known to have exactly the same genetic mutation. The nucleotide bases of DNA (deoxyribonucleic acid) are adenine, thymine, cytosine, and guanine (A, T, C, G). In Lydia's DNA, the "A" was replaced by a "G" at position 683 of the gene KCNQ2.

There are six billion-odd characters in any human's DNA and this sort of "typo", as Seth calls a mutation, can occur anywhere in that string. So conventional tests don't pick it up. While negative mutations affect millions of people worldwide, any given mutation may be so rare that no pharma company will bother to research for a potential treatment.

The Seths discovered that there is a technology called antisense oligonucleotides (ASOs) that can silence such mutations. The first approved ASO drug only became commercially available in 2016. It is possible to create an ASO drug that exactly targets a specific mutation. The mission of the Lydian Accelerator is to create an open source database of ASO research.

Genetic expression occurs via a process where the DNA transmits information to the ribosome via what's known as Messenger RNA (mRNA where RNA stands for ribonucleic acid). The ribosome is a sort of large molecular factory, which is found in all living cells. It uses the information it receives from mRNA to create proteins. Antisense therapy targets the mRNA to prevent information from a mutated gene from being expressed in this fashion by suppressing the message from the DNA to the ribosome.

Oligonucleotides are short fragments

of nucleic acid. In antisense therapy, the misbehaving gene is first identified. Then an oligonucleotide is chemically synthesised to neutralise the information transmitted to the mRNA by that mutated gene. This is very specific, accurate targeting, that can create designer drugs tar-

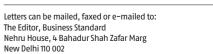
geting just one individual. As with DNA, mRNA genetic information is in the sequence of nucleotides, which are arranged into codons consisting of three base pairs each. The oligonucleotides physically bind to mRNA and can neutralise instructions for creating a specific protein. The treatment has been used to treat a wide range of diseases including thalassemia, retinitis, muscular dystrophy, cancers, HIV, AIDS.

The effects of ASOs in influencing RNA processing protein expression were discovered over two decades ago. The antisense effect of a synthetic oligonucleotide sequence was first demonstrated in the late 1970s by Zamecnik and Stephenson.

However, the progress in using these technologies has been slow. The US Food and Drug Administration approval for the commercialisation of the first ASO, Vitravene (for cytomegalovirus retinitis) came through in 2016. It was as recently as 2018 that Dr Timothy Yu at Boston Children's Hospital created the first designer antisense drug targeting an individual. But approvals of ASOs for the treatment of spinal muscular atrophy and duchenne muscular dystrophy have been received.

This technology holds the potential to change the therapeutic landscape for many neurological and non-neurological conditions in the future. But its expensive and potential side effects must be studied. The Seths could provide an impetus through their NGO.

As they say, as computer scientists, they believe in open platforms. "By open sourcing the processes, tools and data from the first few N-of-1s, we can empower any institute to create one. We can then build a shared database of efficacy and safety data — anyone performing an N-of-1 (creating a designer drug for an individual) should be able to tap into this repository as long as they contribute back with their data. With more data, we may be able to use algorithms to reduce or even eliminate lab work that constitutes the bulk of the costs today. With each treatment, we can reduce the time and cost for the next one." This could be an unusual concatenation of cutting edge technology, and crowd sourced research disrupting the traditional model of drug development.



All letters must have a postal address and telephone

# Risk to federalism

Finance Commission should not carve out a separate fund

n a recent decision by the Union Cabinet, the terms of reference of the Fifteenth Finance Commission were amended, so that the needs of defence and internal security be set aside from regular expenditure. In the course of extending the Commission's term, the Cabinet added the following to its mandate: To "address serious concerns regarding allocation of adequate, secure and non-lapsable funds for defence and internal security

This has correctly been seen as an attempt by the Centre to occupy more fiscal space. Article 280 of the Constitution requires the Commission to be the overall judge of how taxes are distributed, and Article 266 implies that the Consolidated Fund of India is a shared pool for all national priorities. Setting aside a fund purely for defence, which is the natural end point of the Cabinet's demand from the Commission, would act against this basic constitutional principle. It would sequester defence spending and give the Centre more space to spend on its own political priorities at the expense of the states. At a time when there is a quiet fiscal crisis brewing, thanks to the underperformance of the goods and services tax, this is not a welcome development.

It is true that defence allocation, in particular, has been a source of constant worry in past years. It has effectively been shrinking as a percentage of gross domestic product. Worse, a large part of the expenditure goes to fund the wages and pensions bills, along with other current expenditure. The capital budget for defence is in any case too small, and much of it is taken up with tied expenditure — purchases already agreed upon, for example. The amount left for modernisation initiatives is too small. But short-circuiting the Constitutional provisions and shrinking the resource for states are not the answer to this conundrum. No one item on the Central List of the Constitution should be given priority over the State List and the Concurrent list in this manner. It is up to the Union government to decide how much it sets aside for defence from the revenue available to it. If it has not been doing so enough in recent years, it should reassess its overall expenditure, and not ask for the pool of taxes available for division be altered at the expense of states that have been more fiscally responsible.

The carve-out might also include spending on internal security. The paramilitary forces in India have been an exception to recent trends, growing in size, number, and expense. This cannot continue forever, especially as leftwing extremism is less virulent than it has been at times in the past decades. The Commission would do well to recognise the extreme political danger that a carve-out at the request of the Centre for internal security and defence poses to the federal structure of the country. If such a security-specific fund is created, it should not affect the revenue that goes to the states. The Centre should pay for it itself. Anything else would undermine the constitutional framework and might lead to serious problems in the coming years.

# Reforming agriculture

Farming needs to be made profitable

he proposal to link the allocation of Central funds to farm sector reforms in states, discussed at the first meeting of the chief ministers' committee on transforming agriculture, has many sides and needs careful examination before the final call is taken. While it is true that several well-judged farm sector reforms initiated by the Centre have failed to make much headway because of states' apathy, the denial of funding on this count may prove counterproductive, besides undermining the spirit of federalism. If the states' disinterest in Centre-sponsored reforms and other initiatives is owing to their own better plans to achieve the same objective, squeezing funds would be unfair. But if it is attributable to administrative lethargy and inefficiency or, worse, politically motivated one-upmanship, as is sometimes the case, harsher fiscal steps may not be unjustified.

Indeed, the idea of leveraging Central finances for nudging states to hasten reforms is not new. Even the National Institution for Transforming India (NITI) Aayog had advised the agriculture ministry in 2017 to tie up a part of the grant under the umbrella farm development scheme Rashtriya Krishi Vikas Yojana with the implementation of farm sector reforms. However, the proposition was not pursued due to the fear of backlash from state governments. But if some chief ministers are themselves veering round to this view, it may be worthwhile to try it out, even if on a selective basic. A beginning can be made to push reforms in fields such as agricultural marketing, land leasing, contract farming, crop insurance, and agricultural credit.

Another possible, albeit hard to execute, way to circumvent the states' indifference towards the Centre's farmer-oriented agenda could be to shift agriculture from the State list to the Concurrent List of the Constitution's Seventh Schedule. This would empower the Union government to play a greater and more decisive role in the development of agriculture without significantly diluting the powers of the state governments. Such a statutory translocation of agriculture was suggested by the MS Swaminathan-headed National Commission on Farmers in its fifth and final report in 2006. Of late, the Dalwai committee's report on the issues related to doubling farmers' income by 2022, presented to the government in September 2018, also favoured putting agricultural marketing on the Concurrent List.

However, the amendment to the Constitution for this purpose would require the support of two-third members of both houses of Parliament and an endorsement by a requisite number of state legislatures. It might be a tall order, but it would certainly not be unprecedented as such statutory amendments have been carried out in the past as well. Subjects like education, forests, and wildlife protection were moved from the State List to the Concurrent List through the 42nd amendment of the Constitution way back in 1976.

The substantive issue, really, is to carry forward some vital and, more importantly, need-based reforms in agriculture to restore profitability and mitigate farmers' lingering financial woes. Exit avenues also need to be created to let farmers quit farming if they intend to do so to improve their livelihood prospects. The chief ministers' panel can legitimately be expected to come out with practically feasible plans to rejuvenate the country's farm sector.



# Is China's loss India's gain?

To assess developments associated with the trade war, the data to focus on is the US import of goods from both the countries

S President Donald Trump has taken the US into a trade war with China. The early evidence suggests some gains from this for India. The deeper gains will arise, however, through the FDI decisions of the boards of global companies. which will play out over time. For India to make the best of this situation, we need to become more of a mature market economy, and play fair by the rules of the game of globalisation.

In a China-India comparison, the Chinese economy is bigger and the Chinese policy establishment is more capable. China has graduated to making sophisticated

goods, such as computer equipment, which India does not make. India's exports, so far, look more like those of a developing country. As a consequence, we may expect that the US-China trade war might not yield significant gains for India.

ILLUSTRATION: AJAY MOHANT

In order to assess the developments associated with the trade war. the data to focus on is the US import of goods from both countries. India does well on services exports to the **SNAKES & LADDERS** US, but we will keep those out of the analysis as the US-China trade war AJAY SHAH is primarily about goods. The latest

data, for the month of May 2019, shows that India's exports to the US were \$5.6 billion, China's exports to the US were \$39.3 billion and the total import of goods into the US was \$220.8 billion. India's value is, of course, much smaller than that of China.

How have the exports of these two countries been changing as a consequence of the US-China trade war? The highest ever value of China's share in US imports was in September 2015, at 23.87 per cent. From that high, there has been a decline to 17.78 per cent in the latest data, which was May 2019. Just one year prior to this, in May 2018, China's share was 21.5 per cent.

From the peak of September 2015 till the latest reading of May 2019, China's share in US imports has declined by 6.09 percentage points. This is a big change. Over this period, India's share in US imports went up from 1.92 per cent to 2.54 per cent. This is a gain of 0.62 percentage points. We may say that about a tenth of the share ceded by China has

To what extent are these changes about the recent trade war, and to what extent is there some deeper long-term phenomenon going on? The graph (above)

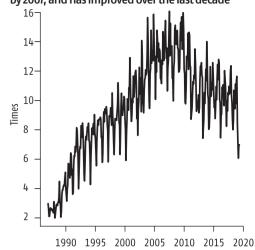
> shows China's exports of goods to the US divided by India's exports of goods to the US. Chinese exports were 2 to 4 times larger than India in the late 1980s, and this went up to 16 times bigger by 2007.

Over the last decade, the ratio has improved from India's point of view. Over and above this long-term process, it does look like the latest few data points have some gains for India in response to the US-China trade war.

How best can India play the emerging US-China trade conflict? The first point to emphasise is that most global trade takes place within multinational firms. When Walmart grows deep roots in India, Walmart will export more from India. For India to do well in exporting, we need global firms to commit to India, on a greater scale, and we need Indian multinationals to flourish. These effects will necessarily play out slowly. When a US-China trade war erupts, in the short run, global firms do not change course by much. But in the medium term, boards of global firms are constantly looking at the countries in which they operate and making

Chinese exports to the US were 2 to 4 times larger than India in the late 1980s. This went up to 16 times by 2007, and has improved over the last decade

**BIG OPPORTUNITY** 



changes based on their judgement about the countries that offer a better economic environment.

We have to get into the mind of the boards of global firms, which are grappling with the problem of their over-exposure to China. What can we do to become more attractive to them?

Improving India's attraction as an FDI destination is about the familiar issues of labour law, infrastructure, and taxation. Of these, taxation has become a particularly important problem. Tax policy and tax administration is a major concern for global operations. For India to be integrated into global supply chains, goods should seamlessly move into India, and then get reexported. This requires removing all customs duties, establishing a goods and services tax (GST) -on-imports and having zero-rating of exports. It also requires wellstructured operational procedures and a well behaved tax administration. The use of raids and imprisonment deters private persons from operating in India.

India now has the highest income tax rate for corporations in the world, and a source-based taxation system. This needs to shift to a residence-based taxation system, and an income tax rate for corporations (all inclusive) of 20 per cent.

India is seen as a difficult place to operate in, on account of policy risk. There is a danger of sudden change e g in customs duties. This requires deeper reform of the policy process. The process of making laws and regulations requires greater consultation, cost-benefit analysis, and introduction of rule changes from dates well into the future.

We should rein in our sense that China's loss is our gain. India has a lot to lose in the decline of a rules-based world of globalisation. We now earn ₹4 trillion per quarter from the export of services and ₹6 trillion per quarter from the export of goods. To make this more physically interpretable, we earn ₹0.44 trillion every calendar day through the export of goods and services. We already have a lot at stake in a globalised world. Looking into the future, it is likely that policy reforms in India (on the issues sketched above) will yield considerable growth of exports from India. We will have more at stake in

If Trumpism becomes the new normal, we will be at the receiving end of it at future dates. India's stance in international relations should emphasise the gains from a rule based world of open borders, where there is a low risk of new barriers to globalisation coming up.

The writer is a professor at National Institute of Public

# Consensus or confrontational politics?

heila Dikshit, Delhi's three-term chief minister court personally. She didn't stand on ceremony; she eration of low-floor and air-conditioned buses — all who passed away on July 20, must be remembered for her politics of consensus and negotitoday's age of highly polarised politics. It is also important if we consider that the objective of a government is to ensure delivery of development. And this is not possible without the ability to manage the contested realities and seek a collaborative solution. For me. this is the real art of politics. Unfortunately, we seem to be losing this art as hate and loud noise take over the airwayes and our world.

My encounter with Sheilaii (as she was known) began with a fight. In the late 1990s we were in the Supreme Court, arguing that Delhi's public transport must switch to cleaner compressed natural gas (CNG) fuel to combat its then deadly air pollution. This had become adversarial and contentious. The Union government was dead against it; the diesel lobby was arguing that CNG was explosive and untested. The Delhi government then headed by Sheilaji — was dragging its feet to make the transition.

Queues at petrol pumps were getting longer and longer as gas was not being delivered; buses were being burnt to show how CNG would not work. In the Supreme Court, the then solicitor general of India, Harish Salve, was hauling up the government for its deliberate inaction. The top court was getting more and more incensed and called for contempt proceedings to start against the Delhi chief minister.

Then all this changed. Sheilaji walked into the

didn't join the acrimony. She just ensured that orders ated settlement. This is even more important in We worked closely with her government through this period of transition to CNG. She didn't blink when the going was tough. She had the ability to make her bureaucrats deliver, not as sovereigns, but by including words and ideas from the "outside". She joined worlds effortlessly and with grace. This is another art in politics we are losing.

In the decade of the 2000s, attention shifted to

public transport to reduce vehicles on the road, and so pollution. I distinctly remember that she came to one of our meetings where we discussed the second-generation reforms after the transition to CNG. She didn't hesitate to chide us. She disagreed that the city could move towards public transport at the scale needed. She didn't think this was the way ahead. But she didn't shut the door on us. We persisted and

I believe it is we who failed her. Not the other way around. When she supported the now-dismantled

Bus Rapid Transit System (BRT), it was because she gave a chance to seemingly impossible ideas. It is our collective inability to design a system for the complexity of Delhi - one that would negotiate with the different road users and not antagonise needlessly which made the system fail. But she again did not give up on ideas. She dismantled the notorious Blue Line bus service, even though many politicians owned such buses. She supported the purchase of a new gen-

new and all untested. She understood the need for were to be followed. As they say, the rest is history. massive investment in public transport — metro, bus, and cycle — to reinvent mobility. Again, it was her governance abilities, combined with persuasive pow ers and without angst without finger-pointing, that brought these changes.

I am writing this not to call out the current leaders of my city or country. But to reminisce so that we can, perhaps for one moment, think of how politics of consensus will deliver. I know she lost the popular vote in 2013; I know that air pollution and many other problems of this ungovernable city with multiple authorities grew in her tenure. But the fact is that she never stopped trying. She never shunned responsibility. She mastered that elusive art of pushing for change without fuss.

One of the last times I met her was when she called to ask what she could do about the growing pollution in the city. She had lost the election a few vears earlier. But she was concerned, even agitated. She wanted to know what more governments could do, and what advice she could give. I told her frankly that she should not try. She would be attacked for not doing enough in her tenure. The blame-game machinery would go on overdrive. But she wrote to governments with her advice. I know, because she called to tell me, with some bemusement that she did not get any responses. What could I sav? The courtesy of a response was old-fashioned; her fashion. It would be really unfortunate if we let the Sheila Dikshit way of politics go out of fashion.

The writer is at the Centre for Science and Environment sunita@cseindia.org Twitter: @sunitanar

# Resurrecting the 'Greatest Victorian'



**BENJAMIN SCHWARZ** 

alter Bagehot (1826-77) — the British literary critic, banker, journalist, political sociologist, analyst of finance, social psychologist and editor of The National Review and The Economist — has never lacked for admirers. His devoted friend George Eliot concurred with the verdict of another close friend, Lord Bryce, that his "was perhaps the most original mind of his generation." Gladstone confided that both Liberal and

Bagehot's financial acumen that they looked to him as a "supplementary chancellor of the Exchequer." His posthumous idolaters have included Woodrow Wilson (who defined Bagehot's role as nothing less than "to clarify the thought of his generation"); Herbert Read, the modernist poet, anarchist philosopher, art critic and literary critic, who pronounced Bagehot's literary criticism "the best of its time" save for Matthew Arnold's; Jacques Barzun, the intellectual historian, who for decades championed him as "the greatest Victorian": and Ben Bernanke. who, in a memoir of the most recent financial crisis, cited Bagehot more often than any living economist. Nevertheless, Bagehot is fated to be best known for not being better known.

Conservative governments so prized

This limbo probably owes something

to the uncertain pronunciation of his name (most say "Badge-it"; some insist on "Bagot") and more to the wide range and seeming incongruity of his fields of expertise, as the disparate assortment of his celebrants suggests. Containing multitudes, Bagehot has been impossible to pigeonhole. Those who examine, say, his comparison of the role of the provinces in Tristram Shandy and the novels of Thackeray may well be unaware of Lombard Street, his tour de force anatomisation of the psychology of finance and banking panics and of the sociology of the London money market. "No book on banking," John Maynard Keynes wrote, "has ever attained such a position an undying classic," imbued with "the glamour of intense reality," it "is a perfect example of a certain kind of English writing, and its truth of human nature."

Those who champion his startling elu-

cidation of the social and psychological dimensions of the Crown and the House of Lords in The English Constitution tend to form a different constituency from those who look to his pioneering exploration of evolutionary political sociology in Physics and Politics (which William James pronounced a "golden little book"), and from those who see his most enduring contribution to be the creation of a new prose style — cool, ironic, epigrammatic, allusive, balanced, sometimes slangy - that remains part of the mental furniture of Oxbridge, Britain's Civil Service and what used to be called Britain's "higher journalism."

**DOWN TO EARTH** 

**SUNITA NARAIN** 

While a full appreciation of Bagehot has been hobbled by his polymathic attainments, he has nevertheless been fortunate in his devotees — even if, for the most part, each has been able to illuminate only specific aspects of his career and his genius.

In his new biography, Bagehot: The Life and Times of the Greatest Victorian, James Grant follows this pattern, burnishing his subject's reputation but offering a somewhat limited appraisal of Bagehot's achievements.

Mr Grant is a biographer of Bernard Baruch and John Adams, and the founder and editor of the cheeky and stylish Grant's Interest Rate Observer. The characterisation that the highbrow Labour Party politician Richard Crossman (another Bagehot devotee) bestowed on Bagehot's writing a "mixture of rollicking cynicism and cool analysis" — applies to Mr Grant's own brilliantly contrarian criticism in the Interest Rate Observer, The Financial Times and elsewhere of market recklessness, bankers' irresponsibility and (to Grant) their concomitant, the expansive monetary policies of the Federal Reserve that have defined the booms and busts of

the past 30-odd years. This biography, though, takes wing only when it treats Bagehot's role as a banker and financial journalist. That these are the very aspects of Bagehot's work that have been relatively neglected by most scholars. who have tended to concentrate on his literary, political and sociological oeuvre, might be reason enough to commend Mr Grant's excellent if uneven biography. Bagehot scholarship, however, isn't accretive, and the 1959 book The Spare Chancellor, by the worldly British journalist Alastair Buchan, remains the most astute, elegant and historically informed assessment of Bagehot's entire life and work — including his participation in and analysis of the powerful and precarious world of finance.

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**BAGEHOT** The Life and Times of the **Greatest Victorian James Grant** 

WW Norton & Company; \$29.95; 334 pages

**SUBRAMANIAN** 

shobhana.subramanian @expressindia.com

Hard

Times

With neither consumption demand nor investment expected

to pick up soon, there's more pain ahead

between 12-18 months before the private sector starts adding capacity.

■ **HE MOSTTELLING** statement during earnings season usually comes from R

Shankar Raman, director, Larsen & Toubro. For nearly a dozen quarters now,

Shankar Raman has been saying that private sector capex is some time away.

This time around too, he was as pessimistic, estimating it could take anywhere

That is pretty much the tone. The Asian Paints management believes the environment

is challenging and is keeping its fingers crossed the monsoon is a good one. At HUL, the man-

agement suggested no triggers for an immediate demand recovery, citing the slow rhythm

of the economy and persistent channel liquidity issues. Tata Motors chief financial officer,

PB Balaji expects ebit margins for the domestic business to see a marginal correction due to

'market uncertainties'. Tata Motors reported a debilitating loss of ₹3,679 crore for the three

would be safe to say it could get worse before it gets better. It is not easy to recover from a

staggering ₹4,800 crore loss that Vodafone/Idea posted, especially since this isn't the first

but the optimism seems largely misplaced. It's possible though managements are

merely making the right noises to keep the morale up. Because right now, it's hard to

see what exactly is going to trigger the revival. It can't be consumption demand; the high

the NPA cycle is far from peaking. That is a wake-up call to be heeded and already, analysts have started paring earnings; there are sure to be many more cuts before the season is over. They have good reason to do so, because this slowdown isn't going away in a hurry. Both the engines—private household consumption led by a deceleration in savings and acceler-

ated government spending on the back of large deficits—may be sputtering. Prospects of

more job cuts—1,700 at the Nissan factory—are going to hurt demand further. At Jubilant

Foods, for instance, same-store sales grew just 4.1% y-o-y, slowing down from the 6% levels reported in 4QFY19. Credit flows to several sections of the economy have been cut off,

with many of the NBFCs strapped for liquidity and some close to insolvency; while banks may

be flush with funds, they are reluctant to lend, except to top-rated clients. That, then, excludes

the vast majority of borrowers. A good example of this can be seen in HDFC Bank's Q1FY20

loan growth, which at 17% y-o-y was the slowest in the past ten quarters. The lower growth

is the result of a steep decline in corporate lending, slowdown in unsecured loans, and muted

growth in auto and two-wheeler credit. Kotak Mahindra Bank (KMB) has also seen a mod-

eration in loan growth; the book including Kotak Prime grew 15% y-o-y, given a sharp

moderation in the vehicle segment, down 4% y-o-y. Additionally, corporate loans are see-

2019-20 is lower than it was last year. If demand does not pick up soon, manufactur-

ers will find it hard to raise prices; at this point though, even bigger volumes would be

helpful.At Maruti Suzuki, volumes fell 18% y-o-y during the quarter while at JSW Steel

they fell 3% y-o-y. Also, given that there has been a fair bit of belt tightening these past

couple of years—savings have been eked out from employee exits, efficient procure-

ment of raw materials, less capex and better inventory management of working capi-

tal—it is hard to see much more taking place. A fall in input prices would, of course, come

Indeed, the India Inc spreadsheet is not a pretty sight. There may not be too many

blotches of red, but most companies are struggling to hold on to their profits. Profits for

a sample of 252 companies have fallen 14% y-o-y in Q1FY20. While managements have

been working hard to rein in costs, margins are under pressure contracting 40 basis

points y-o-y; excluding TCS and Reliance, revenues grew just 3.5% y-o-y while profits

crashed 28% y-o-y. From telecom to two-wheelers and cars to consumer goods, there's

**Shirking RESPONSIBILITY** 

J&J refusing to meaningfully compensate the victims of

its faulty hip implants in India is condemnable

OHNSON & JOHNSON (J&J), the American pharma, is in the eye of a storm of

its own making, having refused to compensate over 1,000 Indians who are suf-

fering from severe pain, mobility restriction, metal toxicity in blood, and repro-

ductive complications as a result of having Articular Surface Replacement (ASR)

hip implants from a J&J subsidiary in their bodies. The implant was found to be leak-

ing cobalt and chromium into patients' bloodstream, and was recalled in 2010—the

company became liable to pay for replacement surgeries. While as many as 4,700 Indi-

ans are reported to have received faulty hip implants between 2004 and 2010, so far,

only 1,080 have been tracked, many of whom were unaware of the fault in the prod-

uct or the compensatory corrective surgery J&J was sponsoring. In relation to this, the

Central Drugs Standard Control Organisation curated a list of 250 individuals who

were to receive a compensation package ranging between ₹30 lakh and ₹1.23 crore per

head, based on a formula that factored in extent of harm, age, etc. However, J&J argued

that the formula for compensation was opaque, and in an independent investigation

 $the pharma\,giant\,has\,refused\,compensatory\,payment\,to\,Indian\,patients\,who\,received$ 

its Pinnacle implant and suffer from the same complications as their counterparts

with the ASR implant. This, when J&J agreed to pay \$1 billion to settle as many as 6,000

lawsuits filed by US patients who had used its faulty Pinnacle model early in May this

year. J&J is claiming that the Pinnacle model was not recalled, but only withdrawn, in

India to reduce its liability, and asserting that there are no cases of Indian patients suf-

fering adverse effects from usage of its Pinnacle implant despite independent inves-

tigations finding an increasing number of such people, many of whom have tried to

contact the company, only to be stonewalled. The prejudice shown by J&J in its attitude

Even as the central government takes on J&J in a legal battle at the Delhi High Court,

came up with a list of 67 patients eligible for a compensation of ₹25 lakh.

The Budget provided no stimulus whatsoever; in fact the total capex budgeted for

ing an economy-linked slowdown; they grew at about 9% y-o-y.

as a big boost to users, but not to producers.

pain everywhere. We need to do more than pray.

The farm sector

remains in deep

distress as seen from

the high and rising

delinquencies at M&M

Financial Services; the

gross NPAs inched up

30% plus quarter-on-

quarter (q-o-q) to

7.4% due to seasonal

weaknesses

If one was to ask whether the worst is over or whether there is more stress ahead, it

There is some expectation the environment will change in the second half of FY20,

months to June, a reflection of the anaemic demand both at home and overseas.

loss; at JSW Steel, consolidated profits plunged by over 50% year-on-year (y-o-y).

frequency data isn't pointing to a recovery just yet.

vehicles from a growth of 3-5% to a de-growth of

2-3%; for CVs it trimmed the estimate from a10-

12% increase to just 2-3%. The farm sector remains in

deep distress as seen from the high and rising delin-

quencies at M&M Financial Services; the gross NPAs

inched up 30% plus quarter-on-quarter (q-o-q) to 7.4%

due to seasonal weaknesses, but analysts are convinced

these will rise further given the sharp deterioration in

the economic environment. In a worrying observation,

analysts at Nomura noted that while historically, asset

quality has had seasonality, a 30% q-o-q spike in

GNPAs, coupled with a worsening economic situation,

increasing rural stress and a weaker monsoon leads

them to believe that the asset quality improvement

cycle has peaked. Indeed, given the large number of rat-

ings downgrades over the past three months it is clear

SIAM on Friday lowered the guidance for passenger

# MONDAY, JULY 29, 2019



# BENGAL POLITICAL VIOLENCE

BJP leader, Sushma Swaraj

I am surprised that these incidents happened under a leader who herself faced such violent atrocities under the CPI(M). Mamtaji told me that my people have been mutilated in political violence

# NEW REGULATORY REGIME **SHOBHANA**

IT IS TIME THAT INDIA RELIES ON AND EMPOWERS SECTORAL REGULATORS SET UP BY PARLIAMENT, AND BACKED BY STATUTORY POWERS, AS PARTNERS IN ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

# Indian regulators 2.0: Call for economic justice

GOPAL

Views are personal

**JAIN** 

**HE NEW BUDGET AIMS** to put the economy on track, which requires a real 'big boost.' The government has clearly declared its intent to attract investments as part of the Naya India Mission. Investment in infrastructure and technology, innovation and recapitalisation of banks to ensure finance and liquidity are national priorities.

A regulatory 'booster shot' is one measure that can do the trick. This requires an intensive, creative, 360degree, holistic approach. Various sectors of the economy and institutions have to fire all guns, delivering and implementing effectively to translate this goal into ground reality.

Parliament set up sectoral regulators, backed with statutory powers. The time has now come to rely on and empower these regulators—the new age economic regulators—as partners in economic development. This can set the stage for Indian Regulators 2.0—an institution that delivers and implements key national objectives and scripts improvement of the ease of doing business by dishing out an innovative recipe that creates an investment-friendly environment. Some food for thought:

Creating the right soil

India's Mission \$5-trillion-economy requires core sectors to perform and pile runs on the board. Regulators can play a catalytic role in creating a vibrant, conducive and commercial ecosystem to trigger a cycle of sustained investments.

The power sector is a classic example that can bring more power to The sector needs recharging/re-energising for deliver-

ing/fulfilling the national goal, i.e., round-the-clock affordable power. This requires the generating companies to invest, to augment generation and create a world-class transmission network. In turn, distribution entities who buy power to supply to consumers must honour payment obligations fully and on time. Similarly, the problem of call drops irking consumers in telecom can be resolved by upgrading existing infrastructure, expanding network capacity and bringing cutting edge technology to the sector.

Senior advocate, Supreme Court of India

All this requires a flow of significant and continuous investments. In turn, investments require safety and returns in line with established regulatory norms/benchmarks. Regulators must act as long-distance thinkers and do regulatory forecasting, i.e., create a framework for fullfledged economic regulation.

# Regulator as an institution for economic justice

To be the go-to forum, a proactive, forward looking and resolution based approach, which delivers/implements, is vital to win back the confidence of investors.

The role of the regulator needs to be viewed through a wider lens—from being a mere tariff settler to the soluprovider of sectoral

problems/issues. The regulator as an institution must be the port of call with a ready tool kit to nurse the sector back to health. A robust regime based on economic viability and eco-

The right regulatory

recipe creates the turf

which allows full play

of market forces

within an overarching

governance regime, is

resolution based and

sets upfront the rules

of the game, which

remain unchanged

nomic justice will secure/increase sectoral returns.

## Regulatory dialogue

Just like chefs take into account food preferences and give their dishes a 'personal touch', the regulator must have deep and wide-ranging dialogue. Open and transparent communication with multiple stakeholders, based on a wealth of

expertise, nip sectoral problems in the bud, remove existing bottlenecks and pave a smooth path ahead. The relationship between the regulator and the regulated should move from a set of "dos and don'ts" for the industry to full-fledged cooperation in order to find innovative, path breaking and effective solutions.

# **Sanctity of contracts**

The most disheartening feeling at a restaurant is to be told that your

favourite dish on the menu is not available. Sanctity of contracts is the bedrock, and prompt and timely payment based on honouring the word will bring certainty, predictability and stability, pushing India up the ease of doing business rankings and making it a win-win.

Let us ensure that what is on the menu is served.

The Supreme Court, in a recent landmark judgement, recognised the concept of economic justice in the context of contractual/commercial rights. Regulators must ensure sanc-

> tity of contracts is in place.

The right regulatory recipe creates the turf which allows full play of market forces within an overarching governance regime, is resolution based and sets upfront the rules of the game, which remain unchanged. This can trigger a regulatory leap forward to make the transition from unease to ease of business. We have to repose

complete trust in our regulators and invest in the regulatory mechanism to trigger returns and rewards for all stakeholders. Make in India regulators, i.e., world-class regulators and regulations will get Indian regulators global recognition and can do the trick for investors to take the flight (with capital) to India.

By following the regulatory recipe, things will be on track and in order, that way the dish will be cooked to perfection—a tasty dish that has a long-lasting and lingering effect.

# Europe's privacy rules hurt small firms

GDPR can only serve Europeans' privacy needs if there's a level playing field for the giants and the smaller companies. That means imposing similar costs relative to their size. That's not the case now



50 million euros is

not even a

mosquito bite for

Google, and other

tech companies—

most notably that

other greedy data

Inc



THE EUROPEAN COMMISSION is largely happy with the first year of its sweeping digital privacy rules. Evidence mounts, however, that the General Data Protection Directive, or GDPR, as applied today hurts smaller firms and has no effect on tech giants, which are the least interested in preserving user privacy.

The directive went into effect in May 2018, demanding companies provide privacy by design and by default on all digital platforms and websites. It laid down the rules for collecting and processing private data, including the cases in which consent is necessary for their harvesting. This week, the commission put out an optimistic progress report, describing the GDPR's first year as "overall positive" and suggesting a number of mild improvements in applying it.

The report said, among other things, that the national privacy watchdogs tasked with enforcing the GDPR had "focused on dialogue rather than sanctions, in particular for the smallest operators which do not process personal data as a core activity."This explains why there are few examples of anyone being fined for noncompliance, though, according to the directive, sanctions can be quite severe—up to 4% of global annual sales.

The fines that actually have been imposed range from 5,000 euros (\$5,558) on a sports-betting cafe in Austria for illegal video surveillance to 50 million euros on Google in France for the opaque process of signing in for a Google account, all but necessary to use an Android smartphone. In between, there are some penalties of hundreds of thousands of euros, such as 220,000 for a Polish data broker that failed to inform people that their data was being processed. Altogether, authorities in the entire European Economic Area (which includes the EU member-states plus Norway, Iceland and Liechtenstein) have imposed just 56 million euros worth of fines.

But 50 million euros is not even a mosquito bite for Google, and other tech companies—most notably that other greedy data harvester, Facebook Inchaven't been taken to task at all. This

despite manywell-grounded complaints filed against some of them by activists, most notably the Austrian lawyer Max Schrems' NOYB (None of Your Business) initiative, which was also behind the successful complaint against Google in France.Indeed, it was a US regulator, not a European one, that slapped a \$5 billion penalty on Facebook for privacy violations this week—even though the US lacks a comprehensive regulatory framework like the GDPR.

It is hard to quantify the exact impact of the GDPR on the internet giants, but they haven't stopped growing in Europe. That, however, can't be said of many

smaller digital businesses. According to a recent paper by Samuel Goldberg from Northwestern University, Garrett Johnson from Boston University and Scott Shriver from the University of Colorado, these have seen 10% lower European page views and revenues since the GDPR went into effect. Among e-commerce sites, revenue dropped by 8.3%, or

\$8,000 a week for the median site. The economists used data from the Adobe Analytics platform, tracking the traffic and sales of 1,500 firms from various industries, which generate a total of about \$500 million in weekly revenues.

The losses likely weren't driven by more privacy awareness among users: More than 90% of them consent to the collection and processing of their data when prompted to do so. Rather, the GDPR deterred companies from using email and display ads to drive traffic, because these methods require the use of personal data; it has also reduced the number of third-party cookies on websites, making it more difficult to track consumer behavior.

The data analysed by Goldberg and collaborators aren't the first indication that the privacy regime has hurt the smaller digital players. Last year, another

group of researchers found that venture funding for European tech firms dropped off after the directive came into effect. One possible reason is that the increased compliance costs and reduced marketing opportunities have adversely affected European startups' business models and made them less competitive with peers in other parts of the world.

The contrast between the GDPR's hard-to-detect impact on the biggest data harvesters, whose compliance is reluctant and largely nominal, and its demonstrated adverse effect on smaller companies makes it difficult to understand why the European Commission

> finds the first-year experience positive.

The national data privacy authorities are illequipped to deal with the giants. Before the GDPR came into effect, most of them asked for 30% to 50% funding increases but none received that much; in fact, two of the national watchdogs saw their fundharvester, Facebook ing cut and three others didn't receive any extra money. With their inadequate resources, they had

> to handle more than 200,000 GDPR cases. Big Tech's expensive legal teams can run circles around such overstretched opposition. To be fair, the EU progress report

> does call for strengthening the watchdogs. But without big rulings, political justification for the extra spending will be hard to come by. The GDPR can only serve Europeans'

privacy needs if there's a level playing field for the giants and the smaller companies. That means imposing similar costs relative to their size. That's not the case now, and the European Commission doesn't appear to see it as a problem. This makes the privacy rules much less of a shining example to the rest of the world than they could have been.

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

# **LETTERS TO** THE EDITOR

# The issue of BREXIT

Boris Johnson's elevation as Prime Minister of Britain has come at the time when the country is deeply divided over the issue of Brexit. Given his harder stance on Brexit and the language he used to deploy against Brexit deal negotiated by his predecessor Teresa, one could not help but conclude that Boris Johnson would dare to walk out from European Union(EU) with no deal. As the October 31 deadline fastly approaches for Britain to strike a final honourable exit deal with EU, the new incumbent needs to show pragmatism and statesmanship to ensure Britain's exit from EU is less painful and does not inflict disastrous consequences on country's economy. — M Jeyaram, Sholavandan

# Ban cola drinks

Mega-star Amitabh Bachchan once

disclosed at Indian Institute of Management (IIM) Ahmedabad about his not advertising for cola drinks after a school-student at Jaipur drew his attention about harmful ingredients in cola-drinks. It is significant that cola-companies voluntarily stopped selling coladrinks in schools worldwide in view of increasing obesity in schoolgoing children. Indian government should also not only ban advertisements, but even sale of cola drinks in the country. Earlier also, soft-drink manufacturers were asked to remove an oil from their products which was found to be harmful for health. It is time that Union government, Indian Agricultural Research Institute (IARI) and soft-drink manufacturers should revive drinks like old and famous rose-flavoured ones, which can not only replace cola-drinks in India but even dominate global-market by breaking monopoly of harmful coladrinks in tune with ambitious 'Make in India' concept of Prime Minister. It will rather earn foreign-revenue for the country rather than Indian money being drained out to multinational cola-manufacturers. — Subhash C Agarwal, Delhi

Write to us at feletters@expressindia.com

towards the well-being of its Indian customers is condemnable, especially against the backdrop of its action in the US.

R.N.l. Reg. No. 6188/61 Printed for the proprietors, The Indian Express (P) Ltd by Vaidehi Chintaman Thakar at The Indian Express Towers, Nariman Point, Mumbai-400 021. Editorial & Administrative Offices: Express Towers, Nariman Point, Mumbai-400 021. Phone: 22022627/67440000. Fax: 022-22856323. Chairman of the Board: Viveck Goenka, Managing Editor: Shobhana Subramanian\* (\*Responsible for selection of news under the PRB Act) © Copyright: The Indian Express (P) Ltd. All rights reserved. Reproduction in any manner, electronic or otherwise, in whole or in part, without prior written permission is prohibited. The Financial Express (P) Ltd. All rights reserved.

**FINANCIAL EXPRESS** 

**HE JOBS DEBATE** rages on. Naysayers and the Delhi Leftist Economic Club claim increasing unemployment. The facts are that India recorded impressive growth between 2014-2019. Nominal GDP grew by an estimated ₹78 lakh crore—69.2% growth at a CAGR of 10.9%—implausible without a corresponding increase in employment.

Oft-quoted surveys, like PLFS (Ministry of Labour) and Consumer Pyramids (CMIE), indicate a decline in employment. However, they survey merely 105,000 and 160,000 households, respectively; not statistically representative of 1.35 billion people since the context in which people work has fundamentally changed. Many scholars have also pointed out technical challenges in the surveys. Further, there is significant economic variance among states, and even within states, as shown in our previous article (https://bit.ly/2IsxvIJ).India's economic composition has also changed dramatically in the last ten years, rendering some survey methodologies outdated. We need new data sampling methodologies, including employment databases, that account for these factors.

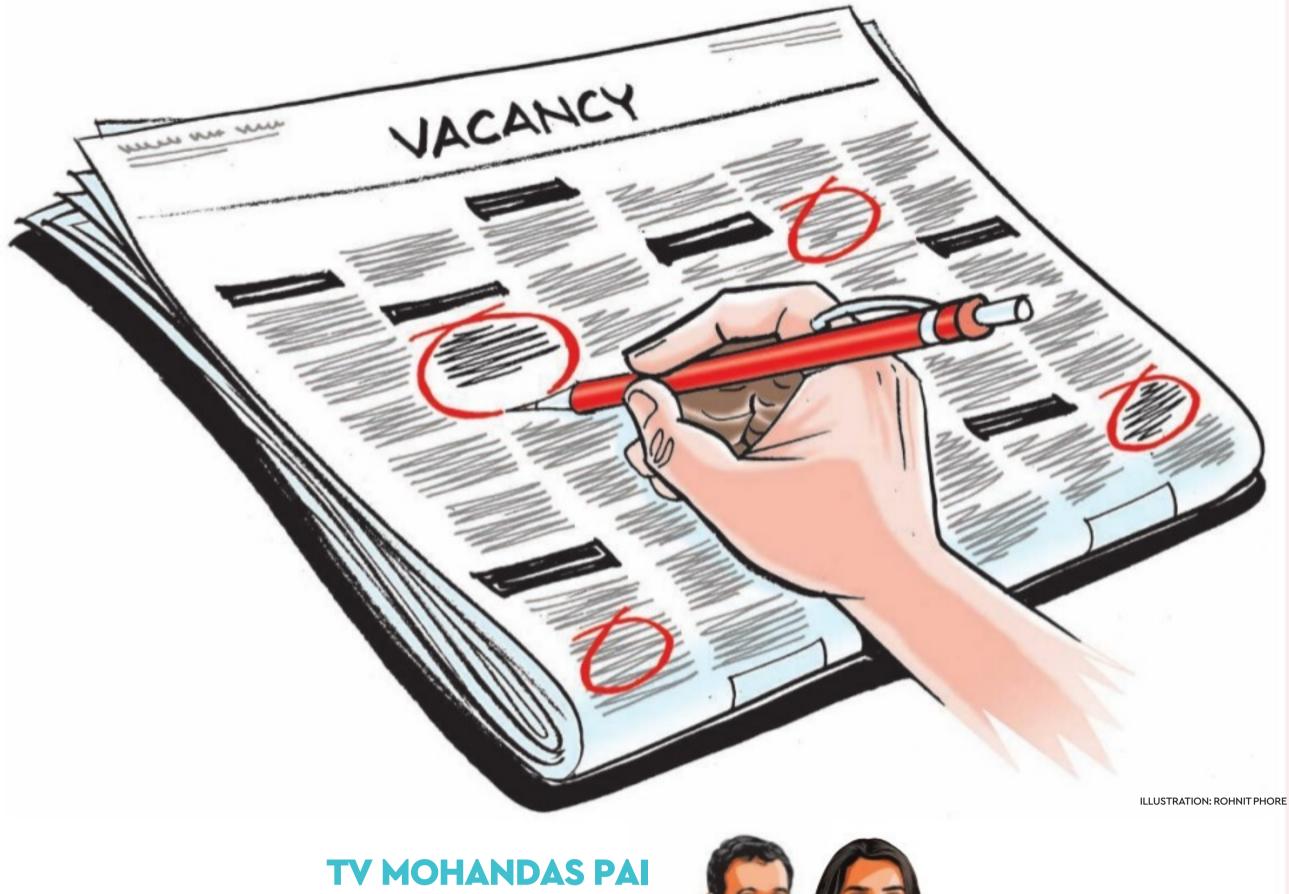
It is time policymakers and economy watchers analyse data from sources like EPFO (Employee Provident Fund Organization), ESI (Employee State Insurance), NPS (National Pension Scheme), IT returns, vehicle sales, Mudra scheme, and others. Steadily, these databases are linking subscribers to Aadhar and can be crossmapped. EPFO, ESI and NPS publish monthly reports, with disaggregated data from September 2017, and serve as useful starting points.

EPFO applies to entities with 20+ employees across 190 industry classifications. EPFO records new subscribers every month upon payment of contribution and classifies them by age group, industry, and state. The latest June 2019 payroll report shows gross number of new EPF subscribers in FY19 is 1.39 crore (see graphic). Accounting for people who joined and then exited, and in some cases rejoined in the same FY, net number of new subscribers is 1.12 crore—representing the net number of people who got a new job during the year.

An applicable entity, on crossing the 20-employee mark, is inducted into EPFO. One criticism is that EPFO does not indicate new jobs but only formalisation, because existing employees are inducted in this manner. This criticism doesn't hold because we can easily account for this. 60,884 establishments remitted their first electronic challan (ECR) in 2018-19; factoring this by 20 gives us 12.17 lakh new subscribers, which are existing employees getting formalised. Subtracting 12.17 lakh from the net number yields just over 1 crore new jobs (see graphic). Further, new employees over the 20-employee minimum of existing entities count as new jobs.

EPFO's methodology was recently updated.In the old MOSPI format, the subtraction of exiting employees included those that had joined before the FY started instead of only those who had registered in the FY. Methodology was revised to count the number of exits, as well as those who rejoined in the same FY, correctly. If a person quits and joins a new job, the record must reflect in both columns. With the correction, the net new subscribers excluding formalisation are at 1.003 crore.

Of the 1.12 crore (see graphic), the highest number is 28.6 lakh, in the age bracket of 22-25 years. A very close second is 27.8 lakh in the 18-21 year bracket. In the below-18-years group, the record is 1.01 lakh. The sum of net new subscribers in these three groups, till age 25, is 57.4 lakh. Census data shows that over the last 30 years, 2.5 crore babies were born every year, on average. With approximately 2.5 crore people attaining the age of 21 every year, of which, let us assume, 60% look for employment, across levels of education—we arrive at 1.5 crore need-





# Where are the jobs?

Oft-quoted surveys, like PLFS and CMIE, indicating decline is employment are misleading as they contain methodological flaws, and are not statistically representative of India's population. More nuanced analysis paints a brighter picture of the status of employment in the country.

ing jobs incrementally every year. With a total of 56.4 lakh new subscribers in the 18-25 year age bracket, we must look at higher education data to correlate the number of college graduates who enter the job market. A majority in the 18-25 years category could have either graduated from high school or progressed substantially in higher education. The 26-28 year age bracket recorded 13.9 lakh new subscribers, who could either have postgraduate degrees or maybe took a break and started a second job.

The accompanying graphic shows the 2018-19 EPFO data, disaggregated by state and age group, correlating with 2017-18 AISHE graduation data. This is the old MOSPI format, with new subscribers totaling 61.1 lakh. Applying the corrected methodology across state data might reveal new patterns. India's GER in 2017-18 was 25.8, and 89.6 lakh students graduated in total. These are people who completed college and may be seeking formal employment. The coverage ratio of new jobs in the 18-28 age bracket in 2018-19 to graduates in 2017-18 is also presented.

In the representative states in the North-Central-East zones, total new subscribers in the 18-28 age bracket were 7.3 lakh while the number of college pass-outs was nearly 40 lakh. Uttar Pradesh is a significant contributor here—it has an impressive GER of 25.9 and 17 lakh graduates—but the coverage ratio is only 11.4%. States like Bihar,

# Table 1: Net number of new subscribers recorded by EPFO in FY18-19, by age group

Age	Net new EPF subscribers	Total
< 18	1,01,851	1,12,50,214
18-21	27,77,760	Exc. formalisation
22-25	28,63,278	1,00,32,534
26-28	13,86,142	Old MOSPI
29-35	19,99,329	format total
35+	21,21,854	61,12,223

Table 3: NPS subscriber data showing growth in government employment (data from PRFDA)

Subscribers (lakhs)	March 2015	March 2016	March 2017	March 2018	March 2019
Central Govt	15.12	16.58	17.89	19.22	19.85
State Govt	26.30	29.24	33.32	38.68	43.21
Total Govt	41.42	45.82	51.21	57.90	63.06
Y-o-Y Growth	8.02	4.40	5.39	6.69	5.16
Y-o-Y growth rate	24.0%	10.6%	11.8%	13.1%	8.9%

Table 2: Net new subscribers by age group for representative states in each zone recorded in EPFO in the old MOSPI format, AISHE data from MHRD\*

Zones			EPFO 2018-19				AISHE 2017-18		Coverage ratio of
		Age 18-21	Age 22-25	Age 26-28	Age 18-28	Total (all ages)	GER College Pass-out		Age 18-28 jobs to pass-outs%
+ A	Uttar Pradesh	1,03,205	68,444	21,601	1,93,250	2,52,773	25.9	17,01,557	11.4%
NORTH- CENTRAL	Rajasthan	66,163	44,997	12,502	1,23,662	1,77,332	21.7	6,86,995	18.0%
N N	Madhya Pradesh	49,644	38,571	16,030	1,04,245	1,42,061	21.2	4,63,449	22.5%
EAST	Jharkhand	15,760	14,737	8,008	38,505	55,616	18.0	1,51,724	25.4%
	Odisha	17,882	16,129	4,289	38,300	35,489	22.0	2,14,911	17.8%
	Bihar	13,167	16,992	12,143	42,302	88,293	13.0	3,76,973	11.2%
	West Bengal	73,101	79,502	36,094	1,88,697	2,63,553	18.7	3,85,507	48.9%
	Tamil Nadu	2,60,699	1,26,990	26,479	4,14,168	5,02,020	48.6	8,77,008	47.2%
E	Andhra Pradesh	45,100	36,978	17,495	99,573	1,51,024	30.9	3,85,572	25.8%
SOUTH	Telangana	1,28,393	1,23,214	42,274	2,93,881	4,04,079	35.7	3,19,539	92.0%
•	Karnataka	2,65,827	2,19,708	53,295	5,38,830	6,18,080	27.8	5,06,839	106.3%
ST	Maharashtra	5,31,060	4,86,518	1,68,034	11,85,612	15,75,943	31.1	8,67,599	136.7%
WEST	Gujarat	2,29,793	1,37,373	50,496	4,17,662	5,55,525	20.1	3,55,305	117.6%
	All India	23,42,998	17,71,705	5,78,759	46,93,462	61,12,223	25.8	89,68,546	52.3%

\*Coverage ratio computed by authors. (Odisha's total EPFO number is less than Age 18-28 because data shows a significant number quit in the 35+ age bracket)

Jharkhand and Rajasthan have low GER and low coverage ratios. West Bengal has a higher coverage ratio, 49%, but low GER, 18.7, which must be improved along with formal job creation.

Even in the more industrialised South-West, some states are unable to provide formal employment on par with graduation rates. Tamil Nadu, with India's highest GER at 48.6, has a coverage ratio of 47% while Andhra Pradesh is at 25.8%. Karnataka and Maharashtra have 100%+ coverage ratios, which is a good sign—representative of economies that have a substantial services contribution. It also indicates sizeable migration towards Bengaluru and Mumbai as zones of high employment. The same could account for Telangana at 92% with Hyderabad.Gujarat,remarkably,also has a 100%+ coverage ratio. However, GER is 20.1—lower than all-India GER—and can be improved to feed Gujarat's formal job creation engine.

ESI enrolment applies to 10+ employ ee entities across 90 industries. In 2017-18, ESI showed an increase of 17.97 lakh, with 6.1% growth. There could be some double counting between ESI and EPFO subscribers.

NPS scheme is availed by citizens and government employees alike. Since 2004, new government employees are necessarily added on a defined contribution basis. PFRDAdata (see graphic) shows that number of new government employees has increased by 21.64 lakh from FY15 to FY19, 52.2% at a CAGR of 11%—indicating employment growth in the government sector as well. In FY19, 5.16 lakh new government employees registered.

Above data clearly shows job creation as new subscribers in EPFO, NPS and ESICexcluding formalisation—invariably equal new jobs. Previous articles by authors Pai and Baid analyse the transportation sector (https://bit.ly/2FtPrSS)and tax-paying professionals (https://bit.ly/2T7pXy7) to demonstrate creation of jobs from other data sources. Ghosh and Ghosh also demonstrated the use of these databases to estimate job creation.

Amidst employment data, however, it is clear that India needs to fix the following:

1.Not enough high-paying jobs are being created for graduates. It is probable that most jobs recorded in EPFO are low paying in the ₹25-30,000 bracket. Data (https://bit.ly/2K5gnbD) shows that number of salaried taxpayers probably with salaries exceeding ₹5 lakh/year has increased from 1.70 crore in AY15 to 2.33 crore in AY18. This could also include existing employees. Correlating ITR data with EPFO subscribers will give an idea of income levels in formal jobs and needs further study.

2. Some states with a significant num ber of graduates are not providing adequate employment. This results in higher unemployment and emigration towards cities with opportunities. For example, there are 1.5 lakh Bengali IT engineers in Bangalore; significantly higher than those in their home state.

3. Women stand to lose the most as they cannot migrate easily, either due to caregiving duties or conservatism. Our previous (https://bit.ly/2WSFKWq) shows that female GER rose from 19.4 in FY12 to 25.4 in FY18, and continues upward PLFS indicates decline in workforce participation of educated women—19.8% unemployment in 2017-18 compared to

10% in FY12. Formal jobs must be cre-

ated in home states to employ graduates.

Regardless, it is challenging for anyone to make claims of growing unemployment based on thin surveys. Instead, one must assemble large datasets from multiple databases-EPFO, ESI, NPS, vehicle sales, IT returns, Mudra and others—and collate with Aadhar. Using the latest big data analytical tools, an appropriate jobs report reflecting facts and the on-ground reality can be prepared to direct policy decisions.

# **NEIGHBOURHOOD WATCH**

#### **EXT YEAR WILL MARK** the 100th birth anniversary of Sheikh Bangabandhu Mujibur Rahman, whose struggles delivered independence for Bangladesh. It provides an opportunity for us to learn to appreciate that country better. For what that country stands for. For what their aspirations are. For why they are totally deserving and justifiably of India's respect.

The first description that needs correction is the Indian characterisation of the events of 1971 on the eastern front as an India-Pakistan war. It wasn't. Instead, it should be seen as Bangladesh's war of independence. Yes, India fought Pakistan. Yes, we sent our army in. Yes, the air force followed thereafter. But let none forget that while 3,900 Indian soldiers died and another 9,851 were wounded, the loss of Bangladeshi life was far more. Some say that the genocide unleashed by Pakistan caused upwards of 3 million deaths. If the quantum of sacrifice made by its people is any criteria, it was clearly Bangladesh's fight in which India provided substantial assistance with men and material to help the local population capture power.

At the 100th anniversary celebrations that start in March next year, no other country has as much claim to be on the main stage as India. During the 1971 war, only India and Russia were with Bangladesh. China sided with Pakistan, but clearly Bangladesh has mended fences with China, with the latter offering to invest huge sums of money in Bangladesh. Even with Pakistan, Bangladesh's relations are on even keel, as evidenced by the sociocultural interaction between the two countries from time to time. While it is

# A new Bangladesh is emerging

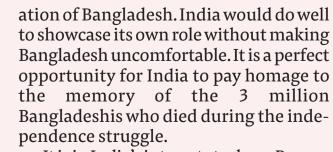
Earlier termed a basket case, terrorist haven, Bangladesh is now aboard the development train





true that Sheikh Hasina's Awami League has sided with India on issues involving Pakistan, the same cannot be said of the two main opposition parties, namely Begum Zia's BNP or late General Ershad's Jatiya Party, both of whom gave Hasina hell for cosying up to India.

It has been 48 years since independence. For more than half the period, Bangladesh had governments that were not favourably disposed towards having good friendly ties with India even when they may not always been completely inimical. The population of Bangladesh, at the time of its independence in 1971, was 65 million; today, it is 165 million. Which means that most of the population has no recollection of Mujib and his sacrifices or India's contribution. The 100th anniversary is a perfect opportunity to tell them about Bangabandhu, his sacrifices and his contribution to the cre-



It is in India's interests to do so. Bangabandhu, or friend of Bengal, Mujib wore his Bengali identity proudly on his sleeve. Which is how, even today, the Bengali identity trumps the Muslim identity for most Bangladeshis. The anniversary provides an opportunity to reinforce this in the minds of the post-independence generation. From India's point of view, that alone will be enough to provide a bulwark against mass radicalisation of the population. Bangladesh attaches great value to its secular credentials, and the fact that there are more than 100 temples where daily worship takes place is testimony to



there, we, in India, need to change. The Indian mindset on Bangladesh has to change. Take the name in front of anyone and everything you likely hear is negative. Illegal migration. Basket case. Poor country. Terrorist haven. There is no denying that Bangladesh has its share of problems. But today's Bangladeshi is a proud Bangladeshi. And there is much for him to be proud of. And he wants to be

The Brookings Institution calls Bangladesh one of Asia's most remarkable and unexpected success stories in

appreciated for it. With good reason, too.



cient in food and earned the world's respect when they gave shelter to the Rohingyas fleeing persecution in Myanmar, in much the same way India did when millions of Bangladeshis took sation that can hurt India. But to get refuge in India in 1971. Even Pakistan calls Bangladesh a success story, admitting candidly that Bangladesh has done much better than Pakistan itself.

There is more. I did not know until last week that India exports \$10 billion worth of goods and services to Bangladesh and that we run a trade surplus of over \$9 billion with them. It means that Bangladesh buys over Rs 70,000 crore worth of stuff from us. That is a lot of jobs they are helping us create in India. They deserve our gratitude for this alone. But the story does not end

there. In 2017, more than 2.2 lakh Bangladeshis came to India for medical treatment, and that number will be much higher by now. They create jobs, too. With them, come their families. The Indian High Commission issues over 15 lakh visas to Bangladeshis annually. I am not sure if there is any other country that sends as many visitors to India. Many of them come to Kolkata for weekend shopping, some have started going to Guwa hati after a direct flight was introduced. The impact of these 15 lakh on the Indian economy cannot be overstated. Thank you, Bangladesh. It is high time we acknowledged their positive impact on the Indian economy, and give them the respect they so rightfully deserve.

If that's not all, Bangladesh trumps on several indicators. Bangladeshis' average life expectancy is now 72 years, compared to 68 years for Indians, says the World Bank. When it comes to banking, only 10.4% of Bangladeshi bank accounts are dormant, compared to 48% of Indian bank accounts. Dormant accounts are those where there has not been a single transaction for a year. When it comes to readymade garments, Bangladesh trumps India by a long way.

If none of this resonates with you as being reason enough for Bangladesh to be proud, allow me to remind you of Shakib Al Hasan, whose performance at the recent ICC Cricket World Cup has been nothing short of phenomenal. The success of Shakib has given the young Bangladeshi reason enough to walk with his head held high. It is time we in India recognised this and give them the respect that they deserve.

#ExpressExplained

COMPARISON OF REGULATORY TREATMENT OF CRYPTOCURRENCIES IN DIFFERENT JURISDICTIONS

Thailand

Yes (but they

issued by govt

approved portals)

are only

Yes

Yes

Switzerland

No

Yes

Yes (but

transactions

must comply

The guidelines

are silent

with securities laws)

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

apan

**Regulation** is

silent on this,

but it is under

consideration

Yes, but only

through

registered

exchanges

Yes

# **TELLING NUMBERS**

# Maharashtra, Gujarat have the most numbers of non-compliant polluting factories

RESPONDING TO a query in the Lok Sabha on Friday, Babul Supriyo, Minister of State for the Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change, shared the all-India and statewise data of all industries that emit highly polluting toxins.

As the table alongside shows, both in absolute terms and as a proportion of the total, Maharashtra and Gujarat have the most number of polluting industries that have still not complied with the pollution control norms. Between them, these two big states account for more than 53 per cent of all non-compliant industries in the country.

According to the data furnished by the Central Pollution Control Board (CPCB), there were a total of 4,264 highly polluting industries in India. Out of these, 518 industries are still non-complaint. The CPCB has issued a total of 156 closure directions till now. However, legal cases have been filed against only five units — all of which are in Maharashtra.



Representational image

Tamil Nadu led the states that have the best compliance levels; it had zero non-compliant industries. Uttar Pradesh, too, stands out with just 25 non-compliant industries, which, however, is just a blip when compared to the total number of highly polluting industries in the state. As things stand, CPCB has issued closure directions to 24 of these.

Keeping Tamil Nadu company are some of the most resource-rich states such as Odisha, which has just 3 noncomplaint industries out of 174, and Chhattisgarh, which has just 6 such industries out of the total 163.

States and UTs	Total	Non-complying Industries	Closure Directions Issued	Legal Action Filed
Andhra Pradesh	243	22	1	0
Chhattisgarh	163	6	1	0
Gujarat	517	97	24	0
Haryana	161	5	2	0
Karnataka	246	15	12	0
Maharashtra	480	179	31	5
Odisha	174	3	0	0
Rajasthan	161	20	2	0
Tamil Nadu	156	0	0	0
Telangana	310	69	40	0
Uttar Pradesh	942	25	24	0
West Bengal	131	24	9	0
<b>Total</b> Source: Lok Sabha ques	4264	518	156	5

# THIS WORD MEANS

# **DEEPFAKE**

# The artificial intelligence software that can change videos marks a new frontier for fake news

DEEPFAKE IS a portmanteau of "deep learning" and "fake". It is an Artificial Intelligence (AI) software that superimposes a digital composite on to an existing video (or audio). The origin of the word "deepfake" can be traced back to 2017 when a Reddit user, with the username "deepfakes", posted explicit videos of celebrities.

"The term first rose to prominence

"The term first rose to prominence when Motherboard reported on a Reddit user who was using AI to superimpose the faces of film stars on to existing porn videos, creating (with varying degrees of realness) porn starring Emma Watson, Gal Gadot, Scarlett Johansson and an array of other female celebrities," a report in *The Guardian* said. In June this year, a deepfake

video surfaced that showed Mark Zuckerberg saying that he is in total control of the stolen data of billions of people.

Deepfakes are created by machine learning models, which use neural networks to manipulate images and videos. A model such as this "analyses video footage until it is able algorithmically to transpose the 'skin' of one human face on to the movements of another — as if applying a latex mask," a separate report in *The Guardian* said.

The debate around "deepfakes" has been rekindled recently with the popularity of applications such as FaceApp (for photo-editing) and DeepNude (that produces fake nudes of women).

MEHR GILL

# SIMPLY PUT QUESTION & ANSWER

# Understanding cryptocurrencies: what's to like, and what's to fear

The absence of regulation is the most appealing aspect of a cryptocurrency. It is also the most dangerous

China

No

No

No

**UDIT MISRA** 

NEW DELHI, JULY 28

AN INTER-ministerial committee (IMC) that was set up to assess the viability of virtual currencies has recommended that India should ban private cryptocurrencies such as Bitcoin. The detailed report of the IMC was submitted on February 28 but it was made public only on July 23. It is available on the Department of Economic Affairs' website.

## What are virtual currencies?

A virtual currency is a digital representation of value that can be digitally traded and functions as (a) a medium of exchange, and/or (b) a unit of account, and/or (c) a store of value, but, unlike fiat currency like the rupee, it is not legal tender and does not have the backing of a government. A cryptocurrency is a subset of virtual currencies, and is decentralised, and protected by cryptography.

# What are Distributed Ledger Technologies and Blockchain?

Imagine a small group of school friends maintaining a list of transactions among themselves, but with a twist: Instead of holding this list in one single computer or in the notebook of one of the group members or authorising some outside authority (say, their class teacher) to maintain (and update) the list, all of them decide to maintain a separate copy of the list in their personal computers. Every time they transact, the rest of the members verify the transaction and once it is verified by all, they update their list. Further, to make sure that none of them changes records of the past transactions in their personal list, they decide to place each transaction as a block, and to stack it one after the other in a sequence. This way, no one can tweak the details of any past transactions because the overall sequence will not match with sequences held by others. Lastly, to make sure that no other child from the school gets to know the details, they devise a code (a cypher) for all their communications related to the list.

Broadly speaking, this is how Distributed Ledger Technologies, and Blockchain, in particular, function. DLT refers to technologies that involve the use of independent computers (also referred to as nodes) to record, share, and synchronise transactions in their respective electronic ledgers. Keeping such distributed ledgers obviates the need for keeping the data centralised, as is done in a traditional ledger. All virtual currencies use DLT.

Russia

No (but barter is

permitted via

exchanges)

Yes (but only

through exchanges)

No

Yes

Activities

**Payment** 

Investment

Token

Crypto

**Exchanges** 

Method

**Legal Tender** 

A transaction under DLT essentially refers to the transfer of "value" from one to another. This "value" could be any record of ownership of assets — money, security, land titles — or the record of specific information such as information about one's identity or health information, etc. That is why DLT has applications in several fields.

Blockchain is a specific kind of DLT that came to prominence after Bitcoin, a cryptocurrency that used it, became popular. Cryptocurrencies such as Bitcoin use codes to encrypt transactions and stack them up in blocks, creating Blockchains. It is the use of codes that differentiates cryptocurrencies from other virtual currencies.

# What is the IMC's view on DLT and cryptocurrencies?

The first thing to understand is that the IMC recognises the potential of DLT and Blockchain. The IMC accepts that internationally, the application of DLT is being explored in the areas of trade finance, mortgage loan applications, digital identity management or KYC requirements, cross-border fund transfers and clearing and settlement systems. To

that extent, it recommends the Department of Economic Affairs (within the Finance Ministry) to take necessary measures to facilitate the use of DLT in the entire financial field after identifying its uses. The IMC also recommends that regulators — RBI, SEBI, IRDA, PFRDA, and IBBI — explore evolving appropriate regulations for development of DLT in their respective areas.

However, the IMC has recommended a ban on "private" cryptocurrencies. In other words, it is open to a cryptocurrency that the RBI may unveil. The IMC's view is that it "would be advisable to have an open mind regarding the introduction of an official digital currency in India". It noted that the RBI Act has the enabling provisions to permit the central government to approve a "Central Bank Digital Currency" (CBDC) as legal tender in India.

# Why have private cryptocurrencies attracted a ban?

While it is true that the technology used in virtual currencies has immense potential, without a central regulating authority, they can have numerous downsides. The IMC's first concern is that non-official virtual currencies can be used to defraud consumers, particularly unsophisticated consumers or investors. The IMC gives the example of the Rs 2,000 crore scam involving GainBitcoin in India where investors were duped by a

Ponzi scheme. Moreover, such currencies often experience tremendous volatility in their value. For example, Bitcoin was selling at \$20,000 per coin in December 2017 but in less than a year, it was trading at \$3,800 per coin. In a country where lakhs of traders get involved in such currencies, this could have huge implications.

New York

Yes (subject to

requirement)

some conditions

Yes, subject to

on exchanges

some laws

registration

Yes, with

Canada

No

Yes

Yes

Yes

(and

transactions

are taxed)

Second, scaling up such a currency system over a large population would require crippling levels of energy resources. Currencies such as Bitcoin require humongous processing power. According to a report by the Bank of International Settlement, Bitcoin processing already uses as much energy as is used by Switzerland; it called this an environmental disaster.

Third, the IMC is worried that if private

cryptocurrencies are allowed to function as

legal tender, the RBI would lose control over

the monetary policy and financial stability, as it would not be able to keep a tab on the money supply in the economy.

Fourth, the anonymity of private digital currencies make them vulnerable to money laundering and use in terrorist financing activities while making law en-

forcement difficult.

Fifth, there is no grievance redressal mechanism in such a system, as all transactions are irreversible.

It is for these broad reasons that the IMC

singled out private cryptocurrencies for a ban.

# What's behind Iconic Tourist Sites initiative?

# DIVYAA

NEW DELHI, JULY 28

DURING HER Budget speech earlier this month, Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman said that 17 "Iconic Tourist Sites" in the country would be developed by the government "into world class tourist destinations, to serve as a model for other tourism sites". The initiative was aimed at enhancing India's soft power.

# The Sites

Taj Mahal and Fatehpur Sikri (Uttar Pradesh), Ajanta & Ellora (Maharashtra), Humayun's Tomb, Red Fort and Qutub Minar (Delhi), Colva (Goa), Amer Fort (Rajasthan), Somnath and Dholavira (Gujarat), Khajuraho (Madhya Pradesh), Hampi (Karnataka), Mahabalipuram (Tamil Nadu), Kaziranga (Assam), Kumarakom (Kerala) and the Mahabodhi Temple (Bihar).

# The Vision

Union Tourism and Culture Minister





Among the chosen sites are the Taj Mahal in Agra and the Qutub Minar in Delhi.

Prahlad Patel told *The Indian Express*, "The government is looking at overall development from the tourism point of view in and around these sites — which includes roads and infrastructure, hotels and lodges, connectivity and access". As such, several ministries, from Railways to Civil Aviation, will be involved, while the Tourism Ministry will be the nodal agency. In keeping with interna-

tional standards, interventions in and around the monuments will have elements of universal accessibility, green technology, and enhanced security for tourists.

# The Funding

The Tourism Ministry has been allocated Rs 1,378 crore for the development of tourism infrastructure. This is only margin-

1,151 crore) and 2018-19 (Rs 1,330 crore).

ally more than the allocations in 2017-18 (Rs

# Role of ASI A spokespe

A spokesperson of the Archaeological Survey of India told *The Indian Express*, "We have not yet received any plan or proposal from the Tourism Ministry about the project mentioned in the Budget... Meanwhile, upgradation and facelift projects at many of these listed sites are already on; some such as Red Fort and Qutub Minar even nearing completion".

# Status of 'Adopt a Heritage' scheme

Many of these monuments were opened up for adoption in late 2017 under the Ministry of Tourism's Adopt a Heritage scheme. The Red Fort was adopted by the Dalmia Group, while the Qutub Minar and the Ajanta Caves were adopted by Yatra Online. But the momentum of the scheme has slowed down since, and only 11 MoUs have been signed so far.

# What caused weekend flooding outside Mumbai; what can be done?

# **KAVITHA IYER**MUMBAI, JULY 28

THE EASTERN part of the Mumbai Metropolitan Region (MMR) was inundated over the weekend after the townships of Kalyan, Ulhasnagar, Murbad and Ambernath all received around 300 mm rain in the 24 hours ending 8 am on July 27. Almost exactly a year earlier, the twin satellite towns of Vasai-Virar had been all but cut off from Mumbai for two days as floods snapped rail and road links.

The MMR, which sprawls over more than 10 times the geographical area of Mumbai, is dotted by semi-rural areas and municipalities that sometimes serve as dormitory townships for India's financial capital. What makes this coastal urban agglomeration prone to flooding of the kind seen in Thane district over Friday and Saturday?

# Reckless construction

Many of Mumbai's satellite towns are located along the Kalu, Ulhas, Waldhuni, and Bhatsa rivers that shimmy down the MMR,

passing through thickly populated areas including Ulhasnagar, Titwala, Badlapur, Vithalwadi, and Ambernath. All these areas have seen a massive spurt in construction activity over the past two to three decades — and almost all these rivers have the problems that come with unplanned urbanisation: encroachments, illegal sand dredging, dumping of effluents, and construction activity on their floodplains.

A March 2015 study prepared for the

A March 2015 study prepared for the Mumbai Metropolitan Region Development Authority (MMRDA) reported that forest cover in the MMR had fallen from about a third of the total area in 1987 to 21% in 2015. Wastelands, floodplains, mangrove areas, all have seen construction activity. Saturday's overhead images from Naval choppers showed the Mahalaxmi Express marooned in what seems to be the floodplains of the Ulhas river. Railway officials say the line was originally a good distance away from the river's buffer areas, but unplanned construction along both banks has rendered the tracks vulnerable to submergence when the river is in spate, with the city's drains emp-



tying into the railway areas simultaneously.

# Worst-affected rivers

The Mithi in spate caused much of the havoc on July 26, 2005, when a cloudburst dumped 944 mm of rain on Mumbai within a span of 24 hours; the overflowing Ulhas is likely to be blamed for parts of Ulhasnagar going under on Friday evening and Saturday.

Picnickers at a resort on its banks had to be rescued. The river passes through Badlapur and Vangani, where the dramatic rescue of train passengers took place.

The winding Ulhas flows 120-plus km from its source in the Sahyadris to the Arabian Sea via Vasai creek, passing the picturesque Karat and Neral regions, and receiving waters from as far as the Palasdhari dam, the Poshir river, Chikoli dam, Barvi dam, before merging with the confluence of the Bhatsa and Kalu rivers. Multiple areas along its banks — Shahad, Ambivali, Dombivali, Kongaon, Mothagaon, Ambernath, Ulhasnagar and Badlapur — were affected on Friday and Saturday.

The Kalu river's overflowing waters caused some parts of Titwala to be flooded, while the much less urbanised Vasind-Asangaon area were inundated by overflow from the Bhatsa river.

# What can be done?

Will cleaning up these rivers reduce the likelihood of floods?

There are over 20 reservoirs/dams within the municipal limits of urban local bodies in the MMR. Modaksagar and Tansa, which serve Mumbai, were already over-

flowing. Villages on the banks of the Vaitarna river had been issued their annual warning over a week back. On Sunday, one floodgate of the Middle Vaitarna Dam, located further north on the Vaitarna river, was opened.

But downstream villages along the

was opened.
But downstream villages along the banks of these rivers are no longer alone in danger of inundation. As natural adaptation and flood resilient geography is broken down by unplanned construction activity. Holding ponds, mangroves, wetlands, salt pan lands, and other buffers have disappeared. Much of the devastation in Vasai-Virar on the two days of flooding in July 2018 was linked to the choking of the creek areas, and at least some of the latest flood-related damage will be found connected to

the upstream damage to the rivers' ecology.

The 13 west-flowing rivers and their 21 tributaries are important natural floodwater drainage systems for the region. At a wider level, the problem of where the MMR gets its drinking water also comes into play — multiple dams on these rivers are in various stages of construction or planning, in-

# THE EDITORIAL PAGE

WORDLY WISE

SUGAR SOLVES LOTS OF PROBLEMS, THAT'S WHAT I THINK.

— STEPHEN KING

# The Indian EXPRESS

∽ FOUNDED BY ∽ RAMNATH GOENKA

BECAUSE THE TRUTH INVOLVES US ALL

# PATIENTS AND VICTIMS

Investigations into faulty hip implants highlight the urgent need for a law to regulate medical devices

AST YEAR, A series of reports in this paper revealed the traumatic experiences of Indian patients who had received faulty hip implants manufactured by the pharma major, Johnson and Johnson. Another investigation by this paper, last week, has revealed that Johnson and Johnson paid hefty compensations to US patients who had received the defective implants. In India, however, the company has challenged government orders to compensate 4,700 patients who had undergone hip replacement surgeries. The reports also highlight that the story is more than that of corporate negligence. That Johnson and Johnson continues to brazen it out in India has much to do with the regulatory deficit in the country.

The investigations pertain to implants manufactured under two brand names, ASR and Pinnacle. Both products are not in the market currently. Johnson and Johnson recalled ASR from the global market in 2010, while Pinnacle was withdrawn in 2013. But recalling a medical device is not like recalling a consumer product. Defective implants can cause crippling pain — even death. Patients who receive such implants need regular monitoring. In several countries, registries track the health of such patients. In fact, Johnson and Johnson's recalling of ASR owes to the more than 15 warnings, between 2007 and 2009, issued to it by the Australian Joint Registry (though the company describes its decision as "voluntary"). Pinnacle was pulled out of the market after a flurry of lawsuits in the US alerted the country's Food and Drug Administration (FDA) about the device's defects. In India, in contrast, regulators were slow to react. Maharashtra's FDA red-flagged ASR a few months after Johnson and Johnson withdrew the product from the global market. But it took another year for the Central Drugs Standard Control Organisation to ban the import of ASR. Another year went by before the drug regulator issued an advisory to orthopaedic surgeons asking them to not implant ASR. These delays are significant because last year, Johnson and Johnson told a Union Ministry of Health and Family Welfare (MoHFW) expert committee that it cannot trace as many as 3,600 patients who underwent surgeries involving the faulty implant. That India did not have a joint registry when these surgeries happened has compounded the problem. The want of a registry has also come in the way of ascertaining the damage caused by Pinnacle. Johnson and Johnson claims that it has no adverse reports of the device in the country. However, reports in this paper have highlighted the trauma of at least seven patients with Pinnacle implants.

In 2017, the MoHFW issued the Medical Devices Rules. However, the country's base legislation on implants continues to be the Drugs and Cosmetics Act, 1940, which does not have the scope to cover most modern devices, including hip implants. The Indian orthopaedic device market is valued at over 450 million dollars and is expected to grow by 30 per cent per year till 2025. The investigations into faulty hip implants bring out the urgent need for a law to regulate medical devices.

# SWEET START

Not hiking FRP for sugarcane is welcome. Transparent pricing formula, freedom for farmers to sell to any mill is way ahead

HE NARENDRA MODI government has done well not to hike the fair and remunerative price (FRP) for sugarcane in the ensuing 2019-20 crushing season from October. The FRP has been retained at the current level of Rs 275 per quintal, linked to a basic sugar recovery of 10 per cent from cane, despite Maharashtra state elections that are due in just over two months. The decision is clearly an acceptance of ground reality, wherein mills are struggling to pay even the existing FRP. As on July 15, Maharashtra mills had cane arrears of Rs 805.76 crore, against the total FRP payments of Rs 23,173.29 crore for the 2018-19 season. It is even worse in Uttar Pradesh, where out of the cane worth Rs 33,046.76 crore bought at the state government's "advised" price (SAP) of Rs 315-320 per quintal — almost equal to the Centre's FRP at an average sugar recovery of 11.48 per cent for this season — mills have paid only Rs 24,535.65 crore till July 25.

At the root of mounting cane dues is politics of a destructive kind. Fixing cane prices totally out of sync with sugar realisations benefits neither mills nor farmers. Mills are supposed to pay the FRP (or SAP) within 14 days of cane delivery. But that requires access to working capital. Banks normally extend cash credit up to 85 per cent of the value of sugar stocks. That, at present ex-factory prices of Rs 31.5 per kg and 11.5 per cent sugar recovery, works out to Rs 308 per quintal of cane. Moreover, mills can use only about 85 per cent of this borrowed money to fund cane purchases and the rest for meeting other working expenses. It means that mills today cannot afford to pay more than Rs 262 per quintal. Farmers are better off getting this price immediately rather than not being paid at all. Politicians may earn brownie points by announcing high cane prices. But how does it help, if these only lead to unpaid dues even at the end of the season.

Not hiking the FRP is a good start; so is the move to create a four million tonnes (mt) buffer stock on which the Centre will bear the interest and storage costs. Given record estimated closing stocks of 14.5 mt for September 30, this should at least help prices from falling further when the new crushing season begins. But the Modi government should go further and push states — at least UP, Maharashtra and now Karnataka, where the BJP is in power — to implement the Rangarajan Committee formula, of paying farmers 70 per cent of the total revenues of mills from sale of sugar and primary byproducts (molasses, bagasse and press mud) as cane price. A transparent pricing formula, combined with freedom for farmers to sell to any mill sans any cane area reservation, should be the path forward.

# Freeze Frame

**EPUNNY** 



# Democratic ambivalence



Modi, Trump and Bolsonaro are great election winners, but their stance on civil liberties is seen as questionable

ASHUTOSH VARSHNEY

DOES DEMOCRACY CONTAIN within itself the seeds of its own weakening? Does it have an inner adversary? These questions have long agitated the minds of political thinkers. Given what is happening in the US, Brazil and India — all producing stunning election victories in recent times — it is time to pay attention to the internal paradoxes of democracies.

A brief history of ideas would be in order. Some of the democratic questioning goes all the way back to the ancient city-states of Greece, but let us begin with the 1830s. That is when democracy, after its modern birth in the United States a few decades earlier, began its political spread in Europe. Franchise — or who could vote — was the big issue. By the 1830s, the US had already granted the right to vote to all adult white males, amounting to nearly 40 per cent of the population. With franchise at 18 per cent, Britain was considerably behind. In the 1860s, when Britain debated whether franchise should be extended, John Stuart Mill, one of the most prominent British voices of the time and a father of modern liberalism, argued, "I regard it as wholly inadmissible that any person should participate in the suffrage without being able to read, write and, I will add, perform the common operations of arithmetic... Universal teaching must precede universal enfranchisement."

India's debates, six to eight decades later, went against Mill. On how to think about democracy, the most decisive voice was Jawaharlal Nehru's. Labelled as an incorrigible elitist in power circles today, Nehru, in fact, defended universal franchise on the premise that "each person should be treated as having equal political and social value". He did not trust the elite to understand and represent subaltern interests. Ambedkar held a similar view, and thus was born the idea that even though India was a mere 17-18 per cent literate in 1947, the poor and illiterate masses had the right to vote. Mill thought giving voting rights to the uneducated would undermine democracy; Nehru and Ambedkar believed the opposite. Disenfranchising the plebian voices would cripple democracy.

Though some polities, especially a few American states, continue to have severe voter registration requirements that effectively disenfranchise the poor, universal franchise is now a worldwide democratic norm. Modern democracy is inconceivable without elections. But one should briefly pause to consider

Political analysts all over the world understand the magnitude of Modi's electoral success. But they are also asking: How does his regime perform on civil liberties — on freedom of expression, religious practice and association? And is he, or his party, by any chance interpreting their electoral victory as a mandate to restrict civil freedoms? If so, then electoral democracy might well become the inner adversary of citizens' freedoms. It will be one dimension of democracy versus another, as the electoral triumph is allowed

to ride roughshod over the

democratically desirable

freedoms.

an important objection to elections. Jean Jacques Rousseau, a great modern political thinker, argued that democracy is about regular, local-level, mass participation in decision-making, not periodic elections. It is also sometimes argued that contemporary China's view of democracy is Rousseauvian, emphasising people's participation in local governments, not elections to select rulers in Beijing and provincial capitals.

However, few accept this principle today. "No elections, no democracy" is now a widely accepted dictum, as elections have become the incontestable foundation of political power in a democracy. There is no other way of figuring out who the people want as their rulers. Local participation is not a substitute for elections.

But is there more to democracy than elections? Modern democratic theory also asks: What does an elected government do while in power for four or five years? Especially important to democratic theory are three civil liberties: Freedom of speech, freedom of association and freedom of religious practice. How free are the citizens to speak? Are the people free to form non-governmental associations, not simply political parties? How are the religious groups, especially the minorities, treated? Without these freedoms, a democracy is only an electoral democracy. It is a deeper and more meaningful democracy, when such freedoms are not curbed. Elections are necessary, not sufficient.

Consider the implications of these larger arguments for India's democracy. Of the 17 national elections since 1952, only in 2014 and 2019 did the turnout exceed 65 per cent. Prime Minister Narendra Modi has won power in India's two most participatory elections. In an electoral sense, this is a truly massive achievement. Nehru won three elections in a row, but those were early days. The turnout was not as high. If Modi wins another high turnout election – let us say, in 2024 – his electoral record will undoubtedly eclipse Nehru's.

Political analysts all over the world, therefore, understand the magnitude of Modi's electoral success. But they are also asking: How does his regime perform on civil liberties — on freedom of expression, religious practice and association? And is he, or his party, by any chance interpreting their electoral victory as a mandate to restrict civil freedoms? If so, then electoral democracy might well become the inner adversary of citizens' freedoms. It will be one dimension of democracy versus another, as the electoral triumph is allowed to ride roughshod over the democratically desirable freedoms.

The judgement of the world's leading organisations, assessing democracy worldwide, is worth considering. One of the largest such sources, rising in international stature and acclaim, is currently located at the Varieties of Democracy (V-Dem) Institute, University of Gothenburg, Sweden. Not connected to any political or partisan organisation, the V-Dem Institute is entirely scholarly. It publishes the 'V-Dem Annual Democracy Report', which democracy scholars and activists await every year with great interest.

What did the annual report say about India last year? "In India, the infringements in media freedoms and civil society activities of democracy... following the election of a Hindu nationalist government have started to undermine the longest-standing and most populous democracy in the Global South. Yet the main indicators of core electoral aspects democracy do not show significant decline.'

And what did the annual report proclaim this year? That "autocratisation" is increasing among "populous countries such as Brazil, India and the United States". By "autocratisation", the V-Dem report means decline of civil liberties, including freedom for the media and civil society. Narenda Modi, Donald Trump and Jair Bolsonaro are thus placed in the same category. They are great election winners, but their stance on civil freedoms is questionable.

and Bolsonaro? How is he interpreting his enhanced electoral mandate? Would civil freedoms be curbed on the argument that the elections have authorised such restrictions? Those who did not vote for the BJP but are

Should such scholarly assessments con-

cern Modi, who has just won another election,

placing him now electorally ahead of Trump

proud Indians, whose voices should matter in a democracy, as well as the world outside, await answers in the coming months.

The writer is director, Center for Contemporary South Asia, Sol Goldman Professor of International Studies and Social Sciences, Professor of Political Science, Watson Institute for International and Public Affairs, **Brown University** 



# THE DIVINE PATRIARCHY

Masculinity of gods reinforces gender inequality. Goddesses could subvert it

IN GOOD FAITH **AAKASH SINGH RATHORE** 

FEMINIST THEOLOGIANS have long held that male depictions of gods serve to reinforce patriarchy. This elicits the question: Do goddesses serve in any way to subvert patriarchy? In Mary Daly's classic, Beyond God the

Father, the feminist (Catholic) theologian examined religion as a major cause of women's repression over the last 3,000 years. Daly's work exposed the foundational misogyny in religion which continues to flourish. Daly made this claim despite the long-standing theological stance that God of the Abrahamic religions is unsexed. The Catechism of the Catholic Church, for example, states: "God is neither man nor woman: He is God". God's gender ought to be understood as figurative.

But when we turn to symbolism, ritual and informal practice, a different story emerges; one where God is gendered, where incarnate God — the son — or prophets or deified persons, are also male. Philosophies, religious symbols, juridical norms and other ideas stabilise and justify patriarchal dominance and attribute it to inherent natural reasons and not to mere social causes. Beyond merely naturalising patriarchy, the maleness/masculinity of

Philosophies, religious symbols, juridical norms and other ideas stabilise and justify patriarchal dominance and attribute it to inherent natural reasons and not to mere social causes. Beyond merely naturalising patriarchy, the maleness/masculinity of gods fixes it into the cosmic order.

gods fixes it into the cosmic order.

RW Conant's 1904 book, The Manly Christ, is an obscene testimony to this. Conant asserts the manliness of Jesus in order to make the increasingly "feminised" religion, as he referred to it, more attractive to the real men of the working classes. As he stresses: "Christ stands for the highest type of a strong, virile man, and there was nothing effeminate about him."

We could also look at the images of masculinity, sex, and the body in Buddhism. An example is available in the Ambattha Sutta from the Dingha Nikaya in the Pali canon. The Brahmin student Ambattha is sent by his famous teacher Pokkharasaati to find out if the acclaimed Gautama is really a great man. He should particularly learn whether Buddha bears the 32 physical bodily characteristics of a perfect man. Ambattha goes to meet Buddha, and behaves insultingly toward him, arrogating himself to a higher position as a Brahmin over the lower-born Sakyas. Buddha argues systematically that Kshatriyas are actually higher born than Brahmins by social convention, but that he himself considers social convention less important than conduct and wisdom. Buddha thus humbles the excessive pride of Ambattha and the student returns to his teacher to narrate what has occurred. Pokkharasaati is angered and goes

himself to confront Buddha. However, upon encountering Buddha and seeing that indeed he bears all the physical marks of a perfect man, he ends up a convert.

Another masculinised body is that of Hanuman. This god's manliness is palpable in the context of the highly masculine practice of wrestling within akharas, which always and everywhere occurs under the auspices of Hanuman murtis. Young men, always men, revere and model themselves upon the god. A crucial part of this emulation lies in the celibacy. In this framework, the seductive and thus enervating feature of women's bodies, and feminine wiles, plays a role.

But if, as it seems, the male-sexed bodies of gods serve to reinforce patriarchy, do goddesses serve to subvert it?

Some powerful strands of feminism in the West assume so. Interventions in Indian feminism, however, generally disagree. Rajeswari Sundar Rajan, for example, in her essay 'Is the Hindu Goddess a Feminist?', throws into doubt the emancipatory value of the Stree-Shakti trope. Everyone seems to agree, however, that powerful goddesses do offer potential opportunities for anti-patriarchal action.

The writer is visiting professor of philosophy at Jawaharlal Nehru University

# JULY 29, 1979, FORTY YEARS AGO

# SWEARING IN

A NINE-MEMBER COALITION ministry — the first at the Centre — came into being when Charan Singh, prime minister, and his colleagues were sworn in by President N Sanjeeva Reddy. The ceremony took place in the Ashoka Hall of Rashtrapati Bhavan, in an atmosphere filled with perfume, thanks to Raj Narain who went round with a bottle of "attar". Seven of the Cabinet members, including Charan Singh, are from the Janata (S) Party and PLKaushik is a Socialist. Y B Chavan was the lone Congress nominee who took the oath of office and secrecy. The appointment of six others of his party, which had been announced in the morning, was cancelled at night. A Rashtrapati Bhavan communique issued in the night designated Chavan deputy prime minister in charge of the home ministry.

# GOVT WON'T LAST

THE LEADER OF the Janata Parliamentary Party, Jagjivan Ram, said the Charan Singh government would not last long. Speaking at the national executive meeting of the Janata Party, the former deputy prime minister said Charan Singh's group was in a minority. He had forged "illogical alignments which could not last long". Both Jagjivan Ram and the Janata Party chief, Chandra Shekhar, asserted that their party would be able to eventually prove its majority in the Lok Sabha.

# Congress Uncertain

CHARAN SINGH MUST have got the message: The contradictions in the combination he heads have come to the fore earlier than expected. The hitch that cropped up in Congress nominees not taking oath of office was not over any programme. The party simply had too many claimants. Even Y B Chavan would have stayed back but for the fact that the Congress did not want the impression to go round that the alliance with the Janata (S) was off. No one doubts that the situation created within the Congress over the distribution of ministerships will evade solution for long.

# THE IDEAS PAGE

# WHAT THE OTHERS SAY

"The special counsel [Robert Mueller] offered no startling new material, but his testimony was nonetheless valuable." - THE GUARDIAN

# The digital identification parade

NCRB's proposed Automated Facial Recognition System impinges on right to privacy, is likely to target certain groups



AAYUSH RATHI AND Ambika Tandon

THE NATIONAL Crime Records Bureau recently issued a request for proposals for the procurement of an Automated Facial Recognition System (AFRS). The stated objective of the AFRS is to "identify criminals, missing persons/children, unidentified dead bodies and unknown traced children/persons". It will be designed to compare images against a "watchlist" curated using images from "any [...] image database available with police/other entity", and "newspapers, raids, sent by people, sketches, etc." The integration of diverse databases indicates the lack of a specific purpose, with potential for ad hoc use at later stages. Data sharing arrangements with the vendor are unclear, raising privacy concerns around corporate access to sensitive information of crores of individuals.

While a senior government official clarified that the AFRS will only be used against the integrated police database in India – the Crime and Criminal Tracking Network and Systems (CCTNS) — the tender explicitly states the integration of several other databases, including the passport database, and the National Automated Fingerprint Identification System. This is hardly reassuring. Even a targeted database like the CCTNS risks over-representation of marginalised communities, as has already been witnessed in other countries. The databases that the CCTNS links together have racial and colonial origins, recording details of unconvicted persons if they are found to be "suspicious", based on their tribe, caste or appearance. However, including other databases puts millions of innocent individuals on the AFRS's watchlist. The objective then becomes to identify "potential criminals" — instead of being "presumed innocent", we are all persons-who-haven'tbeen-convicted-yet.

The AFRS may allow indiscriminate searching by tapping into publicly and privately installed CCTVs pan-India. While facial recognition technology (FRT) has proliferated globally, only a few countries have systems that use footage from CCTVs installed in public areas. This is the most excessive use of FRT, building on its more common implementation as border technology. CCTV cameras are already rife with cybersecurity issues, and integration with the AFRS will expand the "attack surface" for exploiting vulnerabilities in the AFRS. Additionally, the AFRS will allow real-time querying, enabling "continuous" mass surveillance. Misuse of continuous surveillance has been seen in China, with the Uighurs be-

FRT differs from other biometric forms of identification (such as fingerprints, DNA samples) in the degree and pervasiveness of surveillance that it enables. It is designed to operate at a distance, without any

knowledge of the targeted individual(s). It is far more difficult to prevent an image of

ing persecuted as an ethnic minority.

one's face from being captured, and allows for the targeting of multiple persons at a time. By its very nature, it is a non-consensual and covert surveillance technology. Potential infringements on the right to privacy, a fundamental right, could be enormous as FRT allows for continuous and ongoing identification. Further, the AFRS violates the legal test of proportionality that was articulated in the landmark Puttaswamy judgment, with constant sur-

veillance being used as a strategy for crime

detection. Other civil liberties such as free

speech and the right to assemble peace-

fully could be implicated as well, as specific groups of people such as dissidents and protests can be targeted. Moreover, facial recognition technology has not performed well as a crime detection technology. Challenges arise at the stage of input itself. Variations in pose, illumination, and expression, among other factors, adversely impact the accuracy of automated facial analysis. In the US, law enforcement has been using images from low-quality surveillance feed as probe photos, leading to erroneous matches. A mat-

matches returned by FRT. Research indicates that default camera settings better expose light skin than dark, which affects results for FRT across racial groups. Moreover, the software could be tested on certain groups more often than others, and could consequently be more accurate in identifying individuals from that group. The AFRS is envisioned as having both functionalities of an FRT — identification of an individual, and social classification — with the latter holding significant potential to misclassify minority communities.

ter of concern is that several arrests have

been made solely on the basis of likely

In the UK, after accounting for a host of the issues outlined above, the Science and Technology Committee, comprising 14 sitting MPs, recently called for a moratorium on deploying live FRT. It will be prudent to pay heed to this directive in India, in the absence of any framework around data protection, or the use of biometric technologies by law enforcement.

The experience of law enforcement's use of FRT globally, and the unique challenges posed by the usage of live FRT demand closer scrutiny into how it can be regulated. One approach may be to use a technology-neutral regulatory framework that identifies gradations of harms. However, given the history of political surveillance by the Indian state, a complete prohibition on FRT may not be too far-

Rathi and Tandon are researchers at the Centre for Internet and Society

# Tom & Jerry in West Asia

Like the iconic cartoon mouse, Iran is using brinkmanship, asymmetrical military tactics against the US



RAMIN JAHANBEGLOO

THE SEIZURE of an oil tanker bearing the British flag by the naval forces of Iran's Islamic Revolution Guards Corps (IRGC) on July 21 is indicative of the ongoing tension between Iran and the US and its allies. Through this move, the Iranian authorities have shown once again that they are determined to emphasise Iran's hegemonic role in the Middle East and to strongly underline Iran's regional power in the Strait of Hormuz and the Persian Gulf. As tensions have risen between the US and Iran over recent months, the absence of a diplomatic back channel to defuse incidents and potential blow-ups is being felt. We can add to this the fact that the US has not taken any visible retaliatory action, denying Tehran an opportunity for the showdown it seems to want.

General Kenneth F McKenzie Jr, the US Central Command commander gave an explanation for this measured American approach by saying: "We shouldn't fall into the trap of some form of overreaction. So our response is going to be very calm, taken in concert with the international community." But the US-Iran cat and mouse game has been analysed on the Iranian side as a Tom and Jerry cartoon, where the mouse appears cleverer and more astute than the cat. As a matter of fact, during a gathering on May 23 in Tehran, Iran's Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei invoked the US-Iran tensions by making an allusion to the Hanna-Barbera classic. "The US has committed all kinds of animosity to hit the Islamic Republic and has plotted various political, economic, military and propaganda schemes," Khamenei said. "All their plots have failed — just like Tom from the well-known Tom and Jerry cartoon — and they will fail again in the future." Iran continues a tactical escalation, shooting down a US surveillance drone last month, attaching mines to tankers and now seizing ships in the Strait of Hormuz, while Donald Trump is clearly avoiding military confrontation with Iran, especially as he heads into an election year.

Consequently, Iran wants to show off its military capacities, at home and abroad, to demonstrate that it can get around US sanctions and continue to develop its hegemony in the region. This is why, from January to July, Iran has been conducting drone exercises and has said that it even monitored the movements of a US aircraft carrier. On July 10, Iranian drones reportedly were used against a Kurdish dissident group in northern Iraq, after Iran accused the group of killing members of the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps. The new IRGC drone was used three weeks after Iran downed a sophisticated American drone over the Gulf of Oman.

Iranians have also been helping the Houthi rebels to launch drone attacks on Saudi Arabian airports near the Yemen border. Taken as a whole, the Islamic regime's drone technology and its immediate use by the proxies of Iran, like the Lebanese Hezbollah and the Houthis, show that the authorities in Tehran have the military ability to threaten the US and its allies. This shows clearly that Iran's military footprint is growing across the Middle East.

Iran's military actions and the silence of the American cat, show that the Trump administration's weapon of choice is still hard economic sanctions, while Tehran's only remaining option is using its wide array of asymmetrical military capabilities through its Iranian Revolutionary Guards. As a result, it is clear that President Trump is following the same policy that he used in the showdown with North Korea, China and other countries. However, Iran proves to be a tougher challenger and as in the case of Jerry the mouse, Iranian regime is not an easy enemy to defeat. Iran is clearly willing to resort to violent means and push the situation to Iran's military actions and the silence of the American cat, show that the Trump administration's weapon of choice is still hard economic sanctions, while Tehran's only remaining option is using its wide array of asymmetrical military capabilities through its Iranian Revolutionary Guards. As a result, it is clear that President Trump is following the same policy that he used in the showdown with North Korea, China and other countries. However, Iran proves to be a tougher challenger and as in the case of Jerry the mouse, Iranian regime is not an easy enemy

the brink of war, even though the balance of power is largely in the US's favour.

Suvajit Dey

This is the main reason why the European countries, who have been at odds with Trump and his administration over the US withdrawal from the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA), reacted strongly against Tehran's decision to start suspending clauses of the agreement and taking steps to increase uranium enrichment levels and reserves. This said, the Iranian leaders will certainly not return to the negotiating table to reach a new deal on Iran's nuclear programme and its regional policies. Iranians feel stronger in their mouse and cat game, especially when they are backed by the Russian dog.

Actually, a few days ago, the Russian foreign ministry urged the remaining signatories to the JCPOA to continue cooperating and help save the agreement. However, while Russia continues blaming Washington for the failure of the Iran nuclear agreement, some Chinese customers are still buying liquefied petroleum gas (LPG) from Iran. China accounted for 3,46,000 tonnes, or 80 per cent, of Iran's LPG exports in May, since Iranian supplies have been among the cheapest in the world as customers from Japan to South Korea turned away from doing business with the country following the US's sanctions.

In the iconic American cartoon Tom and Jerry, Jerry always gets the upper hand. But this situation might not last long for the Iranian mouse, especially in the absence of a substantive and successful diplomacy between the two countries. Evidently, the Boltons and Pompeos of the Trump administration will not always be silent over the American president's decision to call off retaliatory air strikes over Iran's downing of a US surveillance drone. As for Trump, he cannot continue saying "America first," without doing whatever it takes, however destructive, to show that Tom the cat is not the loser of the game.

> The writer is professor-vice dean, Jindal Global University

# VIEW FROM THE

Neighbourhood



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

# BATTING FOR TRUMP

DAWN, WHICH HAS otherwise been fairly critical of US President Donald Trump on his erratic foreign policy stances, Twitter policy announcements, et al, seems to have changed its tune somewhat in the aftermath of Prime Minister Imran Khan and army chief Qamar Bajwa's visit to the White House. In its July 24 editorial, the newspaper appears to welcome Trump's offer to mediate the Kashmir dispute. It is also somewhat flippant in its dismissal of New Delhi's denial of the US president's assertion regarding Narendra Modi's offer — "He actually said would you like to be mediator or arbitrator? said Mr Trump, quoting the Indian leader".

While maintaining that Trump's diplomacy has had mixed results — the success with North Korea on the one hand, the escalation with Iran on the other — the editorial contends that "Mr Trump's maverick tactics may just be what the Kashmir issue needs".

There is an element of balancing, of not taking a clear position in the editorial. It seems to stand for a bilateral solution, or at best a trilateral one where Kashmir and its people are a separate party, but also calls for multilateral interference: "At the end, it is Pakistan, India and the Kashmiris who will have to take the final decision to resolve this over seven-decade-old imbroglio. But a little friendly 'push' from powerful global actors may help the stakeholders reach a mutually acceptable solution. Moreover, Indian rigidity has left little hope on the bilateral front, especially under Mr Modi's watch, as Delhi keeps harping on about 'terrorism', without earnestly responding to Pakistan's offers for dialogue. Whether it is the US, the UN, or other global players, clearly a multilateral framework may be able to provide a conducive atmosphere for the resolution of the Kashmir issue."

# THE COST OF DINNER

MUHAMMAD AMIR RANA, a security analyst and columnist for *Dawn* writes on July 28 of Islamabad and Rawalpindi's task after the successful visit by the country's leader(s) to Washington. Rana first points out the significant diplomatic gains from the visit: "The country is set to gain in the whole process as India has failed to develop its relevance in the Afghan peace process. On this ground alone, Pakistan's establishment considers it a major achievement. Similarly, the US offer of mediation over the Kashmir issue has put pressure on Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi. It has happened at a time when the Trump administration was not comfortable with India's recent multibillion-dollar deals with Russia, and trade tensions between the two nations were rising."

to defeat.

While India being sidelined in Afghanistan certainly benefits Pakistan, it must now deliver on the expectations it has generated for the US. The country's role in bringing the Taliban to the negotiating table has certainly been welcomed in Washington. But now "to keep this momentum, the government has to deliver on Afghanistan. The probability of direct talks between the Taliban and Kabul would be one challenge, but influencing the former to commit to a lasting ceasefire could prove another daunting task."

Another important political success for Imran Khan actually came before the dinner. M Bilal Lakhani writes in The Express Tribune on July 28 that "Khan's packed jalsa... enabled him to defuse the primary attack against his legitimacy, on being selected, with Mike Pompeo, the American Secretary of State, commenting on his rockstar reception. The *jalsa* strengthened Imran's hand as we walked into the White House, the morning after."

# Mob and State

THE MOB, AND its violence in the name of justice, is an issue that seems to resonance across South Asia. Badiuzzaman Bay writes in The Daily Star on July 27 on the issue of

mob violence and punishment in Bangladesh but his arguments and observations will certainly find resonance in both India and Pakistan. Here's the immediate context: "As of July 23, seven people died and at least 35 were injured in mob beatings sparked off by a rumour about human heads being collected—yes, you heard it right—for the construction of Padma Bridge, the dream project of the Awami League government."

Bay lays some of the blame for "mob justice" on the failure of the state and its legal institutions. But he traces a curious and disturbing form of assertion in such violence as well: "To understand the gravity of this loss, one only needs to take a look at any of the video clips that are now circulating through the social media, showing the lynching of Taslima Begum Renu in Badda, on July 20. It was nauseating to watch as an angry crowd gathered to "punish" the single mother-oftwo for her rumoured attempt to kidnap a child. Only, she didn't do it. But at that rare empowering moment in their life, those people were judge, jury and executioner at the same time. And the world was suddenly reduced to a choice between a weapon and a

What's worse, in their mind, the people that form the mob "were doing the right thing".

# LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

# A PEOPLES' TOOL

to know' (IE, July 24). The right to information Act 2005 is model for many democracies to provide a platform to the citizens to request any information from any public authority. The recent amendments have weakened these powers. Considering the widespread criticisms of these amendments, the government should rethink this piece of legislation.

THIS REFERS to the editorial, 'The right

Nayan Agrawal, Ujjain

# LIVING IN THE PAST

THIS REFERS to the article, 'Article that binds' (IE, July 26). It is time to abolish Articles 370 and 35A. They may have been the legal threads that combined J&K with India. But why should one state be accorded special status?

# **Kaushal Meena** *via e-mail* GOOD NEIGHBOURS

THIS REFERS to the editorial, 'Imran said it' (IE, July 26). It is high time that Pakistan realises the importance of cordial relations with India. India and Pakistan share the same culture and economic conditions and face the same strategic threats. An important sector that will benefit from good relations with Pakistan is tourism. The states bordering Pakistan like Jammu and Kashmir and Punjab can be developed as great tourist centres. Peace will also boost the economy of these states and create employment.

**Veena Shenoy,** Thane

# LETTER OF THE WEEK AWARD

To encourage quality reader intervention, The Indian Express offers the Letter of the Week award. The letter adjudged the best for the week is published every Saturday. Letters may be e-mailed to

editpage@expressindia.com or sent to The Indian Express, B-1/B, Sector 10, Noida-UP 201301. Letter writers should mention their postal

THE WINNER RECEIVES **SELECT EXPRESS PUBLICATIONS** 

address and phone number.

# OPPOSITION FALTERS

THIS REFERS to the editorial, 'A dismal frame' (IE, July 25). It was a very swift move by the Congress to outwit the BJP and form a government in Karnataka After that move last year, other Opposition parties became inclined to explore possibilities for the 2019 general elections. But the massive defeat in the elections has disheartened them. The JD(S) and Congress alliance was an opportunistic one from day one.

Bal Govind, Noida

# Sexism in Parliament

India needs more women in legislatures to combat the likes of Azam Khan

The triple talaq bill was passed in the Lok Sabha on July 25, silencing Opposition voices that the Muslim Women (Protection of Rights on Marriage) Bill, 2019 should not be pushed through in a hurry, and without scrutiny. But the dissent on the nitty-gritty of the bill was overshadowed by the sexist remarks made by Samajawadi Party MP Azam Khan, directed against Bharatiya Janata Party member Rama Devi who was in the Chair. Referring to an intervention by Minority Affairs Minister Mukhtar Abbas Naqvi, Mr. Khan quoted a couplet, "... tu idhar-udhar ki na baat kar (do not digress)." When Ms. Devi asked Mr. Khan to address the Chair, he made an "objectionable" statement, marking a new parliamentary low. The irony that this was said while the House was discussing an issue concerning women was not lost on Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman, who quipped: "Don't politicise an issue that affects women." Women and Child Development Minister Smriti Irani pointed out that Mr. Khan's comment was a "blot on all legislators including men". Mr. Khan, a veteran from the Uttar Pradesh Assembly but a first-time MP who is no stranger to controversy, was banned from campaigning for 72 hours in the recent Lok Sabha polls after his misogynist remarks against BJP candidate Jaya Prada. While Mr. Khan has been asked to apologise to the House, some women members have renewed the pitch for the passage of the women's reservation bill.

The 17th Lok Sabha has the highest number of women MPs, 78, comprising 14.39% of the House. This is higher than 2014 and a long way from the first election in 1951-52, when they made up only 5% of the House. The global average stands at 24.6%, and neighbours Bangladesh, Pakistan and Nepal have quotas for women in Parliament. In India, the women's reservation bill or the Constitution (108th) Amendment Bill to set aside one-third of seats in Parliament and State Assemblies for women was passed in the Rajya Sabha in March 2010. However, the Bill couldn't overcome odds and the opposition in the Lok Sabha and went into cold storage. Critics have cited several reasons behind the bill being thwarted, not least that the quota for women would be appropriated by powerful stand-ins. But this could hold true for men as well. The Bharatiya Janata Party, which has an overwhelming majority in the Lok Sabha (303 of 543 seats) and has rushed through more than a dozen bills in this session, must take the lead. Slogans such as 'Beti Bachao, Beti Padhao' will sound like mere lip-service if political parties don't speak out against gender prejudice. Women must have greater political representation in decision-making bodies as a first step towards changing chauvinistic mindsets, and Parliament needs to show the way.

# Ban or regulate?

There are issues with cryptocurrencies, but a ban might not be the best answer

The recommendation of an inter-ministerial com mittee that India should ban all private cryptocurrencies, that is, Bitcoin and others like it, hardly comes as a surprise. Indian policymakers and administrators have time and again made clear their distaste for them, their existence owed almost entirely to advanced encryption technologies. In his Budget speech in 2018. Finance Minister Arun Iaitlev said the government doesn't consider them legal tender. The Reserve Bank of India has repeatedly warned the public of the risks associated with dealing with cryptocurrencies. Bitcoin, the most prominent among them, has yoyoed wildly in value, even over short periods of time. A May 2019 article by Bloomberg, citing data from blockchain analysis firm Chainalysis, said "speculation remains Bitcoin's primary use case". Its use in illegal online marketplaces that deal with drugs and child pornography is well-documented. There have been cases of consumers being defrauded, including in India. Given all this, it is understandable that the committee, under the chairmanship of Subhash Chandra Garg, the former Economic Affairs Secretary, has come across as being wary of private cryptocurrencies even while advocating a central bank-issued cryptocurrency.

Governments and economic regulators across the world are wary of private cryptocurrencies. As they need neither a central issuing authority nor a central validating agency for transactions, these currencies can exist and thrive outside the realm of authority and regulation. They are even deemed a threat to the official currency and monetary system. The question then is whether banning cryptocurrencies is the most effective way to respond. The inter-ministerial committee believes it is, going so far as to draft a law that mandates a fine and imprisonment of up to 10 years for the offences of mining, generating, holding, selling, dealing in, transferring, disposing of, or issuing cryptocurrencies. But six of the seven jurisdictions that its report cites have not banned cryptocurrencies outright. Many of them, including Canada, Thailand, Russia and Japan, seem to be moving on the path of regulation, so that transactions are within the purview of anti-money laundering and prevention of terror laws. China, which India has taken a cue from, has gone for an outright ban. Even there, the report says, "owing to the networkbased nature of cryptocurrencies, after banning domestic crypto exchanges, many traders turned to overseas platforms to continue participating in crypto transactions." Trading in China is now low but not non-existent. But why would an outright ban be a superior choice to regulation, especially in a field driven by fast-paced technological innovations? The report, unfortunately, doesn't clarify that point.

# Governing India through fiscal math

A focus on fiscal deficit reduction alone is not sound economic management. The revenue deficit must be in the picture



PULAPRE BALAKRISHNAN

Thile it is important for a government to pursue a sound economic policy, including management of the public finances, it is yet another matter to make a fetish of any one aspect of it. The latter appears to govern this government's approach to policy when the fiscal deficit is given pride of place in its self-assessment. Not only is this unlikely to yield results on its own, it is not even necessarily prudent.

Thread of fiscal discipline

Soon after the Budget for 2019-20 was presented, one of the Finance Minister's predecessors remarked that "fiscal prudence rewards economies". This was perhaps issued both as praise for the Budget itself and as a justification of the approach taken during his own tenure. Though a concern for the size of the fiscal deficit would have been inevitable since the enactment of the Fiscal Responsibility and Budget Management Bill in 2003, and has therefore been on the radar of political parties of all persuasions at the Centre, it has been raised to special significance since 2014. It figured in the most recent Economic Survey, and its anticipated magnitude for 2019-20 was the final statement in the Budget speech that had followed. The Finance Minister had commenced the speech saying how the government was committed to fiscal discipline.

In the context, "fiscal discipline" is understood as taking the

economy towards the 3% of the gross domestic product. The basis for this figure can be queried but that is beside the point. Actually, the point is two fold: whether the fiscal deficit should be the sole index of fiscal management and what a reduction in the deficit would achieve. To suggest that fiscal prudence rewards economies is to suggest both that the fiscal deficit is the right indicator of fiscal soundness and that reducing it is bountiful.

Not always a perfect measure

While a sound fiscal policy is highly desirable, the magnitude of the fiscal deficit is not always and everywhere – think here of the state of the economy – a good measure of soundness. First, the fiscal deficit reflects the overall imbalance in the Budget. Embedded in the accounts of the government is the revenue account which is a statement of current receipts and expenditure. A fiscal deficit may or may not contain within it a deficit on the revenue account, termed the "revenue deficit". The possible embeddedness of a revenue deficit within a fiscal deficit muddies the waters somewhat. For movements in the overall, or fiscal, deficit by itself tell us nothing about what is

happening to the revenue deficit.

Why should we worry, one might

ask. We worry because it is the ba-

lance on the revenue deficit that

indicates whether the government

is saving out of its income or

spending more than it receives as

current revenue. A revenue deficit

implies that the government is A fiscal deficit co-terminus with a revenue deficit is to be frowned upon as it implies that at least some part of the borrowing is to finance current consumption, so-

mething a government ought pru-

dently to avoid, at least for long. Therefore, unless the revenue deficit is kept explicitly in the picture, we cannot deduce the soundness of economic management from a mere reduction in the fiscal deficit. In fact, in the Budget for 2019-20, while the fiscal deficit projected is marginally lower than earlier, the revenue deficit is projected to rise. Even though the magnitude of the changes is minuscule, their direction calls into question the Finance Minister's claim that the government is committed to fiscal discipline. It is yet another instance when the fiscal deficit can end up being no more than window dressing. While a pathological adherence to a revenue account balance is itself avoidable, a steady revenue deficit as the fiscal deficit shrinks makes a mockery of fiscal consolidation. Worse still it is open to the interpretation that the exercise is ideological in that it aims only to shrink the size of government, fiscal prudence be

#### Rewards yet to be seen

A detour through history would help bring some perspective here. A revenue deficit of the Central government is relatively recent, having been virtually non-existent till the 1980s. After that a rampant populism has taken over all political parties, reflected in revenue deficits accounting for over two thirds

of the fiscal deficit such as the case today. Revenue deficits have become structural in India by now. This has three implications: that the public debt is only bound to rise; we are permanently borrowing to consume, and leaving it to future generations to inherit the debt. While the populism referred to is not the monopoly of any one political party, it is particularly stark in the case of the present one which relentlessly flags its virtue in lowering the fiscal deficit.

We can see the hollowness of the claim that fiscal consolidation or the shrinking of the fiscal deficit is always and everywhere prudent, for the issue is what is happening to the revenue deficit. Now onto the former Finance Minister's claim that "it rewards" economies. This government has lowered the fiscal deficit alright, though not as much as the United Progressive Alliance government, but the rewards are yet to be seen. Export growth has slowed and the unemployment rate has risen. Even private investment has not soared, an outcome predicted following the claim that government borrowing "crowds out" private investment.

#### **International borrowing**

Of late an entirely new dimension has been added to fiscal management, but here again the appropriateness of conducting economic policy by reference to the magnitude of the fiscal deficit remains the issue. In the last Budget the government has signalled its intention to borrow in foreign currency from the international market. This is an innovation alright as the Government of India has so far never borrowed in the international markets, leaving it to public sector organisations and the private corporate sector to do so.

In the Budget speech of the 17th

Lok Sabha, the Finance Minister justified the move in terms of the very low share of foreign debt to GDP. The proposal has received criticism, some of it focussing on the consequences of exchange rate volatility. Benefits have been flagged too, such as that Indian sovereign bonds will attract a lower risk premium because the price of the foreign-currency-denominated sovereign bond will now be discoverable. This though ignores the biggest lesson from the global financial crisis of 2007, that the market cannot be relied upon to price risk correctly. And, both arguments overlook the foreign exchange constraint.

Dollar-denominated debt has to be repaid in dollars. Right now our reserves are fairly high but this could change. Oil prices could go back to where they were, the trade war initiated by U.S. President Donald Trump holds little prospect for faster export growth, and portfolio investment may flow out. While these are only possibilities, they point to the need to ultimately base your borrowing plan on expected dollar earnings. The opportunity offered by low global interest rates right now is not matched by the likelihood of robust export growth.

In the final analysis though, it is not the risk of exchange rate depreciation or stagnant exports or even capital flight that is the issue; it is the rationale for borrowing. With revenue deficits the overwhelming part of the fiscal deficit, we would be borrowing to finance consumption. Dollar denominated sovereign debt is just a matter of shifting this borrowing overseas. That is the real issue.

Pulapre Balakrishnan is Professor of Economics, Ashoka University and Senior

# History and the 5G dilemma

As India looks to developing 5G technology, its quest in the 1980s for an American supercomputer offers lessons



ARUN MOHAN SUKUMAR

ew technologies have a curious history of finding their way into the crosshairs of international politics. '5G' is no different. In many respects, the dilemma facing Prime Minister wei and other Chinese purveyors of 5G-enabled telecommunications infrastructure, or to salvage the political relationship with the United States – is similar to the one faced by Rajiv Gandhi in the 1980s. Then, India had sought for itself a "supercomputer" from, among others, Japan. Instead, it was dealt a bad hand by the U.S., and made to settle eventually for an American machine that belonged to an older, slower generation of computers. The lessons from that moment in history are instructive, and Indian policymakers would do well to heed them.

The late 1980s saw the waning of Cold War tensions on account of the Soviet Union's inability to stand toe-to-toe with the military might of the U.S. But U.S. President Ronald Reagan's administration had already set its sights on a small nation making rapid advancements in computing: Japan. technological rivalry spawned a trade war between Washington DC and Tokyo, each trying to outpace the other in penetrating newer markets. It reached a crescendo in 1987 when

Reagan himself blocked the acquisition of Fairchild Semiconductors by Fujitsu Corporation. Fairchild was responsible for giving "Silicon Valley" its name – the audacious Japanese attempt to buy off an American crown jewel was the straw that broke the camel's back.

The supercomputer saga

But long before this rivalry reached a head, India had become its unfortunate casualty. Geopolitics induced by technology coincided with Rajiv Gandhi's winning the eneral election by a slide. His early initiatives included the New Computer Policy (NCP) of 1984 and the Software (Exports) Policy of 1986, which resulted in a steep drop in the price of computers, and heralded a remarkable shift in the government's attitude towards them. However, to keep up with rapid, generational leaps in computing, India needed the assistance of nations that had made big strides in the sector. The U.S. made it known early that it called the shots.

Months after the NCP was passed, Reagan put India in a list of destinations that needed special "review" before exports of American technology could be cleared. Rajiv Gandhi made a much publicised visit to Washington DC in the summer of 1985 to break the impasse. It resulted in the Technology Cooperation Agreement (TCA), a genuine, diplomatic success forged by the personal chemistry the young Prime Minister shared with the septuagenarian Reagan. The TCA eased regulations on technology exports, and it was during this visit that Rajiv Gandhi broached the possible purchase of



a supercomputer.

computer to forecast its monsoons better. Negotiations with the U.S. were however long and cumbersome, and an entire year passed by without any progress. Meanwhile, Rajiv Gandhi himself had staked political capital in promising to bring home a supercomputer, lending urgency to the matter. India eventually approached Japan, whose NEC Corporation was the only company outside the U.S. that could offer a supercomputer.. The Wall Street Journal at the time made the stunning revelation that Iapan had promised India it would "sign a supercomputer agreement within 30 days if the US deal fell through".

## **Instrument of politics**

The availability of advanced technology from a competitor undermined the U.S. objective of wielding it as a blunt instrument of politics. Reagan wanted to wean India away from its partnership with the Soviet Union on high technology, and rein in New Delhi's progress on its nascent guided missile programme. Therefore, the U.S. attached riders to the sale,

placing intrusive safeguards and certification requirements that the supercomputer would be used by India only for civilian purposes. Ironically, American technology companies such as Honeywell and Unisys were supplying advanced electronics to Saddam Hussein around the same time, augmenting Iraq's missile system. When Japan stepped into the picture, the U.S. immediately began negotiations to reach a "common understanding" with Tokyo for the sale of supercomputers.

safeguards were "too broad and too stringent" but simply did not have the diplomatic firepower to resist Reagan's overtures. With Japan making its reluctance known, India was held captive at the negotiating table by the U.S. The agreement finally inked was for the sale of a Cray XMP supercomputer a generation older to its latest var-

The deal did little for Rajiv Gandhi domestically. After all, the Indian disaffection with IBM had begun, leading to its eventual exit in 1978, on account of its selling of obsolete machines to customers. If India has made modest forays into supercomputing today, it is thanks to the Centre for Development of Advanced Computing (C-DAC), which stepped up its efforts to create an indigenous machine in the wake of this episode.

The Cray supercomputer sale is well-documented, but less storied is the American effort to dissuade Japan's technology giants from the Indian market. By investing heavily in his political relationship with the U.S., Rajiv Gandhi unwittingly waded into Reagan's technology

trade war with Tokyo. It diminished his ability to negotiate autonomously with NEC.

# Fast forward to the present

The 5G saga is no different. At the recently concluded G20 summit in Osaka, Mr. Modi suggested he was talking to his U.S. counterpart to "collaborate and develop 5G technology for mutual benefit". Few American vendors have the ability today to compete with a Huawei, Nokia or Ericsson – the statement was a concession on Mr. Modi's part, allowing the U.S. to shoot off India's shoulders against Chinese technology giants. With the Principal Scientific Adviser, K. Vijay-Raghavan, also the head of the high-level panel on 5G, openly calling for the exclusion of Chinese players from national trials, the government has unwisely put all its cards on the table.

The U.S.-China technology rivalry is eminently political, one in which India should not take sides. If anything, New Delhi should take care to see history does not repeat itself. Much like the U.S.-Japan understanding on supercomputers, Osaka also saw the beginning of a U.S. rapprochement with China on technology trade: India must ensure whatever bilateral configuration that emerges from such talks does not restrict the sale of 5G equipment to others. There are no winners for India to pick in this battle: just decisions to be made coldly from the prism of economic self-interest.

Arun Mohan Sukumar is a PhD candidate at The Fletcher School, Tufts University and currently with the Observer Research

# $LETTERS\ TO\ THE\ EDITOR\quad \textit{Letters emailed to letters@thehindu.co.in must carry the full postal address and the full name or the name with initials.}$

## Train rescue

The heroic rescue of the passengers on board the Mahalaxmi Express which was caught in flood waters about 65 km from Mumbai is much appreciated (Page 1, "1,050 passengers rescued from stranded train near Mumbai", July 28). The Central Railway should now be proactive and cancel train services in flood-affected regions in the best interest of passenger safety. The incident should also lead to better facilities on board trains. A public announcement system in all trains to communicate information to passengers during an emergency or crisis must be in place. Railway staff should also be

equipped to handle any emergency. VARUN DAMBAL,

■ Compliments to the entire team and agencies involved in the dramatic rescue. We often blame government agencies whenever there is a disaster but seldom appreciate a good job such as this. The role of the local people cannot be ignored, with young men assisting the forces. May their tribe grow. Kunjibettu, Udupi, Karnataka

# **Open House**

I was one of the 40 readers to participate in the first Kerala Open House with the Readers' Editor ("Revive

youth, say readers", July 28). As many readers have pointed out, The Hindu is the best newspaper to improve a person's vocabulary and knowledge. From Saturday's meeting I understand that most readers have expressed dismay over the declining passion for reading especially among the millennials. Students of my generation do find social media to be a huge draw and newspaper. The daily needs to take the initiative to encourage the reading habit right from school and must shape its products towards meeting this goal. Finally, more such open house

passion for reading among

meetings must be held across India so that the editorreader relationship grows. GEORGIL K. JEEMON, Kumarapuram, Ernakulam, Kerala

■ While it is gratifying to note that the 'Readers' Mail' column will be restored and improved, the space for the 'Letters to the Editor' section should be increased, taking up from what a reader at the Kochi session has suggested. R. SIVAKUMAR.

## Life of a doctor

A doctor's life is always on edge (Open Page, "All in a day's work for this doctor", July 28). Ultimately he is judged, hailed or condemned, based on the

end result, ignoring all the sincere efforts and dedication invested by the doctor when handling a case. The primary reason for this is the assumption that a doctor is an omnipotent saviour

This misconception needs to be erased from our minds. Even after the best treatment, a patient may not survive due to extraneous factors. A doctor is also a normal being just doing his job. He can only do it with all the wisdom, knowledge,

sincerity and dedication at his command. KOSARAJU CHANDRAMOULI,

■ The article was extremely poignant, conveying the anguish of not being able to save a patient. Doctors wage a relentless battle day in and day out to save patients under their care but at times fate decides otherwise. C.V. ARAVIND,

MORE LETTERS ONLINE:

**CORRECTIONS & CLARIFICATIONS:** 

In a Business page (July 28, 2019) report on ICICI Bank's performance, there was an erroneous reference to consolidated return on assets - both in the text and in the graphic. It should have been consolidated return on equity.

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

THE HINDU DELHI MONDAY, JULY 29, 2019

# It's time for India and Pakistan to walk the talk

Given the various breaches, the Simla Agreement could do with a makeover



V. SUDARSHAN

The Simla Agreement may be somewhat overrated. It could even be dead though we keep referring to it as a guiding light and take shelter behind it. Signed on July 2, 1972, by Prime Minister Indira Gandhi and Pakistan President Zulfikar Ali Bhutto, the Agreement has been observed mainly in its breach. It commits the two countries to "put an end to the conflict and confrontation that have hitherto marred their relations and work for the promotion of a friendly and harmonious relationship and the establishment of durable peace in the sub-continent". Pending "the final settlement of any of the problems between the two countries", it stipulates that "neither side shall unilaterally alter the situation and both shall prevent the organization, assistance or encouragement of any acts detrimental to the maintenance of peaceful and harmonious relations". This is followed by a list of admirable, if ineffectual, exhortations. If these had been implemented effectively by New Delhi and Islamabad, Hafiz Saeed and Masood Azhar could well have been tourists in India rather than terrorists. Given the various breaches, the Simla Agreement could do with a makeover.

It took more than 10 years after Simla to group the subjects that India and Pakistan would sporadically talk about, and even then the two countries have been going around in circles. It is reasonable to assume that nowadays Pakistan talks more about India and Kashmir to the U.S. than to India. Terrorism was one of the subjects that the two nations emphasised they would bilaterally discuss, but the 2011 Mumbai blasts shattered that premise. Since then India has been talking about Pakistani terrorism not so much with Pakistan as with any country willing to listen. This is probably why U.S President Donald Trump revealed at the Oval Office on July 22 that he and Pakistan Prime Minister Imran Khan would be "talking about India". "I think maybe if we can help intercede and do wha-



Prime Minister Indira Gandhi and Pakistan President Zulfikar Ali Bhutto signing the Simla Agreement in July 1972. • THE HINDU ARCHIVES

dent Clinton, who had been briefing

Vajpayee every little step of the way,

called him. Vajpayee was by then a

sceptic of peace. He had made a

high-risk bus trip to Lahore and the

Pakistanis had rewarded him by vio-

lating the Simla Agreement in Kargil

to seek to alter the LoC. Vajpayee did

not tell Mr. Clinton that this was a bi-

lateral affair and he should stay out

of it. Instead, he warned the Presi-

dent that Mr. Sharif would take him

on a merry ride, and he was afraid

that Mr. Clinton would get co-opted.

Mr. Riedel, who was present at all the

meetings, writes in "American Diplo-

macy and the 1999 Kargil Summit at

Blair House": "Sharif handed the

President a document which he said

was a non-paper provided to him

early in the crisis by Vajpayee in

which the two would agree to restore

the sanctity of the LoC (a formula for

Pakistani withdrawal) and resume

the Lahore process. Sharif said at

first India had agreed to this non-

Mr. Sharif wanted a withdrawal in

return for a time-specific resolution

of the Kashmir issue. President Clin-

ton exploded saying he wouldn't be

blackmailed. The meeting broke to

take stock of the matter. During the

break, President Clinton called a

worried Vajpayee to brief him again.

"What do you want me to say," Vaj-

payee asked when informed of what

had gone on. President Clinton res-

paper but then changed its mind".

tever we have to do," he said. "But I think it's something that can be brought back together."

#### Clinton's role during Kargil

President Trump may have been overstating it, but when the Simla Agreement was violated in Kargil, it was an American President who helped push the Pakistani troops back into Pakistan. As the Kargil War began to get bigger, a worried President Bill Clinton, who called the region "the most dangerous place in the world", reached out to both Pakistan Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif and Prime Minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee, urging Mr. Sharif to pull back from the Line of Control (LoC) and Vajpayee not to widen the war front.

On July 2, 1999, the 27th anniversary of the Simla Agreement, when the Indian Army launched a threepronged attack in Kargil, Mr. Sharif called up Mr. Clinton. He wanted the Americans to intervene. To make it happen, he was even ready to fly to Washington with his family in case he became a Prime Minister in exile. Two American diplomats in the Clinton administration, Bruce Riedel and Strobe Talbott, detail the developments in fascinating detail. They write that the Americans told Mr. Sharif not to come unless he was willing to agree to an unconditional withdrawal, Mr. Sharif told the Americans that he was coming anyway. Presi-

ponded that he was holding firm. When they met again, Mr. Clinton told Mr. Sharif that if Pakistan didn't withdraw, he would issue a statement naming Pakistan as a sponsor of terrorism as it had already readied nuclear missiles. Mr. Sharif said he feared for his life, but he reluctantly agreed to pull back troops. President Clinton called Vajpayee to give him the news. "That guy's from Missouri big-time," he said later. "He wants to see those boys get off that mountain before he's going to believe any of this" (Engaging India, Strobe Talbott). The U.S. helped boot out the Pakistanis from Kargil for India.

#### Trump's hint

Was what President Clinton did mediation? Or was it intervention? Or meddling? Or was this all a shining example of bilateralism envisaged in the Simla Agreement? President Trump gave India a preview on February 28, before Wing Commander Abhinandan Varthaman was freed by Pakistan, of what was coming when he said: "We have some reasonably decent news. I think hopefully that's going to be coming to an end. It's been going on for a long time, decades and decades. There's a lot of dislike, unfortunately. So we've been in the middle trying to help them both out, see if we can get some organization and some peace, and I think probably that's going to be happening." Was that mediation or the Simla Agreement at work? Nobody pointed out to President Trump that only the Ministry of External Affairs or the Pakistani Foreign Office or the Director General of the Inter-Services Public Relations were allowed to make such announcements.

We have to recognise that the world has changed since the Simla Agreement was signed. After the 1971 war, India returned land taken in battle on the western border, to create lasting peace. The LoC is now more firmly established than ever before. There is no talk any more of United Nations resolutions. Most of the subjects in the 'composite dialogue format' like Siachen, Sir Creek and Wullar Barrage have been discussed threadbare. Some of them have been ready for political signatures for years. If the way forward is bilateral, then surely it is time to prove it?

sudarshan.v@thehindu.co.in

#### FROM THE READERS' EDITOR

# Dialogue dividends

The Hindu's Open House ensures a free and frank exchange of ideas between readers and senior editors



A.S. PANNEERSELVAN

The Neiman Reports recently explored the idea of 'dialogue journalism' in

a piece titled, "Can dialogue journalism engage audiences, foster civil discourse, and increase trust in the media?" In that report, Chuck Todd, the moderator of NBC's Meet the Press, observed: "As a journalist, you can't just sit in the observation tower anymore and report that one side is saying this and the other side is saying

that. Listening to community voices and encouraging them to listen to each other is not a new tactic in journalism, it's just more of a necessity than before." In polarised times, dialogue helps people listen to each other rather than emphasise their own points in echo chambers. In my experience, The Hindu's Open House has become a forum for engagement. It is a form of dialogue journal-

#### **Discussion in the Open House**

We invited 40 readers for the last Open House, which was held in Kochi on July 27, for a free and frank exchange of ideas with the senior editorial team led by the Editor. A representative from the management was also present to address non-editorial queries. We provided adequate time to the readers to raise their concerns. It was heartening to note that there were young college students, literary translators, teachers and retired bureaucrats in the audience. The reason for limiting the number to 40 was to ensure that every participant got an opportunity to express his or her opinion.

Louise Diamond of The Institute for Multi-Track Diplomacy once said: "Dialogue means we sit and talk with each other, especially those with whom we may think we have the greatest differences. However, talking together all too often means debating, discussing with a view to convincing the other, arguing for our point of view, examining pros and cons. In dialogue, the intention is not to advocate but to inquire; not to argue but to explore; not to convince but to discov-

Instead of being trapped in the binary of digital media and legacy media, readers understood the value of the process of newsgathering and news processing. Two young readers, Anna Kattampally and Chithra S. Nair, both graduate students from St. Teresa's College, said younger readers now wait for proper journalistic writing to know the truth as social media forwards carry too much misinformation. They told us that

> there is a dramatic increase in the sharing of sensational, unverified content which is eroding trust in various institutions. They said that the fact that such messages come from known circles give them some form of credence. It is in this context that they have decided to become readers of The Hindu, a newspaper which makes central to its news coverage the

act of verification.

#### A difficult balance

Many readers spoke of a balance of hyperlocal, local, state, national and international news. Diverse opinions indicated that any fixed formula would make someone unhappy, as the interests of each reader are different from another's. One idea that the Editor approved of was the creation of an editioncentric letters section to deal with local and civic issues. This can be a form of citizen journalism. He has promised to make the local letters section an interactive one: readers will raise issues and the newspaper will seek responses to these issues from the authorities concerned. One reader said that the official responses could become formulaic and wanted the newspaper to examine both the complaints and the responses, so that there is a system of accountability. This new section should be available within a fortnight.

In the era of digitisation, a question that was asked was, shouldn't news be free? When there are multiple sources of information, why should a publication have a paywall? Some argued that the paywall proposal was an attempt to turn news into a commodity that people are willing to pay for.

The answer is simple: news costs money, and credible news costs more money. It is our own democratic investment to pay a fair price for high-quality journalism. For nearly a century, the revenue model was driven by advertising, which is now getting fragmented across platforms.

readerseditor@thehindu.co.in

# Respecting reproductive choice

Regulation of commercial surrogacy rather than a blanket ban may be the way forward

It is unfortunate that the Surrogacy (Regulation) Bill, 2019, approved by the Cabinet, bans and criminalises commercial surrogacy and only allows altruistic surrogacy. The Bill stipulates that a surrogate mother has to be a 'close relative' of the intending couple.

## **Imposing morality**

The legislation shows that the government is eager to impose a certain morality on others as the Bill excludes gay couples, single men and women, and unmarried couples who want a child. In doing so, the government overlooks the needs of many same sex couples and single parents.

In its earlier form, the Surrogacy Bill was cleared by the Lok Sabha on December 19, 2018. It was passed after a short debate of just two hours among only nine members of Parliament. It could not be introduced in the Rajya Sabha, however. At that time, the Health Minister, J.P. Nadda, said various political parties supported the Bill which was drafted "keeping the Indian ethos in mind". He said the "intention is to save the family" and if the family is not able to bear children, to help them bear children through facilities offered by modern science. A family, according to the Minister, consists of "a registered husband and wife." The 228th Law Commission India Report on Commercial Surrogacy too strongly recommended prohibiting commercial surrogacy. However, it said that "prohibition on vague moral grounds without a proper assessment of social ends and purposes which surrogacy can serve would be irrational."

How did the the Health Ministry conclude that that all forms of commercial surrogacy are suspicious? If it relied on or conducted studies on commercial surrogacy, it would be helpful if it shared these with the public, especially since this Bill, if it becomes law, could affect the chances of many couples in India who are desperate for children and whose only ray of hope is often commercial surrogacy. Is there an inventory of clinics offering commercial surrogacy services? If yes, did the health inspectors carry out inspections?

Should there be a charter of regulations that these clinics must follow? Many questions remain unanswered.

The legislation allows surrogacy only through a close relative. However, the Bill doesn't define 'close relative'. Moreover, the surrogate, the Bill says, should be married, aged 25 to 35, and should have at least one child. This further brings down the number of eligible surrogate moth-

Votaries of the ban have argued that commercial surrogacy is used for trafficking, and foreigners abandon children born through surrogates. Such violations should be addressed with an iron fist. However, has there been a comparison between the number of cases of misuse and those cases where families have benefited from surrogacy? Other practices are misused too, but they are all not banned.



## **Tightening regulations**

The focus should be on the well-being of the surrogate. The intending couple should ensure financial enumeration, a sound insurance cover and regular health check-ups for the surrogate. The relevant parts of the process should be legally documented. To impose a ban where better regulation may have sufficed will only take the entire process underground. Tightening regulations would respect the interests of infertile couples who might have a chance to have a child through surrogacy. That would also respect the woman's choice about how she wants to bear a child.

vijaita.singh@thehindu.co.in



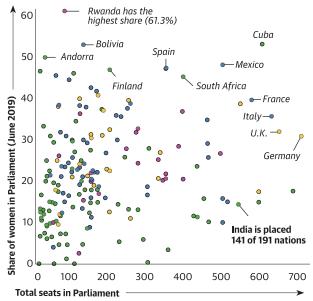
## **DATA POINT**

# Women in charge

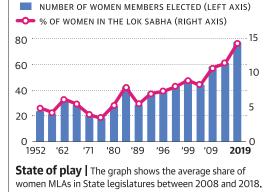
Despite the share of women legislators in the Lok Sabha peaking at 14.39% as of June 2019, India is still worse than 140 countries in the representation of women in Parliament. The global average for the share of women parliamentarians stood at 24.6%. By Sumant Sen

## **Global snapshot**

The graph plots the number of seats in Parliament against the share of women legislators in 191 countries. Each circle is a country. • indicates countries that have a quota for women in Parliament; • denotes countries where parties are mandated to field a certain % of women candidates; O depicts countries where parties give quota to women but are not mandated to do so; O indicates no quota for women



**Slight uptick** | The graph shows the share of women lawmakers in the Lok Sabha from the first election to the latest. The % of women parliamentarians has gone up significantly in the last three terms of the Lower House



Each bar is a State. Only nine States had an average share of more than 10% women in their Assemblies in this period



# Source: Inter-Parliamentary Union, International Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance, Election of India Atlas, Trivedi Centre for Political Data, UN

## The Man Frindu. FROM THE ARCHIVES

FIFTY YEARS AGO JULY 29, 1969

## Signs of ferment in Nepal

The suppression of three newspapers here [Kathmandu] last week, along with the arrest of student demonstrators and a prominent member of the National Assembly, focussed attention on the troubled political conditions in Nepal. The developments indicate that the Panchayat or Assembly system of limited representative Government inaugurated by King Mahendra nine years ago is running into serious new difficulties. One of the chief elements in the situation is a Communist movement looking mainly toward Peking that stands to profit if turbulence and repression continue. The latest flare-up of student restiveness results from recent student union elections. For years, Communist nominees have been winning the annual vote but this year non-Communists came out ahead. Demonstrations by rival factions centred on international issues, with the Communists attacking their opponents through anti-Indian slogans, denouncing the small Indian military liaison group in Nepal, Indian border watchers on the Tibet frontier and India's position over Susta, where location of boundary posts is in dispute.

## A HUNDRED YEARS AGO JULY 29, 1919.

A portion of the correspondence that has

## Letter to Mr. Gandhi.

lately passed between Mr. Gandhi and the Hon'ble Sir George Barnes, Commerce and Industries Member of the Government of India, in regard to the Asiatic Trading Amendment Act, passed by the South Africa Legislature, has been issued to the Press [in Bombay] by Mr. Gandhi. It consists of two letters, one written by Sir George Barnes to Mr. Gandhi on the 18th instant reviewing the position in South Africa at length, regretting that protests from the Government of India had been unavailing and assuring that the Government would consider most anxiously further action to be taken when the full text of the new statute is received, and the other being Mr. Gandhi's reply to Sir George Barnes. The following is the text of Sir George Barne's letter to Mr. Gandhi: Dear Mr. Gandhi, I sent you only a very short note a few days ago in answer to your letter because I wanted to defer a fuller answer until I was able to deal with the subject at length. I told you, in my first note, that I felt certain that you needed no assurance from me that the events in South Africa which have led up to the passing of the new statute have caused the Viceroy and myself the deepest anxiety.

# बिज़नेस स्टैंडर्ड वर्ष 12 अंक 139

# संघवाद को खतरा

के बाद पंद्रहवें वित्त आयोग के लिए शर्तें बदल दी गईं। ऐसा इसलिए किया गया ताकि रक्षा और आंतरिक सुरक्षा की आवश्यकताओं को नियमित व्यय से परे किया जा सके।

**कें द्रीय** मंत्रिमंडल के एक हालिया निर्णय शामिल की, 'देश की रक्षा और आंतरिक सुरक्षा के लिए पर्याप्त, सुरक्षित और बेकार नहीं जाने वाली धनराशि की गंभीर चिंताओं को हल करने के लिए।'

इसे केंद्र द्वारा और अधिक राजकोषीय गंजाइश तलाशने के प्रयास के रूप में देखा आयोग का कार्यकाल बढ़ाते हुए जा रहा है। संविधान के अनुच्छेद 280 के मंत्रिमंडल ने उसके अधिदेश में यह बात अनुसार आयोग को यह अधिकार प्राप्त है

कि वह करों के वितरण का अंतिम निर्णय ले और अनुच्छेद 266 कहता है कि देश का समेकित कोष वह साझा पुल है जिससे तमाम राष्ट्रीय प्राथमिकताओं की पूर्ति की

रक्षा के लिए एक कोष को विशिष्ट रूप से अलग करने से संविधान के मूलभूत सिद्धांत का ही उल्लंघन होगा। इससे रक्षा व्यय, अन्य व्यय से अलग हो जाएगा और केंद्र को यह अधिकार मिल जाएगा कि वह राज्यों के बजाय अपनी राजनीतिक प्राथमिकताओं के अनुरूप व्यय कर सके। जब वस्तु एवं सेवा कर के कमजोर प्रदर्शन के चलते राजकोषीय संकट की स्थिति बनी हुई है, उस समय इस घटना को अच्छा तो कर्तर्ड नहीं कहा जा सकता।

यह सच है कि रक्षा आवंटन बीते कुछ वर्षों के दौरान चिंता का विषय रहा है। सकल घरेलू उत्पाद के प्रतिशत के रूप में इसमें लगातार कमी आई है। इससे भी ब्री बात यह कि व्यय का बड़ा हिस्सा अन्य ताजा व्यय के साथ वेतन और पेंशन में चला जाता है। रक्षा क्षेत्र का पूंजीगत बजट बहुत कम है और इसका बड़ा हिस्सा तयश्दा खर्च मसलन पहले से तय खरीद आदि में लग

आधुनिकीकरण की नई पहल के लिए बहुत कम राशि बचती है। परंतु इस समस्या का हल संवैधानिक प्रावधानों से छेडछाड करना और राज्यों के संसाधन कम करना नहीं है। केंद्रीय सची के किसी भी हिस्से को राज्यों पर या समवर्ती सूची पर इस प्रकार

तरजीह नहीं दी जानी चाहिए। यह केंद्र सरकार पर निर्भर करता है कि वह तय करे कि वह अपने राजस्व में रक्षा के लिए कितना हिस्सा अलग करना चाहती है। अगर वह हाल के वर्षों में इस दिशा में पर्याप्त राशि नहीं दे पा रही है तो उसे अपने कुल व्यय का नए सिरे से आकलन करना चाहिए बजाय बंटवारे के लिए उपलब्ध कुल करों में सेंध लगाने और वित्तीय रूप से अधिक जवाबदेह रहे राज्यों के हिस्से में कमी

इस सूची में आंतरिक सुरक्षा पर होने वाले व्यय को भी शामिल किया जा सकता है। देश के अर्द्धसैनिक बल हालिया रुझानों के विपरीत रहे हैं। उनका आकार, संख्याबल और खर्च बढ़ा है। यह सिलसिला हमेशा नहीं चलता रह सकता। खासतौर पर वाम चरमपंथ का खतरा भी अब बीते दशकों की तुलना में काफी कम हुआ है।

आयोग अगर उस राजनीतिक खतरे को पहचाने तो बेहतर होगा जो केंद्र द्वारा आंतरिक सुरक्षा और रक्षा व्यय के लिए अलग कोष की मांग के कारण देश के संघीय ढांचे को हुआ है। अगर ऐसा सुरक्षा केंद्रित फंड बनाया जाता है तो इसे राज्यों को दी जाने वाली राजस्व राशि में से कोई हिस्सेदारी नहीं मिलनी चाहिए। केंद्र को इसका भुगतान स्वयं करना चाहिए। इससे इतर किसी भी तरह का कदम संवैधानिक ढांचे को नुकसान पहुंचाएगा और इसके कारण आने वाले वर्षों में गंभीर समस्याएं पैदा हो सकती हैं।



# येदियुरप्पा के रसूख से कर्नाटक बना अपवाद

भाजपा में येदियुरप्पा ने मोदी और शाह के निर्विवाद दबदबे को पहली बड़ी चुनौती दी है। अन्य राज्यों के भाजपा नेता भी इससे प्रेरणा ले सकते हैं।

🗕 र्नाटक राजनीतिक दृष्टि से देश 🛮 करते रहे और इसका फल का सबसे महत्त्वपूर्ण प्रांत नहीं है। लोकसभा सीटों के मामले में यह केरल (20) और मध्य प्रदेश (29) के बीच में आता है। इसके बावजूद बीते महीनों में सुर्खियां बटोरने के मामले में कर्नाटक इन राज्यों पर भारी पड़ा। अब जबिक वहां भाजपा दोबारा सत्ता में है, आप आशा करेंगे कि जीत की संतुष्टि और शांति हावी होगी लेकिन सतह के नीचे काफी असंतोष और बेचैनी नजर आएगी।

हम कह सकते हैं कि मझोले आकार के कर्नाटक ने अमित शाह और नरेंद्र मोदी की अक्षुण्ण और निर्विवाद सत्ता को पहली चुनौती दी है। ज्यादा बारीकी से बात करें तो यह चुनौती कर्नाटक ने नहीं बल्कि बीएस येदियरप्पा ने दी है। उन्होंने अपनी ही पार्टी में अनपेक्षित बगावत की है। पहली बार किसी व्यक्ति ने अपने आला कमान को ऐसे समझौते करने पर मजबूर किया जो शायद वह पार्टी में किसी अन्य के लिए नहीं करते।

75 वर्ष की आयु सीमा के नियम का उल्लंघन तो इन समझौतों में केवल एक है। येदियुरप्पा 76 वर्ष के हैं। वह उम्र की वह सीमा पार कर चुके हैं जिसके बाद मोदी और शाह के आगमन के बाद नेता या तो राजभवन जाते हैं या मार्गदर्शक मंडल। अगर हम 2014 के बाद से अब तक की भाजपा पर नजर डालें तो केवल दो नेता 75 के बाद भी कैबिनेट में बने रह सके। एक हैं नजमा हेपतुल्ला, जो आखिरकार मणिपुर की राज्यपाल बनीं और दूसरे कलराज मिश्र जो अब हिमाचल प्रदेश के राज्यपाल बने हैं। बीच की अवधि में अलग-थलग रहते हुए भी वह बिना नागा मोदी की तारीफ में ट्वीट भी उन्हें मिला।

भाजपा में कोई और आयुसीमा का उल्लंघन नहीं कर सका। यहां तक कि जो भाजपा नेता शायद मोदी को ताउम्र देश का प्रधानमंत्री बनाने की मांग करते वे भी ये अटकल लगाने लगे थे कि तीसरे कार्यकाल में 75 की उम्र पार करने पर उनका उत्तराधिकारी कौन होगा। इससे येदियुरप्पा की विशेष

ताकत का अंदाजा लगता है। यकीनन इसका यह अर्थ भी हो सकता है कि मोदी के 75 की उम्र में पद त्यागने की संभावना बेमानी हो जाए। अगर एक छोटे क्षेत्रीय नेता को यह छट दी जा सकती है तो भला अपेक्षाकत स्वस्थ एवं ताकतवर मोदी को क्यों नहीं ?

राष्ट्र की बात

शेखर गुप्ता

कई मायनों में येदियुरप्पा उस आदर्श मुख्यमंत्री से एकदम उलट हैं जैसा मोदी और शाह चाहते। इसके लिए सन 2014 के बाद से उनके द्वारा नियुक्त मुख्यमंत्रियों की सूची खंगाली जा सकता है। इनमें से कोई अपने राज्य में इतना रसूखदार नहीं था और न ही पद का सबसे बडा दावेदार ही था। यहां तक कि योगी आदित्यनाथ भी नहीं। इनमें से कोई भी राज्य की प्रभावशाली जाति से नहीं आता था। जाट बहुल हरियाणा में मनोहर लाल खट्टर जैसे पंजाबी को मख्यमंत्री बनाया गया।

झारखंड में आदिवासियों को सत्ता नहीं सौंपी गई। महाराष्ट्र में युवा ब्राह्मण देवेंद्र फडणवीस को पद सौंपना, मराठाओं की आंख में किरकिरी जैसा था। यहां तक कि असम में भी सबसे ताकतवर नेता हिमंत

शक्ति शाली सर्वानंद सोनोवाल के अधीन रखा गया।

अब तक के मॉडल के मुताबिक भाजपा को केवल दो नेताओं की जरूरत है और वे दिल्ली में रहते हैं। शेष नेता उनके अनुचर हैं। येदियुरप्पा ने इस नियम को भंग कर दिया है। उन्होंने खुद को अपने बूते स्थापित किया है। वह न केवल एक रसुखदार जाति के नेता हैं।

बल्कि वह आलाकमान की निरंतर अवहेलना भी करते रहे हैं। अतीत में जब उन्हें सत्ता सौंपने से इनकार कर पार्टी ने उनके शत्रु सदानंद गौडा को राज्य की सत्ता सौंपी और जब वह भी अस्थिर हो गए तो येदियुरप्पा ने बगावत कर भाजपा छोड़ दी और एक क्षेत्रीय दल बनाकर 2013 का चुनाव लड़ा। उन्हें केवल छह सीटों पर जीत मिली लेकिन लिंगायत वोटों को उन्होंने पार्टी से दूर कर दिया। भाजपा भी 224 सदस्यीय विधानसभा में 40 सीटों पर सिमट कर रह गई।

उन्होंने अपनी पार्टी को एक और प्रमुख सिद्धांत तोड़ने पर मजबूर किया: वह था भ्रष्टाचार को सहन न करना। अपने पहले कार्यकाल में येदियुरप्पा को भ्रष्टाचार के आरोपों और लोकायुक्त की प्रतिकूल रिपोर्ट के चलते सत्ता गंवानी पड़ी। वह कुछ समय जेल में भी रहे और बाद में बरी हुए। परंतु चंकि उन्हें पद से हटाया गया था इसलिए 2008 से 2013 के बीच कोई चैन से नहीं रह सका। भाजपा को राज्य में तीन मुख्यमंत्री बदलने पडे।

यही कारण है कि 2013 में कांग्रेस ने स्पष्ट बहुमत हासिल किया। परंतु येदियुरप्पा को न केवल पार्टी में वापस लिया गया बल्कि क्षेत्रीय कद्दावर नेता की उनकी हैसियत भी बरकरार रही। इसकी तुलना गुजरात में शंकर सिंह बाघेला से कर के देखिए। उस दौर में भाजपा के सबसे बड़े नेता और आरएसएस के आदमी रहे बाघेला ने पार्टी छोडकर कांग्रेस की सहायता से गुजरात के मुख्यमंत्री का पद संभाला। क्या भाजपा उन्हें कभी दोबारा राज्य में सत्ता सौंपती ?

उम्र, जाति, भ्रष्टाचार और वफादारी को धता बताने के अलावा येदियुरप्पा ने अपनी पार्टी को मजबूर किया कि वह राज्य की कांग्रेस-जदसे सरकार गिराकर तत्काल उन्हें पद सौंपे। भाजपा शायद उक्त गठबंधन सरकार को थोड़ा और समय देती कि वह स्वयं गिर जाए। हालांकि ऐसा अनिवार्य तौर पर नहीं कहा जा सकता।

बहुत संभव है कि मोदी और शाह राज्य को कुछ और वक्त तक राष्ट्रपति शासन के अधीन रहने देते और दलबदलुओं से निपटकर सरकार बनाते। फिलहाल जिस हड़बड़ी में येदियुरप्पा को शपथ दिलाई गई वह अजीब है और उसका कोई लाभ भी

इसलिए कि तमाशा अभी खत्म नहीं हुआ है। विधानसभा अध्यक्ष ने सभी बागियों की अर्हता समाप्त कर दी है यानी वे अगला विधानसभा चुनाव नहीं लड़ सकेंगे। खेल अभी खत्म नहीं हुआ है। कम से कम वैसे तो बिल्कुल नहीं जैसा भाजपा चाहती।

भाजपा के इस बुजुर्ग नेता को इतनी ताकत कहां से मिलती है और भाजपा तथा राष्ट्रीय राजनीति के लिए इसके क्या मायने हैं ? पहली बात तो यही कि भाजपा राज्य में युवा नेतृत्व कायम करने में नाकाम रही। येदियुरप्पा के प्रमुख विरोधी अनंत कुमार की असमय मृत्यु से भी उन्हें मदद मिली। परंतु सबसे अहम बात यह है कि भाजपा को अंदाजा हो गया कि कर्नाटक में वह केवल मोदी के दम पर विधानसभा में बहुमत नहीं हासिल कर सकती। यह इकलौता राज्य है जहां भाजपा को हिंदू वोट बैंक के भीतर अपने ही नेता के जातीय वोट बैंक से चुनौती मिली।

अन्य राज्यों के भाजपा नेता भी इसे ध्यान में रखेंगे। आसपास नजर दौडाएं तो अन्य राज्यों में येदियुरप्पा की हैसियत का भाजपा नेता नहीं दिखता। राजस्थान में वसुंधरा राजे अपने वफादारों को किनारे करने और निंदकों की तरक्की से नाराज होंगी। शिवराज सिंह चौहान को वह छूट और संसाधन नहीं मिले जिनकी बदौलत वे कमलनाथ की सरकार को गिरा सकें। परंतु ऐसे नेता हैं कम से कम महाराष्ट्र और झारखंड में। योगी आदित्यनाथ को इस गिनती में क्यों न शामिल किया जाए, वह भी कर्नाटक के अपवाद से प्रेरणा ले सकते हैं।

पुनश्च: आपने देखा होगा कि उनके नाम के वर्णाक्षर एक बार फिर बदल गए हैं। बुरे दिनों में उन्होंने इसे बदला था लेकिन कोई लाभ न होने पर पुन: मूल नाम को अपना लिया है। मैं कह नहीं सकता कि उनका अंधविश्वास भी कम हुआ है

# मशीन लर्निंग, कृत्रिम मेधा से आसान होगा बीमारियों पर शोध

जीवन प्रोटीन और जटिल अणुओं पर निर्भर करता है और ये बहुत से कार्य करते हैं। भिन्न-भिन्न अमीनो अम्ल के आपस में मिलने से प्रोटीन का निर्माण होता है। त्रिआयामी संरचना में आपस में जडे अण मिलकर अमीनो अम्ल बनाते हैं। इनके गलत मेल से अल्जाइमर, पार्किंसन रोग और मस्तिष्क के गंभीर विकार जैसी कई जटिल बीमारियां हो सकती हैं। यदि हम प्रोटीन निर्माण की प्रक्रिया को समझ लें तो नई दवाइयां बनाने और इस तरह की गंभीर स्थितियों से निपटने में तेजी आएगी। यह शोध क्षेत्र की सबसे बडी चुनौतियों में शामिल है। हालांकि प्रोटीन निर्माण के नियम काफी आसान हैं और हम किसी भी दिए गए प्रोटीन में अमीनो अम्ल के क्रम को सूचीबद्ध कर सकते हैं लेकिन त्रिआयामी संरचना में अलग-अलग तरह से इनके जुड़ने की संभावनाएं इतनी अधिक हैं कि सुपर कंप्यूटर की मदद से भी इन्हें सूचीबद्ध करना लगभग नामुमिकन है। करीब 20.000 जीन विभिन्न क्रम में गलत तरीके से क्रमबद्ध हो सकते हैं जिसके चलते अंतिम तौर पर बनने वाला प्रोटीन पूरी तरह अलग हो सकता है।

बहुत से शोधार्थी प्रोटीन की त्रिआयामी संरचना और अमीनो अम्ल के क्रमबद्ध आंकडे सुचीबद्ध करने के लिए विभिन्न एल्गोरिद्म का उपयोग कर रहे हैं। वे प्रोटीन की संरचना को मापने के लिए एक्स-रे क्रिस्टलोग्राफी और नाभिकीय चुबकत्व अनुनाद जैसी पद्धतियों का भी उपयोग कर रहे हैं। लेकिन यह काफी खर्चीली और मात्र अनुमानों पर आधारित प्रक्रिया है जहां हम वास्तव में यह नहीं जानते कि संबंधित क्रमबद्ध संरच अगला क्रम क्या होगा।

कई मामलों में प्रोटीन का निर्माण शतरंज. शोगी (शतरंज का जापानी प्रारूप) और गो खेल की तरह होता है। इन खेलों के नियम काफी आसान होते हैं. जिसे एक बालक कुछ ही मिनट में सीख सकता है। अणुओं के मुकाबले शतरंज के खेल में अधिक संभावनाएं होती हैं लेकिन शोगी में शतरंज से भी ज्यादा और गो में शोगी से अधिक संभावनाएं होती हैं। किसी कंप्यूटर प्रोग्राम के जरिये इन खेलों को खेलने के लिए कारगर तरीके की पहचान करना जरूरी होता है।



तकनीकी तंत्र

देवांग्शु दत्ता

इस तरह के खेलों के लिए बनाए गए प्रोग्राम का उपयोग प्रोटीन निर्माण की प्रक्रिया के लिए भी किया जा सकता है। डीप माइंड का अल्फा–फोल्ड इसका प्रमाण है। कृत्रिम मेधा (एआई) क्षेत्र की ब्रिटिश कंपनी डीप माइंड ने उस समय काफी हलचल पैदा कर दी जब उसके 'अल्फा' एल्गोरिद्म ने शतरंज, गो और शोगी खेल सीख लिए। वर्ष 2016 में इसे पहली बार प्रतिस्पर्धा में उतारा गया और अल्फा-गो ने विश्व विजेता ली सिडोल को हरा दिया। ज्यादा विकसित करने के उद्देश्य से इसके दूसरे संस्करण अल्फा–जीरो को दिशानिर्देश दिए गए और स्वयं को बेहतर बनाने के उद्देश्य से उसने खुद के साथ ही लाखों बार यह खेल खेला। आखिरकार अल्फा-जीरो ने शतरंज तथा शोगी के माहिर खिलाड़ियों और अल्फा-गो को पराजित कर दिया। डीप माइंड स्वयं सीखने वाले

एल्गोरिद्म को दूसरी प्रणालियों के लिए भी विकसित कर रही है। दिसंबर 2018 में इसके प्रोग्राम अल्फा-फोल्ड ने 13वीं क्रिटिकल असेसमेंट ऑफ स्टक्चर प्रडिक्शन (सीएएसपी) नामक प्रतिष्ठित प्रतिस्पर्धा में शीर्ष स्थान हासिल किया था। यह त्रिआयामी प्रोटीन संरचनाओं के अनुमान पर आधारित एक प्रतियोगिता है।

इसमें हिस्सा लेने वाले दलों को 90 प्रोटीन के लिए अमीनो अम्ल की रैखिक संरचना दी जाती है और इनकी त्रिआयामी संरचना ज्ञात होने के बावजद सार्वजनिक नहीं की जाती। किसी भी प्रोटीन के अणुओं की भौतिक विशेषताओं में अमीनो अम्ल के जोड़ों का मिलान, इनके बीच की दरी और बनने वाले रासायनिक बंध का कोण या झुकाव शामिल होता है। अगर आप इन विशेषताओं की पहचान कर लेते

हैं तो संबंधित प्रोटीन की त्रिआयामी संरचना बनाई जा सकती है।

प्रतिभागियों को दी गई जानकारी के आधार पर आए परिणामों का जात संरचनाओं से मिलान किया जाता है। प्रतियोगिता में पहली बार शामिल होने वाले अल्फा-फोल्ड ने दूसरे 97 नए प्रतियोगियों को बहुत पीछे छोड़ दिया। 90 में से 43 अनुक्रमों के बारे में रैखिक संरचना के अतिरिक्त कोई भी जानकारी उपलब्ध नहीं थी और इनके लिए अल्फा-फोल्ड ने 25 बार सर्वाधिक सटीक अनुमान लगाए।

मैरीलैंड विश्वविद्यालय में कंप्यूटेशनल जीवविज्ञानी और सीएएसपी के मुख्य आयोजनकर्ता डॉ. जॉन मॉल्ट का कहना था कि अल्फा-फोल्ड का प्रदर्शन औसत रहा और वह दूसरे प्रतिभागियों से 15 प्रतिशत अधिक सटीक था। डीप माइंड की टीम ने दो एल्गोरिद्म को और परिष्कृत किया है। अल्फा-फोल्ड जीनोम के आंकड़े और दूसरे प्रोटीन की तुलना करता है जिससे संबंधित अनुक्रम की सबसे निकटतम संरचना का पता लगाया जा सके। यह सभी संरचनाओं की बीच दूरी और उनके बीच बनने वाले रासायनिक बंध के कोण की संभावनाएं भी बताता है। इस पद्धति में कंप्यूटर संसाधनों और अभियांत्रिकी का उपयोग करके विज्ञान के मौलिक सिद्धांतों में योगदान किया जा रहा है।

कार्याधिकारी डेमिस हैसाबी का कहना है कि यह एक केवल एक शुरुआत है और इसके जरिये शोध के क्षेत्र में महत्त्वपर्ण परिवर्तन होगा। जैव-रासायनिक क्षेत्र में शिक्षा ग्रहण करने वाले या पारंपरिक फार्मा कंपनियों के बजाए अधिकांश आईटी कंपनियां इस क्षेत्र में आ रही हैं और कृत्रिम मेधा तकनीक की मदद से प्रोटीन के निर्माण का अध्ययन कर रही है। फेसबुक ने भी इस क्षेत्र में शोध कार्य प्रारंभ किया है। शिक्षाविद अल्फा-फोल्ड के प्रदर्शन से काफी चिकत हैं और ऐसा लगता है कि अब प्रोटीन निर्माण पर शोध का कार्य एआई तकनीक के हवाले किया जा सकता है। दवाई निर्माण के तरीकों में तेजी लाने और विभिन्न बीमारियों पर अनसंधान के लिए मशीन लर्निंग और एआई का बडा

योगदान हो सकता है।

के पहिये तथा इंजन को रिक्शे में

लगाने के बाद यह जुगाड़ गाड़ी

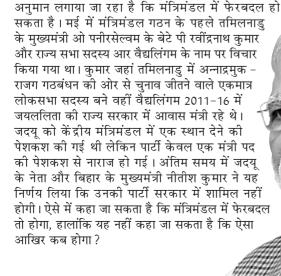
बन जाती है। ऐसा संभव है कि

डीप माइंड के मुख्य

# कानाफूसी

#### मंत्रिमंडल में फेरबदल!

भारतीय जनता पार्टी (भाजपा) के नेतृत्व वाले राष्ट्रीय जनतांत्रिक गठबंधन की सरकार के 50 दिन पूरे हो चुके हैं लेकिन गठबंधन में शामिल दो अहम दल अखिल भारतीय अन्ना द्रविड मुन्नेत्र कषगम और जनता दल यूनाइटेड को सरकार में प्रतिनिधित्व नहीं मिल सका है। ऐसे में



# आपका पक्ष

#### आधार बनाम सोशल सिक्योरिटी नंबर

हाल में केंद्रीय मंत्रिमंडल ने आधार कानून में संशोधन को मंजूरी दी है। इसके तहत राज्य सरकार की योजनाओं तथा सब्सिडी में आधार का इस्तेमाल किया जा सकेगा। इस कानून में संशोधन के बाद राज्य सरकारें राष्ट्रीय बायोमेट्रिक पहचान का इस्तेमाल कर सकेंगी। आधार शुरुआत से ही यह विवादों में रहा है। बायोमेट्रिक डेटा होने के कारण यह काफी संवेदनशील है। इसके डेटा चोरी होने या गलत उपयोग किए जाने का खतरा बना रहता है। सरकारी योजनाओं में मिलने वाली सब्सिडी आधार के जरिये दी जा रही है जिससे भ्रष्टाचार में कमी लाई जा सके। आधार से संबंधित मामला उच्चतम न्यायालय गया था तब अदालत के आदेश के अनुसार ऐसे मामलों में आधार के इस्तेमाल की अनुमति है जहां कोष सीधे केंद्र सरकार से आता है। बहरहाल मंत्रिमंडल की मंजूरी के बाद अब राज्य सरकारें

भी सब्सिडी देने के लिए आधार



हाल में सरकार ने आयकर रिटर्न भरने के लिए पैन कार्ड के अलावा आधार की अनुमति प्रदान की है। भारत में 12 अंकों वाला आधार नंबर अमेरिका के नौ अंकों वाला सोशल सिक्योरिटी नंबर जैसा रूप लेता जा रहा है। अमेरिका में सोशल सिक्योरिटी नंबर वहां के

का उपयोग कर सकेंगी। अभी ः केंद्रीय मंत्रिमंडल ने राज्यों द्वारा आधार से सब्सिडी देने के लिए कानून में संशोधन की मंजूरी दी

वहां के नागरिकों की पहचान के लिए है जिससे किसी नागरिक की पहचान चुराई नहीं जा सके। कर अदायगी में सोशल सिक्योरिटी नागरिकों को दिया जाता है। यह ः नंबर का इस्तेमाल भी किया जाता है। आधार में बायोमेट्रिक डेटा 🗄 समाहित किया जाता है। इससे कोई दूसरा व्यक्ति आधार का दुरुपयोग नहीं कर सकता है। यह भारतीय नागरिकों की नागरिकता की सशक्त पहचान है। हलांकि कई बार आधार के डेटा चोरी होने की आशंका व्यक्त की जा चुकी है। भारत में यह नया है लेकिन आने वाले दिनों में आधार ही किसी व्यक्ति का सबकुछ होगा। मोहित कुमार, नई दिल्ली

#### जुगाड़ गाड़ी पर रोक लगाने की जरूरत

दिल्ली-एनसीआर के साथ ही देश की विभिन्न जगहों में आजकल जुगाड़ गाड़ी का चलन बढ़ने लगा है। पुराने वाहनों को जोड़ तोड़ कर बनाए गए वाहन सड़कों के साथ वातावरण को भी नुकसान पहुंचा रहे हैं। पुरानी मोटरसाइकल, स्कृटर

चोरी की गई गाड़ियों को भी तोड़ जोड़ कर जुगाड़ गाड़ी बनाया जा रहा हो। पर्यावरण के लिहाज से देखें तो इसके साइलेंसर खराब होने से काफी आवाज करते हैं तथा पुराने इंजन होने से धुआं भी अधिक निकलता है। इससे वायु और ध्वनि प्रदूषण बढ़ता है। सड़कों पर यह बेलगाम दौड़ती है जिससे अन्य वाहनों को परेशानी का सामना करना पडता है। अगर जुगाड़ गाड़ी से कोई दुर्घटनाग्रस्त हो जाता है तो इंश्योरेंस नहीं होने की वजह से उन्हें लाभ नहीं मिल पाता है। इस गाड़ी का पंजीकरण नहीं होता है जिससे यह सरकार के रिकॉर्ड में भी नहीं रहता है। पिछले दिनों अदालत ने भी पुलिस को जुगाड़ गाडियों के संबंध में निर्देश दिए हैं। बेलगाम दौड़ती जुगाड़ गाड़ियों पर रोक लगाने के लिए कदम उठाने की बात कही गई है। अत: जुगाड़ गाड़ियों को सड़कों चलने से रोका जाना चाहिए।

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@bsmail.in उस जगह का उल्लेख अवश्य करें, जहां से आप ईमेल कर रहे हैं।



प्रत्येक संकट में एक अवसर भी छिपा होता है

# कश्मीर की बाधा

यह अच्छा हुआ कि प्रधानमंत्री ने रेडियो कार्यक्रम 'मन की बात' में कश्मीर की चर्चा करते हुए यह कहा कि जो लोग विकास की राह में अवरोध और नफरत फैलाना चाहते हैं उनके नापाक इरादे कामयाब होने वाले नहीं हैं। प्रधानमंत्री की ओर से ऐसे किसी बयान की आवश्यकता इसलिए थी, क्योंकि एक तो इन दिनों कश्मीर चर्चा के केंद्र में है और दूसरे, केंद्र सरकार से यह अपेक्षा बढ़ गई है कि वह घाटी को पटरी पर लाने के लिए हरसंभव उपाय करे। पिछले कुछ समय से केंद्र सरकार ऐसे संकेत दे रही है कि वह कश्मीर की जनता को मुख्यधारा से जोड़ने के लिए प्रतिबद्ध है। इसी के साथ उसकी ओर से कश्मीर में व्याप्त अलगाववाद एवं आतंकवाद की कमर तोड़ने की भी प्रतिबद्धता जताई जा रही है। विचित्र यह है कि कुछ लोगों को केंद्र सरकार की यह प्रतिबद्धता रास नहीं आ रही है। ऐसे लोगों में घाटी में असर रखने वाले राजनीतिक दल भी हैं। इन दलों के नेताओं की ओर से जैसे बयान दिए जा रहे हैं उन्हें देखकर उनमें और अलगाववादियों में भेद करना कठिन हो रहा है। इन नेताओं ने कश्मीर में सुरक्षा बलों की तैनाती बढ़ाए जाने को जिस तरह अनुच्छेद 35-ए हटाने की कथित कवायद से जोड़ दिया उससे यही संकेत मिला कि उनके भरोसे घाटी को सही राह पर लाना

फिलहाल यह कहना कठिन है कि अनुच्छेद 35-ए और 370 को हटाने के बारे में किसी तरह का कोई फैसला होने जा रहा है या नहीं, लेकिन इसमें कोई दो राय नहीं हो सकती कि इन अनुच्छेदों से जुड़े प्रावधानों ने जम्मू-कश्मीर और विशेष रूप से घाटी का अहित ही किया है। चूंकि अनुच्छेद 370 अलगाववाद का परिचायक बन गया है इसलिए कश्मीर को राष्ट्र की मुख्यधारा से जोड़ना और मुश्किल हो रहा है। विडंबना यह है कि अलगाववादियों के साथ कुछ राजनीतिक दल इस मुश्किल को बढ़ाने का ही काम कर रहे हैं। उनकी मानें तो कश्मीर को शेष भारत से जोड़ने वाला तत्व अनुच्छेद 370 ही है। क्या इससे वाहियात बात और कोई हो सकती है? क्या कश्मीरियत किसी संवैधानिक प्रावधान की उपज है और वह भी ऐसा प्रावधान जो अस्थाई है? उमर अब्दुल्ला और महबूबा मुफ्ती की ओर से अनुच्छेद 35-ए एवं 370 को लेकर जैसे उत्तेजक बयान दिए जा रहे हैं उनसे यही स्पष्ट होता है कि ऐसे नेता कश्मीर को अपनी जागीर मान चुके हैं। इस मुगालते को दूर किया ही जाना चाहिए। बेहतर यह होगा कि केंद्र सरकार कश्मीर के विकास में बाधक बन रहे तत्वों से निपटने के साथ ही उनकी पोल खोलने का भी काम करे।

# अपराध पर लगाम जरूरी

बिहार में अपराध पर लगाम के लिए उच्चस्तरीय बैठक और निर्देशों के बाद भी आए दिन हो रही वारदात चिंता का विषय है। इस पर गंभीरता से मंथन की जरूरत है, ताकि अपराधियों पर नकेल कसी जा सके। मुजफ्फरपुर में एक कुरियर कंपनी के कर्मियों से लूट की घटना बताती है कि अपराधियों में पुलिस का खौफ नहीं है। अपराध समीक्षा में भी यह बात बार-बार उठी है कि पुलिस का सूचना तंत्र मजबूत हो। इलाके में गश्त बढाई जाए, लेकिन इस तरह की वारदात दिनदहाडे हो तो सवाल उठना स्वाभाविक है। अपराधियों ने छपरा में भी एक कपड़ा व्यवसायी को गोली मारकर छह लाख रुपये की लूट की वारदात को अंजाम दिया। आश्चर्य तो यह कि व्यवसायी ने करीब दस मिनट तक बदमाशों का विरोध किया और जूझते रहे, लेकिन वहां खड़े लोग तमाशबीन बने रहे। सुपौल में अपराधियों ने एक कपड़ा व्यवसायी के कर्मी से 1.20 हजार लूट लिया। ये घटनाएं पुलिस गश्त पर भी सवाल हैं। मुख्यमंत्री ने अपराध पर नियंत्रण के लिए लगातार निर्देश जारी किए हैं। इसके लिए सख्त कदम भी उठाए गए हैं। पुलिस मुख्यालय से भी कड़े निर्देश जारी किए गए हैं। डीजीपी खुद थानों का निरीक्षण कर रहे हैं। इसके बाद भी बीच शहर में इस तरह की वारदातें हो रही हैं तो कहीं-न-कहीं निचले स्तर पर लापरवाही बरती जा रही है और निर्देशों की अनदेखी की जा रही है। पुलिस तंत्र को निचले स्तर पर कसने की जरूरत है। जिन इलाकों में वारदातें थम नहीं रहीं, वहां सख्त कार्रवाई करते हुए कड़े संदेश देने होंगे। जेल से छूटे या अब तक गिरफ्त से बाहर अपराधियों की गहन निगरानी जरूरी है। थाना स्तर पर पुलिस गश्त को और चुस्त-दुरुस्त करना होगा। ज्यादातर जगहों पर इसकी स्थिति ठीक नहीं है। इसका भी आकलन करना होगा कि क्षेत्र विशेष के लिहाज से मानव बल की कहां कितनी जरूरत है और इसकी पूर्ति करनी होगी। पुलिस को संसाधन भी मुहैया कराने होंगे। पुलिस मुख्यालय ने वरीय पदाधिकारियों तक के लिए निर्देश जारी कर रखा है कि वे अनुमंडल और अंचल स्तर तक खुद कैंप कर अपराध की समीक्षा करते हुए आवश्यक कार्रवाई करेंगे। आए दिन हो रही वारदातों से आम जन का दहशत में आना स्वाभाविक है। पुलिस और कानून-व्यवस्था पर लोगों का भरोसा बना रहे, इसके लिए जरूरी है कि सुरक्षा के पुख्ता प्रबंध किए जाएं। लोग कहीं भी बेखौफ आ-जा सकें, यह सुनिश्चित करना होगा।

# भारत की मुश्किलं बढ़ाते ट्रंप



19 साल पहले अमेरिका ने अफगानिस्तान से जिस तालिबान को उखाड फेंका उसे फिर सत्ता की कमान सौंपने की तैयारी कर रहा है। यह भारत के लिए भी खतरे की घंटी है

लिबान के साथ 'शांति' समझौते की बेचैनी में अमेरिकी राष्ट्रपति डोनाल्ड ट्रंप इस क्रूर संगठन के आका पाकिस्तान के आगे झुकने को तैयार हैं। अमेरिका के बदले रवैये में यह स्पष्ट भी हुआ जब उसने इस्लामाबाद के लिए अंतरराष्ट्रीय मुद्रा कोष से छह अरब डॉलर के राहत पैकेज का रास्ता साफ कर दिया। एक प्रमुख बलूच अलगाववादी धड़े को 'आतंकी' समूहों की सूची में डाल दिया। इसके अलावा ट्रंप ने भारत-पाकिस्तान के बीच वार्ता का शिगुफा भी छेड़ा जिसमें कश्मीर में मध्यस्थता की पेशकश भी शामिल थी। पाकिस्तान ने 27 फरवरी को भारत के खिलाफ अमेरिका से मिले एफ-16 लड़ाकू विमान का इस्तेमाल किया। फिर भी अमेरिका ने पाकिस्तान के एफ-16 बेड़े की मदद के लिए 12.5 करोड़ डॉलर की राशि मंजूर कर दी। तिस पर कहा कि इससे 'क्षेत्रीय संतुलन' के समक्ष कोई खतरा उत्पन्न नहीं होगा। कश्मीर विवाद में मध्यस्थता को लेकर ट्रंप ने जो विवादित बयान दिया वह पाकिस्तानी फौज समर्थित प्रधानमंत्री इमरान खान की मौजूदगी में दिया था। इस दौरान वह भारत और पाकिस्तान को बड़े विचित्र ढंग से एक तराजू में तौलते नजर आए। वहीं अफगानिस्तान से बाहर निकलने को लेकर वह एक तरह पाकिस्तान से

बहरहाल कश्मीर विवाद में मध्यस्थता वाले बयान से ज्यादा हमारे लिए यह और बड़ी चिंता का विषय होना चाहिए कि आखिर अफगानिस्तान से अमेरिका की वापसी को लेकर टंप किस अंदाज में पाकिस्तान से मदद मांग रहे हैं। तालिबान से समझौते को लेकर ट्रंप जैसी सौदेबाजी में जुटे हैं वह भारत के क्षेत्रीय हितों और आंतरिक सुरक्षा विशेषकर कश्मीर के लिए बेहद खतरनाक है। वहीं इस्लामाबाद ट्रंप प्रशासन से अफगानिस्तान में मदद के बदले कश्मीर विवाद में भूमिका और भारत-पाक के बीच बंद पड़ी वार्ता को फिर से बहाल कराने की उम्मीदें लगाए हुए हैं। ऐसे में यह महज कोई संयोग नहीं था कि ट्रंप ने इमरान खान की मौजूदगी में ही कश्मीर को लेकर बयान दिया।

भारत को ट्रंप के बयान पर हैरान नहीं होना चाहिए, क्योंकि भारत ने ही बालाकोट हमले के बाद उपजे तनाव में ट्रंप को दखल देने की छूट दी। याद रहे कि भारत-पाक में तनाव घटने की घोषणा पीएम मोदी ने नहीं, बल्कि ट्रंप ने की थी। बालाकोट बाजी पलटने वाला पडाव था। हालांकि 27 फरवरी को पाक के हवाई हमले के बाद पलटवार में नाकाम रहे भारत के हाथ से वह निर्णायक मौका फिसल गया। इससे भी बदतर बात यह रही कि उसने ट्रंप जैसे अहंकारी नेता को इसमें टांग अड़ाने और तनाव घटाने का श्रेय लेने दिया। इसके बाद बंधक भारतीय पायलट की वापसी की राह खुली। कारगिल युद्ध के समय भी भारत ने अमेरिकी कूटनीतिक हस्तक्षेप होने दिया था। कड़वी हकीकत यही है कि भारत कभी भी पाक के साथ विवादों का



निर्णायक पटाक्षेप नहीं कर पाया। भले ही हालात भारत के हक में हों, लेकिन वह इन मौकों का लाभ नहीं उठा पाया। जैसे 1972 के शिमला समझौते में भी भारत 93,000 युद्ध बंदियों के बदले कश्मीर मुद्दे, सीमा विवाद और करतारपुर पर सौदेबाजी कर सकता था। तुरुप के सारे पत्ते होने के बावजूद भारत बाजी नहीं जीत पाया। जंग के मैदान में सैनिकों की पूंजी को वार्ता की मेज पर लुटा दिया गया।

रक्षा मंत्री राजनाथ सिंह ने 26 जुलाई को कहा कि पाकिस्तान की भारत के साथ कोई पूर्ण या सीमित युद्ध लड़ने की हैसियत नहीं और यही वजह है कि वह छद्म युद्ध में लगा हुआ है। उनकी बात एकदम दुरुस्त है। मगर यह भी सही है कि भारत पाक के साथ अपने विवादों को निपटाने में हिचक दिखाता है। भारत पाक को आतंकी देश बताता तो है, लेकिन नीतिगत रूप से इसे पुष्ट नहीं करता। इस सबसे छद्म युद्ध के लिए पाकिस्तान का हौसला और मध्यस्थ बनने के लिए अमेरिका की हसरत हिलोरे मारती है। ट्रंप जिस तरह पाकिस्तान-तालिबान की खुशामद में जुटे हैं वह भारत के लिए खतरे की घंटी है, क्योंकि यह भारत के क्षेत्रीय और सुरक्षा हितों के प्रतिकृल है। इसके अलावा ट्रंप के और भी कदम भारत की मुश्किलें बढ़ाने

वाले हैं। फिर चाहे ईरान से तेल आयात पर प्रतिबंध लगाकर भारत पर बोझ बढाना हो या भारत को मिला जीएसपी दर्जा समाप्त करना या भारत से कुछ रियायतें हासिल करने के मकसद से व्यापार युद्ध में जुटना।

इससे पहले मुंबई हमले के मास्टरमाइंड हाफिज सईद की गिरफ्तारी पर भी टुंप पाक की पीठ थपथपा चुके हैं। पाक में छुट्टा घूमने और रैलियों में खुलेआम जिहाद के लिए भड़काने के बावजूद एक करोड़ डॉलर के इनामी आतंकी पर ट्रंप ने 17 जुलाई को ट्वीट किया, 'दस साल की खोजबीन के बाद पाकिस्तान ने मुंबई आतंकी हमले के मास्टरमाइंड को गिरफ्तार कर लिया है। उसके लिए बीते दो साल में भारी दबाव डाला गया।' एक वक्त अल कायदा को पनाह देने वाला और अब दुनिया के दुर्दांत आतंकी हमलों को अंजाम दे रहे तालिबान से अमेरिका न केवल अपनी सेनाओं की वापसी का वादा, बल्कि काबुल की सत्ता तक पहुंचने का मैदान मुहैया करा रहा है। पाकिस्तानी सैन्य जनरल यह दिखा रहे हैं कि आतंक को शह देना कितना फलदायी होता है। तालिबान और हक्कानी नेटवर्क जैसे उनके पिट्ठू अफगानिस्तान में अमेरिका जैसे देश को उनकी शर्तों पर झुकने के लिए मजबूर कर रहे हैं। इसमें

भी निर्णायक सौदे के लिए अमेरिका को मदद के लिए पाकिस्तान का मोहताज बनना पड़ रहा है। तालिबान-पाकिस्तान के साथ ट्रंप प्रशासन का संभावित समझौता भारत विरोधी पाकिस्तानी आतंकी संगठनों लश्कर और जैश का हौसला बढ़ाएगा। हालांकि इससे सबसे ज्यादा उस कुख्यात आइएसआइ के मंसूबे परवान चढ़ेंगे जो ऐसे तमाम आतंकी संगठनों को पैदा करती

इतिहास खुद को दोहरा रहा है। अमेरिका एक बार फिर युद्ध पीड़ित अफगानिस्तान से बाहर निकल रहा है। बिल्कुल वैसे जैसे तीन दशक पहले सोवियत सेनाओं को वहां से खदेड़कर निकला था। उस सफलता ने बड़े विरोधाभासी ढंग से अफगानिस्तान को अंतरराष्ट्रीय आतंकवाद का गढ़ बना दिया था। उस अभियान में अमेरिका का साथ देने वाली आइएसआइ ने बाद में तालिबान को सत्ता में स्थापित करा दिया। क्या अमेरिका अफगानिस्तान में पाक को फिर से वैसा र्ह खुला हाथ देगा। यदि ऐसा हुआ तो महिला एव नागरिक अधिकारों के मोर्चे पर जो भी प्रगति हुई है वह हवा हो जाएगी। ऐसा इसलिए, क्योंकि तालिबान उन्हीं सख्त मध्यकालीन परंपराओं को थोपेगा जो उसने 1996 से 2001 के बीच अपने शासन में थोप रखी थीं। इससे पाकिस्तान में इस्लामी चरमपंथियों की ताकत बढ़ेगी।

अमेरिका के लिए वक्त का पहिया घूमकर फिर वहीं आ गया है। लगभग 19 साल पहले उसने जिस तालिबान को उखाड़ फेंका था उसे ही एक बार फिर सत्ता की कमान सौंपने की तैयारी कर रहा है। हेनरी किसिंग्जर ने एक बार कहा था कि 'अमेरिका का दुश्मन होन खतरनाक है, लेकिन अमेरिका की दोस्ती औ घातक होती है।' भारत उनके बयान की तपिश शिद्दत से महसूस कर रहा है।

(लेखक सामरिक मामलों के विश्लेषक हैं) response@jagran.com

# संसाधनों की कमी से जूझते विश्वविद्यालय

बीते दिनों केंद्रीय मानव संसाधन विकास मंत्रालय ने देश में नई शिक्षा नीति के पुनर्गठन के लिए एक मसौदा नीति प्रस्तुत की थी। उसके बाद से ही इस पर बहस शुरू हो गई है कि नए भारत में हमारी शिक्षा नीति कैसी हो? वह नीति जो सबके साथ सबका विकास कर सके। मैं अपने 42 वर्ष के अनुभव के तौर पर यह मानता हूं कि नीतियों में एकरूपता और स्पष्टता होनी चाहिए तभी हमारी उच्च शिक्षा गुणवत्ता युक्त हो सकेगी और अंतरराष्ट्रीय स्तर पर हमारे विद्यार्थी प्रतिस्पर्धा कर पाएंगे। देश में मोटे तौर पर तीन तरह के विश्वविद्यालय हैं-राज्य विश्वविद्यालय केंद्रीय विश्वविद्यालय और सम (डीम्ड) विश्वविद्यालय। और ये तीनों अलग-अलग नियमों से संचालित होते हैं। राज्य विश्वविद्यालय भी तीन जगहों से निर्देशित होते हैं। पहला है अध्यादेश और अधिनियम से, दूसरा है सरकारी आदेश से और तीसरा है विश्वविद्यालय अनुदान आयोग (यूजीसी) से। शिक्षा को कभी एक व्यवसाय के रूप में या लाभ कमाने वाले संस्थान के रूप में नहीं देखा गया. बल्कि इसे एक सामाजिक निवेश माना जाता रहा है, पर पिछले दशकों में इस नजरिये में बदलाव आया है। आप किसी भी हाईवे या शहर से गुजरें तो आपको लुभावने वादे करते शैक्षिक संस्थानों के बड़े-बड़े बोर्ड दिखेंगे, पर उनके वायदों को जांचने-परखने का कोई उपकरण हमारे पास नहीं है। इसीलिए वहां से विद्यार्थी नहीं पेशेवर निकल रहे हैं, जिसका असर समाज की सामाजिकता पर पड़ रहा है और संवेदनशीलता में कमी आ रही है।

हर गली-मोहल्ले में खुलने वाले इन संस्थानों के पीछे संबद्धता का जिन्न जिम्मेदार है। उदाहरण के तौर पर कानपुर विश्वविद्यालय से 1100 और आगरा विश्वविद्यालय से 1035 कॉलेज संबद्ध हैं। ऐसे में अच्छे और पुराने डिग्री कॉलेजों को स्वायत्तता दी जानी चाहिए। इसके अलावा विश्वविद्यालयों की स्वायत्तता को भी बढ़ावा दिया ही जाना चाहिए। विश्वविद्यालय खुद पाठ्यक्रम बनाएं और परीक्षा करवाएं। इससे उनके ऊपर से बोझ कम होगा और वे शोध पर ध्यान केंद्रित कर सकेंगे। अभी सिर्फ परीक्षा एवं परिणाम निकालने में ही समय निकल जाता है। स्वायत्तता को बढ़ावा दिया जाए और पुराने विश्वविद्यालयों को संबद्धता से मुक्त किया जाए जिससे वे अपनी पहचान शोध और शिक्षा के क्षेत्र में बना सकें। दुनिया के जितने भी सर्वश्रेष्ठ संस्थान या विश्वविद्यालय हैं, वे संबद्धता नहीं देते हैं और उन्हें सरकार के साथ-साथ समाज के हर तबके से आर्थिक सहयोग



अपना दिल बड़ा नहीं किया तो उच्च शिक्षा का मुरझाता पौधा बिल्कुल सूख



पर जोर देना होगा। साथ ही शिक्षकों की उपस्थिति की निगरानी होनी चाहिए, ताकि शिक्षण पर जोर रहे। पाठयक्रम में बदलाव उद्योगों की जरूरत के अनुसार होना चाहिए। इससे बड़ी विडंबना क्या होगी कि उच्च शिक्षा की सर्वोच्च नियामक संस्था बार-बार अपने नियमों में बदलाव कर रही है जो यह दिखाता है कि हमारी शिक्षा के आदर्श स्वरूप में स्पष्टता नहीं है। उदाहरण के तौर पर छठा वेतनमान 2006 में लागू हुआ तो नियमन 2010 में आया। उत्तर प्रदेश में यह नियमन 2014 में लागु हुआ। इसी तरह सातवें वेतनमान का नियमन 2018 में आ गया। उत्तर प्रदेश में यह अब लागू होगा। बार-बार केंद्रीय नीति बदलने से शिक्षकों की नियुक्ति, प्रोन्नित, छुट्टी आदि के नियम राज्य सरकारों द्वारा उसके अनुरूप बदलाव करने में वर्षों लग जाते हैं। इससे वाद-प्रतिवाद बढ़ते हैं। ऐसे में राष्ट्रीय स्तर पर एक नीति बने और सभी राज्य उसे लागू करें। अभी शिक्षकों की सेवानिवृत्ति की उम्र और कुलपतियों के कार्यकाल की सीमा भी अलग-अलग राज्यों में अलग-अलग हैं। ऐसे में भी राष्ट्रीय स्तर पर एक नीति की आवश्यकता है जो सभी के लिए एक जैसी हो। केंद्रीय विश्वविद्यालय में कुलपति का कार्यकाल पांच वर्ष का होता है, पर उत्तर प्रदेश के राज्य विश्वविद्यालयों में यह तीन साल का है।

दूसरी ओर विश्वविद्यालयों एवं डिग्री कॉलेजों में शिक्षकों की भारी कमी है। यहां करीब 31 प्रतिशत पद खाली हैं। यूजीसी के 200 प्वाइंट रोस्टर नियम को लागू किया गया है। इसके अनुसार अब विश्वविद्यालय को यूनिट मानकर आरक्षण लागू होगा। पहले विभाग स्तर पर आरक्षण लागू होना था। वहीं गरीब सवर्णों को आरक्षण देने पर अभी तक राज्य निर्णय लागू नहीं करवा पाए हैं। ऐसे में नियुक्ति की प्रक्रिया अभी तक शुरू नहीं हो पाई है। सबसे महत्वपूर्ण बात धन की है जिनसे सरकारों ने लगातार हाथ खींचे हैं। विश्वविद्यालयों के पास विद्यार्थियों को बेहतर संसाधन उपलब्ध करवाने के लिए धन नहीं हैं। सौ साल पुराने लखनऊ विश्वविद्यालय में हर साल शिक्षक एवं कर्मचारियों के वेतन पर 147 करोड़ रुपये खर्च होते हैं और राज्य सरकार 34 करोड़ रुपये की ही मदद दे पाती है। सरकार को उच्च शिक्षा के लिए अपना दिल बड़ा करना होगा. क्योंकि प्रदेश के सर्वश्रेष्ठ शिक्षकों का संकुल अभी भी सरकारी विश्वविद्यालयों के ही पास है। अगर सरकार निवेश नहीं करेगी तो यह पौधा जो अब मुरझा रहा है, बिल्कुल सूख भी सकता है।

उत्तर प्रदेश के विश्वविद्यालयों में एकसमान पाठयक्रम लागू किया जाए और यूजीसी के निर्देश के अनुसार दस प्रतिशत पाठयक्रम स्थानीय जरूरतों के आधार पर शामिल किया जाए। यूनिवर्सिटी स्नातक एवं परास्नातक स्तर पर सेमेस्टर प्रणाली लागू करें और नकल पर सख्ती करें। स्नातक में परीक्षा में बहुविकल्पीय सवाल पूछे जाएं जिससे छात्र पूरा कोर्स पढ़ने को मजबूर होंगे और समय पर परीक्षा परिणाम भी घोषित हो सकेगा। विश्वविद्यालयों में छात्रों को पढ़ाई के साथ-साथ स्वरोजगार के लिए भी प्रेरित करना होगा। उद्योग जगत की जरूरत के अनुसार कोर्स डिजाइन किया जाना जरूरी है। प्रोफेशनल कोर्स तो इंडस्ट्री की जरूरतों को पूरा करने वाले जरूर होने चाहिए। उद्योग जगत के विशेषज्ञ, बड़े उद्यमी, वैज्ञानिक, साहित्यकार और अर्थशास्त्री इत्यादि के व्याख्यान नियमित रूप से आयोजित किए जाएं। सेंट्रल प्लेसमेंट सेल बनाकर विद्यार्थियों को अधिक से अधिक रोजगार हासिल करने के अवसर प्रदान किए जाने चाहिए। रिसर्च को बढ़ावा देने के लिए विश्वविद्यालय न सिर्फ अच्छे संस्थानों से गठजोड़ कर साझा शोध करें, बल्कि विभागों के बीच भी प्रतिस्पर्धी भावना को बढ़ाएं। इसके साथ ही विद्यार्थियों से जुड़ी सुविधाएं अधिक से अधिक ऑनलाइन करने पर जोर देना चाहिए।

> (लेखक लखनऊ विश्वविद्यालय के कुलपित हैं) response@jagran.com



आदर

आदर की भावना से हृदय की पवित्रता, बुद्धि की निर्मलता एवं स्वभाव की उत्कृष्टता का परिचय मिलता है। व्यक्ति आदर देकर ही आदर पाने का पात्र बनता है। आज्ञा-पालन और अभिवादन आदर देने की महत्वपूर्ण विधा हैं। इससे व्यक्ति के नैतिक रूप से सुंदर, उन्नत चरित्र के बारे में ज्ञात होता है। वहीं उदंडता स्वभाव को पतनोमुख बना डालती है। इसके प्रभाव से समाज संस्कृति विकृत हो जाती है। उदंड लोग अनादर करने में ज्यादा रुचि लेते हैं। ऐसे लोगों की बुद्धि भ्रष्ट बनी

वास्तव में आदरणीय व्यक्ति को आदर देने से व्यक्ति के शुभ-संस्कार में वृद्धि होती है। चेतना का परिष्कार होकर मन आनंदित होती है। जब व्यक्ति अपने मित्र, कुटुंब, बड़े-बुजुर्ग, गुरु, अभिभावक को आदर देता है तो आदर देने वाला और आदर पाने वाला, दोनों बहुत ही लाभान्वित होते हैं। सर्वप्रथम दोनों के मन-हृदय प्रफुल्लित, उल्लासित हो जाते हैं। मन की गंदगियों का सफाया हो जाता है। वातावरण में सकारात्मक ऊर्जा-तरंग का सृजन होकर सृजनात्मक विचारों, पहलुओं में वृद्धि होती है। सकारात्मकता का भाव ही व्यक्ति को आदर देने के लिए उत्प्रेरित करता है और नकारात्मक भाव की वृद्धि होने से अनादर की भावना कूट-कूटकर मन, विचार में भर जाती है। आत्मा निष्पाप और निष्कलंक होती है, लेकिन वातावरण के दोष-प्रभाव से व्यक्ति की चेतना, विचार कुछ समय के लिए बीमार हो जाते हैं, पर ज्यों ही उन्हें सत्संग का अवसर प्राप्त होता है तो विषाक्तता का निवारण होता है और उनके हृदय में प्रेम की गंगा बह चलती है और व्यक्ति के स्वभाव में आदर देने की लालसा प्रबल हो जाती है।

जाहिर है जीवन में आनंद, खुशी की अभिवृद्धि तथा जीवन की सार्थकता के लिए, समाज में मित्रता की वृद्धि के लिए, सभ्यता, संस्कृति के उत्थान के लिए, समाज में शांति-सद्भाव की ज्योति प्रखर करने के लिए आदर देने की भावना को मनुष्य अपने अंदर विकसित करें यही हमारी भारतीय परंपरा भी है। सभी को आदर दें।

# विकास का आधार है इनोवेशन

हाल ही में 130 देशों में किए गए एक अध्ययन के आधार पर वर्ल्ड इंटेलेक्चुअल प्रॉपर्टी ऑर्गनाइजेशन द्वारा जारी ग्लोबल इनोवेशन इंडेक्स में भारत को 52वें स्थान पर रखा गया है। पिछले चार वर्षों के दौरान भारत इस सूची में 24 स्थान ऊपर उठा है। हालांकि इस मामले में भारत अपने पड़ोसी चीन से अभी भी काफी पीछे है। चीन इस मामले में 14वें स्थान पर है। सिंगापुर आठवें स्थान पर है। इजरायल जैसा छोटा देश भी शीर्ष दस देशों में शुमार है। जाहिर है भारत को शीर्ष दस देशों में आने के लिए अभी भी काफी कुछ करने की दरकार है।

ग्लोबल इनोवेशन इंडेक्स 80 पैमानों पर तैयार जाता है जिसमें सृजनात्मक उत्पादन, संस्थाओं की गुणवत्ता, पूंजी निवेश, शिक्षा की गुणवत्ता आदि प्रमुख घटक हैं। हालांकि इनोवेशन यानी नवोन्मेष एक मानसिकता है, जिसके चलते कोई देश अपनी संस्थाओं और दूसरे संसाधनों का सृजनात्मक तरीके से उपयोग कर अलग तरीके के उत्पादों का निर्माण करता है। फिर उसे बाजार में उतार कर लोगों की जरूरतें पूरी करता है और आय कमाता है।

जो देश इनोवेशन के क्षेत्र में आगे रहेंगे वे इसके परिणामस्वरूप आर्थिक और फिर सामाजिक विकास में भी अग्रणी रहेंगे

यदि भारत के युवा इनोवेशन की मानसिकता से लैस हो जाएं तो हमारे देश के इस मामले में पीछे रहने का कोई कारण नहीं है। किसी देश के आर्थिक विकास के लिए निवेश का जितना महत्व होता है उतना ही महत्व इनोवेशन का भी होता है। पिछले कुछ वर्षों से एक तथ्य साफ उभर कर आया है कि जो देश शोध और विकास (आरएंडडी) पर जितना अधिक खर्च कर रहे हैं उसी के अनुपात में उनके सकल घरेलू उत्पाद (जीडीपी) में भी वृद्धि देखने को मिल रही है। ऐसे में जो भी देश आने वाले वर्षों में इनोवेशन के क्षेत्र में आगे रहेगा वह इसके परिणामस्वरूप तकनीकी और फिर सामाजिक-आर्थिक विकास में भी अग्रणी रहेगा। राहत की बात यह है कि भारत इस मामले में सही दिशा में आगे बढ़ रहा है।

यद्यपि भारत इस सूची में ऊपर आने के लिए कई तरह के सुधारों को अंजाम दे रहा है जैसे कि पेटेंट कराने में लगने वाले समय को कम करने की कोशिश कर रहा है, अधिक से अधिक उच्च शिक्षण संस्थाएं खोल रहा है, स्कुलों में लैब स्थापित कर रहा है, लेकिन इतना ही काफी नहीं है। दूसरे मोर्ची पर भी सुधार की रफ्तार बढ़ानी होगी। यह ठीक है कि सरकार ने शोध कार्यों की फंडिंग के लिए एक केंद्रीयकृत निकाय गठित करने का फैसला किया है, लेकिन इतना ही काफी नहीं है उसे देखना होगा कि शोध कार्यों के लिए फंड देने में नौकरशाही की तरफ से किसी तरह की कंजूसी तो नहीं दिखाई जा रही है। इसके साथ ही विश्वविद्यालयों में ऐसा माहौल बनाना होगा ताकि वहां मुक्त सोच को बढ़ावा मिले। जाहिर है देश में इनोवेशन को बढ़ावा देने के लिए शोध और विकास पर खर्च बढ़ाने के साथ-साथ हमें अपनी स्कूली शिक्षा का स्तर बढ़ाना होगा। स्वास्थ्य पर खर्च की सीमा बढ़ानी होगी। और तमाम सामाजिक रूढियों को ध्वस्त करना होगा, ताकि हर क्षेत्र-वर्ग से नए विचार मख्यधारा में जगह बना सकें।

(लेखक स्वतंत्र टिप्पणीकार हैं)

#### संवादहीनता की स्थिति बनाती क्लिष्ट हिंदी

डॉ. विजय अग्रवाल का लेख, 'संघ सेवा आयोग की हिंदी' अत्यंत प्रासंगिक है। भाषा प्रमुखतः संवाद के लिए होती है। ऐसी भाषा जिससे संवादहीनता की स्थिति बने अवांछित है। यह सत्य है कि बोलचाल की भाषा एवं साहित्यिक भाषा में अंतर होता है, परंतु साहित्यिक भाषा भी क्लिष्ट नहीं होती है। उसे भी एक सर्व साधारण व्यक्ति थोड़े से प्रयास से समझ सकता है, जिससे संवादहीनता की स्थिति पैदा नहीं होती है। एक भाषा के सभी शब्दों के समानांतर शब्द दूसरी भाषा में होना आवश्यक नहीं है। अतः हम अपनी भाषा की समृद्धि के लिए उन शब्दों के समानांतर शब्द अपनी भाषा में जोड़ने का प्रयास करते हैं, परंतु इस प्रक्रिया में ऐसा नहीं होना चाहिए कि समानांतर बनाया गया शब्द इतना क्लिष्ट या अव्यावाहरिक हो कि उसका अर्थ ही समझना कठिन हो जाए, उसके प्रयोग से संवादहीनता की स्थिति उत्पन्न हो, जैसा कि लेखक ने अपने उदाहरणों में चित्रित किया है। 'ट्रेन' की हिंदी 'लौह पथ गामिनी' बनाने अथवा 'स्टेशन' की हिंदी 'लौह पथ गामिनी विश्राम स्थल' बनाने का क्या औचित्य है? ऐसी अवस्था में जब हम किसी अंग्रेजी शब्द का उपयुक्त सुगम हिंदी शब्द बनाने में अपने आपको असमर्थ पाते हैं तो हमें उस शब्द को हिंदी में उसके उसी रूप में अपना लेना चाहिए। ऐसा सभी भाषा विद्वान करते हैं। जैसे 'जुगाड़' को अंग्रेजी ने इसके अपने मूल रूप में अपना लिया है। ऐसे अनेक उदाहरण हैं।

krishnam.agrawal@gmail.com

#### बदल रहा चीनी रुख

1962 में चीन ने खुद चीनी-हिंदी भाई-भाई कहकर धोखा दिया और हमसे युद्ध करके हमारी जमीन हड़प ली। हमारे

# मेलबाक्स

शत्रु और उसके मित्र पाकिस्तान ने भी तीन बार युद्ध किया, किंतु हर लड़ाई में बुरी तरह मात खाई। चीन के मित्र पाक ने तीन-तीन बार मात खाने और आतंकवाद के मामले में अंतरराष्ट्रीय लताड़ मिलने और दोस्त चीन की भी संयुक्त राष्ट्र में नहीं चलने का नतीजा यह हुआ कि अब चीन का रुख भारत के प्रति नरम होता नजर आ रहा है। कहते भी हैं कि मुसीबत में कोई साथ नहीं देता, किंतु ताकत को दुनिया सलाम करती है। mahesh\_nenava@yahoo.com

## इंसानियत के रिश्ते

मनुष्य जीवन का लक्ष्य सिर्फ खुद के लिए जीना नहीं होता, बल्कि अपने कुछ फर्ज को पहचान कर उनको पूरा करना भी होता है। अक्सर हम सोचते हैं कि हमारा कर्तव्य तो सिर्फ हमारे परिवारवालों तक ही सीमित होगा, ऐसा नहीं है। हम सबके कुछ ऐसे कर्तव्य होते हैं जो न रिश्ते से जुड़े होते हैं न समाज से, वे तो केवल ऐसे फर्ज हैं जो हमें इंसानी रूप की परिभाषा बतलाते हैं। ईश्वर ने अनेकों मनुष्य इसलिए बनाए कि हम एक दूसरे की मदद कर सकें। सांसारिक कर्तव्य का अर्थ ही मदद है, बिना किसी नाम, धर्म, खुन इत्यादि जाने। आजकल लोगो में इतनी स्वार्थ की भूख बढ़ गई है की वो इंसानियत के रिश्ते को भुला बैठे हैं।

nikitabedi1994@gmail.com

शांति स्थापना एवं आतंकरोधी कार्रवाई के लिए उपयुक्त

कश्मीर में और सैनिक जम्मू कश्मीर में अर्द्ध सैनिक बलों की और तैनाती वहां

है, क्योंकि जब तक आतंक को कुचल नहीं दिया जाता तब तक शांति की बातें बेमानी हैं। इसलिए घाटी में सैन्य बलों की संख्या में वृद्धि एक अच्छा निर्णय है। आतंकवादियों के साथ जितना सख्ती से निपटा जाए उतना ही घाटी के आम लोगों को विश्वास में लेने के प्रयास भी तेज करने होंगे ताकि विश्वास बहाली की जा सके और वहां के लोगों को लगे कि सैन्य बलों की तैनाती उनके हित के लिए जरूरी है। cddetha@gmail.com

#### आजम का व्यवहार

समाजवादी पार्टी के सांसद आजम खान का महिलाओं के प्रति गलत व्यवहार कोई नई बात नहीं है। चुनाव के समय जयाप्रदा पर की गई टिप्पणी पर आजम खान की चौतरफा आलोचना हुई थी। लेकिन अपनी आदत से मजबूर उन्होंने संसद के अंदर ही सभापति की कुर्सी पर बैठी महिला के साथ अनुचित व्यवहार किया। ऐसा व्यक्ति जो संसद के अंदर महिला को सम्मान नहीं दे सकता, वो सामान्य महिलाओं के साथ कैसा व्यवहार करता होगा?

बुजेश श्रीवास्तव, गाजियाबाद

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

अपने पत्र इस पते पर भेजें : दैनिक जागरण, राष्ट्रीय संस्करण, डी–210–211, सेक्टर–63, नोएडा ई-मेल: mailbox@jagran.com

श्मीर में एक बार फिर वहां के सियासी दल केंद्र के खिलाफ भड़काऊ बयान देने लगे हैं। मामला यह है कि केंद्र ने दस हजार अतिरिक्त सुरक्षा बलों की तैनाती शुरू कर दी है और बाद में दस हजार और सैनिक भेजे जाने की बात कही है। इसे पीपुल्स डेमोक्रेटिक पार्टी और नेशनल कान्फ्रेंस ने अनुच्छेद 35-ए हटाने की तैयारी के रूप में प्रचारित करना शुरू कर दिया है। पीडीपी की नेता और जम्मू-कश्मीर की पूर्व मुख्यमंत्री महबूबा मुफ्ती ने इस फैसले पर यहां तक कह दिया कि अगर कोई अनुच्छेद 35-ए को हाथ लगाएगा, तो भस्म हो जाएगा। उमर अब्दुल्ला भी इसे सियासी रंग दे रहे हैं। इस तरह दोनों दल वहां के लोगों में भ्रम फैलाने और उन्हें उकसाने का प्रयास कर रहे हैं। जबिक हकीकत यह है कि पिछले हफ्ते राष्ट्रीय सुरक्षा सलाहाकार के कश्मीर दौरे से लौटने के बाद उनकी सिफारिश पर केंद्रीय गृह मंत्रालय ने सैनिक कंपनियां भेजने का फैसला किया। वहां आतंकवाद निरोधक ग्रिड काफी समय से अतिरिक्त सैनिकों की मांग कर रहा था। फिर खुफिया सूत्रों से आने वाले दिनों में सीमा पार से हमले की सूचना भी थी। ऐसे में सुरक्षा कारणों से घाटी में अतिरिक्त सुरक्षा बलों की तैनाती का फैसला करना पड़ा।

जम्मू-कश्मीर में आतंकवाद की समस्या कोई छिपी बात नहीं है। उससे निपटना केंद्र के लिए खासी चुनौती बनी हुई है। तमाम कड़े कदम उठाने और निरंतर तलाशी अभियान चलाने के बावजूद आतंकियों पर नकेल कसना मुश्किल हो रहा है। इसके कारण वहां चुनाव कराने में भी देरी हो रही है। जब तक घाटी में शांति बहाली नहीं होगी, चुनाव कराना टेढ़ा काम होगा। इसलिए अगर सरकार अतिरिक्त सुरक्षा बलों की तैनाती कर स्थिति को काबू में लाना चाहती है, तो वहां के सियासी दलों से इसमें सहयोग की अपेक्षा की जाती है, न कि उसमें बाधा डालने की। कश्मीर का मसला सियासी जरूर है, पर आतंकवाद को मदद कहां से मिल रही है और उसका मकसद क्या है, यह न तो उमर अब्दुल्ला से छिपा है और न महबूबा मुफ्ती से। आतंकी संगठनों के प्रति नरम रवैया अपनाने की वजह से ही इन दोनों की सरकारें घाटी में अमन का माहौल बनाने में विफल रही हैं। इससे वहां के अलगाववादी संगठनों को भी शह मिलती रही है। इस तरह वहां के आम लोगों की रोजी-रोटी और युवाओं के रोजगार की संभावनाएं भी सिकुड़ती गई हैं। आखिर दहशतगदीं को कोई भी दल या व्यक्ति कैसे सहन कर सकता है।

कश्मीर समस्या का समाधान वर्तमान केंद्र सरकार के लिए बड़ा मसला है। भाजपा अपने चुनावी वादों में बहुत पहले से इस समस्या के समाधान की बात कहती रही है। पिछले पांच साल की सरकार में इस दिशा में कोई उल्लेखनीय नतीजा नहीं निकला। इसलिए इस बार वह उस पर ध्यान केंद्रित कर रही है, तो यह स्वाभाविक है। कश्मीर मसले को लेकर पाकिस्तान अंतरराष्ट्रीय मंचों पर तो भ्रम फैलाता ही रहता है, इस पर घाटी के लोगों को भी गुमराह करता रहा है। इसी का नतीजा है कि सीमा पार से आतंकी गतिविधियों को संचालित किया जाता रहा है। उस पर नकेल कसना सेना के जरिए ही संभव दिखता है। इसलिए केंद्र सरकार ने यह कदम उठाया है। मगर शायद वहां के सियासी दलों को डर है कि विधानसभा के चुनाव हुए, तो उन्हें मुंह की खानी पड़ सकती है। इसलिए भी वे इसे सियासी रंग दे रहे हैं।

# भीडतंत्र और सवाल

रेश में उन्मादी भीड़ की हिंसा की बढ़ती घटनाओं पर सुप्रीम कोर्ट ने एक बार फिर राज्यों से यह पूछा है कि इसे रोकने के लिए पिछले साल दिए गए निर्देशों पर अमल की क्या स्थिति है। बेकाबू होती भीड़ हिंसा वाकई बहुत गंभीर मसला है, जिस पर शीर्ष अदालत ने राज्यों से जवाब तलब कर पूरे देश की चिंता को ही जाहिर किया है। एक जनहित याचिका पर सुनवाई करते हुए सर्वोच्च अदालत ने केंद्र सरकार, राष्ट्रीय मानवाधिकार आयोग और ग्यारह राज्यों को नोटिस जारी किए हैं। देश में बढ़ती इस तरह की हिंसा को लेकर शीर्ष अदालत काफी सख्त है और पिछले सवा साल में सरकारों को कसा है। लेकिन इसके बावजूद अभी तक किसी भी राज्य ने भीड़ की हिंसा को रोकने के लिए कोई कदम उठाया हो या कोई कठोर कानून बनाया हो, ऐसा देखने में नहीं आया। सरकारों का यह हाल तो तब है जब देश की सर्वोच्च अदालत सिक्रय है और बार-बार नोटिस जारी कर रही है, दिशानिर्देश जारी कर रही है और अपने निर्देशों पर अमल के बारे में पूछ रही है। इससे क्या यह बात प्रमाणित नहीं होती कि सरकारें चाहे राज्यों की हों या केंद्र की, शीर्ष अदालत की बात को कोई तवज्जो नहीं दे रही हैं?

ऐसा नहीं है कि भीड़ की हिंसा को रोका नहीं जा सकता। लेकिन केंद्र और राज्यों का इस मामले में अब तक का रवैया बहुत ही निराशाजनक रहा है। लगता है, ऐसी घटनाओं को गंभीरता से लिया ही नहीं जा रहा। वरना क्या यह संभव है कि पुलिस प्रशासन चाहे और ऐसी घटनाएं न रुकें! सवाल तो यह है कि उन्मादियों की हिंसा से बचाव के लिए सरकारों ने कौनसे उल्लेखनीय कदम उठाए जिनसे ऐसे बर्बर कृत्यों को अंजाम देने वालों के भीतर भय पैदा होता। सर्वोच्च अदालत ने पिछले साल जो निर्देश दिए थे, वे अपने में पर्याप्त हैं और अगर इन पर अमल होता तो निश्चित रूप से भीड़ तंत्र के न्याय पर लगाम लगती। सुप्रीम कोर्ट ने सभी राज्यों से हर जिले में नोडल अधिकारी नियुक्त करने, खुफिया सूचनाएं जुटाने के लिए विशेष कार्यबल का गठन करने, पुलिस तंत्र को दुरुस्त करने, गश्ती बढ़ाने जैसे कदम उठाने को कहा था। इसके अलावा भीड़ हिंसा के खिलाफ लोगों को जागरूक बनाने के लिए इलेक्ट्रॉनिक, प्रिंट और सोशल मीडिया के माध्यम से अभियान चलाने को कहा गया था। लेकिन जिस तेजी से इस तरह की घटनाएं बढ़ रही हैं उससे लगता है कि सरकारों ने ऐसे कोई कदम नहीं उठाए, बल्कि ऐसी घटनाओं को सामान्य अपराध ही मान कर कार्रवाई की जा रही है। शीर्ष अदालत का स्पष्ट निर्देश है कि भीड़ की हिंसा को सामान्य अपराधों से अलग रखा जाए।

सर्वोच्च अदालत ने केंद्र सरकार से भीड़ हिंसा के खिलाफ कानून बनाने को कहा था। लेकिन इस दिशा में अब तक कुछ नहीं हुआ। राज्यों ने तो कोई कानून बनाया ही नहीं, केंद्र ने भी इस दिशा में कोई पहल नहीं की। केंद्र का रवैया तो डांवाडोल स्थिति वाला रहा है। कुछ दिन पहले केंद्र सरकार ने यह कह दिया था कि भीड़ की हिंसा से निपटने के लिए वह कोई कानून नहीं बनाएगी, क्योंकि राज्यों के पास पर्याप्त शक्तियां और अधिकार हैं, वही इससे निपटने के उपाय करें और कानून बनाएं। लेकिन बाद में इस तरह की खबरें भी आईं कि भीड़ हिंसा से निपटने के लिए केंद्र जल्द ही ऐसा कानून बनाएगा। जब सर्वोच्च अदालत ने केंद्र से कानून बनाने को कहा है तो कानून बनना चाहिए। सवाल है जब संवेदनशील मामलों में भी सरकारें सर्वोच्च अदालत के निर्देशों को गंभीरता से नहीं लेंगी तो समस्या से कैसे निजात मिलेगी!

# कल्पमेधा

बुद्धिजीवियों का व्यक्तिवाद अनिवार्यत: उनमें एक ऐसा मानसिक रोग पैदा कर देता है, जो उन्माद का निकट संबंधी है। –मैक्सिम गोर्की

# बाढ़ और सूखे की दुविधा

सुविज्ञा जैन

जल प्रबंधन की परियोजनाएं बनना और लागू होना कोई एक-दो महीने का काम नहीं होता, बल्कि इसके लिए चार-छह साल का वक्त लगता है। फिलहाल कुछ कर सकते हैं तो बस इतना कि बाढ़ और सूखे के बाद राहत और दूसरे काम की तैयारियां अभी से करके रख लें। लेकिन उससे बड़ा काम यह होना चाहिए कि देश में जल संभरण या संचयन की बड़ी योजनाओं पर सोचना शुरू कर दें। खासतौर पर वैसी जल योजनाएं जो थोक में पानी

को रोक कर सकती हों।

र्रेश में मुख्य मानसून के चार महीने ही होते हैं। दो महींने गुजरने को हैं। मौजूदा स्थिति यह है कि अब तक औसत से सत्रह फीसद पानी कम गिरा है। यानी इस साल सुखे का अंदेशा और ज्यादा बढ़ गया। हालांकि अभी पूरा मानसून गुज़रा नहीं है। दो महीने और बचे हैं। हो सकता है कि ताबड़तोड़ बारिश हो जाए और इस साल पुरे मानसून में सामान्य बारिश का सरकारी अनुमान सही भी साबित हो जाए। लेकिन दो महीने में अगर औसत से सवा गुनी बारिश हो गई तो देश में कई जगह भयावह बाढ़ का खतरा खड़ा हो जाएगा। देश में इस समय तक जो हालात बने हैं, उनसे भयानक बाढ़ या भीषण सुखे के आसार बराबर के बन गए हैं। ऐसे हालात को प्रबंधन प्रौद्योगिकी के लिहाज से भी देखा जाना चाहिए।

बीस दिन पहले तक देश के कई क्षेत्रों में सखे जैसे हालात बन रहे थे। जून के महीने में बारिश

औसत से तैंतीस फीसद कम हुई थी। पिछले महीने मीडिया में सूखे तालाबों में गड्ढे खोद कर पानी ढूंढ़ने और टैंकरों से पानी लेने के लिए लंबी-लंबी कतारों की तस्वीरें छप रही थीं। उसके बाद जुलाई में पांच-सात दिन कुछ ज्यादा बारिश हो गई और देश में कई जगह बाढ़ के हालात बन गए। हैरत इस बात पर होनी चाहिए कि जुलाई के चौथे हफ्ते तक देश में कुल बारिश औसत से सत्रह फीसद कम हुई है, इसके बावजूद कई क्षेत्र बाढ़ की चपेट में हैं। यानी इस साल के मानसून की बेतरतीब चाल ने इस दुविधा में डाल दिया है कि हम बाढ़ से ज्यादा चिंतित हों या सुखे से? या इस बार बाढ़ और सुखा दोनों ही संकटों से निपटने के लिए हमें तैयार रहना चाहिए? एक ही साल में बाढ़ और सूखे की स्थित को मानसून की गड़बड़ी की बजाय जल प्रबंधन के नजरिए से देखे जाने की दरकार है।

जल विज्ञानी और जल प्रबंधक कई साल से बार-बार बताते आ रहे हैं कि देश में पानी की समस्या का समाधान बारिश से मिले खरबों घनमीटर पानी को रोक कर रखने से ही संभव है। यही एकमात्र उपाय है जो बाढ़ और सूखे से निजात दिला सकता है। इसीलिए इस साल बांध और जलाशयों में पानी रोक कर रखने की मौजुदा स्थिति पर नजर डालनी जरूरी है। देश के बांधों और जलाशयों पर हफ्ते दर हफ्ते निगरानी रखने वाले केंद्रीय जल आयोग (सीडब्लूसी) के मुताबिक इस समय तक देश के सभी मुख्य बांधों में सिर्फ दो सौ सत्तावन अरब घनमीटर पानी रोक कर रखने की व्यवस्था है। गौरतलब है कि देश की धरती पर बरसे कुल पानी में हर साल हमें औसतन एक हजार आठ सौ

निदयों को उफनाता और बाढ़ की तबाही मचाता समुद्र में वापस चला जाता है।

यही नहीं, अपने बांधों की दो सौ सत्तावन अरब घनमीटर क्षमता भी कहने को ही है, क्योंकि मानसून के बाद इस्तेमाल के लिए इन बांधों की पानी जमा करने की क्षमता (लाइव स्टोरेज) सिर्फ एक सौ इकसठ अरब घनमीटर ही है। बाकी छियानवे अरब घनमीटर पानी वह है जिसे जिसे इस्तेमाल नहीं किया जा सकता। यह डेड स्टोरेज कहलाता है। कई कारणों से इस पानी को निकालने की मनाही होती है। डेड स्टोरेज इसलिए बनाया जाता है ताकि भूजल रिचार्ज होता रहे और उस इलाके का पारिस्थितिकी संतुलन बना रहे। डेड स्टोरेज पानी के साथ बह कर आने वाली मिट्टी के कारण बांध को जल्दी बेकार हो जाने से भी रोकते हैं।

जल आयोग के ताजा आंकड़ों के मुताबिक एक सौ इकसठ अरब घनमीटर संभरण क्षमता वाले बांधों में जुलाई के आखिरी हफ्ते तक सिर्फ चालीस अरब घनमीटर पानी भरा जा सका है। पिछले साल इस समय तक यह आंकड़ा पैंसठ अरब घनमीटर का था। उस हिसाब से इस साल अब तक जल भंडारण पिछले साल से अड़तीस फीसद कम हुआ है। यहां इस बात पर गौर होना चाहिए कि पिछले साल सामान्य से छह फीसद ही कम बारिश हुई थी, मगर देश का लगभग आधा हिस्सा सूखे की चपेट में आ गया था। इसका एक मतलब यह निकलता है कि इस साल के हालात पिछले साल से ज्यादा गंभीर हैं। हालांकि ये



अरब घनमीटर पानी उपलब्ध होता है। बाकी पानी अलग बात है कि देश का मौसम विभाग अभी भी इसके समाधान के लिए 'जलग्रहण क्षेत्र उपचार' पूरे मानसून में औसतन सामान्य वर्षा की उम्मीद में है। लेकिन यह हिसाब अभी नहीं लगा है कि अगर मानसून के बाकी बचे समय में औसत से बीस फीसद ज्यादा बारिश हो गई तो बाढ़ से तबाही का आकार कितना बड़ा होगा। और अगर सामान्य से ज्यादा बारिश न हुई तो सुखा पड़ना लगभग तय है। बेशक यह ऐसी आफत है जिसका फौरन ही कोई हल नहीं निकाला जा सकता। जल प्रबंधन की परियोजनाएं बनना और लागु होना कोई एक-दो महीने का काम नहीं होता, बल्कि इसके लिए चार-छह साल का वक्त लगता है। फिलहाल कुछ कर सकते हैं तो बस

इतना कि बाढ़ और सूखे के बाद राहत और दूसरे काम की तैयारियां अभी से करके रख लें। लेकिन उससे बड़ा काम यह होना चाहिए कि देश में जल संभरण या संचयन की बड़ी योजनाओं पर सोचना शुरू कर दें। खासतौर पर वैसी जल योजनाएं जो थोक में पानी को रोक कर सकती हों।

कुदरती आपदाओं से कम से कम नुकसान हो, इसकी कोशिशें अभी से होनी चाहिए। और अगर बाढ़ और सूखे से बचाव करना है तो बारिश के पानी को नदियां उफनाते हुए, बाढ़ की तबाही मचाते हुए वापस सुमुद्र में जाने से रोकने के लिए नए बांध और जलाशय बनाने पर सोचना ही पड़ेगा। वैसे इस काम के लिए भी हमने अपने लिए बहुत से व्यवधान खड़े कर रखे हैं। इससे अलग एक मसला यह भी है कि जो बांध, झीलें, तालाब आदि देश में मौजूद हैं उनमें से कई अपनी क्षमता के मुताबिक पूरे भर

> नहीं पा रहे हैं। ये बांध और तालाब क्यों नहीं भर पाते हैं, कम से कम इसके कारणों को खत्म करने के काम पर फौरन ही लगा जा सकता है। मसलन जिस भी बांध, जलाशय या दुसरे जल निकाय के जल ग्रहण क्षेत्र (कैचमेंट एरिया) में गड़बड़ियां पैदा कर दी गई हैं, उन्हें फौरन सुधारा जाए। जल ग्रहण क्षेत्र वह क्षेत्र होता है जहां बरसा पानी किसी जल निकाय में जाकर जमा होता है। लेकिन कई जगह ऐसी सड़कें या रिहाइशी इमारतें बन गई हैं कि जलाशय तक पानी जाने के रास्ते ही बंद हो गए हैं। यही कारण है कि अच्छी बारिश के बावजूद कई बांध, तालाब और कुंड भर ही नहीं पाते और इसी कारण शहरी इलाकों में जलभराव और बाढ़ की समस्या बढ़ गई है। इसी वजह से जमीन के भीतर भी पानी नहीं पहुंच पाता। जल विज्ञान के विशेषज्ञ

(कैचमेंट एरिया ट्रीटमेंट) नाम का उपाय सुझाते हैं। हाल फिलहाल अगर और कुछ न हो सकता हो तो सरकार कम से कम ऐसे उपायों पर विचार-विमर्श तो शुरू करवा ही सकती है।

इस बात पर विवाद की कोई गुंजाइश नहीं है कि जल संचयन की परियोजनाएं बहुत खर्चीली हैं। बांधों-तालाबों से गाद निकालने का काम भी खर्चीला है। जलग्रहण क्षेत्र उपचार का काम भी भारी-भरकम है। साल दर साल बाढ़ और सूखे के कारण देश की आर्थिक वृद्धि दर पर बुरा असर पड़ रहा है। इसलिए जल संचयन पर ज्यादा खर्च करना भी मुनाफे का सौदा साबित हो सकता है।

# बिसरता परिवेश

अशोक कुमार

मेरे एक मित्र का आठ साल का बेटा उनसे पूछ रहा था- 'पापा कुआं कैसा होता है? हमें दिखा दीजिए।' मेरे मित्र ने उसे दिखाने का आश्वासन देकर उस वक्त तो उसे बहला दिया, लेकिन मुझसे कहने लगा कि ऐसे ही नई-नई बातों से परेशान करता रहता है। मैंने उसे कहा कि दरअसल वह तुम्हें परेशान नहीं करता, यह उसके भीतर का कौतुहल है। वह नई चीजों के बारे में जानना चाहता है। हममें से कई लोग हैं जो अपने आसपास की चीजों को नजदीक से जानना चाहते हैं, लेकिन कई इसे सामान्य ढंग से ही लेते हैं। मित्र के साथ कुछ देर की बातचीत के बाद मैं अपने घर आ गया। लेकिन बच्चे के कुएं के बारे में नहीं जानने को लेकर मन उद्विग्न था कि ऐसा किन वजहों से हुआ होगा।

किसी को यह हास्यास्पद लग सकता है कि बच्चे कुआं के बारे में नहीं जान रहे हैं! जानें भी कैसे? हम अपने आसपास के जल-स्रोतों को खत्म कर रहे हैं। पानी निकालने के नई तकनीक का ईजाद कर रहे हैं। बिना यह सोचे समझे कि इससे

पानी का ज्यादातर हिस्सा बर्बाद हो रहा है या हम उसका उपयोग कर पा रहे हैं। ऐसी स्थितियों में ही यह सवाल दिमाग उभरता है कि हम हर अगले रोज अपना परिवेश को भूलते तो नहीं जा रहे! जो कल तक हमारे लिए अति महत्त्वपूर्ण थे, जिन पर हमारा जीवन निर्भर था, आज उसके बारे में हमारे बच्चे ही नहीं जान रहे हैं। भावी पीढ़ियों की क्या हालत होगी, यह सिर्फ अंदाजा ही लगा सकते हैं।

हम बच्चों की किताबों में कई शब्द पढ़ते हैं। हल, बैल, तालाब, घर की चक्की आदि।

एक समय था जब हमारी पूरी खेती का आधार ही हल और बैल था। लेकिन बदलते समय और तकनीक ने हल और बैल को सदियों पुरानी पद्धति बना दिया। पहले गांव से शहरों तक तालाब जल संरक्षण का महत्त्वपूर्ण स्रोत हुआ करता था। लेकिन आज तालाबों और पोखरों को भर कर बड़ी-बड़ी अट्टालिकाएं खड़ी कर दी गई हैं। इन बहुमंजिला इमारतों को देख कर कोई अंदाजा भी नहीं लगा सकता कि कभी यहां बहुत बड़े तालाब भी रहे होंगे, जिसमें हजारों लीटर पानी सालों भर रहते होंगे।

इसके अलावा, घर की चक्की का तो कोई सपने में भी नहीं सोच सकता। अमुमन सभी घरों

के कोने में यह चक्की पड़ी रहती थी। हमारी दादी और नानी इसी चक्की में गेहूं, चावल आदि पीस कर उसके आटा से भोजन तैयार करती थीं। आमतौर पर योग स्थल पर इस विषय पर योग शिक्षक बताते हैं कि चक्की चलाने और मोटा दाना के भोजन से हमारे पहले की पीढ़ियां या बुजुर्ग कितने स्वस्थ रहते थे। कई लोग इस पर सवाल उठा सकते हैं कि विज्ञान के इतने विकास करने के बाद भी हम उन्हीं पुरानी

दुनिया मेरे आगे पद्धतियों को क्यों ढोएं! मैं यह नहीं कहता कि आज जब सभी क्षेत्रों में इतनी तरक्की हुई है, तब भी पुराने ढर्रे पर काम होता रहे।

मेरा मानना है कि इन चीजों को सहेजने की जरूरत है कि आने वाली पीढ़ियां इन संसाधनों के बारे में भी जानें। वह यह भी जानने का प्रयास करे कि जब लोगों के पास संसाधनों का घोर अभाव था. तब वे कैसे और किन-किन संसाधनों का उपयोग कर अपने को जीवित रखते थे। लेकिन सिमटते संसार ने लोगों के पास वक्त ही नहीं रहने दिया इन सब पर सोचने के लिए। विकास के दौर में वे तेज रफ्तार से भागे जा रहे हैं। आज जब उनके बच्चे उन्हीं के पूर्वजों के उपयोग के साधनों पर सवाल

पूछते हैं तो वे झल्ला उठते हैं। वे उनके प्रश्नों को टालने का प्रयास करते हैं।

आज के बच्चे भी प्रकृति से प्रेम न करके टीवी और मोबाइल की दुनिया को ही सच मान लेते हैं। उनसे अलग किसी दुनिया का उन्हें आभास ही नहीं। अक्सर सुनने को मिलता है कि शहर के बच्चे तारे को नहीं जान पाए। यह हास्यास्पद, लेकिन गंभीर प्रश्न है कि रोज रात को टिमटिमाने वाले तारों को हम नहीं देख पा रहे हैं। उसके विषय में जितना कुछ किताबों में पढ़ा है, उससे अधिक कुछ न देख पाते हैं और न कुछ सोच पाते हैं। नए जमाने के उपकरण के तौर पर स्मार्ट फोन ने तो लोगों को और अधिक आभासी दुनिया में धकेल दिया है। हमारे पास एक मिनट भी कुछ और स्वतंत्र तरीके से सोचने के नहीं बच पा रहा है। हम नए उपकरणों के दौर में पुराने साधनों को भूलते जा रहे हैं। हम न केवल पुराने औजारों को, बल्कि अपने परिवेश को ही भूल रहे हैं। पुरानी पद्धतियों को भूल रहे हैं। मानव जीवन के विकास के क्रम में पुराने संसाधनों का भी महत्त्व है। हम अपने बच्चों को अपने बुजुर्गों के साधनों के बारे में बताएं तो जरूर वे इसे सहेज कर उसमें नवीनता का रंग भर सकेंगे।

# आतकवाद पर लगाम

ञ्जातंकवाद भारत ही नहीं अपितु विश्व की गंभीर समस्याओं में से एक है। भौगोलिक सीमाओं से परे आतंकवाद हर जगह अपनी जड़ें मजबूत कर चुका है। अमेरिका, इजराइल, अफगानिस्तान, पाकिस्तान, न्यूजीलैंड, श्रीलंका, बांग्लादेश, म्यांमार इत्यादि कई देश आतंकवाद की मार झेल रहे हैं। आतंकवाद दरअसल वैश्विक राजनीति में दबदबा बनाए रखने वाले कुछ देशों का एक तरह का अभियान ही है। इसी से उनके स्वार्थ और हित पूरे होते हैं। इसीलिए आतंकवादी संगठनों को कई देशों का समर्थन हासिल होता है। ऐसे देश मानव सभ्यता के लिए खतरा हैं।

भारत सरकार ने आतंकवाद के मुद्दे पर 'जीरो टॉलरेंस' की नीति अपनाने का दावा किया है। सरकार जिस प्रकार से संसद सत्र में आतंकवाद से जुड़े विधेयक पेश कर रही है, उससे साफ है कि सरकार आतंकवाद को लेकर गंभीर है। लोकसभा में राष्ट्रीय जांच एजेंसी (एनआइए) एक्ट संशोधन, गैरकानूनी गतिविधियां (रोकथाम) संशोधन विधेयक 2019 तो पास हो गए हैं। ऐसा माना जा रहा है कि इन संशोधन से सरकार अपनी कथनी को करनी के रूप में पेश करना चाह रही है। आतंकवाद से लड़ना एक चुनौती है जिसे संपूर्ण विश्व को स्वीकार करना होगा, ताकि इस गंभीर समस्या से जल्द से जल्द निजात पाई जा सके।

• मुकुल सिंह चौहान, दिल्ली

# इमरान से उम्मीद

पाकिस्तान के प्रधानमंत्री इमरान खान के अमेरिका में दिए हालिया बयान को दो परिप्रेक्ष्यों में देखा जा सकता है। इमरान खान ने स्वीकार

किया कि पाकिस्तान में चालीस हजार से ज्यादा आतकवादी हैं। इमरान खान ने यह बयान बहुत ही सोच-समझ कर दिया लगता है। पहला तो यह कि पाकिस्तान इस समय बेहद हो गभार आर्थिक संकट से जूझ रहा है। ऐसे आर्थिक संकट से उबरने के लिए उसे अमेरिका सहित अन्य देशों से आर्थिक सहयोग की बेहद आवश्यकता है और इसी आवश्यकता को पूरा करने के लिए इमरान खान ने अमेरिका में ऐसा बयान दिया है। यह कहीं न कहीं सत्य भी है। इमरान खान के इस बयान के बाद यह उम्मीद

# बिजली के वाहन

भारत सरकार की योजना है कि वर्ष 2030 तक सड़कों पर मौजूद वाहनों में तीस फीसद वाहन बिजली से चलने वाले हों। लेकिन इस तंत्र के बाद बिजली से चलने वाली कारें काफी महंगी हो जाएंगी और बढ़े दाम आम ग्राहक को आकर्षित नहीं कर पाएंगे। इसके लिए सरकार क्रेडिट प्वाइंट जैसी सुविधा या टोल टैक्स आदि में कुछ छूट जैसे प्रावधान कर सकती है। बीएस-6 मानक लागु होने से बिजली से चलने वाले वाहनों को

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

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

की जा सकती है कि शायद पाकिस्तान अपने यहां चल रहे आतंकी संगठनों पर नकेल कसे जाएगी। प्रधानमंत्री बनने के बाद से ही इमरान खान विकास और शांति की बात करते आ रहे हैं। इसलिए उनके इस बयान के बाद उम्मीद और जगी है कि वे पाकिस्तान की सरजमीं से आतंकियों का सफाया कर एक नया पाकिस्तान बनाएंगे। मगर पाकिस्तान से यह उम्मीद कम ही की जानी चाहिए कि वह अपने इस रुख पर ज्यादा समय तक कायम रह पाएगा। अगर सचमुच पाकिस्तान अपनी सरजमीं से आतंकियों का सफाया करना चाहता है तो इस काम के लिए भारत उनकी तारीफ ही करेगा।

• विकास बिश्नोई, हिसार

प्रोत्साहित कर सकती है। यहां इ-वाहनों में लगी लिथियम आयन बैटरी की क्षमता पर भी विचार करना होगा, जिसमें बैटरी बार बार चार्ज होने पर इसकी क्षमता में कमी आने लगती है। अभी इ-वाहनों के लिए चार्जिंग स्टेशनों की संख्या बहुत कम है। ऐसे में यात्रा करने वालों को भारी मुश्किलों का सामना करना पड़ सकता है। इसलिए विश्वसनीय बैटरी स्टेशन विकसित किए जाएं जो डिस्चार्ज बैटरी के बदले चार्ज की हुई बैटरी उपलब्ध करवा सकें। विकसित देशों में सामान्यतः एक बैटरी एक लाख साठ हजार किलोमीटर तक या आठ वर्ष तक काम करती है। लेकिन खासकर भारत में बेकार हुई बैटरियों से निपटना भी समूची व्यवस्था के लिए बड़ी

चुनौती होगा। प्लास्टिक कचरे से निबट रही दुनिया के सामने बेकार बैटरियों का ढेर लग जायेगा। ऐसे में बैटरी के अन्य उपयोग के बारे

म भा साचा जाए। • अजीत कुमार गौतम, गोरखपुर

# खत्म हो तीन तलाक

लोकसभा ने तीसरी बार मुसलिम महिलाओं के लिए तैयार तीन तलाक विधेयक को मंजूरी दे दी। यह विधेयक लोकसभा में दो बार पहले भी पास हो चुका है, लेकिन राज्यसभा में अटक जाता है। तीन बार 'तलाक-तलाक-तलाक' बोल कर या लिख कर तलाक देने वाले पुरुषों को तीन साल की सजा का प्रवधान है। सुप्रीम कोर्ट भी बोल कर तलाक लेने की प्रक्रिया को गैरकानूनी करार दे चुका है। पाकिस्तान, इराक, सीरिया, ईरान, अफगानिस्तान, सऊदी अरब, बांग्लादेश जैसे बाईस इस्लामी देश तीन तलाक को गैरकानूनी करार दे चुके हैं। पिछले दो-तीन साल में तीन तलाक के लगभग छह सौ मामले आए हैं। इस मसले पर हाल में संसद में जम कर बहस हुई। महिलाओं के हक से जुड़े इस मुद्दे पर इस बार बहस इसलिए भी अहम थी, क्योंकि नई संसद में सबसे ज्यादा महिलाए पहुंची हैं। लेकिन क्या ज्यादा महिला सांसदों का होना औरतों को ज्यादा हक और सुरक्षा की गारंटी हो सकती है? देखना यह होगा कि अब राज्यसभा में यह विधेयक पारित होता है या नहीं। विपक्ष ने इसे गलत ठहराते हुए कई दलील दी हैं। तीन बार तलाक बोल कर रिश्ता खत्म करना अगर अपराध की श्रेणी में आ जाएगा तो मुसलिम महिलाओं के लिए यह सबसे बड़ा तोहफा होगा।

राघव जैन, जालंधर

पटना, सोमवार, २९.०७.२०१९

# गांव-गांव में दूरसंचार

चना तकनीक के व्यापक विस्तार के क्रम में देश के 5.54 लाख गांवों को दूरसंचार नेटवर्क से जोड़ा जा चुका है, पर आज भी 43 हजार गांव इसके दायरे से बाहर हैं. सरकार ने एक साल के भीतर इन गांवों को नेटवर्क से जोड़ने के लिए निजी क्षेत्र की टेलीकॉम कंपनियों से सहयोग मांगा है. संचार मंत्री रवि शंकर प्रसाद के साथ बैठक में कंपनियों ने इस प्रस्ताव पर सहमति भी दी है. संसद में केंद्रीय मंत्री द्वारा दी गयी जानकारी के मुताबिक, चालु वित्त वर्ष में ये कंपनियां ग्रामीण क्षेत्र में 57.5 हजार से अधिक टावर लगायेंगी. 'भारतनेट' परियोजना के तहत सभी ढाई लाख ग्राम पंचायतों तक ब्रॉडबैंड पहुंचाने के लिए चरणबद्ध प्रक्रिया भी जारी है. अब तक 3.37 लाख किलोमीटर से अधिक ऑप्टिकल फाइबर केबल बिछाया जा चुका है, जिसके जरिये करीब 1.29 लाख ग्राम पंचायतों को ब्रॉडबैंड से जोड़ा जा चुका है. इनमें से 1.20 लाख से अधिक पंचायतों में सेवा पहुंचाने की तैयारी पूरी हो चुकी है. जीवन के हर हिस्से में इंटरनेट और मोबाइल फोन के बढ़ती अहमियत को देखते हुए ये उपलब्धियां

पिछले साल राष्ट्रीय डिजिटल संचार नीति के आने के बाद से एक लाख से अधिक रोजगार के अवसर बने हैं. इस प्रयास में निजी क्षेत्र के निवेश की जरूरत है.

उल्लेखनीय हैं. प्रधानमंत्री कार्यालय ने पूर्वोत्तर में टेलीकॉम इंफ्रास्ट्रक्चर के कामों को जल्दी पुरा करने के निर्देश भी दिया है. एक तरफ 5जी तकनीक दस्तक दे रही है, तो दूसरी तरफ अर्थव्यवस्था को आगे बढ़ाने में ग्रामीण क्षेत्रों की बड़ी भूमिका है. प्रधानमंत्री नरेंद्र मोदी ने 2024 तक अर्थव्यवस्था को पांच ट्रिलियन डॉलर के स्तर तक पहुंचाने का लक्ष्य देश के सामने रखा है. इसे हासिल करने के लिए दूरसंचार को कोने-कोने तक ले जाना जरूरी है. संचार मंत्री

का मानना है कि इसमें लगभग 25 फीसदी हिस्सेदारी टेलीकॉम सेक्टर की होनी चाहिए. संचार सचिव अरुणा सुंदरराजन ने आशा जतायी है कि आगामी डेढ सालों में इस सेक्टर में तीन लाख नौकरियां उपलब्ध हो सकती हैं. इनमें से आधे से अधिक रोजगार ग्रामीण क्षेत्रों में सुजित होंगे. पिछले साल राष्ट्रीय डिजिटल संचार नीति के आने के बाद से एक लाख से अधिक रोजगार के अवसर बने हैं. इस प्रयास में निजी क्षेत्र के निवेश की जरूरत है. सौ अरब डॉलर निवेश जुटाने के इस नीति के लक्ष्य में से 16 अरब डॉलर का वादा अब तक निजी कंपनियों की ओर से किया जा चुका है. नयी तकनीक की आमद और बढती प्रतिस्पर्ध्धा के माहौल में इसके बढने की अपेक्षा है. सरकार ने भी स्पष्ट कर दिया है कि वह संचार के क्षेत्र में किसी कंपनी विशेष का एकाधिकार स्थापित नहीं होने देगी. इस संदर्भ में एक बड़ी चुनौती सरकारी कंपनियों की गड़बड़ाती आर्थिक सेहत की है. भारतीय दुरसंचार क्रांति में इन कंपनियों का बहुत बड़ा योगदान रहा है तथा दुर-दराज और बिना मुनाफे के इलाकों में भी फोन और इंटरनेट पहुंच सका है. सरकार बीएसएनएल और एमटीएनएल को मुसीबत से निकालने के उपायों पर विचार कर रही है. आशा है कि सरकार और निजी क्षेत्र नीतियों पर अमल कर जल्दी ही 'डिजिटल इंडिया' के लक्ष्यों को पाने में सफल होंगे.



# शरीर को विश्राम

प करने से क्या होगा? कुछ लोग बोलते हैं कि आदमी आध्यात्मिक हो जायेगा, अच्छा लगेगा या शांति मिलेगी. तरह-तरह की बातें बोली जाती हैं. लेकिन जप से होनेवाली जो असली चीज है, वह यह कि संसार से कुछ क्षणों के लिए तुम अपने आपको दूर कर पाओगे. जब हमारे हाथ में माला हो, तो कम-से-कम कुछ देर के लिए तो हम सुख-दुख, हर्ष-विषाद और राग-द्वेष जैसे संसार के अनुभवों, संबंधों, परिस्थितियों और परिवेशों को भूल जायेंगे और नाता जोड़ेंगे अपनी आस्था के साथ, अपनी ऊर्जा के स्रोत के साथ, अपनी अंतरात्मा के साथ. जब तक हम उस अवस्था में हैं, तब तक मन को विश्राम मिलता है. शरीर को विश्राम कब मिलता है? जब तुम रात को सोते हो, तब. दिनभर तुम जो भागदौड़ करते हो, उससे शरीर की बैट्टी का खर्चा होता है और थकान का अनुभव होता है. शारीरिक बैट्टी की रिचार्जिंग के लिए फिर निद्रा की आवश्यकता होती है. यह तो शरीर के लिए हुआ, लेकिन मन, बुद्धि और भावना जैसी आंतरिक प्रक्रियाओं की चार्जिंग निद्रा में नहीं होती, बल्कि जिस वस्तु से इनका संबंध है, उससे इनको दूर कर देने से होती है. रात को जब तुम सोते हो, तो भी तुम्हारा मन विषयों में लगा रहता है और अचेतन स्तर पर तनाव का अनुभव करता है. सबेरे उठते हो, तो मन और शरीर में आलस्य रहता है, प्रमाद रहता है. बैट्टी चार्ज नहीं हुई, क्योंकि सोते हुए भी मन का व्यापार संसार के विषयों के साथ चल रहा था. इसलिए संसार से मन को मोड़ना वह पहली क्षमता है, जो मनुष्य को अपने जीवन में प्राप्त करनी होती है. हमारा अभी जिस चीज से मानसिक संबंध है, उससे अपने आपको कुछ क्षणों के लिए किसी प्रकार से अलग करना है. जब हम अलग होते हैं, तब फिर शांति का अनुभव होता है. जप का माध्यम होता है मंत्र और मंत्र की परिभाषा है- मननात त्रायते इति मंत्रः यानी मुक्ति दिलाना. कहां से? विषयों से. क्योंकि मन का चक्कर अपने साथ विषय को लेकर ही चलता है. मंत्र मन को विषयमुक्त करता है. स्वामी निरंजनानंद सरस्वती

# बड़बोले और झूठे हैं राष्ट्रपति ट्रंप

ह आश्चर्यजनक, किंतु सत्य है कि दुनिया के सबसे ताकतवर देश का राष्ट्रपति अक्सर असत्य बोलता है. यह बात अमेरिकी मीडिया खुलेआम कहता आया है और अब धीरे-धीरे दुनिया यह जानने लगी है कि राष्ट्रपति ट्रंप न केवल बड़बोले हैं, बल्कि वह अक्सर झूठ भी बोलते हैं. दुनिया हतप्रभ है कि ऐसे शख्स का सामना कैसे किया जाए. हमें यह अचंभित करता है, क्योंकि इस देश में शुरुआत से ही सत्य बोलने पर भारी जोर दिया जाता है- सत्यं वदु धर्मम चर. इस देश का सूत्र वाक्य भी सत्य पर आधारित है- सत्यमेव जयते अर्थात सत्य की हमेशा जीत होती है. शायद यही वजह है कि ऐसा अनुभव हमें चौंकाता है. इसका कटु अनुभव भारत को तब हुआ, जब अमेरिकी राष्ट्रपति ट्रंप ने कश्मीर पर मध्यस्थता की बात कही और उसमें प्रधानमंत्री नरेंद्र मोदी को भी घसीट लिया, हाल में पाकिस्तान के प्रधानमंत्री इमरान खान ने अमेरिका के राष्ट्रपति डोनाल्ड ट्रंप से मुलाकात की. उसके बाद जैसी कि परंपरा है, एक साझा प्रेस कॉन्फ्रेंस हुई. इमरान ने सुनियोजित तरीके से ट्रंप की भारी प्रशंसा की. जिसे भदेस भाषा में कहते हैं, चने के झाड़ पर चढ़ा दिया. इमरान खान ने कहा कि ट्रंप कश्मीर मामले में मध्यस्थता कर उपमहाद्वीप में शांति स्थापित करने में अहम भूमिका निभा सकते हैं. यह बात अमेरिकी मीडिया में सामने आ चुकी है कि राष्ट्रपति ट्रंप शांति का नोबेल पुरस्कार पाने के बेहद इच्छुक है. शांति और मध्यस्थता की बात आते ही वह झाड पर चढ जाते हैं. इसके लिए वह उत्तर कोरिया जा कर वहां के तानाशाह किम जोंग-उन से मुलाकात कर सकते हैं. दरअसल, उनके पूर्ववर्ती राष्ट्रपति ओबामा को नोबेल शांति पुरस्कार मिल चुका है. इमरान खान की बात पर बड़बोले ट्रंप तुरंत चढ़ गये और उन्होंने कहा कि पिछली मुलाकात में भारत के प्रधानमंत्री नरेंद्र मोदी उनसे मिले थे और उन्होंने भी उनसे कश्मीर में मध्यस्थता का अनुरोध किया था और वह तैयार हैं.

लेकिन इस बार उन्होंने कश्मीर जैसे संवेदनशील मसले को

संपादकीय प्रभात

लेकर ऐसा दावा किया, जिसे लेकर अमेरिकी प्रशासन भी सकते में आ गया. इसका असर भारत-अमेरिका संबंधों पर भी पड सकता है. अमेरिका को आनन-फानन में सफाई देनी पडी और पुरे मामले की लीपापोती करनी पड़ी. अमेरिकी प्रशासन की समस्या यह है कि वह अपने ही राष्ट्रपति के बयान का खंडन कर उन्हें झुठा नहीं ठहरा सकता है. हालांकि राष्ट्रपति ट्रंप के इस बयान के बाद अमेरिकी विदेश मंत्रालय ने इस मामले पर सफाई देते हुए ट्वीट किया कि कश्मीर भारत-पाकिस्तान के बीच द्विपक्षीय मद्दा है. ट्रंप प्रशासन पाकिस्तान और भारत के साथ इस मुद्दे पर सहयोग करने को तैयार है. भारत के लिए भी धर्म संकट है कि कूटनीतिक दृष्टि से राष्ट्रपति ट्रंप को सीधे सीधे झुठा कह देना उचित नहीं है. हालांकि भारत के विदेश मंत्री एस जयशंकर ने संसद के दोनों सदनों में ट्रंप के बयान का दो ट्रक शुब्दों में खंडन किया और कहा कि पीएम मोदी ने ऐसी कोई बात कही ही नहीं थी. भारत की वर्षों से स्थापित नीति रही है कि उसे कश्मीर मुद्दे पर किसी तीसरे पक्ष की मध्यस्थता स्वीकार नहीं है. उन्होंने कहा कि भारत का लगातार

यह पक्ष रहा है कि वह पाकिस्तान के साथ सभी मुद्दों पर द्विपक्षीय वार्ता के लिए हमेशा तैयार है. लेकिन बातचीत की शर्त यह है कि पहले सीमा पार से आतंकवाद बंद हो. उन्होंने कहा कि शिमला समझौता और लाहौर घोषणा पत्र



आशुतोष चतुर्वेदी प्रधान संपादक. प्रभात खबर

ashutosh.chaturvedi @prabhatkhabar.in

राष्ट्रपति ट्रंप शांति का नोबेल पुरस्कार पाने के बेहद इच्छुक हैं. शांति और मध्यस्थता की बात आते ही वह झाड़ पर चढ़ जाते हैं. इसके लिए वह उत्तर कोरिया जा कर वहां के तानाशाह किम जोंग-उन से मुलाकात कर सकते हैं.

> हिस्सा आव्रजन के बारे में है. उन्होंने चुनाव के दौरान वादा किया था कि अमेरिका से सटे मैक्सिको की सीमा पर वह दीवार खडी करवा देंगे. इस विषय में ट्रंप ने सबसे ज्यादा 172 बार झठा दावा किया कि बस अब दीवार बनायी जा

पाकिस्तान और भारत के बीच के सभी मद्दों के द्विपक्षीय समाधान का आधार प्रदान करते हैं. दरअसल, यह समय की कसौटी पर जांची-परखी भारत की नीति रही है. अमेरिकी राष्ट्रपति टंप के दावे के बाद भारत में लेकर हंगामा मचना तय था. संसद में विपक्ष ने सरकार को घेरने का प्रयास किया और प्रधानमंत्री नरेंद्र मोदी से सदन में इस विषय पर स्पष्टीकरण देने की मांग की. विपक्षी सदस्यों ने इस मृद्दे पर सदन में

हंगामा और वॉकआउट किया. ऐसा नहीं है कि ट्रंप ने पहली बार झुठ बोला हो. अमेरिका के जाने माने अखबार वॉशिंगटन पोस्ट के फैक्ट चेकर्स डेटाबेस के अनुसार डोनाल्ड टंप ने राष्ट्रपति बनने के बाद से अपने कार्यकाल के 869 दिनों में 10 हजार 796 बार झुठ बोला और हवा-हवाई दावे किये. यानी बतौर राष्ट्रपति ट्रंप औसतन रोजाना 12 बार झूठ बोले हैं. वॉशिंगटन पोस्ट ने एक रिपोर्ट प्रकाशित की थी. जिसमें कहा गया कि ट्रंप ने अपने कार्यकाल के पहले साल हर दिन औसतन करीब छह झुठे दावे किये. दूसरे साल उन्होंने तीन गुना तेजी से हर दिन ऐसे करीब 17 झूठे दावे किये. इन दावों में से लगभग पांचवां

मीडिया के संदर्भ से मैं उन्हें पेश कर रहा हूं, लेकिन भारतीयों ने अभी तक इस पर विशेष ध्यान नहीं दिया है. अमेरिकी मीडिया रिपोर्ट की मानें, तो ट्रंप अपनी रैलियों में ही जो दावे करते हैं, उनमें लगभग 22 फीसदी झूठे होते हैं. यही नहीं, अपने ट्विटर हैंडल पर भी वह झुठे दावे करने में संकोच नहीं करते हैं. उन्होंने ट्वीट कर जापान, चीन और यूरोपियन युनियन के साथ व्यापार घाटे पर झुठ बोला था. एक बार

रही है. इसके अलावा उन्होंने अमेरिकी राष्ट्रपति चुनाव में

ये बातें अमेरिकी और भारतीय अखबारों में समय-

रूस के दखल के विषय में भी अनेक बार झूठ बोला है.

समय पर छपती रही हैं. मैं कोई नया खुलासा नहीं कर रहा हूं

ट्रंप ने यहां तक कहा था कि पूर्व अमेरिकी राष्ट्रपति बराक ओबामा अमेरिका में पैदा ही नहीं हुए. बाद ट्रंप ने मिशेल ओबामा पर यह आरोप लगाया कि उन्होंने ही ओबामा के जन्म को लेकर अफवाह फैलायी थी. ट्रंप ने दावा किया था कि सऊदी अरब और अमेरिका के बीच 450 अरब डॉलर के रक्षा सौदे हए, जिसे रक्षा विशेषज्ञों ने झठा बता दिया था. अपने बयानों में वह अमेरिका में बेरोजगारी की दर कभी 5 फीसदी तो कभी 24 फीसदी तक बताते हैं. मुंबई हमले के मास्टरमाइंड पाकिस्तानी आतंकवादी हाफिज सईद को लेकर भी वह गलत बयानी कर चुके हैं. सईद की गिरफ्तारी के बाद ट्रंप ने ट्वीट किया था कि दस वर्षों तक तलाश करने के बाद आखिरकार सईद को गिरफ्तार कर लिया गया है. अमेरिका की विदेश मामलों की समिति ने जवाब ट्वीट किया कि हाफिज सईद पाकिस्तान में खुले आम घुम रहा था. उसे कोई खोज नहीं रहा था. उसे कई बार गिरफ्तार किया गया और छोड़ भी दिया गया. यह सही है कि राष्ट्रपति ट्रंप अक्सर झुठ बोलते हैं, लेकिन यह भी सच है कि वह दुनिया के सबसे ताकतवर देश के राष्ट्रपति हैं. यह केवल भारत की नहीं दुनिया के सभी देशों के लिए चुनौती है कि उनसे कैसे निबटा जाए, क्योंकि उनकी अनदेखी करने का

# ससदाय समितया को अनदखो नही



भूपेंद्र यादव राष्ट्रीय महामंत्री, भाजपा संसद सदस्य, राज्यसभा

bhupenderyadav69@gmail.com

यूपीए सरकार ने राज्यसभा में केवल पांच विधेयकों को संसद की प्रवर समिति को भेजा था, जबकि एनडीए सरकार ने 17 विधेयक समीक्षा के लिए भेजे हैं. इससे साफ है कि विधेयकों को संसद की समितियों के पास नहीं भेजने का आरोप पूरी तरह से तथ्यहीन है.

ल ही में राज्यसभा में विपक्षी दल के नेताओं ने आरोप लगाया है कि केंद्र सरकार ने संसदीय स्थायी और प्रवर समितियों को समीक्षा के लिए भेजे बगैर जल्दबाजी में कई कानून पारित करवाये हैं. आश्चर्यजनक है कि विपक्ष को इस बात पर आपत्ति है कि संसद अधिक कानून लाकर अपने समय का समुचित उपयोग कर रही है और सदन का वर्तमान सत्र पिछले अन्य सत्रों के मुकाबले ज्यादा सार्थक और उपयोगी सिद्ध हो रहा है. वस्तुतः विपक्षी दलों के आरोप निराधार हैं. सही तथ्य यह है कि यूपीए सरकार ने 2009 से 2014 तक राज्यसभा में केवल पांच विधेयकों को संसद की प्रवर समिति को भेजा था, जबकि एनडीए सरकार ने 2014 से 2019 के बीच कुल 17 विधेयक समीक्षा के लिए भेजे हैं. साफ है कि विधेयकों को संसद की समितियों के पास नहीं भेजने को लेकर विपक्ष का आरोप तथ्यहीन है.

जो लोग राज्यसभा सत्र के दौरान चर्चाओं और ध्यानाकर्षण प्रस्तावों को बाधित करते रहे हैं, वही आज सदन में सुचारु ढंग से हो रहे कामकाज पर सवाल उठा रहे हैं. उन्हें स्वयं से यह सवाल करना चाहिए कि आखिर मानसून सत्र 2015, बजट सत्र 2018, शीतकालीन सत्र 2018 और अंतरिम बजट सत्र 2019 में कामकाज की गति क्यों ठप जैसी हो गयी थी ? हैरानी की बात है कि सदन में सकारात्मक रुख के साथ बहस और चर्चा करने की बजाय अनेक अवसरों पर गतिरोध पैदा करने वाले इस बात पर सवाल खड़े कर रहे हैं कि सदन का प्रदर्शन अच्छा क्यों हो रहा है!

यह संसदीय परंपरा का ही हिस्सा रहा है कि केंद्र सरकार के किसी भी संस्थान को सशक्त करने से जुड़े आमूलचूल संशोधन और प्रावधान को प्रवर समिति नहीं भेजा जाता था. यह ठीक है कि प्रवर समितियों को विधेयक भेजना सदन की प्रक्रिया का हिस्सा रहा है, किन्तु यह भी सच है कि ऐसा विधेयक के लिए अनिवार्य नहीं है. कभी-कभी प्रवर समितियां कानून में फेरबदल करने की सलाह देती रही हैं और इसके परिणामस्वरूप कुछ विधेयकों में उन सिफारिशों को लागू भी किया जाता रहा है.

महत्वपूर्ण तथ्य है कि कुछ विधेयक प्रवर समितियों में विचार होने के बावजूद सदन का सत्र नहीं होने की वजह से पारित नहीं हो पाते हैं. इस कारण उन्हें दोबारा सदन की पटल पर रखना पड़ता है. इस तरह के विधेयकों में ज्यादातर वे हैं, जो लोकसभा द्वारा पारित भी हुए तथा स्थायी समिति द्वारा उन्हें अनुमोदित भी किया गया था. उदाहरण के लिए द मोटर व्हीकल्स (अमेंडमेंट) बिल 2019, जिसकी समीक्षा पहले स्टैंडिंग कमेटी द्वारा की गयी. फिर लोकसभा द्वारा पारित किया गया था. इसके बाद राज्यसभा ने इस बिल को प्रवर समिति के पास भेज दिया था, लेकिन लैप्स होने के कारण इसे फिर से लोकसभा में लाना पड़ा. इसी तरह ट्रिपल

तलाक बिल में विपक्ष के सुझाव पर संशोधन करके दो बार इसे लोकसभा द्वारा पारित किया गया है. चूंकि इसे राज्यसभा में यह दो बार पारित नहीं हो सका. अंतः इसे तीसरी लोकसभा में पारित कराना पड़ा है.

ऐसे अनेक विधेयक हैं, जिन पर या तो प्रवर समिति या स्थायी समिति में विचार हो चुका है और इन्हें राज्यसभा द्वारा अभी पारित होना है. मसलन, राष्ट्रीय चिकित्सा आयोग विधेयक 2019, सरोगेसी (विनियमन) विधेयक 2019, ट्रांसजेंडर व्यक्तियों (अधिकारों का संरक्षण) विधेयक 2019, वेतन संहिता 2019, अंतर-राज्यीय नदी जल विवाद (संशोधन) विधेयक 2019 तथा कंपनी संशोधन विधेयक 2019.

पिछले संसदीय सत्रों की तुलना में वर्तमान सत्र कानून के अधिनियमन के लिहाज से अधिक प्रभावी व अधिक उपयोगी रहा है, कई बार सदन की कार्यवाही शाम छह बजे के बाद तक चला. इस सत्र में विधेयकों के पारित होने के अलावा कई महत्वपूर्ण मुद्दों पर सार्थक चर्चा हुई है. शून्यकाल और ध्यानाकर्षण प्रस्ताव के माध्यम से सार्वजनिक महत्व के कई मुद्दों पर भी चर्चा हुई है. इस सत्र में प्रश्नकाल भी सार्थक रहा है. गौरतलब है कि हाल के पांच सत्रों में से चार सत्र बर्बाद चले गये, इसके बावजुद एनडीए सरकार के दौरान 2014 से 2019 के मध्य कम समय के लिए अवधि की जो चर्चाएं हुईं, जिनकी संख्या 29 थी. यह 2009 से 2014 के दौरान यूपीए सरकार की 27 चर्चाओं से अधिक है.

संसद की बिजनेस एडवाइजरी कमेटी द्वारा सदन के कामकाज को अंतिम रूप दिया जाता है, जिसमें सभी दलों का प्रतिनिधित्व होते हैं और सभी विधेयकों को उसके आवंटित समय के अनुसार इस समिति द्वारा पारित होने के बाद सूचीबद्ध किया जाता है. लंबे समय के बाद लांग ऑवर चर्चाएं सदन में फिर से होने लगी हैं. ऐसा तब हुआ है, जब व्यवधानों और अनावश्यक हस्तक्षेपों के कारण संसदीय सत्र अनियमित रहे हैं.

कानून बनाना संसद का महत्वपूर्ण कार्य है और विपक्ष की रचनात्मक प्रतिक्रिया और सार्थक हस्तक्षेप इसमें एक महत्वपूर्ण भूमिका निभाता है, लेकिन केवल विरोध के लिए विपक्ष को प्रोत्साहित नहीं किया जा सकता है. विपक्ष को यह समझने की आवश्यकता है कि किसी भी विधेयक के संबंध में सहमति-असहमति की प्रतिक्रिया स्वीकार्य है, परंतु अनावश्यक बाधा उत्पन्न करना स्वस्थ लोकतंत्र के लिए सही नहीं है. विपक्ष को अपनी भिमका के महत्व का एहसास करने और रचनात्मक विपक्ष के रूप में कार्य करते हुए लोकतंत्र को मजबूत करने की दिशा में समझदारी से काम करने की आवश्यकता है. संसदीय कामकाज के लिहाज से यह उत्साहजनक है कि इस सत्र के दौरान सदन का कामकाज पहले की किसी भी अन्य सरकारों की तुलना में अधिक प्रभावी ढंग से पूरा हो रहा है.



जोखिम दिनया का कोई देश भी नहीं उठा सकता है.

# आपके पत्र

# कटेया से मुसहरी के बीच नहरों की नहीं हुई सफाई

पिछले कई वर्षों से कटेया से मुसहरी के बीच नहरों की सफाई का काम नहीं हुआ है, जिससे यहां के किसानों का बुरा हाल है. कई बार किसानों ने विरोध प्रदर्शन भी किया, परंतु कोई सुनने वाला नहीं है. जबसे नयी सरकार बनी है, तो लोगों में विश्वास जगा था कि इस बार नहरों की सफाई होगा और किसानों की समस्याओं पर कुछ विशेष ध्यान दिया जायेगा. लेकिन, सरकार मानो सो रही है. किसानों के हालात खराब होते जा रहे हैं. कुछ किसानों का आरोप है कि जान-बूझ कर इस काम में देरी हो रही है. नेपाल का पानी जो किसानों के खेत में आता था, वह अब नहीं आ रहा. प्रशासन से यही उम्मीद है कि इस दिशा में जल्द सकारात्मक कदम उठाया जायेगा.

अभिषेक राय, गोपालगंज

# जंगलों की कटाई जारी रही तो विलुप्त हो जायेंगे बाघ

हमारे देश का राष्ट्रीय पशु बाघ है, जो शारीरिक रूप से काफी मजबूत, स्वस्थ, बुद्धिमान व एक बेहतर तैराक भी है. वह अन्य जंगली जंतुओं से भिन्न है, जिसके कारण वह जंगल का राजा कहलाता है. जिस प्रकार धरती पर डायनासोर का राज था और जैसे ही धरती पर उसके अनुकूल वातावरण नहीं मिला, इस पृथ्वी से विलुप्त हो गये. ठीक उसी प्रकार अगर जंगलों की कटाई मौजुदा रफ्तार से होता रहा, तो वही स्थिति हमारे राष्ट्रीय पशु की भी होगी और वह सिर्फ तस्वीरों में ही देखने को मिलेगा. बाघ पर्यावरण संरक्षण में अपनी महत्वपूर्ण भूमिका निभाते हैं. इसलिए इनके संरक्षण के लिए महत्वपूर्ण कदम उठाये गये. प्रोजेक्ट टाइगर अथवा अन्य चिड़िया घरों का निर्माण किया गया, ताकि इनकी प्रजातियों को बचाया जा सके.

**उदय कुमार,** इ-मेल से

# पर्यावरण संरक्षण की दिशा में पौधारोपण अच्छी पहल

हम और हमारी धरती एक खतरनाक स्थिति की ओर बढ़ रहे हैं. इसी डर ने हमें पौधे लगाने और पानी बचाने की तरफ मोड़ दिया है. बच्चों की ड्राइंग से गायब होते प्राकृतिक दृश्यों को फिर से बनाने की कोशिश में पौधारोपण जैसे कार्यक्रम एक अच्छी पहल है. इसी क्रम में हाइब्रीड और सजावटी पौधों को मुफ्त या उपहार देने का चलन भी जोरों पर है. शायद पौधे बड़ा होकर उजड़ते जंगलों की जगह लेंगे, जो आनेवाली पीढ़ी के लिए एक खुशखबरी बन सकती है. मगर यहीं से हमारी कोशिशों पर कुछ सवाल भी खड़े होते हैं. क्या सचमुच नये जंगल बसाने के प्रयासों में हम ईमानदार हैं? तुलसी पौधे, सजावटी या पाम जैसे पौधे लगा कर कितने घने जंगल बनाने में कामयाब होंगे? तरक्की की देन कंक्रीट जंगल के जालों ने फलदार और छायादार पौधों के लिए जगह नहीं छोड़ी है. हमें वह जगह तलाशनी होगी, जहां हरे वृक्षों के घने जंगल की वसीयत आने वाली पीढ़ी के नाम कर सकें.

एमके मिश्रा, मां आनंदमयीनगर, रातू (रांची)

# देश दुनिया से

# चांद पर बसने की भावी योजनाएं हो रहीं तैयार

चांद पर इंसान के पहला कदम पडने की आधी सदी के बाद एक नयी रेस शुरू हो चुकी है, जिसका मकसद कारोबार के लिए फायदे जुटाना है. तकनीकी जगत की बड़ी कंपनियों के साथ ही कई स्टार्टअप कंपनियों ने चांद के लिए बड़ी-बड़ी योजनाएं बना ली हैं. इनमें स्पेस टूरिज्म से लेकर क्षुद्र ग्रहों की खुदाई और आकाश में विशाल विज्ञापनों तक की तैयारी है और इसके लिए करोड़ों का निवेश हो रहा है. अंतरिक्ष से जुड़ा कारोबार फिलहाल 350

अरब अमेरिकी डॉलर का है. यह आकलन अमेरिकी इनवेस्टमेंट बैंक मॉर्गन

स्टैनले का है. इंसान ब्रह्मांड का कितना इस्तेमाल करे, इसे नियमित करने के लिए कानून की मांग उठने लगी है. चांद पर खोज के लिए बने जापान के स्टार्टअप आइस्पेस के प्रवक्ता आरोन सोरेंसन का कहना है कि हमारा मानना है कि 2040 तक चांद पर करीब एक हजार लोग रह रहे होंगे और काम कर रहे होंगे, जबकि सालाना यात्रियों की संख्या दस हजार होगी. हम मानते हैं कि इसकी शुरुआत पृथ्वी की अर्थव्यवस्था के चांद पर विस्तार से होगी. टेस्ला के चीफ इलॉन मस्क और एमेजॉन डॉट कॉम के संस्थापक जेफ बेजोस अंतरिक्ष में बस्तियां बसान चाहते हैं. इसके लिए वे अत्याधुनिक अंतरिक्ष यान बनाने पर भारी निवेश कर रहे हैं.

# Land of Hope and Boris

साभार : कार्टूनमूवमेंटडॉटकॉम

सवाल है कि सब काम जनता ही कर लेगी, तो सरकार क्या करेगी? जवाब है सरकार कड़ी नजर रखेगी और चुनाव की तैयारी करेगी. सवाल है कि देश के पूर्वी हिस्सों में बाढ़ पानी से तबाही है. जवाब है सरकार यहां भी चुनाव की तैयारी करेगी. जनता चाहे तो अपने बांध बनवा ले. सरकार की जान को बहुत काम होते हैं. कर्नाटक देखकर पता लगता है कि सरकार बनी रहे, सरकार का पहला काम यही होता है और आखिरी काम भी यही होता है. सरकार बाढ-पानी देखे कि अपना बना रहना देखे. सरकार बनी रहती है और जनता को बेवकूफ बनाती रहती है. स्कूल सही काम ना कर रहे सरकार के, तो जनता प्राइवेट स्कूल में भेजे अपने बच्चों को. पर प्राइवेट स्कूल में भेजने के लिए पैसे कहां से आयें? पैसे कहां से आयें, यह आर्थिक सवाल है इसे शिक्षा के सवाल से जोड़कर नहीं देखना चाहिए. सरकारी अस्पतालों के हाल खराब हैं, तो निजी अस्पताल जायें.

निभा रहे हैं. जनता अपनी ड्यूटी निभाये. जनता को ज्यादा

आफत है, तो वह अपनी सडक अलग बनवा ले. अपने

मंबई में मेनहोल खले हैं बच्चे डब के

सरकार की पार्टी अगले चुनाव की

तैयारी कर रही है. विपक्ष भी यही कर

रहा है. चुनाव की तैयारी से बड़ा कोई

काम ना है. नेता लोग अपनी ड्यूटी

मेनहोल अलग बनवा ले.

मर रहे हैं. सरकार क्या कर रही है.

सरकारी अस्पताल और निजी अस्पताल में एक बुनियादी फर्क यह है कि सरकारी अस्पताल में मौत सस्ते में मिल जाती

आलोक पुराणिक

कुछ अलग

ड्यूटी अपनी-अपनी!

वरिष्ठ व्यंग्यकार puranika@gmail.com

खींच कर मौत का सर्टिफिकेट बनाते हैं. वैसे भी निजी अस्पताल में भर्ती होने के लिए रकम हर कोई नहीं जुटा सकता. इतने पैसे कहां से आयें, यह एक आर्थिक सवाल है. इसे स्वास्थ्य के सवाल से जोड़कर नहीं देखना चाहिए.

है. निजी अस्पताल वाले बहुत रकम

सरकार अस्पताल न फिट रख सकती. सरकार बाढ़ से निबटने का जुगाड़ न कर सकती. सरकार सरकारी स्कूल फिट नहीं रख सकती. ऐसे में सब कुछ सरकार को ही करना है तो फिर सरकार होती ही क्यों है, इस सवाल का जवाब हमें कर्नाटक से लेना चाहिए. सरकार बनती इसलिए है कि वह बनी रहे. बने रहना ही बहुत बड़ा या और एकमात्र लक्ष्य होता है. मुंबई में बरसों से उन्हीं दलों की सरकार और सड़कों के गड़े भी बने रहते हैं. बनने-बनाने में सरकार की बहुत दिलचस्पी है. विधानसभा चुनावों के बहुत पहले ही महाराष्ट्र के वर्तमान मुख्यमंत्री ने घोषणा कर दी है कि वही अगले मुख्यमंत्री बनेंगे. यद्यपि उनकी सहयोगी पार्टी अपने बंदे को मुख्यमंत्री बनाना चाहती है. मुंबई की सड़कों को गड़ा मुक्त बनाने में किसी की

यह बात पहले ही बतायी जा चुकी है कि सरकार बनती ही इसलिए कि वह बनी रह सके. बाकी का काम करना जनता की ही ड्यूटी है. लोकतंत्र के बुनियादी सिद्धांत सबको समझ लेने चाहिए. सरकार का काम बने रहना है. बाकी जो भी बनाना है. उसे बनाना जनता की ड्यूटी है.

दिलचस्पी नहीं है. तो फिर सरकार होती क्यों है?

कार्टून कोना

**पोस्ट करें** : प्रभात खबर, अद्वैता भवन, बोरिंग रोड चौराहा, पटना, **मेल करें** : patna@prabhatkhabar.in ध्यान रखें, इ-मेल संक्षिप्त व हिंदी में हो. लिपि रोमन भी हो सकती है. फैक्स करें: 0612-2540610 पर