Tribunals stuck in low gear

Appeals cannot be heard as chairmen or technical members are not appointed



OUT OF COURT

M J ANTONY

he last decade saw a proliferation of regulators and tribunals. Each scam produced a new one. Later, raw wisdom dawned on the decision makers that tribunalisation had gone too far and their number should be reduced. The tribunals have not substantially lightened the burden on regular courts, which was one of the pious intentions. Moreover, most of those

lack of infrastructure, fund crunch and chronic vacancies of judicial and tech-

Judges have been speaking about this crisis from different platforms. Now, in three major judgments, they have taken to writing about it. Earlier this month, while upholding the amendment to Insolvency and Bankruptcy Code, a long "post-script" was added to the judgment by three judges of the Supreme Court. In *Pioneer* Urban Land vs Union Of India, they stated that some "recalcitrant states and Union Territories" have not set up the Real Estate Regulatory Authority and appointed adjudicating officers. The court directed them to do so in three months and file compliance reports. The central government was also directed to file a similar affidavit of compliance on its part. "It is absolutely necessary that the NCLT and the NCLAT are manned with sufficient

entities are non-functional due to the members to deal with litigation that may arise under the Code generally."

While these tribunals are comparatively new, the old ones are in dire straits. This is evident from two other recent judgments of the Delhi High Court one dealing with intellectual property rights and the other with competition law. In Mylan Lab vs Union of India, the complaint was that the company's stay application regarding a design could not be taken up because of the absence of a technical member in the Intellectual Property Appellate Tribunal (IPAB). The court called for the status of the various tribunals under IPR laws.

According to the status report, IPAB $\,$ was established in 2003. It hears appeals under the Patents Act, the Copyright Act and the Plant Varieties Protection Act. No technical member (copyright) has been appointed till date. With respect to patents, the post of technical member was lying vacant since May 2016. With respect to trademarks, the post of technical member was lying vacant since December 2018. There is only one technical member relating to plant varieties protection.

IPAB had also begun to receive Geographical Indication appeals from 2009 and till date only 12 appeals have been disposed of. This was done by an apparent loan system. The technical member of trademarks will join the bench as technical member for hearing the Geographical Indication matters along with the chairman. Even this system does not work well in most IPR cases because either the chairman's post is vacant or the technical member is not appointed. So there is a logjam in all these IPR appeals.

Another judgment of the Delhi High Court dealt with the situation in the Competition Commission of India (CCI). In Cadd Systems vs CCI, a company was accused of cartelisation in a tender to conduct tree census in Pune using GPS. When CCI passed an order

against it, the firm moved the high court alleging that the CCI was functioning without a judicial member and was not competent to adjudicate the matter. The plea was rejected because the law has provided a loophole (Section 15) by which CCI can function without a judicial member. This clearly runs counter to various Supreme Court judgments which had asserted that a judicial member is mandatory. However, the court dismissed the challenge observing that "plainly, interdicting CCI from passing final orders would effectively bring its functioning to a standstill". This ad hocism will repel any corporation which looks for ease of doing business.

There are other quasi-judicial bodies like the consumer forums established in every district in the country but whose coram is never full. In south Delhi, for instance, there is a build-up of final hearing matters because there was no president for nearly two years. One lady gives out the next date of hearing, usually four months hence. The above state of affairs affects both large corporations who want to enter manufacturing sector as well as individual consumer who buys goods and services. The time for bandage solutions or looking the other way is over.

CHINESE WHISPERS

Gandhi as a prisoner The National Archives of India, in

collaboration with Oxford University Press, has published The Diary of Manu Gandhi 1943-44. Edited and translated by Tridip Suhrud, currently provost at the CEPT University, Gujarat, the book will be launched on Thursday at 5 pm at New Delhi's Nehru Memorial Museum and Library. Manu is Mahatma Gandhi's great-niece. She joined him in 1943 as an aide to the Mahatma's ailing wife, Kasturba, when the couple was in the Aga Khan Palace prison in Pune. Manu remained with Gandhi until his assassination. She wrote 10 diaries, which years after her death were handed over to the National Archives. The first volume of *The Diary of Manu* Gandhi is a record of her life with Gandhi in 1943 and 1944. Authenticated by Gandhi himself, the entries in the diary throw light on his life as a prisoner and the "spiritual and educational pursuits of an adolescent woman who takes up writing as a mode of self-examination". It is the subsequent volumes of her diary, which are to be published, that have references to Gandhi's controversial experiments with celibacy.

Busy Thursday

Thursday promises to be a politically busy day in New Delhi. While the Nehru Memorial Museum & Library will host the launch of a book at 5



pm, the Congress will at that particular hour kick off the 75th birth anniversary celebrations of former prime minister Rajiv Gandhi in another part of the city. Congress General Secretary Priyanka Gandhi Vadra and a group of party leaders have planned the event at the Indira Gandhi Indoor Stadium. Congress President Sonia Gandhi (pictured) will address the gathering and there will be cultural events to highlight Rajiv's contribution to the country. The DMK plans to organise a protest at Jantar Mantar to demand the release of leaders of Jammu and Kashmir's mainstream political parties. The TMC has said it will join the DMK in the protest. Some other opposition parties are likely to lend support.

Diplomatic mission

The British High Commission in New Delhi wants Indian women between 18 and 23

GST: Account and accountability

A close reading of the CAG's audit of the two-year-old indirect tax regime reveals systemic flaws, not just temporary glitches

NITIN SETHI

July, the Comptroller and Auditor General (CAG) of India conducted its first ever audit of the goods and services (GST) tax regime, the implementation of which has been a signature initiative of the National Democratic Alliance, and pointed to many flaws that persist two years after GST's nationwide rollout.

These were the headline findings that were widely reported. A closer reading of the report reveals some startling and worrisome facts. These findings, it should be noted, are from a partial audit exercise because in breach of constitutional provisions

and legal obligations, CAG was not provided full access to the GST database. With the Union government preventing a comprehensive audit, CAG carried out a test audit instead.

As the report points out, "Providing such data as CAG may require is a conand legal stitutional requirement." CAG's persistence got it aggregated

statistics instead of full access to granular data. "...(The) audit, therefore, was hampered in the detailed analysis of pan-India transactions," it says.

ANALYSIS BEHIND THE HEADLINES

But even this limited exercise proved eve-opening, "[T]he gamut of issues brought out even in this limited audit point to serious systemic deficiencies that need to be addressed by the (revenue) department."

Granular, comparable and regularly

updated data on GST has never been shared by the government with researchers or the public. This has made it difficult to review GST's functioning beyond the headline gross monthly collections. So far, reviewers have tried their best to draw a picture out of the Controller General of Accounts (CGA) figures, the government's partial responses to Right to Information Act, answers in Parliament and the occasional discussions and data found in records of GST council meetings. But these discrete packets of information do not permit a deeper analysis.

CAG's test audit shows us why such granular information is vital. The audit

tells us that the state of GST is in much worse shape than what the government has suggested.

Take the example of one gross error CAG discovered in the sample data it was allowed to test. Just one individual entity in Andhra Pradesh erroneously made a single entry in the GST online records for input credit worth ₹6.45 trillion amounting to 79 per cent of

the input credit claimed across the country by all registered entities in one month (₹8.19 trillion). This erroneous entry went undetected in the system till CAG pointed it out during the audit.

In fact, the auditors noted a trend of anomalies in the input credit generation. It warned of consequences for not just overall revenue collected but also how the tax collected on inter-state transactions is shared with states. The auditors concluded, "The system in vogue today is an unverified return, without an IT-based checking of invoices and is prone to ITC frauds. The selfcorrecting system, as originally envisaged, is not in place and this has led to continuation of avoidable assessee-tax officer physical interface instead of ITbased interface. Without invoice matching and auto generation of refunds, assessments etc on the whole, the envisaged GST tax compliance system is non-functional."

One of the chief objectives of GST was to reduce evasion and fraud. In 2018-19, GST Intelligence officials detected 1,620 cases worth ₹11,251 crore of fraud. In the absence of automated checks, officials had to depend on manual checks and analytics coupled with field investigations to unearth these frauds. In July this year, they detected the case of an individual who had floated 90 fictitious companies. operated 173 different bank accounts on the GST database and created fictitious trade worth ₹7,672 crore helping "established traders and cotton yarn spinners" to defraud the government of ₹660 crore of revenue. More than a 100 such cases of fraud had been detected by June this year. The fundamental idea that distin-

guished GST from previous indirect tax regime was the use of 100 per cent voucher-to-voucher matching to avoid cascading tax-on-tax. But with government putting this on hold, the tax system has become highly inefficient. It's led to leakage of tax as well as problems in revenue-sharing between states and Centre, the audit notes.

The audit found, without the automated matching of vouchers, the GST



system is unable to generate all the reports required to correctly settle IGST into the states' and Centre's shares. This led to ₹1.77 trillion of IGST standing unsettled by the end of FY18. Breaching the law, the Union government wrongly appropriated an extra ₹57,450 crore of state's share from this in FY18-19. CAG found that the IGST settlement

system continued to be flawed till as recently as May 2019.

Another reflection on how the GST regime continues to be hobbled is the CAG's conclusion that, "While it was expected that compliance would improve as the system would stabilise, all returns being filed showed a declining trend of filing from April 2018 to December 2018." Introduction of GSTR-3B returns allowed unverified claims of input credit, which in turn led to reduced annual filings which would allow tax officials a degree of

In breach of scrutiny. The government constitutional plans to pilot-test and provisions and legal introduce vet another set obligations, the CAG of returns this year. was not provided full It is worth recalling access to the GST that the previous indirect

Union government with loopholes as well. preventing a How better has the GST comprehensive done and is it improving? audit, CAG carried out a test audit instead data suggests it could be

database. With the

new alternative that was once conceptualised.

The audit notes that the revenue for the Centre from indirect taxes on goods and services subsumed under GST fell by about 10 per cent in 2017-18 over previous year even after accounting for the excess apportionment of states share that year by the Centre. But, a conclusive review remains elusive till the government begins to release more granular and comparable data on the complex backend of GST to a deeper scrutiny, by researchers, auditors and

tax regimes were riddled

far from the efficient

The CAG audit and other

to apply for its "High Commissioner for a Day" competition. The winner will get to head a diplomatic mission for a day overseeing the UK's network in India, leading daily briefings, and interacting with important stakeholders and the media. The competition celebrates the International Day of the Girl Child on October 11. This is the third year of the competition. Last year's winner was Esha Bahal. She is pursuing her master's degree while continuing her work supporting the LGBT community. The 2017 winner, Rudrali Patil, recently finished her master's in international law at the Fletcher School of Law and Diplomacy, A jury at the British High Commission will select the winner.

INSIGHT

Those in power must empathise

Apart from the hardware of macro-economic policy, officials in power must implement a software solution of listen, listen and listen



R GOPALAKRISHNAN

ntil just a few months ago, the Indian economy was supposed to be booming, among fastest growing. the world's Suddenly, high-level discussions are going on about a slowdown amidst disbelief and confusion. Although the Prime Minister welcomes businessmen as wealth creators, others in authority browbeat (like threatening a jail term for not spending corporate social responsibility or CSR budget), bureaucrats interpret data to avoid upsetting ministers, while bankers and economists diagnose ailments from 30,000 feet height.

I have no doubt that government wants to appreciate the real problem, but it must first admit that there is a problem. Maybe it can follow the reductionist approach of understanding a complex system by studying the interaction of its parts as Descartes advised in 1637 in his Discourses Part V.

At an atomic level, the problem is that people feel bullied and threatened by the system. Important people have inadequate empathy for the

unimportant people. Power diminishes the mirror neurons in our brain, resulting in a lack of empathy. This affliction has been observed for centuries. The lack of empathy manifests as powerful people do not listen. They behave defensively, maybe even arrogantly. Molecular level issues are dismissed as stray, so leaders do not perceive the ground-level view. In this situation, leaders must assemble the ground level signals from the level of those who drive the economy — business and entrepreneurs.

With constructive intent and in good faith, I present a ground-level perception of the empathy problem that ails the economy through five stories of business. These examples are at the molecular level. This perception is the reality. ■ A well-known and successful

entrepreneur committed suicide. In a note, he expressed his unbearable tension from the attitude and behaviour of tax authorities. This accusation may be incorrect, but it was his perception. The entrepreneur has surely expressed great pain.

■ An entrepreneur complained that he and his ilk were harassed by an "un-angelic" angel tax. Harshly worded demand notices were issued to many start-ups, and the advocates of entrepreneurship cried out in agony. This persisted for months, until energies began to get sapped and stocks of newsprint began to

■ A mindless intent is announced that a shortfall in CSR expenditure will be treated as a criminal offence. ■ A retired manager was served a notice by the Service Tax Audit Department to furnish documents pertaining to 2014. His tax advisor's

response carried a covering letter

which merely stated that "since the

matter of the jurisdiction of Service

Tax Audit is in the courts, the docu-

ments were being submitted without prejudice to the client's rights". The Service Tax Audit officer became furious. He threatened that he would pass a unilateral order and that the matter would go into appeals for the next 20 years. What a crude threat to a lawful tax payer! A company director was served a

non-bailable arrest notice by a criminal court in Bengaluru. The shocked director discovered that the Registrar of Companies, Bengaluru, had filed a criminal complaint that the director had served as director on more than 10 companies after the new Companies Act came into force on April 1, 2015. The director had to neutralise the non-bailable warrant by appearing before a criminal court in Bengaluru. After an expenditure of ₹1.5 lakh (fares, lawyers' fees, surety bond), the director submitted that the RoC had erred and that he had not been a director of more than 10 companies as alleged. (It is, anyway, unclear how this could be construed as a criminal offence). It took the RoC Bengaluru six months, including sending files to Delhi, to withdraw its original complaint without a word of apology to the dis-

tressed director. Apart from the hardware of macro-economic policy, officials in power must implement a software solution of listen, listen and listen. There is a problem. If officials listen and switch on their empathy neurons, a more positive mood will surely emerge.

The author is a corporate advisor and distinguished professor of IIT Kharagpur. He was director of Tata Sons and vicechairman of Hindustan Unilever. Email: rgopal@themindworks.me

LETTERS

May better sense prevail



This refers to "PM Modi raises Imran Khan's 'extreme' anti-India rhetoric with Donald Trump" (August 20). Prime Minister Narendra Modi did nothing wrong by conveying India's deep concern to US President Donald Trump. During his 30-minute telephone conversation with Trump, PM Modi (pictured) reportedly highlighted the importance of creating an environment free from terror and violence, and eschewing cross-border terrorism without exception, apart from raking up various issues concerning Indo-US bilateral trade.

Incidentally, following their prolonged talks, US President Trump is understood to have urged Pakistan Prime Minister Imran Khan to moderate his anti-India rhetoric. Mind you, the Pakistani PM has desperately been trying to use every trick up his sleeve to somehow malign India at the global level notwithstanding the fact that he has no locus standi in the context of the abrogation of Article 370. All his illconceived attempts have so far turned out to be a damp squib. But sadly, instead of learning any lesson, Khan has stooped low by not only launching Pulwama type terror attacks, but also extending nuclear threats to India. One wishes that better sense finally prevails; otherwise Pakistan will grossly repent his silly mistakes.

S Kumar New Delhi

Sustainable growth

This refers to "Develop corporate bond market sustainably" (August 20). The Indian economy is slowing and the central bank is cutting interest rates. But the cost of long-term money is refusing to budge. What could be troubling the market is the unknown quantum of public spending via borrowings, that are but sovereign liabilities, beyond the ₹7 trillion fiscal gap. The FCI alone has borrowed over ₹2 trillion, most of it from non-market sources as EPF, postal savings, stressing the need for deepening of the Indian corporate bond market to meet the funding requirement of the infrastructure sector, particularly by insur-

ance companies and pension funds. Despite interest rate cuts, the 10year Indian government bond yield was tracking at 7.4 per cent till recently, only to slip to sub-7 per cent level now, as falling crude oil and slowing economic growth feeds speculation on monetary easing by the RBI. The banking sector and bond market reforms were softpedalled when global economy was in better shape. But the Trump-disruption era of uncertain duration is upon us and it will be brave to even contem-

R Narayanan Navi Mumbai

Favourable ecosystem

This refers to the editorial "Boost for start-ups" (August 19). Though technology start-ups have grown in number in recent years, there is enough scope of the segment to grow manifold, if a proper ecosystem is put in place. Amendments in the Shares and Debentures Rules of the Companies Act, 2013, enhancing the limit for the issue of shares with differential voting



its before issuing DVR shares or launching an initial public offer (IPO). This is a much needed relief for the start-ups that can now manage their funding plans better without bothering about profit figures in the initial years or losing operational control of the

By bringing out these amendments and having earlier addressed the issues arising out of angel tax, the government has shown positive intent in building a favourable ecosystem for start-ups. Hopefully, the start-up movement will become big in India, produc-

ing many more unicorns. Sanjeev Kumar Singh Jabalpur

Letters can be mailed, faxed or e-mailed to: The Editor, Business Standard Nehru House, 4 Bahadur Shah Zafar Marg New Delhi 110 002 Fax: (011) 23720201 · E-mail: letters@bsmail.in All letters must have a postal address and telephone

HAMBONE



MUMBAI | WEDNESDAY, 21 AUGUST 2019

In the right direction

The DTC task force recommendations will reduce litigation

he task force on the Direct Tax Code (DTC) submitted its report to Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman on Monday. The government has not yet given any timeframe for releasing the report (it should put it in the public domain soon to enable an informed debate), but some of the recommendations have been reported, including by this newspaper, and are in the right direction. For instance, the report has proposed changes in personal tax slabs to benefit the middle and upper-middle class Indians, though the extent of the reduction and the status of exemptions are not clear. Further, the panel has reportedly recommended reducing the corporate tax rate to 25 per cent for both domestic and foreign companies. Over 99 per cent of domestic firms are already at this level and the rate is likely to be reduced for the rest in the coming years. Therefore, there should not be any difficulty in accepting this recommendation. The reduction in the tax rate for foreign firms will help bring more investment and boost growth in the medium to long run. Some of the foreign firms may, however, wait for the fine print as the panel has proposed a branch profits tax on the amount repatriated to their foreign partners.

However, the most significant suggestions are in the area of tax disputes. The task force has suggested replacing assessing officers with assessment units. This is in addition to the idea of faceless scrutiny of cases picked centrally and allocated randomly. Also, taxpayers may be allowed to go for negotiated settlement through a collegium of commissioners. This will help reduce cases of harassment by tax officials and make life easier for taxpayers. Further, the report has recommended changing the rules for reopening assessment cases. It should be done on the basis of pre-defined criteria. All this will help reduce litigation and is likely to aid both the government and taxpayers. Currently, there are taxrelated disputes worth about ₹6 trillion. It is no secret that the Income-Tax Department is the largest tax litigant, and the success rate is pretty low. Often, arbitrary or irrational demands are raised by assessing officers, because they must meet unrealistic targets, on which hinges their performance appraisal. This results in the taxpayer invariably filing an appeal. So any step to reduce litigation must be welcomed.

Overall, the task force has made all the right noises. Fundamentally, there is no dispute that tax rates need to be brought down for both individuals and firms. However, what would perhaps be worth debating at this stage is whether the current fiscal situation will allow the government to move in this direction. In order to make a significant difference, the tax department would need to work on compliance. Irrespective of what the government decides to do with the recommendations of the task force, the tax department should build capabilities through better use of technology to check evasion. It is important to bring more people in the tax net to increase revenue. At the broader level, the task force has given an opportunity to the government to rewrite direct tax laws, and it should aim to reduce rates, broaden the tax base, remove distortions in the system, and contain the possibility of disputes.

Population and patriotism

Birth rates are influenced by overall development

peaking from the ramparts of the Red Fort on Independence Day, Prime Minister (PM) Narendra Modi equated population control and patriotism: "Population explosion will cause many problems for our future generations. But there is a vigilant section of public (who) ... have a small family and express their patriotism to the country. Let's learn from them." The PM is not wrong that India's large population has stressed its infrastructure, its natural resources, and its administrative and educational capacity. But, in a sense, the population problem is yesterday's problem. While the population will continue to grow, it is not an increasing problem. Indeed, according to the United Nations' population division projections, the number of Indians under the age of five peaked in 2007. The number under 15 peaked in 2011 and is now falling. The current generation of under-25 years will be India's largest ever — its demographic "bulge". India's own figures on the total fertility rate, or TFR, from the Sample Registration System of the Office of the Registrar General of India back up this slowing of births. The nationwide TFR has steadily declined from 3.24 in 2001 to 2.53 in 2011 to an estimated 2.2 now, and will be lower by 2021. The larger part of future population growth, therefore, is going to be on account of increased longevity and the growth of the 60+ age group as a result of better health, nutrition, and care. This is, of course, a desirable outcome.

This overall improvement conceals considerable geographic and social diversity. In many parts of India, such as the South Indian states, Kashmir, and West Bengal, the TFR is particularly low — at European levels or below, in fact. Many minority communities, such as Christians, Buddhists, Sikhs, and Jains, have their TFR below the replacement level of 2.1. But areas like Uttar Pradesh (with a TFR of 3), Bihar (a TFR of 3.2), and other parts of the Hindi heartland continue to see significantly high birth rates. Thus, if the PM is serious about managing the population increase, these are the areas that should be targeted. In other words, the challenge is development; population control is a derived benefit. The lessons of India's past experience with family planning should be taken on board. Behavioural change comes about as a product of external stimuli. The most important factors are increased urbanisation, access to income security, lower infant and child mortality rates, improved public health standards, occupational patterns, and so on. Female empowerment, including the number of women working and the effectiveness of female education, may have an even greater role to play.

Linking the issue of birth rates to patriotism is a wrong way to look at the problem. Most differences, including between communities and regions, can be best explained through other development indicators. Any policy framed as a result should take these facts into account. The government might want to consider giving incentives to those with two children or fewer. However, the fiscal situation at the moment is far from being comfortable, and there are many other calls on the government's purse — so new items of expenditure to address this problem might be unwise. The focus should be on extending health care, expanding urbanisation, and female empowerment in left-behind areas.

ILLUSTRATION: BINAY SINHA



GDP measurement and the slowdown

Although there are some structural issues, the economy is slowing largely due to cyclical factors

rvind Subramanian's view that India's Gross Domestic Product (GDP) was over-estimated after the 2011-12 base revision is being used incorrectly to argue the slowdown is likely to be recalcitrant and worse than it appears. Subramanian's empirical results cover the period 2011-2016 and have been subject to widespread criticism to which there is no satisfactory response. We show his recent heuristic arguments to be equally unsatisfactory. Therefore, they cannot illuminate the recent period. The National Accounts Statistics (NAS) data shows a slowdown now and showed a

slowdown continually in investment and exports, which was earlier countered by credit-fuelled consumption.

In a rejoinder paper, Subramanian de-emphasises his estimations, choosing to focus on puzzles such as Indian growth rates remaining high despite a number of shocks and a fall in exports and investment growth, in an attempt to recreate Indian growth rates from the demand side.

It is true that export growth declined significantly. But domestic consumption and service growth was high and could have compensated. He does not come to grips with the fact that India had an unusual service-led growth since the reform in the 1990s. A large diversified economy has more ability to absorb shocks compared to small export-dependent economies. If one sector slows, another expands.

Demand components were underestimating GDP even before 2011 and, therefore, cannot be used to link underestimation to measurement changes. Demand-side estimates, based more on benchmarks and thumb rules, are not robust compared to production-based estimates. Even taking demand side, the NAS estimates tell a consistent story. Investment declined from about 34 per cent

to 29-30 per cent of GDP, as clearly shown in the official estimates. Underutilised capacity as well as improvements in productivity allowed consumption-led growth that arrested any significant growth decline till 2017-18. Recent slowdown in consumption credit due to problems in the non-banking financial companies (NBFCs), as well as election-related postponement in private investment and few structural issues, explain the decline in growth to 5.8 per cent in the last quarter of 2018-19.

Subramanian argues the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) consumer confidence survey shows a fall in

confidence, so growth could not have been consumption-led. Moreover, credit slowed. But credit fell to manufacturing not to services. There was a rise in retail credit as private banks and NBFCs competed to lend to consumers, financing a consumption boom. Consumption credit growth was high until the IL&FS crisis. Household liabilities rose consistently. Their gross domestic savings fell from about 23 per cent to 19 per cent of GDP. The aggregate credit data he uses cannot capture these compositional changes

Increasing use of technology has raised productivity. It is possible that outdated methodologies were underestimating growth rates before 2011—

changes may be capturing value added, quality and productivity improvements. Intellectuals sometimes get wedded to concepts and ideas of underdevelopment they are unwilling to shed.

Subramanian argues there could not have been growth in productivity because corporate sector profits declined. But this result is restricted to a

growth in productivity because corporate sector profits declined. But this result is restricted to a corporate database where he does not specify the number of firms. National Sample Survey (NSS) in 2017 showed the unorganised sector's compound annual productivity growth at 7.2 per cent over 2011-

2016 exceeded that of the organised sector (3.2 per cent). Demonetisation impacts fall outside the Subramanian estimation period.

Corporate distress in India was narrow, restricted to a few firms largely in infrastructure. That private corporate savings and investments increased from 9.5 per cent to 12.1 per cent and 11.2 per cent to 12.3 per cent of GDP, respectively, over 2011-16 shows diversity in corporate outcomes.

The two possible reasons Subramanian identifies for over-estimation are: (1) use of MCA21 data for industry and (2) absence of double deflation in a period when there was considerable dispersion between different price indices. But issues highlighted are of doubtful validity and also transient. No one has so far showed problems in the MCA data (only the Central Statistics Office has worked on it) except for saying its growth rates are higher than from Annual Survey of Industries and Index of Industrial Production (IIP). Until this is done, underestimation may be as likely as overestimation—there are grounds for both. The database has matured and become more robust based on 3,00,000 active firms. Dummy firms are cleaned out. As divergence between indices dropped sharply in 2017, measured growth should have fallen if deflation was a major cause of overestimation. But growth rose. Double deflation is itself not wellestablished.

The shift to the enterprise from the establishment approach, which now includes a number of headquarter services, partly explains higher CSO manufacturing growth compared to that from the IIP. Moreover, CSO captures values compared to volume in IIP.

Finally, the NAS data is massive. The CSO uses around 3,000 data sources and more than 300 surveys. No regressions or correlations can substitute it. There are several continuing problems like old benchmarks, informal sector data etc. But, this cannot be used to criticise revision, which is an improvement in these respects. For example, the NSS 2011-12 informal enterprise survey is better than the 2006-07 one used earlier.

The more heuristic arguments Subramanian makes now are, therefore, not more convincing than his empirical estimates.

The present slowdown shows up in the data to its true extent. It is largely due to cyclical factors, although there are some structural issues. Countercyclical polices can be quickly implemented in several sectors to enhance demand, growth and jobs without waiting for structural reforms. Monetary policy can reduce the interest rates further as real rates are still high; abundant liquidity aids transmission. The government can frontload planned expenditure and rebuild confidence.

Dev is director, IGIDR and former acting chairman and member of the National Statistical Commission; Goyal is professor, IGIDR and a member of the PM's Economic Advisory Council

A wake-up call for DoT

RAHUL KHULLAR

S MAHENDRA DEV &

he telecom sector has been in crisis for quite some time. The warning signs have been clear as daylight: Exit of the smaller firms, RCom going into bankruptcy, huge losses of incumbent firms, mounting debt and stressed bank assets. The government's insouciance and inaction defies all logic

Consider the industry-level facts. Revenues normally grew at a steady clip of 5-9 per cent per annum. In the past four years, however, the industry's revenues fell by 20 per cent. The telcos debt (excluding the tower business) has tripled and is now a whopping ₹4.3 trillion. The debt is now 2.6 times its annual revenues. Government revenues (licence and spectrum usage fees) have fallen by 36 per cent.

Disaggregating, look at the private sector. Tata Teleservices, RCom, Aircel, Telenor and Videocon have exited. Debt has nearly quadrupled in four years, increasing by ₹2.8 trillion. Idea-Voda and Jio each have debt of ₹1.5 trillion. In 2018-19, the debt was thrice the annual revenues. Two of the majors have reported losses for the past three years. In 2015-16, when debt levels were relatively low, the EBITDA margin for the

three majors was 34 per cent. In 2018-19, this margin had collapsed to 25 per cent; for one firm it was barely 13 per cent.

The public sector picture is even bleaker. In the last four years, BSNL's revenues have fallen by 40 per cent and MTNL's by 30 per cent. BSNL and MTNL have reported operational losses continuously since 2013-14. In 2018-19, BSNL's losses are more than ₹14,000 crore; cumulative losses exceed ₹0.9 trillion. MTNL's losses are greater than its revenues and its debt is nine times its revenues. Except for handwringing, the government has done scant little.

Some distress was inexorable. A shakeout was necessary — there were far too many firms. Exit and bankruptcy were the only options. Further, Jio's entry had to be disruptive — it was the only

way it could succeed. Zero price became its USP. The resultant price war wreaked havoc on the

But, it was not a level playing field. Regulatory action became the new invisible hand determining economic fortunes. The Telecom Regulatory Authority of India (Trai) turned a blind eye and let the zero price regime go on and on. Its questionable order on termination charges reduced Jio's payout (costs) and reduced its rivals' revenues (*Business Standard*, September 2017). Then came Trai's egregious order on predatory pricing: Jio was free to price below cost because it could not be a predator and all others were potential predators because they had market share. This order had other odious

and anti-competitive provisions (Business Standard, 16 March 2018). The Telecom Disputes Settlement and Appellate Tribunal (TDSAT) set aside provisions of the order 18 months later. By that time, the damage was done. The secretary in the Department of

Telecommunications (DoT) who drew attention to the falling industry and government revenues was peremptorily transferred.

The severe financial stress raises the spectre of more NPAs for public sector banks. More importantly, it raises questions of long-term commercial viability. Do the math. If the debt-to-revenue ratio is 2.5, then with 8 per cent as the cost of debt, 20 per cent of revenues are required just to service the debt. Then add on the amortisation for spectrum and depreciation (as replacement cost). For two firms where data is available, depreciation and amortisation are, respectively, 20 per cent and 11 per cent of revenues. Even if the latter are judged too high, at today's debt levels, the minimum EBITDA margin to survive is 40 to 45 per cent.

The industry is capital-intensive but its defining characteristic is rapid technological obsolescence. The 3G spectrum auction was held in 2010. 3G systems became operational in 2012 (some later). In

2019 comes news that 3G will be "shut down". The unforeseen obsolescence destroys capital — networks and equipment. Add on the costs of reconfiguring spectrum. Depreciation will nearly always run behind actual replacement cost. In the headlong rush to 5G, pause to ponder: How much capital invested in 4G will be destroyed? What happens to the outstanding debt of ₹4.3 trillion? If an auction is held, can the domestic banking industry fund the requirements? Would a hasty auction end up helping only deep pockets and move the industry to a monopoly?

Exorbitant spectrum prices are the main reason for the spike in debt. The low availability of spectrum has pushed prices to absurd levels. India has 8.6 million subscribers per MHz of spectrum. The counterpart figures are: Germany (170,000), Japan (262,000), Korea (137,000) and the United States (589,000). In India the average holding is 31 MHz per operator; the counterpart numbers: Europe (61) and Asia (49). The desperate need is for the government to locate and then release a large chunk of spectrum. Only then should auctions be held. Releasing spectrum in driblets will result in the same outrageous prices.

The race-to-the-bottom price war has to stop. Even Jio, the only firm posting profits, is not "making money" like its parent. If firms do not have internal resources, future investment is jeopardised.

Schumpeter's creative destruction was predicated on innovation and competitive markets. Competition has been anything but free and fair. Regulatory capture is openly discussed but sotto voce. Perversely, telecom has seen destructive creation — value destroyed for the creation of a new behemoth. The paramount need is to restore a semblance of balance and impartiality to all regulatory decisions, be they of Trai or DoT.

The purpose of regulating the industry was, inter alia, to "protect interests of service providers...and promote and ensure orderly growth of the telecom sector". Regrettably, this has been all but forgotten. This is a wake-up call to DoT.

 $The writer\ is former\ chairman\ of\ Trai$

Kashmir from the ground up



CHINTAN GIRISH MODI

Toome from a place where funerals of the young are political events, mourning is permanent politics, and the people are in a constant battle between memory and forgetfulness," writes Gowhar Geelani, whose book, *Kashmir: Rage and Reason*, is a reality check for Indians who think peace can come to the valley via curfews and communication clampdowns, and the promise of economic growth can magically erase the evidence of bloodshed.

Self-determination is too precious a dream to give up, so those who make it their vocation are celebrated as heroes. Kashmir is a place where tombstones of slain militants are like shrines, and people venerate them so much that a visit to the martyrs' graves is considered no less than a pilgrimage.

The book takes off from the encounter killing of Burhan Wani, a young man who is a martyr to most Kashmiris but a terrorist in the eyes of the Indian state. Why did the son of a school principal join the Hizbul Mujahideen, and become a militant? Why did people from all over Kashmir put their lives in jeopardy, and walk several miles for his funeral? This is the story Mr Geelani wants to tell. It is the story of not just one individual but of Kashmir itself — a flashpoint of conflict between two nuclear powers, India and Pakistan, that seem to care more about

the land than the people.

Mr Geelani does not valourize or discredit armed resistance. He keeps his ear to the ground, writes about his impressions of the situation, and interprets it for readers who are outsiders looking in. As a journalist and political commentator, he has documented the history of political resistance in Kashmir, and its changing contours over several years. "The reason why people continue to support local militants is because most Kashmiris feel oppressed, dispossessed and disempowered on multiple fronts, as spaces for democratic dissent stand choked in the restive region. There is a ban on peaceful assembly, and student politics in universities is not allowed either," he savs.

Mr Geelani is based in Srinagar, a city where he grew up in the early 1990s and

personally experienced what it felt like to be seething with rage when armed personnel frisked schoolchildren, forced them to prove their identity in their own land, threw their school bags away, and hurled abusive words at them. Recalling that time, he writes, "Young men in their thousands had crossed the LoC to receive arms training in camps run by the Pakistani Army and its spy wing, Inter-Services Intelligence (ISI). I was too young to take such a life-turning decision then, of fighting the State with a gun in my hand. All my hands could handle well were a cricket ball and bat, as an off-spinning all-rounder, and a pen, which I hoped to put to good use in the years to come."

Mr Geelani writes about the political aspirations of his own people. This is a position of great responsibility. He does not collapse various shades and extremes of opinion but engages with them carefully, unveiling layers to which non-Kashmiris may find difficult to

relate in the absence of local knowledge about the social ecosystem in which resistance plays itself out. He notes the prevalence of pro-Pakistan sentiment in the valley but also points out how Pakistan has appropriated the Kashmiri independence struggle by sending in Islamist militants, thus inviting speculation about possible links with Daesh. He laments the hardships faced by Kashmiri Pandits who had to seek refuge in camps in Jammu and elsewhere.

"The problem is that very few Pandits or Muslims acknowledge the pain and suffering the other has endured...Voices that have dared to rise above ideological and religious differences to acknowledge pain as pain, without making any attempt to quantify or reduce it to a mere number game, are rare," he writes. He has little faith in the leadership of the Abdullahs and Muftis but that does not diminish his hopes for Kashmir. "Can Srinagar become a bridge of friendship between Islamabad and Delhi, and not a bone of

contention? Can someone make it happen, instead of waiting for things to happen? Who will extend the hand of friendship? Who will reciprocate? Will Srinagar produce such a statesman?"

This book was published before the abrogation of Article 370. As restrictions on movement are relaxed, and phone lines are restored, more Kashmiri voices will be heard. What forms of resistance might emerge to meet the demands of the present moment? What kinds of solidarities might shape up across movements? What role will the Kashmiri diaspora play? The answers could take a while to come, and perhaps the next edition of Mr Geelani's book will give readers more to chew on.

KASHMIR: Rage And Reason Gowhar Geelani Rupa, 288 pages, ₹395





NEGOTIATING BREXIT
Prime Minister of United Kingdom, Boris Johnson

Time is very short. But the UK is ready to move quickly, and, given the degree of common ground already, I hope the EU will be ready to do likewise

Raising deficit by cutting tax rates is OK, go for it!

If exemptions done away with, move won't lead to major revenue losses, and lower tax rates will spur compliance

FINITIAL REPORTS on the Direct Taxes Code (DTC) panel report are anything to go by—the report is not yet public—there will be sizeable relief for the middle and upper-middle classes as well as for corporate India, where a flat 25% rate appears to have been recommended; and, it appears, the rates will be the same for Indian and foreign firms, along with a branch profit remittance tax for the latter. What is not clear, and this is critical, is when the report's recommendations will be implemented; keep in mind, the 25% corporate tax was something first promised by Arun Jaitley in 2015, but the promise was never kept for the bigger firms; and while 25% was the prevalent rate then, several countries like Vietnam have further lowered taxes for foreign investors, so while a cut in tax rates will be welcome, India may still have higher tax rates than competitor countries.

Also, 25% has to be the all-inclusive rate, there cannot be—as there is now further cesses on this, on top of which you have the CSR'tax' of two%. If the lower corporation tax is accompanied by a replacement of the DDT with a tax on dividends in the hands of the shareholders, for instance, by way of a dividend withholding tax, it would remove the double taxation that the current DDT structure results in. It is not clear what the DTC panel has recommended on various exemptions and rebates that are allowed now, but if these are done away with—as seems logical—funding the lower tax rate may not be too difficult; to the extent this does cause the deficit to rise, this can be made up by compressing expenditure, though a slightly higher deficit due to a tax cut could be termed a good deficit as it will raise compliance.

It is not clear what exactly has been suggested for personal income taxes, but the top tax of 30% comes in too early at an income of ₹10 lakh; the earlier DTC had recommended this be raised to ₹20 lakh and that was a long time ago; the top rate will also fall if corporate tax rates fall to 25%. It is not certain if the new DTC suggests doing away with all exemptions and rebates like 80C and D, but their presence makes it easier for tax avoidance; the absence of exemptions will also make filing taxes easier. The structure of taxes also invites tax avoidance: after a zero tax for those earning up to $\stackrel{?}{\sim}$ 1 lakh, for instance, the tax rate jumps to 20.8% for those in the ₹5-20 lakh income bracket; so, anyone whose income is even a few lakh over ₹5 lakh will find ways to try and lower their taxable income. Also, while finance minister Nirmala Sitharaman hopes to earn around ₹12,000 crore more with her rich-surcharge, she will earn more from greater compliance with lower tax rates. While just 81,344 individuals reported earnings of more than ₹1 crore, the latest all-India income survey by research agency Price estimates the number of those earning over ₹1 crore at around 6.4 lakh in FY16; while Price estimates there are 11.6 lakh persons who earn ₹50-100 lakh a year, just 1.4 lakh persons declared this to be their income in FY16. A 20% hike in the number of crorepatis declaring their incomes—assume an average income of ₹2.5 crore if the tax rate is slashed to 25% will, for instance, still lead to ₹50,000-55,000 crore additional collections even after accounting for the loss in revenues from the existing taxpayers paying at a lower rate. The budget's higher taxes—including on FPIs—did considerable damage to consumer/investor sentiment, so the government should use the DTC report to fix this and usher in a lower-tax regime at the earliest.

Vote for Aadhaar

Linking Election ID to Aadhaar can make voting portable

S IN ALL elections in the past, the last general elections, too, saw allegations of voter fraud as well as instances of the Election Commission (EC) bungling. So, just before the elections, the YSR Congress Party alleged that there were 59 lakh fake entries in the voter rolls for Andhra Pradesh; that's a massive 16% of the electorate. In the case of Telangana, it was the EC that felt the rolls were fake and struck off 27 lakh names. In other cases, such as in the case of former CII President Shobhana Kamineni, bona fide residents found their names struck off the voters' list. The EC has, in this context, done well to ask for amendments in the Representation of People Act to allow linking of Aadhaar with voter IDs. According to a report in *The Indian Express*, EC has written to the law secretary asking for making Aadhaar linking legal, while also accommodating those who cannot furnish Aadhaar cards or do not have an Aadhaar number. Although the EC had started Aadhaar-seeding of voter IDs to eliminate fake cards way back in 2015, and had linked 38 crores voter IDs before the Supreme Court ruled against the linking. Aadhaar-linking, should this happen, will, in the words of the EC, "pave the way for exploring the use of technology for voting and verification of voter identity in the future".

Besides, rooting out fake voter IDs, Aadhaar can find further uses to curb voter fraud. If Electronic Voting Machines (EVMs) can be linked to the Aadhaar database, and a feedback loop is designed in such a way, it could be possible to ensure that there is no duplicate voting; an Aadhaar verification, as is done for drawing rations, could ensure that there is no fake voting. Besides, it also opens up the possibility of making voting truly portable, where a migrant worker from Bihar can cast his vote—for his MLA or MP in Bihar—at any election centre while working in Delhi; once Aadhaar is used to ensure that all voter IDs are genuine, with appropriate checks, there is no reason why e-voting can't be made possible. With many companies having adopted this, via use of blockchain, even countries can do the same. For a country where losing political parties never tire of making the same allegations of EVM fraud from time to time, though, even talking of this could be premature.

SettingSCORE

Khayyam's music wove intensity into words in a manner that is perhaps impossible to replicate

HE MOST AN artist can hope for is that their legacy transcends epochs. But, timelessness is an honour history bestows only a few, such is the rarity of artistic genius that imbues art with the ability to evoke awe and admiration even generations after its debut. Mohammed Zahur Hashmi, popularly known, in the Hindi music industry, as Khayyam, or Khayyam sa'ab, in deference to his calibre as a music composer, belonged to that elite breed assured of immortality. Khayyam died Monday, aged 92, in Mumbai, battling serious illnesses over a mericfully short period. If the lyrics gave Kabhi kabhi mere dil mein from Kabhie Kabhie (1976), and In aankhon ki masti from Umrao Jaan (1981) both albums won him Filmfare Awards for Best Music—the exalted standing of poetry, the music that Khayyam set these songs to makes them immortal. Khayyam's four-decade-long career birthed compositions that can only be described as sublime. Born in the Punjab of British India, Khayyam received training in classical Indian music under Pandit Amarnath, and assisted Baba Chishti, before moving to Mumbai to make his debut with *Heer Ranjha* in 1948.

The Padma Bhushan recipient worked with some of the biggest names in Hindi music—his first big break, in 1950, came from a song sung by Mohammed Rafi; he regularly set Sahir Ludhianvi's words to music; it was Khayyam's songs that established Asha Bhonsle, more famous till then for her fast-paced numbers, as a serious singer; and Kishore Kumar, Mukesh, and Lata Mangeshkar regularly gave voice to his compositions. The magic of Khayyam's melodies came, in large part, from their uniqueness, highlighted by his use of classical Indian sounds—at a time when his contemporaries were experimenting with Western ones—to weave intensity into words. That genius perhaps will be impossible to replicate.

URBANISATION DIVIDEND

WITH GROWTH INCREASINGLY DEPENDENT ON STATE SPENDING, INDIA WILL ONLY REALISE ITS ECONOMIC POTENTIAL WHEN STATES URBANISE SUSTAINABLY TO RISE OUT OF POVERTY

Urbanise India to push poverty out

USTAINABLE URBANISA-TION CAN mobilise India's potential. The world is at 55.3% urbanisation on average, whereas India lags at 34%. A detailed analysis in our previous article (bit.ly/319wUCb) demonstrates that keeping a majority of India's population in villages has resulted in high inequity. India must systematically urbanise and provide mass-employment to its large population in highgrowth sectors like industry and services.

The question of whether we can grow enough food with a reduced agriculture workforce is answered by studying other countries. World Bank data shows that with only 1.3% of its workforce in farms, the US produces enough food to feed double its population. In 2017, median farming household income was \$75,994, which exceeded the \$61,372 US household median. China, with 27% of its workforce involved in farming, produces 500 million tonnes of food every year with less arable land than India. India, in comparison, produces 290 million tonnes of food with a 43% agriculture workforce when 20% would suffice. With higher yield and productivity, a smaller agriculture workforce will earn comparably with industry and services.

The case for urbanisation is evident when we examine state-wise data. The accompanying graphic shows urban percentage, per-capita GSDP, higher education Gross Enrolment Ratio (GER), and Total Fertility Rate (TFR) for representative states. GER is an indicator of human capital development; crucial for highgrowth sectors like services. TFR indicates whether a population is shrinking or expanding and is vital to policy planning, as discussed in the article (bit.ly/2MtXsLY). Urbanisation data from the 2011 census must be re-examined with the 2021 census. Nevertheless, there is a clear correlation between urbanisation and prosperity.

States in the South-West zones are more urbanised, all above the 31% all-India average. These states also have low TFR, considerably below the national average of 2.18. Low fertility and high GER has resulted in better educated, smaller populations that are earning more than their northern counterparts. Urbanisation is driving this trend urbanisation aggregates human activity, enabling specialisation and productivity improvements. It boosts economic prosperity, which reflects in the leading percapita GSDP figures of these states. In 2011-12, already these states had higher per-capita GSDP—with Andhra Pradesh on the low end at ₹77,000 and Maharashtra with the highest at ₹1.13 lakh.In six years, these figures have doubled.



Tamil Nadu (TN) has India's highest GER, at 48.6, and one of the lowest TFRs, at 1.7. In 2011 itself, we can see TN is most urbanised at 48.4%, with an already-high GER of 40. No other big Indian state attained a GER of 40 even in 2017-18. Rapid urbanisation has boosted TN's enrollment in higher education. However, regressive focus on caste politics has taken away from growth. Though TN had the secondhighest per-capita GSDP in 2011-12, growth is lower compared to states like Karnataka and Telangana, which are driven by services. The TN government must converge on using high GER and urbanisation to drive its strong industry legacy and build a large services sector.

Karnataka is an intriguing case. With one of the highest per-capita GDPs at ₹2 lakh in 2017-18 and a reasonably high urban percentage at 38%, a reality check indicator is its lower GER of 27.8. Data from RBI and the Economic Survey show 60% of Karnataka's GDP comes from Bengaluru and the services sector—driven by IT and other technological drivers. As analysed in our article (bit.ly/2GAaSk6), a majority of the specialised workforce comes from elsewhere. Like most southern states, TFR is low; but, the state sees significant immigration. Despite its large services sector, by defocusing on human capital, Kar-

nataka's government is placing natives

in an unfortunate situation of being unable to compete for the best jobs in their state. Karnataka must focus on urbanisation and development of human capital to remedy this, which will further boost the state's impressive growth trajectory.

Gujarat is another u high urbanisation at 43 than-average GER of 2 steady growth and high pe of ₹2 lakh are driven by it industry sector, which acco than half of GVA. High de industry, and not service tribute only 35% of Gujarat's growth will start when automation and oth in.With a TFR of 2.03, Gu tion downturn is not as s ern states. Without the de human capital, Gujarat is in danger of lagging in the future. The answer to this is investing in higher education and building a strong services sector to complement its industry.

Punjab stands out among northern states. It boasts a high urban percentage (37.5%), high GER (30.3) in 2017-18, and one of the lowest TFRs (1.62). Despite this, Punjab still relies heavily on agriculture; its services and industrial output is lower than that of southern states. With indicators of high urbanisation, high GER and low population

six years. Now, policies to boost output
with labour-intensive industries (LIIs)
and services to provide formal employ-
ment can increase growth.
Bihar is a troubling case study on the
effects of low urbanisation and human
capital. Only 11.3% of the population is
urban. GER is the lowest in India and
hardly growing—from 12.5 to 13 in six
years. Per-capita GSDP is lowest, at
₹42,000 in 2017-18. Despite having fer-
tile land, Bihar's agriculture sector can-
not grow because it is disorganised with
a large number of dependents. With
India's highest TFR—3.41—Bihar's

growth, Punjab can easily make the tran-

sition to a high-growth economy focused

East zones mostly have low urbanisation

and low GER. The lack of urbanisation

has resulted in a shortage of industry and

services sectors and low per-capita GDP.

The populations in these states will keep

growing in the foreseeable future, indi-

cated by higher TFRs. Without employ-

ment options in high-growth sectors,

these large populations cannot rely on

agriculture or industry alone for growth.

Services are a must. Uttar Pradesh has

made a valiant effort to develop human

capital—GER rose from 17.4 to 25.9 in

Other states in the North-Central-

on services, with the right policies.

provide mass employment. It is clear that every state—irrespective of prosperity or geographical location—is diverse. We are now in an era where the role of the Centre is increasinglylimited, and state spending is growing. Each state must evaluate its economy-workforce distribution, sectoral contribution, demographics, formal employment, higher education and spe-

cialisation, unique growth drivers—and

set a development plan.

expanding population is condemned to

a sub-aspirational existence due to the

state's stagnant economy. Bihar needs

special attention from the Centre, with

focused schemes to organise the agricul-

tural industry, urbanise and educate the

masses, and provide mass employment

through LIIs. Madhya Pradesh has set a

good example here by prioritising agrar-

ian growth as well as instituting LIIs to

Maharashtra CM Devendra Fadnavis has taken the lead here by setting a far sighted vision of a \$1 trn economy by 2025 to match PM Narendra Modi's \$5 trn goal. It remains to be seen how Maha rashtra will back this vision up with policy changes. Similarly, we need CMs of each state to evaluate and execute a longterm plan and vision for their state. India can only realise its true potential as a topthree economy when every state rises out of poverty-and into prosperitythrough sustainable urbanisation and

		Urban %	Per-ca	oita GDP	GE	R	TFR
Zones	14	2011 Census	2011-12	2017-18	2011-12	2017-18	2013-1
NORTH- CENTRAL	Uttar Pradesh	22.3%	35,917	62,291	17.4	25.9	2.7
	Rajasthan	24.9%	62,907	1,11,539	18.2	21.7	2.4
	Madhya Pradesh	27.6%	43,082	93,491	18.5	21.2	2.3
	Punjab	37.5%	95,379	1,55,816	23.0	30.3	1.6
EAST	Jharkhand	24.0%	45,318	69,534	9.9	18	2.5
	Odisha	16.7%	54,708	92,726	16.6	22	2.0
	Bihar	11.3%	23,525	42,242	12.5	13	3.4
	West Bengal	31.9%	56,693	1,04,750	13.6	18.7	1.7
SOUTH	Tamil Nadu	48.4%	1,03,600	1,86,125	40.0	48.6	1.7
	Andhra Pradesh	33.4%	76,997	1,57,495	29.9	30.9	1.8
	Telangana	33.4%	1,00,732	1,98,577	29.9	35.7	1.7
	Karnataka	38.7%	98,568	1,99,875	23.8	27.8	1.8
WEST	Maharashtra	45.2%	1,13,154	2,05,499	26.3	31.1	1.8
	Gujarat	42.6%	1,01,075	2,00,244	16.5	20.1	2.0
-	All-India	31.2%	72,187	1,31,698	20.8	25.8	2.1

FDA's new graphic cigarette labels

The new warning labels are significantly less graphic than the originals, but they are plenty disturbing nonetheless

CANANEW regulation be something to celebrate? If it stands to save lives, absolutely. Here is one that does: the Food and Drug Administration's new proposal requiring warnings, including graphic images, on cigarette packages and in cigarette advertisements. The regulation, now out for a 60-day comment period, also appears to fix the problems that hobbled previous attempts to mandate graphic cigarette warnings.

It has been 10 years since Congress first directed the FDA to require graphic warnings, and that job was supposed to be done by mid-2011. The FDA duly aimed to meet the deadline, proposing labels that were indeed graphic. (As administrator of the Office of Information and Regulatory Affairs at the time, I helped oversee that process.) But the tobacco companies convinced a federal court that, by compelling speech, the FDA's regulation violated their First Amendment rights. Importantly, the court did not say Congress lacked the power to mandate graphic warnings. It ruled more narrowly that the FDA had not provided sufficient evidence that its warnings would substantially cut US smoking rates—either by discouraging people from starting to smoke or by encouraging smokers to quit.

For reasons that remain unclear, Barack Obama's administration did not seek an alternative way to comply with Congress's direction. And Americans continued to die from smoking-related

causes at the rate of 480,000/year (12X) as many as die from gun-related causes). Finally, the Campaign for Tobacco-Free Kids (which is supported by Bloomberg Philanthropies), the American Cancer Society, the American Lung Association and several other organisations sued the FDA for failing to carry out the 2009 law. And last September, a federal district court ordered the agency to get to work.

The newwarning labels that resulted are significantly less graphic than the originals, but they are plenty disturbing nonetheless. To smokers and would-be smokers, they vividly portray what cigarettes can do to the human body. And the FDA is now providing a new justification for them—one that should much reduce the risk of further legal challenge. Rather than insist that the labels will directly cut smoking rates, the agency says they will promote "a greater understanding of the negative health consequences".

The text-only warnings that have been displayed on cigarette packs and ads since 1984, the FDA argues, are inadequate: Many people, including adolescents, "do not see or read, and do not remember" them, or give them much thought. Pictorial warnings, in contrast, heighten attention and awareness, and thus increase smokers' knowledge about health outcomes, including stroke and cancer. Employing focus groups, individual interviews and online research panels, the FDA tested various textual and graphic warnings, and homed in on

the kinds that best attract attention and are most likely to be remembered. "Smoking can harm your children," for example, made the cut.

CASS R SUNSTEIN

Like any agency issuing a new regulation, the FDA also had to quantify the benefits and costs of the new rule, and show that the former justify the latter. The agency found that for the tobacco industry, the annual expense of adopting, designing, rotating and advertising the various labels will be in the vicinity of \$110 million—a reasonable estimate.

As for benefits, the agency acknowledges that they "are difficult to quantify." The reason is simple: When you are aiming to increase public understanding rather than reduce illness and death, it is hard to assess monetary savings. So, as agencies often do in such situations, the FDA undertook a "break-even analysis," by which it asks how great the benefits would have to be in order to justify the costs. It noted that if the benefits of graphic warnings were as low as \$0.01 per pack, they would be worthwhile. Surely, greater public understanding of the health risks of smoking is worth at least a penny a pack.

The FDA's new label requirement is set to be finalised in March. Let us hope the agency meets that deadline—and that cigarette makers have the good sense to stay out of court this time.

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

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

human capital development.

Shooting skills

Apropos of "Back to Hindu rate of growth", Aug 20, PV Narasimha Rao can be largely credited with the orbital shift in the rate of growth of our economy. He must also be simultaneously credited with achieving the nation's improved pre-eminence in foreign relations. Dr Manmohan Singh, an economist, during his stint as prime minister, sustained and improved upon the growth indices. But, his tenure had meagre contributions in global management and diplomacy. Modiji earnestly climbed the development plank only to step onto ideological crusades of many hues. Economy was led with great intentions but the needed reforms were sporadic, isolated and loosely stitched. Private investment and employment, and manufacturing index have dipped rapidly. Sharp shooting in politics and diplomacy can, at best, hit the outer rings of the target board of economic growth, never the bull's eye. — R Narayanan, Mumbai

Ban guns in J&K

Any place of humans should plant trees of prosperity not violence. Unrest and happy development can't go together anywhere. Enough of the inhuman dirty life; real human life is constructive and development oriented.

— Sandhya Murthy, Hyderabad

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FINANCIAL EXPRESS



ILLUSTRATION: ROHNIT PHORE

The share of bulk

deposits (₹1 crore

& above) in banks'

total deposits was

32-38% in the

period between

March 2016 and

March 2018. We

believe currently it

is around 30%





Time for benchmarking bulk deposit rates of banks?

Such benchmarking could protect the interest of retail savers and help the system achieve quicker transmission. Banks would be comfortable if bulk deposits are floating rates and would be more willing to pass on as well, by having repo-linked loans. Since no bank can do it alone, it needs to be an RBI decision for the implementation to happen

HE RESERVE BANK of India (RBI) has deregulated the interest rate structure and has moved from the prime lending rate (PLR) to base rate to the marginal cost of funds-based lending rate (MCLR) for better transmission. Recently, RBI has been pushing banks to benchmark loans to an external benchmark, as conspicuous trans-

mission is not happening. Until now, the transmission has been slow, even though this is the fourth rate cut in a row-the policy rate is down from 6.25% in February 2019 to 5.4% now. During the same period, banks have, on an average, transmitted around 40 basis points through their MCLR, with public sector banks transmitting more than private sector banks.

The case of the State Bank of India (SBI) is bit different. Due to the linking of savings bank deposits with balances above Rs 1 lakh and short-term loans (cash credit accounts and overdrafts with limits above Rs 1 lakh) to the repo rate, the SBI floor rate (repo-linked lending rate, or RLLR) for short-term loans has declined from 8.5% (at the time of announcement of linking) to 7.65% (a whopping reduction of 85 basis points), effective from September

1, 2019. The SBI has also introduced a repo-linked home loan product.

However, to be fair, for external benchmarking it is not possible for banks to only link the asset side of the balance sheet as it will create ALM (asset and liability management) mismatch—as close to 35% of bank liabilities are savings bank deposits. Further, banks are also not able to link external benchmark to the entire liabilities (especially time deposits), as the floating term

deposits are not accepted by Indian depositors and have already been unsuccessfully experimented by some peer banks in India.

Therefore, the key to effective transmission, we believe, is adjusting either savings bank deposits or time deposits. Savings bank deposits typically serve the transaction needs of the depositor. The option is always available with the customer to transfer the surplus savings bank deposit balance to time deposits. However, the problem is that it cannot be done in isolation by any one bank, and must be

enforced by the regulator. The best option for us is to link the bulk deposits within time deposits to an external benchmark/floating rate. In India, single rupee deposits of Rs 2 crore and above (since February 2019, earlier it was Rs 1 crore and above) are considered as bulk deposits, and banks have the discretion to offer differential rate

of interest on bulk deposits as per their requirements and ALM projections. The share of bulk deposits (Rs 1 crore and above) in banks' total deposits was in the range of 32-38% in the period between March 2016 and March 2018. This was more than 40% in some fiscal years also, but with the revision of definition we believe that this share is currently around 30% of total deposits. Needless to say, most of the bulk deposits are from institutions.

It is, therefore, logical that large institutions could afford to take interest rate risk as this would spare the retail depositors from taking the same. Specifically, with India currently aiming towards becoming a \$5-trillion economy, it is imperative that the interest rate derivative market expands. Just to put it in a different way, currently, all kinds of risks—be these FX, credit or rates—are all largely warehoused in the banking system itself, and with the economy growing, we must diversify this risk across the financial market at arm's length.

However, most importantly, such benchmarking could protect the interest of retail savers and help the system achieve quicker transmission. We believe that banks would be comfortable if bulk deposits are floating rates and would be more willing to pass on as well, by having repo-linked loans (as their spreads get locked with more stability in the net interest margins). Since no bank can do it alone and sail through, it needs to be an RBI decision for the implementation to happen. It is, in fact, pertinent to initiate a discussion on this.

It may also be noted that, in India, interests on deposits are an important source of income for many, particularly rural and middle class segments. For example, savings bank interest income currently constitutes 1.8% of the private final consumption expenditure (PFCE) of individuals. However, interest incomes on time deposits are nearly 10% of PFCE, and hence any effort to go beyond savings bank deposits and subsequently linking time deposits with market rates could introduce a significant spike in the consumption patterns of individuals. This could also result in a concomitant decline in income velocity of money, as it could then be used more for precautionary purposes. This is not desirable for eco-

> nomic activity, though. Even as transmission remains a challenge, we believe that banks can reduce deposit rates and align the real deposit rates that are as high as 4.45%. Our estimates suggest that bank deposit rates remain the largest constraining factor in rate transmission. For example, a 100 basis point cut in deposit rates could result in 45-50 basis point reduction in lending rates. However, in a developing country like India,

cutting deposit rates always remains a challenge, given that a large populace of senior citizens depends on interest income from deposits as a source of livelihood.

Interestingly, contrary to popular belief, small savings rates are not a large constraining factor as incremental small savings collections are merely 11% of incremental deposits.

Finally, interest rates offered on deposits in India are demography-agnostic (barring the separate rate for senior citizens) by regulation. However, going forward, in our view, RBI could consider an age-wise interest rate structure, with rates linked to long-term bank deposit rates till a certain age group, and offering a higher-than-market rate over that age group. This could, in one go, serve the multiple purposes of (1) ensuring a lower lending rate structure, (2) adequate returns for senior citizens, (3) lower interest expenditure, and (4) an alternative to floating rate deposits.

HOMEBUYERS' RIGHTS A halfway house

SHLOK CHANDRA

The author is an advocate practising in NCLT

Those at the bottom of the real estate pyramid shouldn't start celebrating, yet

N 2018, THE Centre pushed through a major amendment to Section 5(8)(f) of the Insolvency and Bank-

ruptcy Code, 2016. An 'explanation' was added to that

section with effect from June 6, 2018, which allowed

homebuyers to be treated as financial creditors and allowed them to approach the National Company Law Tribunal (NCLT) in case of default by real estate developers in handing over units. Thousands of homebuyers got relief from the NCLT in the ensuing months. But the joy for homeowners was short-lived, as the amendment to the IBC was stayed by the Supreme Court in the Pioneer Urban Land and Infrastructure Limited vs Union of India case in January 2019. The strength of the NCLT as a forum was the speed at which relief could be obtained by homebuyers. Builders who did not want to lose control of their companies and believed in the inherent commercial viability of their projects soon entered into out-of-court settlements with homebuyers,

with a range of customised agreements, such as refund of interest, waiver of part cost, etc. Now, in a judgment delivered on August 9, 2019, the Supreme Court cleared the dark clouds hanging over the fate of homebuyers and affirmed the constitutional validity of the amendment to Section 5(8)(f). In addition, it has mandated that the Real Estate (Regulation and Development) Act and IBC have to coexist. In the event of a clash, RERA is to give precedence to IBC.

The Supreme Court also clarified it would be open to the developer to put forth its defence that the homebuyer is himself a 'defaulter' or a speculative investor, and not a person who is genuinely interested in purchasing a flat/house. These are bona fide observations by the apex court to allay developer fears that a floodgate of litigation would be opened. The subject would have been well-served had the court elaborated on these points and set out clear guidelines in this regard. Nevertheless, it is a matter of time before the court is called upon to adjudicate in detail on these issues. In the light of the safeguards set out in the *Pioneer Urban*

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Land judgment, it remains to be seen if a minor default in payment of an instalment by the homebuyer would be sufficient ground to disentitle the homebuyer from seeking remedy before the NCLT. Hopefully, the NCLT will examine the payment history to determine whether the homebuyer can be deemed a 'defaulter'.

It also remains to be seen how the NCLT would cope with the deluge of cases that could potentially be filed before it by disgruntled homebuyers. The Supreme Court has adjudicated that homebuyers can

pursue their remedies simultaneously before consumer courts, RERA and the NCLT. It has also directed that states in which RERA is not operational should operationalise RERA within three months, and vacancies of NCLT members are also to be filled up within three months.

Homebuyers would be advised not to rush to the NCLT in all cases. Where construction is ongoing and building work has not come to a standstill, homebuyers could approach the NCLT with the expectation of out-of-court settlement. They should factor in the fact that upon initiation of the corporate insolvency resolution process, there is a 180-day moratorium on institution of new legal proceedings or continuation of existing suits or proceedings. Developers in serious financial strife may be relieved to get a 180-day moratorium from paying off their debts and initiation of the corporate insolvency resolution process, and may want to get a troublesome monkey off their back. Thus, things are not all that rosy for homebuyers in projects where developers are in genuine financial strife—the path remains hazy. The government may consider the feasibility of compulsory insurance of real estate projects and a central levy on real estate transactions whose proceeds can be made available to entities (for example, NBCC) nominated to salvage real estate projects that have run into trouble, albeit without an ele-

ment of fraud or diversion of funds. The Supreme Court has passed a strong judgment in the interest of homebuyers. But much work remains to deliver solace to those at the bottom of the real estate pyramid.

NE OF THE most effective and under-acknowledged schemes of the government that has the potential to significantly reduce air pollution is the Pradhan Mantri Ujjwala Yojana, which provides clean LPG cooking gas to first-time users to in an attempt to replace chulhas that use traditional fuels and biomass for cooking. By next month, Ujjwala will have met its revised target of providing 8 crore deposit-free LPG connections to women whose family income falls below the poverty line, up from the initial 5 crore—bringing 95% of households across 715 districts under its coverage.

This is an extraordinary achievement. But the government has made one big mistake in the most basic of premises while implementing Ujjwala. By making this about providing cooking gas to those who don't have it, without strongly focusing on the health benefit of cooking with clean fuel in a targeted way, it has not only lost a big opportunity for long-terms gains in increasing LPG use through uptake of refill cylinders, but has also lost the political advantage of positive publicity it could have harvested in highlighting how it is tackling air pollution at a national level.

By focusing on increasing access versus increased use by new beneficiaries, the government is missing out on key benefits of such a programme. The data shows that although 7.75 crore new connections have been given to first-time users at subsidised rates until August 2019, the actual uptake of LPG hasn't risen concomitantly. This means that people are accepting new LPG

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Clean air for all

Despite its success, the Pradhan Mantri Ujjwala Yojana is yet to be acknowledged as an efficient strategy to reduce air pollution

JYOTI PANDE **LAVAKARE**

The author is co-founder, Care for Air (careforair.org)

This data divergence can be explained by the fact that while the first cylinder is free, subsequent cylinders need to be paid for, which BPL users are likely to find challenging, especially if the alternative remains free biomass like wood or cow dung. To understand this is fairly simple. The cost of anything when you compare it to 'free' is always higher. Unless a direct benefit of using higher-cost fuel is demonstrated—like better health for family people may switch to a free LPG connection on paper, but will continue to use free or low-cost biomass to burn for heating and cooking purposes when they have to pay out of pocket for a refill.

connections, but not using, or not refilling.

If the government had emphasised health benefits of using clean cooking gas while giving out free connections, it would have been easier to drive behavioural change. If it had especially focused on improved health of women, the government would have been able to claim the credit for improved health of an entire voting demographic, while ensuring better re-uptake of cylinders. This could easily have been done if the health ministry had been co-opted to collaborate with Ujjwala's nodal petroleum ministry and the messaging targeted towards health benefits of cooking with clean fuel.

Strategically, this is important since as many as seven independent studies have



Household biomass burning first affects its immediate users, usually women in rural kitchens (just as stubble burning first impacts the health of farm-

ers). By adding to the overall pollution load of PM 2.5, it also affects the health of the rest of us who use clean fuel for indoor energy use. Exposure to household air pollutants at source is estimated to result in about 8 lakh premature deaths in India. By adding a 30% pollution load to outdoor air, indoor household pollutants result in roughly 3 lakh additional premature deaths. As the CCAPC recommends, it "should be one of the pillars of India's pollution control efforts."

An enlightened government would focus even more on universal access to cleaner fuels like LPG, while encouraging increased usage by emphasising health benefits, thus making it a signature pro-

gramme that promotes not only social justice, but also environmental justice. However, all is not lost.

By making this more about better health and less about free/subsidised connections, the PMO can still claim credit for tackling air pollution at a national level especially since it increasingly being recognised as a public health emergency. And what better time to do this than on the

Independence Day?

For that, the government must make new LPG beneficiaries aware that cooking with clean fuel directly benefits their health, not just increasing productivity, but also bringing down medical bills. This will encourage those who have been given subsidised connections to continue using LPG even as the cost of replenishing LPG cylinders remains higher than cow dung cakes or wood. This won't be hard to do if the government is able to co-opt the health ministry into this strategy. Its rural health and ASHA workers can demonstrate the connection between the nagging cough a woman keeps coming back with and the fuel she is using at home. Also, signages at rural LPG stations can make this connection between smoke and ill-health more direct. Together, this will lead to an actual increase in the use of LPG and drive behavioural change.

Ujjwala is an excellent policy for reducing national air pollution levels and bringing down premature deaths. However, it is essential to not just bring the last 5% of the households into the clean cooking and heating fuel net, but also to ensure existing users don't fall back into biomass use.



— Omar Khayyam

The Indian EXPRESS

∽ FOUNDED BY ∽ RAMNATH GOENKA

BECAUSE THE TRUTH INVOLVES US ALL

SPENDING LIMITS

Centre needs to re-evaluate its expenditure priorities. States should have the autonomy to decide on theirs

N ARGUMENT HAS been made, most recently by Bibek Debroy, chairman of the Prime Minister's Economic Advisory Council, in an interview to this paper, for the creation of a body on the lines of the GST Council to oversee public expenditure in India. Given the limits of public spending owing to issues of fiscal consolidation, this argument goes, there is a need to rationalise and prioritise spending by the Centre and state governments. To be sure, there is a case for greater coordination in spending by different levels of government. But, in a federal architecture, shouldn't states have the autonomy to decide on their own spending priorities? It is debatable if setting up a new body to monitor public expenditure is a prudent approach to negotiating Centre-state relations.

The Seventh Schedule of the Constitution clearly lays out the separate as well as joint responsibilities of the central and state governments. But, over the years, successive governments have encroached on the space of states. Studies have shown that despite state governments accounting for around three-fourths of the total expenditure (Centre and states) in sectors such as agriculture, education and health, central government intervention in these areas has increased, leaving it in the peculiar position of not having enough funds for spending on items in the Union list such as defence. This has occurred even as the relative size of the central government has shrunk, while that of states (put together) has surged. This raises pertinent questions: First, if the Centre wants greater resources for spending on items in the Union list, shouldn't it draw back on its expenditure on items in the state list and re-orient its spending? Second, in a federal system, shouldn't states have the freedom to decide on their expenditure priorities in line with their developmental needs?

Moves such as these, seen in tandem with the Centre asking the Finance Commission to sequester resources for defence and internal security, are bound to raise anxieties over India's federal architecture vis a vis the government's centralising impulses. It might be seen as an attempt by the Centre to grab even more space at the expense of the states. State governments have already ceded part of their taxation powers with the shift to GST — they may resist yielding to the Centre on items falling exclusively in their domain. Part of the problem is that India does not have robust institutions to negotiate Centre-state relations. Rather than setting up an expenditure council, perhaps a better alternative to mediate intergovernmental relations, one which reflects the federal nature of the polity, is the Inter-State Council. Set up in 1990, following the recommendations of the Sarkaria Commission, the primary duty of the Inter-State Council is to investigate and discuss subjects where the states and the Union have a common interest. Rejuvenating this council — its last meeting was held three years ago — should ideally be the first step.

UNCERTAINTY AHEAD

Despite an imminent US-Taliban 'peace agreement', no light is visible at the end of the long Afghan tunnel

HE BOMBING OF a wedding party in Kabul that killed 63 people and wounded nearly 200 last week, and the August 19 string of bombings in Jalalabad that left many people injured on the day Afghanistan marked its 100th independence day from British rule, are ominous signs: Despite an imminent "peace agreement" between the US and Taliban, there may be no light at the end of the long Afghan tunnel. The suicide attack on the wedding was claimed by ISIS. The Taliban condemned the attack, but there is little to differentiate between the two, not even the fact that the Taliban are negotiating a comeback deal with the the US. In the last seven months of talks, the Taliban have turned up the violence so much that there are only two explanations: They are maximising their hold in Afghanistan before a deal, leveraging their ability to commit violence in order to position themselves better for the negotiations; or, there is a rift between the leadership in talks with the US and Taliban fighters on the ground. President Ashraf Ghani was not wrong in saying in his independence day speech that it was the Taliban that had provided the platform for such violence.

The bombings come at a time when US special envoy Zalmay Khalilzad appears to have almost closed a deal for the withdrawal of American troops, which President Donald Trump wants completed before his re-election bid in 2020. In return, the minimum assurance the US has sought from the Taliban is that Afghan soil will not become a safe haven for terrorists, even though how and if the Taliban will or can keep that promise is not clear. A ceasefire and power-sharing talks with the Afghan government may or may not take place after US withdrawal.

Only one thing is certain: There is more uncertainty in Afghanistan today than there was even a year ago. The identification by ISIS of the suicide bomber as one of their Pakistani fighters underlines the dangers that confront Afghanistan. ISIS in the AfPak region is said to comprise breakaway groups from the Pakistani Taliban and disgruntled Afghan Taliban. Indian security agencies believe that Lashkar-e-Toiba and Jaish-e-Mohammed fighters are also present in Afghanistan. With fungible groups and crossborder havens, much of what unfolds in Afghanistan over the next two years and thereafter will depend on decisions made in Pakistan, the facilitator of the US-Taliban talks.

MUSIC OF THE SOUL

Composer Khayyam's oeuvre is a rare combination of originality and versatility

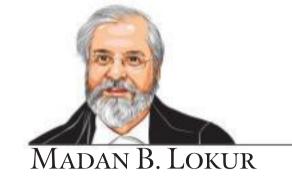
TH THE PASSING of music composer Khayyam, the country has lost one of its last musical composers from the golden era that included names such as Naushad, Anil Biswas, OP Nayyar and Shankar Jaikishen. What was special about Khayyam was originality of a kind one saw in few composers. And in that originality, steeped in his learning of Hindustani classical music, he showcased his versatility. No two songs are similar, even though so many are based on similar ragas. The compositions in Muzaffar Ali's *Umrao Jaan* (1981) are as melodious and soulful as those in Bazaar, Razia Sultan and Kabhie Kabhie.

In Umrao Jaan, in the famed pratham dhar dhyaan, Khayyam used different ragas such as Bhairay, Todi and Kedar to communicate the story of a young girl becoming a courtesan. The film resurrected ghazal as a genre in the 1980s. It's difficult to think that "inn aankhon ki masti ke" or "justuju jis ki thi" could exist in any other form. Every composition

from the Khayyam ouvre had one thing in abundance — soul. Then there was the song that merged the world of the poet with that of the composer. "Mana ke abhi tere mere armanon ki qeemat kuchh bhi nahi/ Mitti ka bhi hai kuchh mol magar/ Insanon ki qeemat kuchh bhi nahi/ Insanon ki izzat jab jhoote sikkon mein na toli jayegi/ Woh subah kabhi toh ayegi, woh subah kabhi toh ayegi" by Sahir Ludhianvi needed a tune that would let the words have the effect of a recitation, without being one. Khayyam turned to one of his favourite ragas — Yaman Kalyan. The song has stood the test of time. When composers such as RD Burman were turning to western sounds, Khayyam stood his ground to deliver songs with Hindustani music as the foundation. The melody-maker who managed to touch the most obscure corners of the heart will be remembered.

Justice delayed

Vacancies, adjournments, vacations are bogies. Time to identify real causes, find meaningful solutions



THE ECONOMIC SURVEY of 2017-18 and of 2018-19 provided new insights into traditional areas of judicial reform. These surveys, along with the World Bank's Ease of Doing Business of 2018 and 2019 debunked and also confirmed some myths associated with justice delivery. These four reports tell us that knee-jerk reactions do not work and the need is for systemic and structural reforms.

The government is the biggest litigant and the problem starts at the grass-roots. Therefore, government adjudicators performing quasi judicial functions or taking administrative decisions must improve the quality of their orders. Judgment writing is an art and it must be developed by the adjudicating authorities. Poorly drafted orders have resulted in contested tax revenues in the region of Rs 7.58 lakh crore as on March 31, 2017. This is equal to 4.7 per cent of the GDP and it is rising. The success rate in government litigation relating to tax is less than 30 per cent and, in some instances, goes down to 12 per cent and further, while litigation is increasing. Decision-making is often complex and putting down the reasons in an intelligible and logical form is challenging.

Roughly Rs 50,000 crore are locked up in stalled projects and investments are reducing. Both these complications have arisen because of injunctions and stay orders granted by the courts primarily due to poorly drafted and poorly reasoned orders. The Economic Survey points out that the only beneficiaries are lawyers who get about 31 per cent of the total claim.

Increasing the number of judges or criticising judicial activism is not a solution. About 87.54 per cent of the total pendency of cases is in the district courts where judicial activism does not exist. Let's not expend energy over a mere fraction of public interest litigation out of the remaining 13 per cent pendency. Increasing the number of judges is also not necessary. The Economic Survey states that in the district courts only 2,279 vacancies need to be filled up to achieve 100 per cent clearance rate and 2,580 posts can be left vacant. In the high courts, 93 vacancies need to be filled up to achieve 100 per cent clearance rate and 315 positions (roughly 30 per cent) can be left vacant. Sure,

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cent) can be left vacant.

if there are no vacancies, the clearance rate will increase dramatically, provided support staff is also provided. Increasing the number of judges has never reduced the pendency of cases.

But where is the money? Assuming that increasing judge strength and providing adequate staff does make a difference in the pendency figures, the fact is that the budget allocated to the judiciary is between 0.08 and 0.09 per cent of the GDP. Only four countries — Japan, Norway, Australia and Iceland have a lesser budget allocation and they

do not have any problem of pendency like we do. How do we define pendency? A case filed half an hour ago should not be counted in the pendency figures, as at present. For a start, let's decide (arbitrarily) that only cases pending for more than one year will be counted. This will make a substantial and realistic difference and introduce some sense in understanding figures.

Judges take too many holidays — really? District court judges work the same number of days as government officers — 242 days in a year. The annual average disposal of cases by each judge is 746. This is quite good considering that evidence has to be weighed and sifted in every trial. High court judges work for 212 days in a year but their annual average disposal is 2,348. How much harder should high court judges work when only 93 more are required to achieve 100 per cent clearance rate? Cutting down on holidays is not a realistic answer — better case and court management is key.

Case and court management are the most important areas which, unfortunately, have not been adverted to in the Economic Surveys. The Ease of Doing Business Report of the World Bank for 2018 and 2019 shows that the time taken to decide a case has remained static at 1,445 days. Why is that? The quality of judicial process (out of 18 points) has marginally increased from 10.3 in 2017 to 10.5 in 2018. Clearly, judicial process in India needs huge investment to bring about significant improvement. Fast track courts or special courts or increasing the number of judges are not viable solutions, but ad hoc measures. About 30 per cent of the life of a case is spent in something as simple as serv-

ice of notice. Will an increase in the number of courts or judges speed up the process? By way of a solution for expeditious service of notice and summons, the eCommittee of the Supreme Court launched a mobile application called National Service and Tracking of Electronic Processes (NSTEP). But it is seldom used, if at all.

A number of other tools have been provided to judges and the administrative staff through the eCourts Project of the Supreme Court. The sole aim is to make justice delivery more responsive to the needs of litigants. The latest is the launch of a Virtual Court in Delhi. Unfortunately, computerisation and automation are not being fully and effectively utilised by the high courts and district courts.

Yet another managerial solution that needs serious consideration was suggested by the 13th Finance Commission which introduced the concept of professional managers, an idea that has gained traction in the Economic Survey. However, when court managers were introduced in some of the courts, only a handful of chief justices took their engagement seriously, resulting in the experiment turning out to be a complete flop. In my view, court managers or equivalent professionals are the need of the hour and justice delivery can improve only if the courts accept and adopt professional help in their administration.

The usual suspects — vacancies, adjournments and vacations — are bogies and it is time we stop thinking about them and get down to identifying the causes of delays in our justice delivery system and providing meaningful solutions. The Economic Surveys have provided food for thought and we must digest it and have detailed discussions and debates, experiments and innovations, on a variety of proposals with a long-term perspective.

If we take up judicial reforms with seriousness, expeditious and effective justice can see the light of day and improve India's standing in the reports of the World Bank and other institutions and organisations that study judicial processes.

> The writer is a retired judge Supreme Court of India

MORE THAN A DAM

Sardar Sarovar Project should be completed to avail of the promised gains

Yoginder K Alagh

THE SARDAR SAROVAR Narmada Project (SSP) is showing substantial benefits although it has not been implemented the way it was designed. Activist NGOs agitated against closing the gates of the dam because this would flood the backwaters as the reservoir fills up. Some politicians have already given this a political hue although Madhya Pradesh Chief Minister Kamal Nath has maintained a dignified, studied silence.

This year, the onset of the kharif monsoon was delayed by over a month in Gujarat, causing much misery. Drinking water was scarce. The sown crop withered away and kharif area was at one time a tenth lower. By now the deficit is wiped out, but the losses are there in terms of non-preferred crops grown and loss of potential yield. The reservoir filling up has high socioeconomic benefits.

Memories of the original (SSP) plan dim and a number of exciting new alternatives are visualised. In a water scarce area, the possibilities are many. Given the passage of time, redesigning the plan is of some importance. New crops are possible. Scarcities change. Gujarat and Indian agriculture is now trade dominated. Resource-based planning is important to keep us anchored. A more serious reason for this caution is the fact that central

Gujarat has correctly stated that after the reservoir fills up, if water is still flowing into the dam, the largest main canal of the world will be used to take water to Saurashtra and will fill up the many small dams in the plateau. This was modelled as a benefit of the project in the original blue print of the SSNP in 1984.

resources have been an important part of financing the project. Resource-based planning is the only way of accessing them. The conditions of central assistance for the project are still as set up 25 years ago when it was approved by then Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi, who, after he was convinced of its merits, became a great supporter of the project. These may need review.

Gujarat has correctly stated that after the reservoir fills up, if water is still flowing into the dam, the largest main canal of the world will be used to take water to Saurashtra and will fill up the many small dams in the plateau. This was modelled as a benefit of the project in the original blueprint of the SSP in 1984. It has been said that some of the unique features built into the planning of the project are "concrete-lined canals to reduce conveyance losses, use of control volume concept for design of distribution systems, efficient water-use allocation with optimised crop planning for 13 different agro-climatic zones of the command, extensive irrigation to a 1,80,000 ha area... deepening of village tanks for borrowing soil for canal embankments, computerised automated operation of canal system, participatory irrigation management through water users associations, and promoting micro-irrigation systems like drip and sprinkler for efficient water use."

The benefits of the SSP project will be more when this is done. Without it, the coverage of beneficiaries is less; we must issue the SCADA contracts so that the largest number of farmers benefit. Mathematical models have been developed using the services of Indian consulting firms for the command area at different time stages. These need to be used.

There is some urgency to getting back to the original design configuration of the SSP plan. As long as upstream use of Narmada waters was not according to MP's full entitlements, Gujarat as the lower riverine state was entitled to all the water flowing down from the Sardar Sarovar Dam. This was more than the water which would be available as Gujarat's share when MP uses all its share. The SSP plan had anticipated all this.

The SSP plan is not cast in stone. Planning is meant to be a flexible business in its best variants. However, in some of the great social decisions, pursuit of objectives with tenacity is also a virtue not to be scoffed at. It is quite obvious that completion of the SSP plan is of great priority.

> The writer, a former Union minister, is an economist

INDIAN EXPRESS CHARAN SINGH RESIGNS

AUGUST 21, 1979, FORTY YEARS AGO

CHARAN GOVT RESIGNS CHARAN SINGH'S COALITION government, which was in office for 23 days, submitted its resignation this morning and advised the President to order fresh parliamentary elections. Soon after, Singh handed in his resignation to the President, the Leader of the Opposition Jagjivan Ram, met Sanjiva Reddy, and staked his claim to form the government. Ram opposed Singh's advice for dissolution of the Lok Sabha. The possibility of the president ultimately deciding to dissolve the Lok Sabha and order fresh elections in winter could not be ruled out.

No Indira Support CHARAN SINGH SAID in a statement that he had resigned as the prime minister of the

coalition government because he did not want support from Indira Gandhi who wanted him to withdraw certain cases against her relating to excesses during the Emergency. This is for the first time that Singh has said that Mrs Gandhi had attached conditions to her support to his government. Singh did not name Mrs Gandhi in the statement but his reference to the "authoritarian forces" and the "quarters which sought interference in the normal functioning of the judiciary" left no doubt as to whom he was referring. "The country would not have forgiven us if we had, for the sake of remaining in office, agreed to withdraw prosecutions against persons responsible for atrocities during Emergency," the statement read.

INDIRA GANDHI MET the President and reportedly asked for a mid-term poll as soon as possible. Earlier, during the day, the Congress-I Parliamentary Board discussed at

DEMAND FOR POLLS

two meetings whether the party should support Charan Singh's recommendation to the president that the Lok Sabha should be dissolved and a mid-term poll ordered. Before the Parliamentary Board met for the second time, Mrs Gandhi had met the party PCC chief and other state leaders who were in Delhi. According to Congress-I sources, they overwhelmingly voted for a mid-term poll. A R Antulay, Congress-I general secretary, told newsmen that the parliamentary board might meet again tonight, but the meeting did not come off.

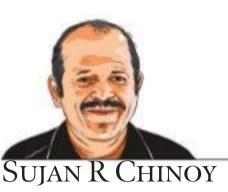
5 THE IDEAS PAGE

WHAT THE OTHERS SAY

"If Washington wants to link trade talks with Hong Kong under such circumstances, it so flatters itself." - GLOBAL TIMES, CHINA

China and its quasi-colony

Beijing's hypocritical stance at the UN against India is a bid to distract from its own troubles in Xinjiang, Hong Kong. It is patently wrong to claim that scrapping of Article 370 has resulted in 'internationalisation of J&K'



ON AUGUST 16, the 15 members of the United Nations Security Council (UNSC) engaged in closed-door informal consultations in response to a letter written by Pakistan's Foreign Minister Shah Mahmood Qureshi to the President of the United Nations Security Council (UNSC), backed by a request by Pakistan's "iron brother" China, on the situation in Jammu and Kashmir (J&K).

A great deal of hullabaloo has been raised about the meeting. However, informal consultations are held in the UNSC all the time. There is no official record of the proceedings nor does the informal exchange result in any outcome document. In this case, the only consensus that had the backing of the majority of members was that India and Pakistan should resolve matters bilaterally. The members of the UNSC did not authorise the rotational president for the month of August, Poland, to issue even informal remarks on their behalf to the mediapersons who stake out the chamber, let alone a UNSC press statement by the president, which needs to be negotiated in a formal meeting and must be based on consensus, at least among the five permanent members. Such a press release or press advisory is not even considered an official document on record.

But for China's request, even the closeddoor informal discussion would not have taken place. China's attempts to get the president of the UNSC to issue an informal statement to the media, was curiously backed by the UK, perhaps in the hope of scoring some brownie points with the large domestic constituencies of Pakistanis. The UK might also have hoped to curry some favour with China to further its mercantilist interests in the face of an imminent Brexit meltdown.

Pakistan's Permanent Representative Maleeha Lodhi made a mendacious and propagandist statement to the media making allegations against India, claiming that "the voice of the people of Kashmir was being heard in the UNSC". Pakistan should first permit the voice of the Baloch people to be heard, along with that of the oppressed in Gilgit-Baltistan.

China's Permanent Representative Zhang Jun egregiously arrogated to himself the role of the president of the UNSC in an extraordinary breach of traditional practice and protocol, and spuriously claimed that members of the UNSC "had expressed their serious concern concerning the situation in Jammu and Kashmir". He added that "they are also concerned about the human rights situation there and also, it is the general will of the members that parties concerned should refrain from taking any unilateral action which might further aggravate the tension". He then went on to repeat the remarks of Chinese state councillor and foreign minister, Wang Yi, that "the Kashmir issue is a dispute left from colonial history. It should be properly and peacefully resolved based on the UN charter, relevant UN Security Council resolutions and bilateral agreements".

The Indian government's bold step to revoke the special status of J&K, long overdue, has given Pakistan and its cohorts in J&K a big jolt. It has hurt vested interests in the Valley who, for generations, have siphoned off the wealth of the state and waltzed with separatists at the same time. Prime Minister Narendra Modi emphasised in his Independence Day address that the move to revoke Article 370 will bring development and prosperity to the region. Earlier, the external affairs minister, S Jaishankar, had clearly conveyed, during his visit to Beijing, that the decisions were internal to India and aimed at providing good governance, promoting social justice and ensuring economic development



that the constitutional change in India had no bearing on the boundary issue or the Line of Actual Control with China.

While it is a known fact that China treats Pakistan as a quasi-colony and backs it on all matters, its initiative to trigger informal consultations in the UNSC may have a broader rationale. China is facing global censure for its unbridled human rights violations in Xinjiang province, the mass incarceration of Uighurs in so-called re-education camps and the razing of mosques and other historical places that give the Uighurs their distinct identity.

The daily images on television screens around the world of the mass unrest in Hong Kong must be galling for a regime that takes pride in its ability to use force to quash dissent and seeks, with vaulting ambition, to emerge as the number one power in the world. The long-drawn public protests in Hong Kong are a reaction to the progressive erosion of the special status accorded to Hong Kong Special Administrative Region under the terms of its Basic Law, which protects Hong Kong's capitalist system, the independence of the judiciary and the media.

Apart from its undying commitment to Pakistan, it is to deflect scrutiny of its own actions in Xinjiang and Hong Kong that China would have decided to support Pakistan's request and also to have its permanent representative masquerade as a spokesman for members of the UNSC.

That China has never commented when Pakistan unilaterally changed the status of regions in PoK exposes its deep bias. Gilgit-Baltistan was re-designated by Pakistan as Northern Areas in 1970. In 1974, Pakistan unilaterally overturned a law of the erstwhile princely state of Jammu and Kashmir prohibiting outsiders from owning property, and encouraged large-scale settlement by Sunnis in predominantly Shia-populated Gilgit-Baltistan. Pakistan once again unilaterally issued the Gilgit-Baltistan Empowerment and Self-Governance Order in 2009, without any consultation with the people. One should recall that in 1965, when

China reorganised the erstwhile Tibet region into the Tibet Autonomous Region, giving it a provincial status, India was not apoplectic, like China has been following the designation of Ladakh as a union territory. That was not necessary since the claims of the two sides and the ground situation remained unchanged, whether then or now. Based on the principle of non-interference in each other's internal affairs, India has always refrained from making statements concerning the internal situation of China.

It is patently wrong to claim, as vested political interests have done in India, that the scrapping of Article 370 has resulted in the "internationalisation of Jammu & Kashmir" and that the informal discussion by UNSC mem-

bers is the first of its kind in six decades. Many sections of the Indian media have erroneously claimed that the last time the UNSC discussed the issue of J&K was in 1965. First, the UNSC does not have any agenda item explicitly termed "Jammu and Kashmir". The only agenda item on its manin J&K. He had also pointed out to the Chinese date is "The India Pakistan Question". Second,

UNSC Resolutions 209, 210, 211, 214 and 215 of September 1965 focussed on a ceasefire during the war and demanded that the two sides cooperate with UNMOGIP. Third, the last formal resolution under the agenda item titled "The India Pakistan Question", was UNSC Resolution 307 of 21 December 1971, which noted India's unilateral declaration of a ceasefire in the western theatre during that war, Pakistan's acceptance of it, and, demanded a durable cessation of all hostilities. It was under Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru that India first brought the matter be-

fore the UNSC using Article 35 of the UN Charter, in a letter of January 1, 1948, from the Representative of India P P Pillai, addressed to the UNSC president. The agenda item was titled "The Situation in Jammu & Kashmir" until the 230th meeting of the UNSC, held on 20 January 1948. Pakistan too had written a letter dated January 15, 1948, addressed by Pakistan foreign minister, Zafarullah Khan, to the UN secretary general. As a result, the agenda item was re-designated as "The India-Pakistan Question" in the 231st meeting of the UNSC on January 22, 1948, diluting the question of "aggression" that India had taken up. The item has since remained on the agenda of the UNSC.

Pakistan's communications to UN bodies of matters relating to J&K are not a new development. Every year, Pakistan's permanent representative to the UN in New York writes to the secretary general requesting that the agenda item "The India Pakistan Question" be retained, lest it is struck off the agenda for lack of any formal action on the subject over the years. Similarly, in Geneva, the Pakistani mission routinely engages in propaganda about alleged human rights violations.

With the exception of Pakistan and a few of its supporters, the global community endorses the bilateral framework for resolution of differences between India and Pakistan. Pakistan will no doubt try to rake up the issue at the October meeting of the Human Rights Committee at the UNHRC, hoping to capitalise on the insidious report prepared in 2018 by former UN High Commissioner for Human Rights Zeid Ra'ad Al Hussein, a Pakistan sympathiser.

The informal meeting at the UNSC may have occasioned much jubilation in Pakistan though well-informed Pakistanis must surely know that it is a pyrrhic victory. The global community will no doubt take positive note of the steps being taken by India to restore normalcy in J&K through restoration of landlines, phased lifting of restrictions and the re-opening of government offices and schools. And, as Pakistan remains mired in its medieval ways, the world will soon see visible evidence of rapid development in J&K, which will contrast sharply with the backwardness of

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Protect the LoC

Because it is the Line of Control that has, ironically, preserved common political space between India and Pakistan



THE EVENTS FOLLOWING the August 5 announcement reminded me of a Kashmiri friend saying they are the proverbial grass beneath two elephants. "When two elephants fight, the grass suffers; and, when the same two elephants make love, the grass also suffers.'

For 72 years, this dynamic has played out at the Line of Control (LoC): When the elephants fight, shelling across the LoC kills, injures and displaces Kashmiri communities. When the elephants make peace, as in the Vajpayee-Musharraf era, Kashmiris fear a secret deal that puts a legal gloss on the territorial status quo, converting the LoC into an international boundary overnight, without considering what the Kashmiris themselves want. However, preserving the sanctity of the LoC will prevent the crisis from further unraveling and sustain hopes of finding common ground in an increasingly polarised environment.

Legally, the LoC is a ceasefire line and not an international boundary. Under international law, it is defined and protected by a bilateral treaty, the 1972 Simla Agreement, executed in writing between India and Pakistan following the 1971 war, and subsequently ratified by both parliaments. Records of these negotiations show Prime Minister Indira Gandhi would have preferred to declare the ceasefire line an international boundary and permanently settle the Kashmir question but agreed instead to the LoC at Pakistan's request. It is also significant that the same agreement largely restored the territorial positions of both countries in Jammu and Kashmir prior to the war.

The language of the agreement and the negotiating history make abundantly clear the intent behind defining the line in this way: The territories on either side of the line remain the subject of a dispute and making arrangements (military or otherwise) at the LoC do not prejudice the final resolution of the conflict. The parties have since reinforced this understanding of the LoC in subsequent compacts such as the Lahore Declaration of 1999, an unpublished ceasefire agreement in 2003, and, a statement from the Indian and Pakistani Directors General of Military Operations in 2018 reiterating their commitment to uphold the 2003 ceasefire understanding in letter and spirit. As with any bilateral treaty, the status or definition of the LoC can be legally altered only with the agreement of India and Pakistan.

While the constitutional changes to Article 370 are being fiercely contested under Indian and international law, they don't automatically impact the status of the LoC. A domestic law of one country simply cannot amend a bilateral treaty without the consent of the other party. Previous amendments and additions to Article 370, too, haven't changed the LoC. Last year, Pakistan

introduced the Gilgit Baltistan Order 2018, an executive order to begin the integration of Gilgit Baltistan into the federal structure of Pakistan and a step towards making it the country's fifth province, akin to Punjab or Sindh. While India and Kashmiris on both sides of the LoC opposed the move, there was no suggestion that the LoC should be sacrificed. It is arguable that the unilateral consti-

tutional changes, like we saw earlier this month, fundamentally violate the letter and spirit of the Simla Agreement. Article 4(2) of the Simla Agreement states: "Neither side shall seek to alter it (the LoC) unilaterally, irrespective of mutual differences and legal interpretations. Both sides further undertake to refrain from the threat or the use of force in violation of this Line." Such an interpretation would justify internationalising the conflict, violating the ceasefire and in the extreme, direct military action. Indeed, Pakistan briefly threatened to reconsider its adherence to bilateral treaties, including the Simla Agreement, in response to India's latest move, but has since gone silent on the issue. The reasons are as much political as they are legal. Pakistan realises the Line of Control is the only remaining way for it to retain its claim on Kashmir. India has adopted an identical position for exactly the same reasons. When the Indian home minister was questioned in Parliament about what his changes mean for territory on the Pakistani side, he reiterated with some force India's claim to all of Kashmir. Diplomatic speak from the Ministry of External Affairs followed to confirm that the changes do not affect either the LoC or the Line of Actual Control, the disputed border with China running through Ladakh.

For all these reasons, many see the LoC as merely perpetuating an indefinite and harmful status quo, preventing a substantive resolution of the conflict. However, given the reality of ever-hardening territorial positions (particularly in India) and increasingly polarised narratives within Jammu and Kashmir, the LoC, ironically, is the only surviving political space where common ground can be found. This is why the muchmaligned Four Point Formula, centred around opening up the LoC for trade, travel, religious tourism and people-to-people exchanges, has survived in the imagination of Kashmiris of vastly different political inclinations. It allows the historic identities, cultural and familial ties, and to a limited degree, political aspirations of the people of Jammu and Kashmir to be celebrated without asking either India or Pakistan to climb down from their respective legal and political positions. The governments should preserve the gains made on the LoC rather than using it to settle scores on other issues.

The LoC can be changed in two ways: Bilateral agreement or an all-out war. The former is practically impossible when all diplomatic channels for dialogue are suspended. The latter is unlikely to produce a decisive victor and will inflict untold suffering on Kashmiris. They deserve better from two countries claiming to act in their best interests.

The writer, a lawyer, has worked on dialogue and peacebuilding initiatives in Kashmir. Views are personal

unchanged, whether then or Pakistan Occupied Kashmir. now. Based on the principle of Use it first non-interference in each THIS REFERS TO the editorial, 'A new

playbook', (IE, August 20). New Delhi's nuclear strategy was based on the doctrine of Credible Minimum Deterrence, which perceives a responsible response from the adversary in question. India's volatile neighbour, Pakistan, is infamous for its statesponsored terrorism and violent extremism. Expecting from it a credible, rational and calculated response in the face of a perceived threat is overly courageous on the part of India. The US, Russia and NATO, despite their military prowess, did not commit to a nofirst-use policy. India should project itself as a responsible nuclear power with the right to use its nuclear weapons in the most extraordinary circumstances.

Sudip Kumar Dev. Kolkata

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

THIS REFERS TO the editorial, 'A new playbook', (IE, August 20). The defence minister's remarks regarding the reviewing of the "no-first-use" policy is in keeping with the Narendra Modi government's muscular approach towards the nation's safety. With China and Pakistan continuing their shenanigans, India must send out the signal that it cannot be taken for granted. Controlled aggression pays rich dividends in the contemporary world. Moreover, in diplomacy, nothing is cast in stone. Machiavelli had said: "The promise given was a necessity of the past, the word broken is a necessity of the present."

Kamna Chhabra, Gurgaon

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

address and phone number. THE WINNER RECEIVES **SELECT EXPRESS PUBLICATIONS**

mention their postal

FANS' DUTY

THIS REFERS TO the editorial, 'This isn't cricket' (IE, August 20). Cricket is a gentleman's game. This extends not just to players but the fans as well. Booing and jeering does not fit that remit. Fans should appreciate a good game, whether the player is from the home team or not. They should not spoil the atmosphere. The sportsman spirit exhibited by fans raises the performance of players in every sport. Hooliganism does the opposite.

Subhash Vaid, Noida

The healing word

There cannot be a single story for layered narratives in a time of trauma

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KUNAL RAY

THE LAST FEW weeks have been distressing owing to the various developments that this nation has seen. I was constantly reminded of W B Yeats' oft quoted lines: "Things fall apart; the centre cannot hold." Large parts of the country are adversely affected by floods while some still continue to languish in water scarcity. Kashmir is back in public discourse, and how. In such anguishing times. I often think about the role of writing. Does writing really help? Why must we write? In his iconic poem, Ode to a *Nightingale*, John Keats writes: "My heart aches, and a drowsy numbness pains." I wonder if language is an enabler or often imperils this expression of heartache and the painful numbness that Keats mentions in his poem. Is there a language for distress or do we invent/ find new registers for it? How do we really write about distress?

ties, then why write at all? I soon dismissed my initial misgivings and array of banal thoughts which now seem rather churlish. Looking to resolve my dilemma, I turned to the novels of Toni Morrison, much loved author and recently deceased Nobel laureate. Morrison was a peerless humanitarian, who constantly endeavoured to unpack the Black female experience in the US. Her life was devoted to writing about their many struggles and agonies. At the heart of her writing, one finds intensely humane stories people struggling to live a life of dignity. James Baldwin comes to mind too. In his poignant novel, If Beale Street Could Talk, Baldwin, in a humdrum way, mentions the daily struggles of a couple who want a life together. Both Morrison and Baldwin gave voice to distress in their writing.

Owing to the recent developments in Kashmir, poet Agha Shahid Ali has found a

new lease of life on social media. His poems about his homeland are being widely shared and discussed. In Postcard from Kashmir, Ali bemoans his distance from home and laments how the landscape and Valley wouldn't be the same again when he returns. His verse pulsates with a sense of desolation, impending gloom and longing for home.

There are numerous others who emerge in my memory. Mahasweta Devi, who relentlessly fought and wrote about the tribals and their rights. Krishna Sobti, whose unabashed writing on sex and desire from a female perspective shook up the Hindi literary establishment. Dalit poet, Namdeo Dhasal, in a series of poems wrote about life in Kamathipura, the red light area of Mumbai, incorporated the language of the slums. Words that were never deemed appropriate for poetry found place in his work.

and examples? To say that these authors and their writing taught us to resist. Writing in itself is an act of resistance. But then there are moments of self-doubt and personal trepidation. In such moments, one turns to writing to seek answers. Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie has famously cautioned us about the dangers of a single story, the perils of a linear approach to history. It is in and through writing that we can defeat the single story and accommodate divergent views. A close friend recently told me that if not now, may be all that is being written will find an audience later. But write we must without thinking of immediate gains. Therefore, we must persist, in distress or otherwise, to challenge the perils of a single story.

But why am I recounting these names

The writer teaches literary and cultural studies at FLAME University, Pune

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TELLING NUMBERS

XDR TB: what makes it deadly, how many have contracted it

TB CASES WORLDWIDE, 2017

MDR/RRTB 5,58,000 **XFR TB** 10,800 India 2,650

NOTIFIED MDR/RR AND XDR TB BY REGION, 2017

Region	Total notified	MDR/RR TB	XDK IR
Africa	13,23,450	26,845	867
The Americas	2,43,064	4,084	121
Eastern Mediterranean	5,36,185	4,969	168
Europe	2,64,563	48,299	6,758
South-East Asia	29,65,311	51,788	2,755
Western Pacific	13,75,550	24,699	131

Source for all data: WHO

IN A groundbreaking development recently, the United States Food and Drug Administration approved a three-drug regimen against the most lethal form of multi-drug-resistant tuberculosis, known as the XDR (extensively drug-resistant) strain. Essentially, this strain of TB is resistant to some of the most potent anti-TB drugs, making it difficult for patients suffering from this strain to be cured. A trial in the US, which enrolled 109 patients with the XDR strain, was able to cure 90 per cent of them.

Cases of XDR TB are much fewer than those of the other drug-resistant strain, MDR/RR TB, and have been reported from 117 countries until 2017, a World Health Organization (WHO) report said. Out of 10,800 cases worldwide, India accounted for 2.650 cases, or almost one-fourth. As per WHO,

two-thirds of cases of the XDR-strain are in China, India and Russia. These countries also share 47 per cent of the burden for MDR/RR TB. The average success rates for drugs to treat the XDR strain has been 34 percent globally.

WHO explains that XDR can be contracted in two ways. It may develop in a patient who is already receiving treatment for TB and misuses the anti-TB drugs, or it can be contracted from a person who already has the disease. The risk of transmission for XDR remains the same as the risk of transmission of other strains of TB. Often, XDR TB may go undiagnosed since lower-middle-income countries lack the infrastructure to detect it.

Worldwide, TB has surpassed HIV-AIDS as the leading cause of death due to infectious diseases. In 2017, over 13 lakh people died of the disease.

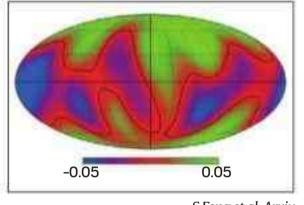
TIP FOR READING LIST

How Earth May Appear to AN ALIEN FROM LIGHT YEARS AWAY

IN THE search for extraterrestrial life, what do astronomers look for? There are standard biosignatures, such as evidence of oxygen or liquid water. But when an exoplanet is light years away and barely visible through even a powerful telescope, such signs may be difficult to detect. So, a team of scientists has offered a solution by looking at the problem from the opposite point of view — that of a potential alien. If an alien were to view Earth from light years away, what would she see?

The scientists came up with the con-

tour map pictured. They worked with 10,000 images of Earth taken by the Deep Space Climate Observatory (DSCOVR) satellite, which NASA has positioned so that it can see only the daytime side of Earth. The images were taken at 10 wavelengths every one to two hours during 2016-17. For each wavelength, the scientists reduced the images into a single brightness reading, which produced light curves over the images to represent a prolonged view of Earth, Science magazine explained. The team then compared the constructed map with the original image, and was able to identify the



S Feng et al, Arxiv

specific light curves that represented land masses and cloud cover. The idea is that a similarly created image for an exoplanet may allow astronomers to assess whether an exoplanet has oceans, clouds etc.

The scientists, from the California Institute of Technology, have made it clear this may not represent how a real alien would see Earth. "We present the first twodimensional surface map of Earth reconstructed from light curve observations without any assumptions of its spectral properties," they said in their paper, now a preprint server https://arxiv.org/abs/1908.04350.

SIMPLY PUT QUESTION & ANSWER

Milestone now, Moon in sight

Chandrayaan-2 has just entered a lunar orbit. What makes it a milestone big enough for the ISRO head to announce it to the country? What are the next milestones coming up before the September 7 landing?

AMITABH SINHA

PUNE, AUGUST 20

ON TUESDAY, India's Chandrayaan-2 mission crossed a major milestone on its journey towards the Moon, having entered a lunar orbit, almost exactly 30 days after being launched on July 22. The mission has several more milestones to cross before the Lander and Rover components of the spacecraft, called Vikram and Pragyaan respectively, make a soft landing on the Moon's surface in the early hours of September 7. But Tuesday's milestone was big enough for India Space Research Organisation (ISRO) Chairman K Sivan to call a press conference and inform the nation about the event.

So, what exactly did Chandrayaan-2 achieve on Tuesday?

After being launched, Chandrayaan-2 had been put in an elliptical orbit around the Earth. Until August 14, it had been going around the Earth, incrementally raising its orbit by firing boosters on five occasions. Eventually, it reached an orbit that was 276 km from the Earth's surface at its closest and 142,975 km at the farthest. It spent nearly a week in that orbit, before firing a booster once again to break free from the Earth orbit and begin its journey towards the Moon. This transit from orbit to orbit happened on August 14. After five days of this journey, Chandrayaan-2 came sufficiently close to the Moon to experience its gravity. And on Tuesday, it entered into an orbit around the Moon.

What exactly is meant by 'insertion into lunar orbit'?

Just like it was going around the Earth at the start of its journey, Chandrayaan-2 is now orbiting the Moon. On Tuesday, it was placed into an elliptical orbit that was 114 km from the Moon's surface at its nearest, and 18,072 km at the farthest.

The spacecraft will carry out a few more manoeuvres to eventually place itself in a circular orbit of 100 km × 100 km around the Moon (see illustration). The Lander and Rover modules will detach themselves from here and descend into lower orbits before finally making a landing on September 7. The main spacecraft, however, will continue to orbit

IE JOURNEY OF A BILLION DKE story for ternity

Insertion to **Lunar Orbit Lunar Transfer Trajectory** Injection to Earth 100 x 100 km Parking Orbit (EPO)

170 × 39120 km

ISRO Chairman K Sivan at a press conference where he announced Chandrayaan-2's insertion to lunar orbit. AP & ISRO

EARTH ROUNDS DONE, NOW CIRCLING IN ON MOON

the Moon in the 100 km circular orbit for at least one year, making observations through the several instruments it has on board.

But why are these manoeuvres needed in the first place?

Indeed. it is possible to fly straight to the Moon, without getting into the Earth orbits. The lunar orbit, however, cannot be avoided. The spacecraft cannot land directly on the Moon.

In fact, none of the Apollo missions that landed astronauts on the Moon took the route that Chandrayaan-2, or all other recent missions to Moon, have taken. The Apollo missions flew directly to the Moon. But this is not considered wise or economical.

That is because the rockets need to be extraordinarily powerful to carry the spacecraft all the way to Moon. An enormous amount of fuel too is required. Taking a longer route, however, makes it much easier for the spacecraft to travel. The rocket has to take the spacecraft only about 200 km from the Earth's surface and deposit it in Low-Earth Orbit. Thereafter, the spacecraft moves around the Earth under the influence of gravity. This stable position is also a good time for

ground controllers to check on the health of the equipment on board. While circling the Earth, a substantially

lower amount of energy is required to propel the spacecraft into higher orbits due to reduction in atmospheric drag. This is easily possible with a small amount of fuel onboard. With each higher orbit, however, the gain in energy is enormous, enabling the spacecraft to achieve great velocities, and the power to move much deeper into space.

To put things in perspective, the Apollo missions were carried on giant Saturn V rockets, which even today remain the most powerful rockets ever built. They were 111 metres tall, higher than a modern 30-storey building, and weighed 2,800 tonnes, a significant part being contributed by the fuel it carried. According to information on NASA website, the fuel it burnt to land astronauts on the Moon — several million litres of liquid oxygen and liquid hydrogen in different stages — could take a normal car 800 times around the Earth. It is said to have consumed 20 tonnes of fuel every second.

In comparison, ISRO's GSLV Mk-III rocket used to launch Chandrayaan-2 is extremely modest. At 43.43 metres, it has less than half the height of Saturn V, and weighs 640 tonnes, less than one-fourth of Saturn V. It can carry less than 350 tonnes of fuel, roughly about one-fifth of what Saturn V needed for its Apollo missions.

Chandrayaan-2 is said to have slowed down before entering lunar orbit. Why did it need to slow down?

ISRO Chairman Sivan said Chandrayaan-2, after coming under the influence of lunar gravity on Monday, had begun to accelerate. At one point, it had reached a velocity of 2.4 km per second (8,640 km per hour). This is just about equal to the escape velocity of the Moon. If Chandrayaan-2 had been allowed to speed up unrestrained, it would have escaped the Moon's gravity and moved away. To keep it in the lunar orbit, therefore, its velocity was brought down to 2.1 km per second (7,560 km per hour).

Spacecraft increase or decrease their velocities by firing on-board thrusters. To speed up, the thrusters are fired in a direction opposite to the motion of the spacecraft. It has an effect similar to the recoil that a gun experiences after firing. Velocity can be reduced if the thrusters are fired in the direction of motion.

THIS WORD MEANS | PANGLOSSIAN

From a Voltaire character to RBI Governor Das

YASHEE SINGH

NEW DELHI, AUGUST 20

RESERVE BANK of India Governor Shaktikanta Das on Monday stressed the importance of "mood" and "sentiment" when talking about the Indian economy. Despite the reports of job losses and deepening slowdown in many sectors, a "mood of doom and gloom is not going to help anyone", Das said.

"I am not saying we maintain a Panglossian countenance and smile away every difficulty," Das said, addressing the Ficci-Indian Banks Association banking summit in Mumbai.

"But in any real economy, the mood is very important. There are several opportunities amid the challenges we face today and together with the financial sector, the business community, the policymakers and the regulators, we should address the challenges

and look ahead with greater confidence."

So, who was Pangloss, and why did his countenance find its way into the Governor's address? In less esoteric terms, a

Panglossian way of life is one of extreme optimism, in which you are convinced whatever happens is for the best, and hence make no effort to change it. The expression refers to

Professor Pangloss, a character in Candide, ou l'Optimisme (translated into English as *Candide: Optimism*), a satirical novella published by the Enlightenment philosopher François-Marie Arouet a.k.a. Voltaire in 1759. Pangloss was

convinced that "all is for the best in this best of all possible worlds", an idea that he also



A portrait of Voltaire by Nicolas de Largillière, c. 1724. Wikipedia

taught his young student, Candide. While this philosophy was easy to be-

lieve in while Candide and his tutor lived a sheltered life in a baron's

castle in Westphalia, Pangloss refused to part with his optimism even after contracting syphilis, becoming a beggar (after the castle was attacked and many inmates were killed before his eyes), surviving an earthquake, a fire, and a tsunami, and being almost hanged, among other hardships.

Nor was Pangloss's optimism limited to his outlook on his own affairs. At one

point in the story, Jacques, who had helped Pangloss in many ways, including curing his syphilis, is drowning. While Candide tries to save him, Pangloss lets him die because, in his philosophy, whatever happened was for the best, and one should not make any effort to change it.

Voltaire created the exaggerated character of Pangloss to mock the extreme optimism advocated by Gottfried Wilhelm Leibniz, a German philosopher a few years his senior. (Leibniz also designed a calculating machine that was the predecessor of the modern calculator.)

Leibniz's theory was that a benevolent God created this world, the best possible one that He could have created. Voltaire on the other hand, believed that if this were indeed the case, earthquakes, famines and other non-benevolent things wouldn't occur with the regularity that they did.

He, thus, placed more importance on human effort and intent, something Candide finally tells Pangloss — that the world may be what it is, but "we must cultivate our garden".

How CBSE fee hike is different in Delhi and other states, why the protests

SUKRITA BARUAH NEW DELHI, AUGUST 20

EARLIER THIS MONTH, the Central Board of Secondary Education (CBSE) sent out a circular to the heads of all schools affiliated to it, giving directives for the submission of lists of students who will be appearing for the classes X and XII board examinations in 2020. The directives for the collection of examination fees from the candidates showed that these have been doubled for all students. In the case of Delhi government school students in class X, the hike is even steeper — an increase of 3.2 times for students belonging to the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes categories, and of 4 times for the rest. The move has led to opposition from the state governments in Delhi as well as Odisha.

The hike

Until last year, students across all states appearing for both the class X and the class XII examinations had to pay Rs 750 as the examination fee for five subjects, with an additional Rs 300 for each extra subject they might have opted for. The only exception

was in the case of the students of Delhi government schools. Here, the fees were Rs 375 for class X candidates and Rs 600 for class XII candidates. Over and above this, through a special arrangement of the Delhi government with the Board, SC/ST students of both classes were required to pay only Rs 50 on their own, with the rest paid by the Delhi government to the board – Rs 325 per student in for class X, and Rs 550 per student for class XII. With the hike put in place this year, the

fee has increased to Rs 1,500 for all students except SC and ST students of Delhi government schools, in whose case the fee has increased to Rs 1,200.

Why hike fees

According to a CBSE official, one of the primary reasons was the loss of a large source of its revenue with the setting up of the National Testing Agency in 2018. "The CBSE is a self-funded organisation and needs to create its own resources. There is no budgetary allocation towards it. It is used to generate the greater share of its revenue through the fees of a number of public examinations it used to conduct such as the National Eligibility cum Entrance Test

BREAKING DOWN THE HIKE

Students	Govt & a	ided schools	Private	Private schools		
	Now	Proposed	Now	Proposed		
CLASS X, DELH	I					
SC/ST	375*	1,200	750	1,500		
General	375	1,500	750	1,500		
CLASS XII, DEL	HI					
SC/ST	600*	1,200	750	1,500		
General	600	1,500	750	1,500		
CLASSES X & X	II, OTHER ST	ATES				
SC/ST	750	1,500	750	1,500		
General	750	1,500	750	1,500		

 st For SC/ST students in Delhi government schools, Rs 50 paid by students, rest by government.

(NEET), National Eligibility Test (NET), and Joint Entrance Examination — Main (JEE Main). With these being transferred to the NTA, this source has been lost even as the board is running with a deficit in its finances of Rs 200 crore," said the official.

The last time the CBSE increased its examination fees was five years ago. According to officials, since then the costs of conducting examinations has been increasing because of efforts to make it more efficient. Among the causes for increased costs cited by the CBSE are the introduction of one lakh new evaluators and invigilators for each day of the examination this year, the introduction of 5,000 new observers and 5,000 new super-

intendents, an increase in the honorarium of evaluators by 33 per cent, and face-to-face training of of 2.5 lakh evaluators. The Board had also introduced a number of technological interventions this year to prevent paper leaks like in 2018. These include a "Confidential Material Tracking and Monitoring (CMTM)" app for supervisors through which they had to send geo-tagged and time-tagged photos of three stages of the exam day process — opening the question paper packets, distribution of question papers, and sealing of answer-script packets.

Opposition in Delhi...

The Delhi government threatened to form its own Board, stating that the decision to increase the fee was "arbitrary" and taken without taking into consideration the government's opposition to it. There are more than 1,000 schools run by the Delhi government, all affiliated to the CBSE. Schools run by various state governments almost all follow their respective state education boards. Delhi, like other Union Territories, follows the CBSE in its government schools, and it is the UT with the largest number of governmentrun schools. Apart from this, the largest number of CBSE-affiliated schools are private schools and central government schools.

Because of this, the Delhi government has claimed to be the "largest partner" of the CBSE and opposed the fee hike. Following its opposition, the CBSE announced that it will restore the previous arrangement of SC/ST students of their schools paying only Rs 50, with the Delhi government paying the remaining Rs 1,150. The Delhi government has also promised that it will pay the entire examination fee for all its students; however, no such directive has been issued to schools so far.

And in Odisha

Odisha Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik has written to Union HRD Minister Ramesh Pokhriyal asking that the decision be reconsidered. "You may know that Odisha Government has opened more than 200 English Medium Model Schools affiliated to CBSE in rural areas for the benefit of economically and socially under-privileged sections of the society. This decision is bound to result in acute hardship to them," Patnaik wrote.

However, the CBSE has not announced any special arrangement for students in any state other than Delhi.

बिज़नेस स्टैंडर्ड वर्ष 12 अंक 158

जनसंख्या और देशप्रेम

स्वतंत्रता दिवस के अवसर पर लाल किले के प्राचीर से देश को संबोधित करते हुए आने वाली पीढियों के लिए कई समस्याएं खडी करेगा। परंत जनता का एक धडा

जाहिर करता है। हमें उनसे सीखना चाहिए।' प्रधानमंत्री नरेंद्र मोदी ने जनसंख्या नियंत्रण प्रधानमंत्री का यह कहना सही है कि देश और देशभिक्त को एक समान बताया। की भारी-भरकम आबादी ने उसके बुनियादी उन्होंने कहा, 'जनसंख्या विस्फोट हमारी ढांचे, प्राकृतिक संसाधनों और प्रशासनिक तथा शैक्षणिक क्षमताओं पर दबाव डाला है। परंतु एक तरह से देखा जाए तो जनसंख्या जागरूक भी है..उसका परिवार छोटा है की समस्या आज की नहीं है। आबादी का

बढना जारी रहेगा लेकिन इस समस्या का विस्तार नहीं हो रहा है। निश्चित तौर पर संयुक्त राष्ट्र के जनसंख्या प्रभाग के अनुमान के मुताबिक सन 2007 में देश में पांच वर्ष से कम उम्र के बच्चों की तादाद उच्चतम स्तर पर थी। 15 वर्ष से कम उम्र के बच्चों की संख्या 2011 में उच्चतम स्तर पर पहुंची और 25 से कम उम्र की मौजूदा पीढ़ी अब तक की सबसे बड़ी तादाद वाली ऐसी पीढ़ी है। देश के महापंजीयक कार्यालय की नम्ना पंजीयन व्यवस्था के अनुसार देश की कुल प्रजनन दर (टीएफआर) के आंकड़े भी जन्मदर में धीमेपन की पुष्टि करते हैं। देशव्यापी टीएफआर 2001 के 3.24 से घटकर 2011 में 2.53 हुई और 2021 तक इसके केवल 2.20 रह जाने की उम्मीद है। प्रधानमंत्री आबादी में हो रही बढोतरी के

भविष्य में जनसंख्या वृद्धि का बड़ा हिस्सा दीर्घजीविता और बेहतर स्वास्थ्य, पोषण एवं देखभाल के कारण 60 से अधिक उम्र के लोगों के कारण होगा। यह वांछित भी है।

यह समग्र सुधार तमाम भौगोलिक और सामाजिक विविधता को छिपाए हुए है। देश के कई हिस्सों मसलन दक्षिण भारत के राज्यों, कश्मीर और पश्चिम बंगाल में टीएफआर खासतौर पर कम है। यह यूरोप के स्तर पर या उससे भी कम है। कई अल्पसंख्यक समुदायों मसलन ईसाइयों, बौद्धों, सिखों और जैनों में टीएफआर की दर 2.1 से भी कम है। परंतु उत्तर प्रदेश में यह 3 और बिहार में 3.2 है। अन्य हिंदीभाषीय प्रदेशों में भी जन्मदर काफी बेहतर है। ऐसे में यदि

प्रबंधन को लेकर गंभीर हैं तो उन्हें इन क्षेत्रों पर अधिक ध्यान देना होगा। दूसरे शब्दों में कहें तो असली चुनौती विकास की है। जनसंख्या नियंत्रण के कई लाभ हैं। अतीत में परिवार नियंत्रण के तरीकों को अपनाने से जो सबक मिले, उन्हें भी ध्यान में रखना होगा। व्यवहारात्मक बदलाव तो बाहरी प्रोत्साहन से आता है लेकिन सबसे अहम कारक हैं बढता शहरीकरण, आय सुरक्षा तक पहुंच, कम शिशु एवं बाल मृत्यु दर, बेहतर स्वास्थ्य मानक आदि। महिला सशक्तीकरण जिसमें कामकाजी महिलाएं और महिला शिक्षा का प्रभाव शामिल है, वह भी इसमें अहम भूमिका निभा सकता है।

जन्म दर के मसले को देशभिक्त से जोडना इस समस्या से निपटने का सही तरीका नहीं है। विभिन्न क्षेत्रों और समुदायों के बीच के अंतर को अन्य विकास सचकांकों के माध्यम से बेहतर ढंग से परिभाषित किया जा सकता है। जाहिर है इस दिशा में बनने वाली नीति में इन बातों का ध्यान रखा जाना चाहिए। संभव है सरकार दो या कम संतान रखने वालों को कुछ प्रोत्साहन देना चाहे। बहरहाल, फिलहाल राजकोषीय स्थिति ऐसी नहीं है कि ऐसा कोई कदम उठाया जा सके। सरकार के पास अन्य तमाम खर्च भी हैं। ऐसे में इस समस्या से निपटने के लिए नया खर्च करना बुद्धिमानी नहीं होगी। सरकार को स्वास्थ्य स्विधाओं के विस्तार, शहरीकरण बढाने और महिला सशक्तीकरण पर अधिक ध्यान



बॉन्ड बाजार का फूटता हुआ बुलबुला!

भारतीय बॉन्ड बाजार में बन रहे बुलबुले के बारे में हमें चिंतित होने की जरूरत है। बता रहे हैं आकाश प्रकाश

• श्विक स्तर पर बॉन्ड बाजारों में कुछ अटपटा हो रहा है। कुछ आंकड़ों पर नजर डालते हैं। काफी कुछ अप्रत्याशित घटित हो रहा है। ऐसा कुछ पहले नहीं देखा गया था।

■ करीब 15 अरब डॉलर मूल्य के बॉन्ड इस समय दुनिया भर में नकारात्मक प्रतिफल

■अमेरिका से बाहर के 43 फीसदी बॉन्ड नकारात्मक प्रतिफल दे रहे हैं और जर्मनी में समुचा सरकारी बॉन्ड प्रतिफल वक्र नकारात्मक हो चुका है।

 यूरोप में विभिन्न जंक बॉन्ड जारीकर्ताओं को उधार पर रकम लेने के लिए भुगतान किया जा रहा है।

 करीब 10 साल पहले वैश्विक अर्थव्यवस्था को लगभग तबाह कर देने वाला सब-प्राइम दौर फिर से वापसी करता हुआ दिख रहा है।

 करीब 75 फीसदी वाणिज्यिक रियल एस्टेट ऋण केवल ब्याज हैं जो कि वर्ष 2006 के बाद का सर्वोच्च स्तर है।

■ अमेरिकी कॉर्पोरेट बॉन्ड बाजार में जंक श्रेणी से ठीक ऊपर वाले बीबीबी रेटिंग का आकार इससे पहले कभी भी इतना बडा नहीं

■ अमेरिका में 30 साल की परिपक्वता वाले बॉन्ड का प्रतिफल अब तक के निचले स्तर पर है और इसी समय जापान, जर्मनी, फ्रांस और स्विट्जरलैंड में नकारात्मक बॉन्ड प्रतिफल की स्थिति है। अधिकांश परिपक्वता अवधि वाले बॉन्ड में प्रतिफल वक्र उलटा

■ वर्ष 2008 में जब वैश्विक वित्तीय प्रणाली पतन के कगार पर थी तब जी-7 देशों के सरकारी बॉन्ड का प्रतिफल तीन फीसदी रहा था। आज उन्हीं बॉन्ड का प्रतिफल एक फीसदी से भी नीचे आ

 ऑस्ट्रिया के 100 वर्षीय बॉन्ड की कीमतें परवलयाकार बढ़ी हैं। गत 12 महीनों में बॉन्ड का मूल्य 110 से बढ़कर 185 हुआ है और पिछले दो महीनों में ही यह 150 से बढ़कर 185 हो चुका है। बॉन्ड मूल्य की यह सारिणी देखने में दिग्गज तकनीकी कंपनियों के सुनहरे दिनों की तरह लगती है।

नियत आय बाजार में कीमतों के इस तरह काफी बढ़ा-चढ़ाकर रखने की दो संभावित व्याख्याएं हैं। पहली, नियत आय बाजार वृद्धि एवं मुद्रास्फीति दोनों मोर्चीं पर एक बेहद कमजोर परिदृश्य की तरफ इशारा कर रहा है। प्रतिफल वक्र का उलटा होना इस तरफ संकेत देता है कि एक मंदी आसन्न है और नकारात्मक वास्तविक प्रतिफल बताते हैं कि बाजारों को मुद्रास्फीति में गिरावट जारी रहने की उम्मीद है। बाजार बेहद कमजोर आर्थिक वृद्धि और अवस्फीति का जोखिम बढ़ने के परिदृश्य को आत्मसात करते नजर आ रहे हैं। मौजूदा व्यापार युद्ध और वैश्विक स्तर पर कंपनियों के प्रति भरोसा कम होने से हम एक वैश्विक मंदी की तरफ बढ सकते हैं जो कि असंभव नहीं लगता है। लेकिन उस स्थिति में भी बॉन्ड की कीमतें बढ़ी हुई नजर आती हैं।

इक्विटी बाजारों में बुलबुलों का होना सामान्य बात है। हम तमाम देशों में समय-समय ऐसा होते हुए देख चुके हैं। इनमें शायद सबसे बड़ा बुलबुला डॉट-कॉम का था जो मार्च 2000 में फूट गया। बॉन्ड बाजारों को कहीं अधिक टिकाऊ माना जाता है। निवेशक एक टिकाऊ एवं सुरक्षित आय के लिए ही बॉन्ड की तरफ रुख करते हैं, न कि कीमतों में जोरदार उछाल के लिए। आम तौर पर मीडिया भी बॉन्ड बुलबुलों की पहचान पर अधिक ध्यान नहीं देता है।

हालांकि हाल में हमें बॉन्ड निवेशकों के बीच बुलबुले जैसा आचरण दिखने लगा है। एक परंपरागत बुलबुले में निवेशकों को इससे कोई मतलब नहीं होता है कि वे जो संपत्ति खरीद रहे हैं उसका वास्तविक मुल्य क्या है ? वे इसे लेकर आश्वस्त होते हैं कि वे जरूरत पडने पर थोडे समय में ही खरीदी गई संपत्ति को किसी और को बेच देंगे। आज के दौर में बड़े बेवकुफ केंद्रीय बैंक माने जाते हैं जो परिसंपत्ति खरीद कार्यक्रम शुरू होने पर इन परिसंपत्तियों को किसी भी भाव पर खरीद लेंगे। वैकल्पिक तौर पर पेंशन फंड एवं बीमा कंपनियों को नियत आय परिसंपत्तियां नियामकीय जरूरतों के चलते किसी भी भाव पर खरीदने के लिए बाध्य किया जा सकता है। निश्चित रूप से, जर्मनी के 15 वर्षीय बॉन्ड को नकारात्मक प्रतिफल देने के बावजूद अगर कोई खरीदता है तो उसका इरादा उसे परिपक्व होने तक बनाए रखने और पूंजी का तयशुदा नुकसान उठाने का कर्ता नहीं होता है। वे बॉन्ड इसलिए खरीद रहे हैं ताकि किसी और खरीदार को ऊंचे भाव पर बेच सकें।

बुलबुले-जैसे माहौल में निवेशक मौजुदा आर्थिक हालात को भविष्य में भी आरोपित करने लगते हैं। हमारे बॉन्ड बाजार में 30 वर्षों तक तेजी रही है। बाजार में तेजी का यह दौर राजकोषीय मजबूती, उत्पादकता में वृद्धि और भूमंडलीकरण से हासिल लाभों का नतीजा था। ब्याज दरों एवं मुद्रास्फीति में 30 वर्षों के भीतर लगातार गिरावट रही है। हालांकि इसकी संभावना काफी कम है कि आगे भी यह रुझान कायम रहने वाला

है। न तो ब्याज दर और न ही मुद्रास्फीति में आगे और कमी की गुंजाइश रह गई है। केंद्रीय बैंक का कहना है कि भविष्य में वे मुद्रास्फीति को बढ़ते हुए देखना चाहते हैं। मुद्रास्फीति के लगातार लक्ष्य से नीचे रहने को ब्याज दरों में आगे और कटौती के लिए आधार बताया जाता रहा है। इसी तरह सरकारें राजकोषीय दायित्व निभाने में चुकती जा रही हैं। अधिक खर्च करने पर सरकारों को मत मिल रहे हैं। अमेरिका के अलावा ब्रिटेन और यूरोपीय संघ में भी राजकोषीय संयम के अधिक मुरीद नहीं रह गए हैं।

भूमंडलीकरण की प्रक्रिया भी अब अवरूद्ध नजर आती है। एक के बाद एक देश में व्यापार एवं आव्रजन संबंधी बाधाएं खड़ी हो रही हैं। भारत और चीन में उदारीकरण और वैश्विक आपूर्ति शृंखला का हिस्सा बनने के अवस्फीतिकारी आघात दोहराए जाने की संभावना नहीं है। दुनिया के किसी भी अन्य क्षेत्र में उत्पादों की कीमतें वैश्विक स्तर पर कम कर पाने की

इन कारकों के उलट जाने से क्या हम वास्तव में उम्मीद कर सकते हैं कि बॉन्ड कीमतों से मिल रहे संकेतों के हिसाब से मुद्रास्फीति अब आगे से कम होती रहेगी?

बुलबुलों के मामले में मूल्य-निर्धारण बहुत मायने नहीं रखता है। आज भी कुछ ऐसी ही स्थिति है। बॉन्ड की कीमतें ऐसे तय हो रही हैं जैसे वृद्धि एवं मुद्रास्फीति लौटकर ही नहीं आएगी। सिद्धांत कहता है कि कर्ज का पहाड़ वैश्विक अर्थव्यवस्था को नीचे की तरफ घसीट रहा है। जितना अधिक कर्ज दिया जाता है, वृद्धि एवं मुद्रास्फीति के अभाव की स्थिति उतनी ही मजबूत होती जाती है। ऐसे हालात सशक्त होने पर निवेशक उतना ही अधिक कर्ज लेते हैं क्योंकि वृद्धि नदारद रहने पर उन्हें यही परिसंपत्ति समझदार लगती है। यह खुद को सशक्त बनाने की कवायद लगती है।

सामान्य सहज बुद्धि कहती है कि ये प्रतिफल स्तर अवास्तविक हैं। आखिर ग्रीस में उधारी की लागत अमेरिका से कम कैसे रह सकती है ? निवेशक ऑस्ट्रिया के 100 वर्ष वाले बॉन्ड के पीछे क्यों भागेंगे जबकि प्रतिफल में एक फीसदी की भी वृद्धि से 30 फीसदी पूंजी का नुकसान हो जाएगा? समूची आर्थिक प्रणाली में पैसे की कीमत ही सबसे अहम संकेत है। बाकी सब कुछ जोखिम-मुक्त दर से इतर तय होता है। कृत्रिम रूप से कम जोखिम-मुक्त दर सभी परिसंपत्ति संवर्गों में कीमत संबंधी विकति पैदा करेगी। वास्तविक दरों के शून्य हो जाने पर भी परिसंपत्ति समूहों में मूल्य की खासी उठापटक देखी जा सकती है। इसके अनचाहे नतीजे होंगे।

अगर भारत विदेशी मुद्रा सॉवरिन बॉन्ड जारी करने का फैसला करता है तो उसके लिए इससे बेहतर समय नहीं हो सकता है। यह बॉन्ड जारीकर्ताओं का बाजार है। आप नाममात्र के प्रतिफल पर पैसे जुटा सकते हैं, लिहाजा इसका फायदा उठाइए। अगर एक बाजार या परिसंपत्ति समूह एक बुलबुले जैसे माहौल में हैं तो निश्चित रूप से आपको इसका इस्तेमाल अपने लाभ के लिए करना चाहिए।

(लेखक अमांसा कैपिटल से संबद्ध हैं। लेख में व्यक्त विचार निजी हैं)

सरकारी व्यय में कटौती से कुछ योजनाओं पर लगेगा ताला ?

सरकार के भीतर अब व्यापक स्वीकारोक्ति हो चुकी है कि इसकी वित्तीय स्थिति ठीक नहीं होने से राजकोषीय राहत पैकेज लाने या सरकारी व्यय बढाने की गंजाइश काफी सीमित रह गई है। यह आभास आने वाले हफ्तों में अर्थव्यवस्था में नई जान फूंकने के लिए घोषित किए जाने वाले उपायों पर असर भी डालेगा।

चालू वित्त वर्ष की पहली तिमाही के गैर-अंकेक्षित अनंतिम आंकडों से पता चलता है कि इसका सकल कर राजस्व 2018-19 की समान अवधि के मुकाबले केवल 1.3 फीसदी ही बढ़ा है। इस वित्त वर्ष में सकल कर राजस्व में 18 फीसदी की वृद्धि के बजट लक्ष्य को देखते हुए यह वृद्धि काफी कम है। यह तुलना वर्ष 2018-19 में संकलित कर संग्रह के अनंतिम आंकड़ों पर आधारित है, न कि बजट में पेश किए गए संशोधित अनुमानों पर। लिहाजा वृद्धि के ये आंकड़े चालू वित्त वर्ष में किए जाने वाले राजस्व प्रयासों का एक अधिक वाजिब तरीका दिखाते हैं।

इस तरह अप्रैल-जून 2019 तिमाही में कॉर्पोरेट कर संग्रह भी महज छह फीसदी बढ़ा। हालांकि व्यक्तिगत आयकर और सीमा शुल्क से प्राप्त राजस्व में वृद्धि क्रमशः 12 फीसदी और 16 फीसदी रही। पहली तिमाही में संकलित केंद्रीय वस्तु एवं सेवा कर (सीजीएसटी) 28 फीसदी की दर से बढ़ा। लेकिन देश में पेट्रोल एवं डीजल के उपभोग यानी आर्थिक गतिविधियों की रफ्तार का संकेत देने वाला उत्पाद शुल्क संग्रह करीब आठ फीसदी तक गिर गया। यह विरोधाभास हमारे लिए चिंता की वजह है।

ऐसे में आश्चर्य की बात नहीं है कि सरकार ने अपने व्यय पर लगाम लगा दी है। चालु वित्त वर्ष के पहले तीन महीनों में भी सरकार का राजस्व व्यय महज छह फीसदी की दर से ही बढा है। यह वृद्धि दर पूरे साल के राजस्व व्यय के लिए अनुमानित 22 फीसदी वृद्धि की तुलना में काफी कम है।

पूंजीगत व्यय की नकेल तो और अधिक कस दी गई है। इसके वर्ष 2019-20 के पूरे साल में करीब 11 फीसदी की दर से बढ़ने का अनुमान है। लेकिन अप्रैल-जून की अवधि में पूंजीगत व्यय वर्ष 2018-19 की पहली तिमाही की तुलना में हुए खर्च से 27 फीसदी तक नीचे आ चुका है।



दिल्ली डायरी ए के भट्टाचार्य

वित्त मंत्रालय के पास यह तय करने के लिए केवल छह महीने ही रह गए हैं कि केंद्र सरकार की बाकी सभी परियोजनाओं एवं केंद्र द्वारा प्रायोजित योजनाओं की समीक्षा कर उनके निष्प्रभावी या फालतू हो जाने का फैसला किया जाए।

अगर वित्त मंत्रालय के मख्यालय नॉर्थ ब्लॉक का मिजाज ऐसा ही बना रहा तो सरकार विभिन्न मंत्रालयों द्वारा संचालित सभी तरह योजनाओं एवं परियोजनाओं पर अब करीबी नजर रखेगी। वित्त-पोषित सार्वजनिक योजनाओं एवं परियोजनाओं को मंजूरी एवं उनकी समीक्षा के संबंध में जारी एक पुराने परिपत्र को कछ हफ्ते पहले ही व्यय विभाग की वेबसाइट पर डाला

इस अधिसूचना के दो निर्देश खास अहमियत वाले हैं क्योंकि वे किसी खास संदर्भों में उसके निहित मंतव्य को भी उजागर करते हैं। पहला, यह सभी केंद्रीय मंत्रालयों को व्यय विभाग की सैद्धांतिक पूर्वानुमित नहीं मिलने पर कोई भी नई योजना या परियोजना शुरू करने से रोकता है। इस तरह यह निर्देश किसी भी मंत्री या सचिव को अपने क्षेत्राधिकार में कोई भी नई योजना शरू करने से रोकता है जिससे नया खर्च बढ़ने वाला हो।

इसी के साथ वित्त मंत्रालय ने केंद्रीय मंत्रालयों को अब बेअसर

एवं व्यर्थ हो चुकीं योजनाओं एवं परियोजनाओं के विलय या पुनर्गठन या उन्हें बंद किए जाने पर गंभीरतापूर्वक विचार करने को भी कहा है। यहां पर इस बात का ध्यान जरूर रखा जाना चाहिए कि एक नई योजना शरू करने के लिए वित्त मंत्रालय की सैद्धांतिक मंजुरी लेनी होगी, वहीं किसी फालतू योजना को बंद करने या उसके पुनर्गठन की शुरुआत किसी भी केंद्रीय मंत्रालय द्वारा नॉर्थ ब्लॉक की पूर्व-अनुमित के बगैर ही की जा सकती है।

दूसरे निर्देश के कई योजनाओं के भविष्य के लिए अहम निहितार्थ हैं। वर्ष 2016 में केंद्रीय क्षेत्र द्वारा संचालित कुल योजनाएं 300 थीं लेकिन उन्हें सरल एवं कारगर बनाने की कवायद पिछले तीन वर्षों से चल रही है। इसी तरह केंद्र द्वारा प्रायोजित एवं उसकी भागीदारी वाली योजनाओं की संख्या घटाकर केवल 30 पर लाई गई थी। ऐसी योजनाओं के भविष्य पर फैसला करने की पहली समयसीमा मार्च 2017 थी जब बारहवीं पंचवर्षीय योजना का भी समापन हो रहा था। ऐसी समीक्षा की दूसरी एवं अंतिम समयसीमा मार्च 2020 होने वाली है। उसी समय 14वें वित्त आयोग की अनुशंसाओं के लागू होने की मियाद भी पूरी होगी।

करने के लिए केवल छह महीने ही रह गए हैं कि केंद्र सरकार की बाकी सभी परियोजनाओं एवं केंद्र द्वारा प्रायोजित योजनाओं की समीक्षा कर उनके निष्प्रभावी या फालतू हो जाने का फैसला किया जाए। दूसरा निर्देश दिखाता है कि मार्च 2020 के बाद भी जारी रखने लायक ऐसी सभी योजनाओं पर समयावधि समीक्षा का प्रावधान लाग होगा। इसके पीछे दलील यह है कि 15वें वित्त आयोग की अनुशंसाएं अप्रैल 2020 से प्रभावी होंगी और केवल वही योजनाएं इस समयावधि समीक्षा से बच सकती हैं जिन्हें फंड उपलब्धता के आधार पर आगे भी जारी रखने को सही ठहराया जा सके।

वित्त मंत्रालय के पास यह तय

इस लिहाज से अगले छह महीने ही यह तय करेंगे कि कौन सी केंद्रीय योजना समेट ली जाएगी और किस योजना का वजुद बचा रह जाएगा? ऐसी स्थिति में आने वाले महीनों में हमें इन योजनाओं के पक्ष एवं विपक्ष में गोलबंदी भी तेज होती हुई नजर आएगी।

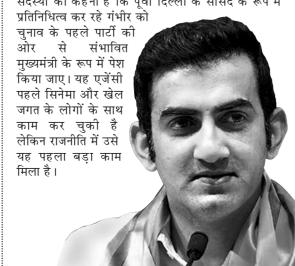
कानाफूसी

'मेरा गौरव दीदी'

तृणमूल कांग्रेस को लोकसभा चुनाव के दौरान पश्चिम बंगाल में जो भी नुकसान हुआ उसे दूर करने के लिए पार्टी अपने राजनीतिक विरोधियों के साथ पुराने जुड़ाव तक का सहारा ले रही है ताकि उसे प्रगतिशील समझा जाए। युवा मतदाताओं को ध्यान में रखते हुए पार्टी ने सोशल मीडिया पर एक अभियान शुरू किया है। हम जानते हैं कि कोई भी राजनीतिक विज्ञापन बिना व्यंग्य के परा नहीं होता है और 'मेरा गौरव ममता' नामक यह विज्ञापन भी अपवाद नहीं है। पिछले दिनों आयकर विभाग ने विभिन्न पुजा समितियों को आय कर रिटर्न दाखिल करने को कहा था। इस विषय पर केंद्र सरकार की चुटकी लेते हुए बने एक विज्ञापन में दिखाया गया है कि एक कर अधिकारी देवी दुर्गा से रिटर्न फाइल करने को कहता है। विज्ञापन के अंत में एक संदेश उभरता है जो कहता है कि क्या अब देवी को भी अपना पैन नंबर और आधार कार्ड देना होगा?

'ગંभીર' हो रहे गंभीर

खबरों के मुताबिक क्रिकेट के खेल से राजनीति के मैदान में पदार्पण कर चुके भाजपा सांसद गौतम गंभीर ने एक डिजिटल एजेंसी की सेवाएं ली हैं जो ऑनलाइन रूप से उनके राजनीतिक कद का ख्याल रखेगी। डिजिटल स्तर पर उनकी पहचान मजबूत करने के अलावा एजेंसी अगले वर्ष होने वाले दिल्ली विधानसभा चुनावों में उनकी रणनीति तैयार करने का काम भी करेगी। हालांकि अभी जल्दी है लेकिन पार्टी के कई सदस्यों का कहना है कि पूर्वी दिल्ली के सांसद के रूप में



आपका पक्ष

समान कार्य और समान वेतन लागू हो

में कार्य करने के लिए विभिन्न शासकीय पदों पर संविदा, दैनिक वेतन भोगी के रूप में अनुबंधित कर्मचारियों की भर्ती की जाती है। ऐसे पद अस्थायी होते हैं जो एक निश्चित समय तक के लिए होते हैं। इसके बाद सरकार या तो कर्मचारियों को हटा देती है या प्रतिवर्ष इनके करार को बढाते रहती है। ऐसे कर्मचारियों को सरकार की तरफ से कुछ भी सुविधाएं नहीं मिलती हैं। इनके वेतन भी स्थायी कर्मचारियों की तुलना में काफी कम होते हैं। विभागों में कार्य करने वाले नियमित कर्मचारी भी इनसे अत्यधिक कार्य लेते हैं और वे भविष्य में नियमित होने की आस में निरंतर बेहतर कार्य करते रहते हैं। इन पदों पर कार्य करने वाले कर्मचारियों की मानसिकता यही होती है कि उनके द्वारा किए गए बेहतर कार्य और अधिकारियों की प्रशंसा के लाभ से वे एक दिन नियमित हो जाएंगे। ऐसे अस्थायी



कर्मचारियों का सिर्फ शोषण ही होता है।शासन द्वारा कम वेतन देना, सुविधाओं से वंचित रखना, नौकरी में अस्थिरता बने रहना आदि इनके लिए सबसे बड़ी चुनौती और समस्या बनी रहती है। स्थायी कर्मचारियों द्वारा ज्यादा से ज्यादा इनसे कार्य लेना इनका स्थायी होने की संभावना तलाशना इनकी

और अनुबंधित नियुक्ति से सरकार को अनुबंध के आधार पर नियुक्तियों को बाद में स्थायी करना चाहिए

> समस्या के मुख्य कारणों में से एक है। उच्चतम न्यायालय ने भी 'समान कार्य के लिए समान वेतन' के सिद्धांत पर मुहर लगाते हुए कहा ं कि अस्थायी कर्मचारी भी स्थायी

हैं। फिर भी सरकार इस ओर कदम नहीं उठा रही है और न ही किसी प्रकार की दिलचस्पी दिखा रही है। लिहाजा वर्तमान समय की जरूरत है कि पदों पर भर्ती स्थायी लिया जाए। अगर अनुबंध के आधार पर नियुक्ति की जा रही है तो उन्हें स्थायी कर्मचारियों की तरह समान वेतन और सुविधाएं दी जाएं। इससे न सिर्फ वह आर्थिक और सामजिक रूप से मजबूत होंगे, बल्कि सरकारी महकमे में कार्य करने के लिए लोगों को एक अनुकूल माहौल मिलेगा। अमित पांडेय, बिलासपुर

की तरह मेहनताना पाने के हकदार

पांच खरब डॉलर की अर्थव्यवस्था का लक्ष्य पिछले दिनों नीति आयोग की बैठक में प्रधानमंत्री नरेंद्र मोदी ने जो

संकल्प दोहराए हैं अगर उन पर संजीदगी से अमल हो तो

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।

अर्थव्यवस्था को लक्ष्य तक पहुंचाने में काफी हद तक कामयाबी मिल सकती है। प्रधानमंत्री ने अर्थव्यवस्था को अगले पांच वर्षों में पांच खरब डॉलर तक पहुंचाने का लक्ष्य रखा है। उन्होंने कहा कि यह लक्ष्य बड़ा है पर सब साथ मिलकर प्रयास करें तो हासिल करना कठिन नहीं है। अर्थव्यवस्था की मजबूती सभी क्षेत्रों के सम्मिलित सहयोग से आती है। उसमें कोई भी क्षेत्र कमजोर रह जाता है तो वह विकास दर को ऊपर नहीं बढने देता। इसलिए केंद्र सरकार ने सभी विभागों व सभी राज्य सरकारों को इसमें सहभागी बनाने की कोशिश की है। इससे बेहतर नतीजों की उम्मीद बनती है। जीएसटी जैसे फैसलों के नतीजे अब नजर आने शुरू होंगे। कौशल विकास व मेक इन इंडिया जैसे कार्यक्रमों के परिणाम भी अब दिख सकते हैं। लेकिन इसके लिए औद्योगिक क्षेत्र पर ध्यान केंद्रित करने के साथ साथ अंदरूनी और बाहरी बाजार के आकार में विस्तार पर भी गंभीरता से ध्यान देना होगा। अजीत कुमार गौतम, गोरखपुर





सत्य का आकर्षण बढ़ने पर माया का आकर्षण खत्म हो जाता है

मुश्किल में चिदंबरम

आइएनएक्स मीडिया मामले में पूर्व केंद्रीय मंत्री पी चिदंबरम की गिरफ्तारी की नौबत आ गई तो इसीलिए कि दिल्ली हाई कोर्ट ने उनकी जमानत याचिका खारिज कर दी और सुप्रीम कोर्ट ने तत्काल उन्हें राहत देने से इन्कार कर दिया। पता नहीं सुप्रीम कोर्ट से उन्हें राहत मिलती है या नहीं, लेकिन इस नतीजे पर पहुंचना ठीक नहीं होगा कि उनके खिलाफ राजनीतिक बदले की भावना के तहत कार्रवाई हो रही है। ऐसा आरोप लगाने वालों को इसकी अनदेखी नहीं करनी चाहिए कि दिल्ली उच्च न्यायालय ने चिदंबरम की जमानत याचिका खारिज करते हुए उनके खिलाफ गंभीर टिप्पणियां की हैं। उसकी ओर से यहां तक कहा गया है कि आइएनएक्स मीडिया में निवेश का मामला काले धन को सफेद करने का सटीक उदाहरण है। कहना कठिन है कि इस मामले में अदालतें किस निष्कर्ष पर पहुंचती हैं, लेकिन इससे इन्कार नहीं किया जा सकता कि इस तरह के घोटाले कोई नई बात नहीं हैं। संप्रग शासन में तो खास तौर पर एक के बाद एक घोटाले हुए। ये सारे घोटाले नेताओं और नौकरशाहीं की शह या फिर उनकी मिलीभगत से ही हुए, लेकिन विडंबना यह है कि किसी भी घोटाले में किसी नेता को सजा नहीं सुनाई जा सकी है। जहां कोयला घोटाले में केवल एक अधिकारी को सजा सुनाई गई है वहीं 2जी स्पेक्ट्रम घोटाले में सीबीआइ की विशेष अदालत सभी आरोपियों को बरी करते हुए यह कह चुकी है कि यह एक काल्पनिक घोटाला था। इसे देखते हुए आइएनएक्स मामले में समय रहते दूध का दूध और पानी का पानी होना जरूरी है।

आम तौर पर राजनीतिक घपले-घोटाले का कोई मामला सामने आने पर कठघरे में खड़े नेता पहले तो सरकार को चुनौती देते हुए यह कहते हैं कि अगर उसके पास सुबूत है तो फिर वह कार्रवाई क्यों नहीं करती? जब कभी कार्रवाई आगे बढ़ती है तो यह शोर मचाया जाने लगता है कि सरकारी एजेंसियों का मनमाना इस्तेमाल किया जा रहा है। कई बार तो यह भी कह दिया जाता है कि जांच एजेंसियों के साथ-साथ अदालतें भी सरकार से प्रभावित होकर काम कर रही हैं। ऐसा तब तक होता रहेगा जब तक जांच एजेंसियां का कामकाज विश्वसनीयता नहीं हासिल कर लेता। निःसंदेह जांच एजेंसियों के साथ-साथ अदालतों से भी यह अपेक्षित है कि वे सक्रियता का परिचय दें। यह किसी से छिपा नहीं कि नेताओं अथवा रसूख वालों के मामलों में तारीख पर तारीख का सिलसिला कायम हो जाता है। राजनीतिक भ्रष्टाचार पर लगाम लगाने और भ्रष्ट तत्वों को सबक सिखाने के लिए यह आवश्यक ही नहीं अनिवार्य है कि भ्रष्टाचार के गंभीर मामलों का निस्तारण कहीं अधिक तेजी से हो।

स्वस्थ होगा झारखड

झारखंड में उत्कृष्ट स्वास्थ्य सेवाओं की अपेक्षा के बीच अच्छी खबर यह है कि अब यहां हालात बदल रहे हैं। स्वास्थ्य सेवाओं में सुधार होने लगा है। सरकार भी इस दिशा में गंभीर है। यह बात साफ है कि स्वास्थ्य सेवाओं में कमी इसलिए भी है, क्योंकि झारखंड चिकित्सकों की कमी से जूझ रहा है। इसी क्रम में एक अच्छी खबर आई है। सुप्रीम कोर्ट ने राज्य सरकार की याचिका पर सुनवाई करते हुए दुमका, हजारीबाग और पलामू स्थित मेडिकल कॉलेजों में इसी साल से नामांकन और पढ़ाई की हरी झंडी दे दी है। दरअसल मेडिकल काउंसिल ऑफ इंडिया (एमसीआइ) ने तीनों मेडिकल कॉलेजों में विभिन्न कमियां गिनाकर इनको मान्यता देने से इन्कार कर दिया था। तब राज्य सरकार ने सुप्रीम कोर्ट की चौखट पर दस्तक दी थी। अब अनुमति मिलने के बाद तीनों मेडिकल कॉलेजों में सौ-सौ सीटों पर दाखिला हो सकेगा। सुप्रीम कोर्ट के आदेश के बाद अब प्रदेश में एमबीबीएस की सीटें एक साथ तीन सौ बढ़ गईं। यह भी जान लें कि रांची स्थित राजेंद्र आयुर्विज्ञान संस्थान (रिम्स) में कमजोर वर्ग के लिए आरक्षित सीटों के साथ कुल 190, धनबाद स्थित पाटलिपुत्र मेडिकल कॉलेज एंड हॉस्पिटल एवं जमशेदपुर स्थित महात्मा गांधी मेडिकल कॉलेज एंड हॉस्पिटल को 50-50 सीटों के विरुद्ध दाखिले की अनुमित मिली थी। अब सरकार कोडरमा तथा चाईबासा मेडिकल कॉलेजों पर रेस होगी। राज्य सरकार ने बोकारो में भी मेडिकल कॉलेज खोलने का प्रस्ताव केंद्र को दिया है। उधर प्रदेश के सबसे बड़े अस्पताल रिम्स में मरीजों की सुविधाओं के लिए 300 बेड का अतिरिक्त भवन बनाया जाएगा। रिम्स ने सरकार के समक्ष यह प्रस्ताव रखा है। यह बात साफ है कि जब मेडिकल कॉलेज बढ़ेंगे तो चिकित्सकों की संख्या भी बढ़ेगी, जो राज्य की स्वास्थ्य सेवाओं को गति देगी। जरूरत इस बात की है कि इन मेडिकल कॉलेज से निकले चिकित्सक राज्य में ही अपनी सेवाएं दें। इसके लिए सरकार को सटीक उपाय करने होंगे। संताल परगना के जिलों में स्वास्थ्य सेवाओं का हाल अच्छा नहीं है। पहाड़ों पर बसीं आदिम जनजातियों को बेहतर स्वास्थ्य सेवाएं नहीं मिल रही हैं। सरकार का फोकस इन इलाकों में अच्छी स्वास्थ्य सेवाओं और शिक्षा व्यवस्था पर होना चाहिए, क्योंकि राज्य के विकास के लिए यह अहम है। जब राज्य के नागरिक स्वस्थ होंगे तभी वे कोई भी काम मन लगाकर कर सकेंगे।

स्याह नतीजों वाला फैसला



मनीष तिवारी

दिल्ली और श्रीनगर के बीच राजनीतिक दीवार को गिराकर कश्मीर को सीधे नई दिल्ली से संचालित किया जाना उचित नहीं

🟲 जपा के नेतृत्व वाली राजग सरकार ने जम्मू-कश्मीर राज्य का विभाजन कर भारतीय संघ के साथ उसके संबंधों को नए सिरे से तय किया है। इस कवायद से वह ऐसे स्याह क्षेत्र में दाखिल हो गई है जिसकी छाया भारतीय राष्ट्र राज्य के लचीलेपन को चुनौती देने जा रही है। पहले बात संवैधानिक स्याह पक्ष की। इस प्रक्रिया में अनुच्छेद तीन की मूल भावना की अनदेखी और अनुच्छेद 370 की समाप्ति के साथ और भी कुछ संवैधानिक पहलुओं का मखौल उड़ाया गया है। भारतीय संघ में विलय से पहले जम्मू-कश्मीर 1939 में अपनाए गए अपने संविधान से संचालित होता था। जब तक राज्य ने अपना संविधान नहीं अपनाया तब तक यही व्यवस्था कायम रही। महाराजा हरि सिंह ने भी जो विलय की संधि की थी उसके सातवें पैराग्राफ के अनुसार भारतीय संघ भविष्य में भी राज्य पर कुछ ऐसा थोप नहीं सकता। हालांकि और भी रियासतों ने ऐसे ही कई समझौते किए थे, लेकिन पाकिस्तान के साथ संघर्ष के चलते जम्मू-कश्मीर की स्थिति खासी जटिल हो गई। इसीलिए संविधान सभा ने भारतीय संघ के साथ कश्मीर के संबंधों को नया क्षितिज देने के लिए विलय की संधि से परे जाते हुए 17 अक्ट्बर, 1949 को अनुच्छेद 370 के रूप में एक विशेष प्रावधान किया। भारत के साथ जम्मू-कश्मीर के स्थाई एकीकरण के लिए 31 अक्टूबर, 1951 को एक चुनी हुई संविधान सभा का गठन हुआ। यह 17 नवंबर, 1956 तक अस्तित्व में रही जहां इसके द्वारा स्वीकृत संविधान 26 नवंबर, 1957 को लागू हुआ। इस संविधान के अनुच्छेद तीन ने राज्य को भारत में अविभाज्य रूप से जोड़ते हुए कहा कि यह भारत का अभिन्न अंग होगा।

अब जब सरकार ने राज्य को दो भागों में बांट दिया है तो अविभाजित जम्मू-कश्मीर के संविधान का क्या होगा? कोई भी उस संविधान को निष्प्रभावी नहीं कर सकता। फिर 12 भागों और 147 अनुच्छेदों वाले इस संविधान में स्वयं को समाप्त करने वाला कोई प्रावधान भी नहीं है। यहां तक कि भारतीय संसद भी इसे निरस्त नहीं कर सकती, क्योंकि इसका निर्माण भी भारतीय संविधान की तर्ज पर एक चुनी हुई संविधान सभा द्वारा किया गया था। अगर कोई यह दलील दे कि राज्य के विभाजन के साथ ही यह संविधान भी समाप्त हो गया तब यह तर्क भी उतनी मजबूती से दिया जा सकता है कि ऐसी स्थिति में भारत और जम्मू-कश्मीर के रिश्ते भी उसी पड़ाव पर पहुंच जाने चाहिए जहां विलय की संधि के वक्त थे।

अब जरा राजनीतिक मोर्चे पर स्याह परिदृश्य की पड़ताल कर ली जाए। अगर 1947 की बात करें तो तब कश्मीर का एक बड़ा तबका स्वायत्तता, स्वशासन, आजादी और पाकिस्तान के साथ विलय का हिमायती था। कश्मीर की राजनीति में चार धाराएं आज भी हैं। ये धाराएं एक दूसरे से मिली हुई भी हैं और एक दूसरे को



काटती भी हैं। लिहाजा प्रत्येक तबके के लिए आजादी के मायने भी अलग हैं। स्वतंत्रता के समय से ही कश्मीर घाटी में भारतीय राष्ट्रीय कांग्रेस और नेशनल कांफ्रेंस यानी नेकां जैसे भारतीय संघ के ध्वजवाहक भी रहे हैं। समय के साथ पीपुल्स डेमोक्रेटिक पार्टी यानी पीडीपी जैसे राजनीतिक धड़े भी इसमें शामिल होते गए। 1990 के दशक में आतंकी गतिविधियों में जबरदस्त तेजी के दौर में मुख्यधारा के दलों के तमाम नेता और कार्यकर्ता मौत के घाट उतार

इस दौरान 1996 से 2019 के बीच राज्य में चार विधानसभा और सात लोकसभा चुनाव संपन्न हुए। इससे भारतीय लोकतांत्रिक प्रणाली में उनकी आस्था ही व्यक्त हुई। राज्य के विभाजन ने दोनों क्षेत्रीय दलों नेकां और पीडीपी के लिए एक तरह से संभावनाएं खत्म कर दी हैं। कश्मीर की राजनीतिक मुख्यधारा यकायक गायब हो गई। यह भी विडंबना है कि राज्य के तीन पूर्व मुख्यमंत्रियों डॉ. फारूक अब्दुल्ला, उमर अब्दुल्ला और महबूबा मुफ्ती को नजरबंद रखा गया है। महबूबा मुफ्ती तो हाल तक भाजपा की गठबंधन सहयोगी रही हैं।

दिए गए, मगर ये दल फिर भी अड़े रहे।

राजनीतिक मुख्यधारा को इस तरह नकारने के भविष्य में बहुत गंभीर नतीजे देखने को मिलेंगे।

अब सुरक्षा से जुड़े स्याह परिदृश्य पर चर्चा की जाए। इसमें एक मान्यता यह है कि यदि किसी अलगाववादी मुहिम को जनसमर्थन मिला है तो उस पर अंकुश लगाना असंभव सा होता है। लोगों के दिलों को जीतकर ही इसमें कामयाबी हासिल की जा सकती है। अगर आप आम जनता और अलगाववादियों के बीच की कड़ी को नहीं तोड़ पाते तो अलगाववाद और जोर पकड़ता है। पंजाब में अलगाववाद के खिलाफ लंबी लड़ाई में निर्णायक पड़ाव तभी आया जब 1992 में चुनी हुई सरकार सत्ता में आई। उसी तर्ज पर सरकार फिलहाल नगालैंड में दशकों से चले आ रहे अलगाववाद को खत्म करने के लिए वार्ता कर रही है। यह उचित नहीं कि दिल्ली और श्रीनगर के बीच राजनीतिक दीवार को गिराकर कश्मीर को सीधे नर्द दिल्ली से संचालित किया जाए।

अब सामरिक दृष्टिकोण से भी इसे देखना होगा। पाकिस्तान न केवल कश्मीर, बल्कि इस समूचे क्षेत्र में फिर से प्रासंगिक हो गया है। तालिबान के साथ अपने समझौते को सफल

बनाने के लिए अमेरिका को अब पाकिस्तान की कहीं ज्यादा जरूरत है। इस बीच ईरान का मसला भी गर्म है। ऐसे में पाकिस्तान अमेरिका की योजनाओं के केंद्र में होगा। अमेरिका और तालिबान के बीच समझौता होने की स्थिति मे कश्मीर में आतंकी दस्तक की आशंका भी और गहरा जाएगी। आइएस भी यहां अपनी नजरें जमाए हुए है। ऐसे मोड़ पर कश्मीरियों को अलग-थलग करने के बजाय सरकार को उन्हें साथ लेकर चलने की जरूरत है।

पाकिस्तान के कब्जे वाले कश्मीर और उत्तरी हिस्सों को वापस लेने से जुड़ा भारत का मामला पुरी तरह विलय की संधि और संसद के दो संकल्पों पर टिका हुआ है। जम्मू-कश्मीर संविधान के अनुच्छेद चार के अनुसार, 'राज्य के शासक की संप्रभुता के अनुसार इसमें वे सभी क्षेत्र आते हैं जो 15 अगस्त, 1947 तक इसका हिस्सा रहे।' इसी तरह 1994 और 2012 के दो संकल्पों का भी यही सार है कि विभाजन का एकमात्र अधूरा एजेंडा जम्मू-कश्मीर के उन हिस्सों को वापस लेना है जो पाकिस्तान ने अवैध रूप से कब्जाए हुए हैं और जिन्हें उसने चीन को भी हस्तांतरित किया। मूल जम्मू-कश्मीर राज्य को समाप्त करने से ये दावे भी संदिग्ध हो जाते हैं। अब किसी द्विपक्षीय या बहुपक्षीय वार्ता में भारत यह दावा नहीं कर सकेगा कि वह विलय की संधि के अनुसार जम्मू-कश्मीर के सभी हिस्सी पर नियंत्रण चाहता है। जम्मू-कश्मीर पर मोदी सरकार के इस कदम से अंतरराष्ट्रीय मंचों पर भी भारत का पक्ष कमजोर हुआ है। यही वजह है कि लोकसभा में बहस के दौरान मैंने गृहमंत्री को बताया कि जम्मू-कश्मीर में ब्लैक एंड व्हाइट के बीच 'फिफ्टो शेडस ऑफ ग्रे' वाली

> (लेखक कांग्रेस के लोकसभा सदस्य एवं पूर्व केंद्रीय मंत्री हैं) response@jagran.com

भारत-चीन दोस्ती के बीच की दीवार

मसूद अजहर के समर्थक-संरक्षक की छवि से लैस होने और दुनिया भर में अपनी फजीहत कराने के बाद चीन कुछ समय पहले जब इस आतंकी सरगना पर पाबंदी के पक्ष में खड़ा हुआ था तो ऐसा लगा था कि अब वह भारत के प्रति सकारात्मक रवैये का परिचय देगा, लेकिन जम्मू-कश्मीर पर उसके हालिया रुख ने यही साबित किया कि उसकी पाकिस्तानपरस्ती कायम रहने वाली है। पाकिस्तान में निहित अपने हितों की रक्षा के लिए चीन किस तरह भारतीय हितों की अनदेखी करने को तैयार है, इसकी पुष्टि तब हुई जब बीते हफ्ते भारत से चीन गए पत्रकारों के एक समूह से चीनी विदेश मंत्रालय के एक अधिकारी ने कहा कि हम अनुच्छेद 370 हटाने को इसलिए ठीक नहीं मानते, क्योंकि हम भारत को नैतिक स्तर पर ऊंचे धरातल पर देखते हैं और यह चाहते हैं कि भारतीय नेतृत्व दक्षिण एशिया में शांति-सद्भाव कायम करने में सहायक बने। उन्होंने पंचशील सिद्धांत याद करते हुए यह शिकायत की कि भारत को एकतरफा फैसला नहीं लेना चाहिए था। उनके पास इस सवाल का कोई जवाब नहीं था कि चीन ने गिलगित-बाल्टिस्तान में पाकिस्तान की ओर से किए गए बदलाव का कोई संज्ञान क्यों नहीं लिया? वह यह भी स्पष्ट नहीं कर सके कि अनुच्छेद 370 हटाने का भारत का फैसला चीन की चिंता का कारण क्यों और कैसे है? सीमा विवाद सुलझाने में हो रही अनावश्यक देरी पर उन्होंने अवश्य यह कहा कि अगले दौर की वार्ता में ठोस प्रगति होने के आसार हैं, लेकिन वह यह नहीं बता सके कि यह बातचीत कब होगी? उनकी बातों से यह भी साफ हुआ कि भारत न्यूक्लियर सप्लायर ग्रुप की सदस्यता के लिए चीन से सहयोग की अपेक्षा न रखे। यह पहले से स्पष्ट है कि चीन पाकिस्तान के कब्जे वाले

कश्मीर में अपने द्वारा बनाए जा रहे गलियारे पर भारत की आपत्तियों का निस्तारण करने को तैयार नहीं है। इसके बावजूद वह यह चाहता है कि भारत यह ध्यान रखे कि लद्दाख को केंद्र शासित प्रदेश बनाने का फैसला उसकी संप्रभुता का उल्लंघन है। चीन यह तो चाहता है कि कश्मीर का समाधान अंतरराष्ट्रीय नियमों और खासकर संयुक्त राष्ट्र चार्टर के हिसाब से हो, लेकिन हांगकांग के मुद्दे को वह अपने हिसाब से हल करना चाह रहा है। इन दिनों चीन सरकार यह साबित करने की हरसंभव कोशिश कर रही है कि हांगकांग के प्रदर्शनकारी दंगाई हैं और वे आतंकियों सरीखा बर्ताव कर रहे हैं। सरकार नियंत्रित चीनी मीडिया भी यह सब साबित करने में कोई कसर नहीं छोड़ रहा है।



लेकिन चीन की तेज तरक्की से बहुत कुछ सीखा जा सकता है



13 अगस्त को अंग्रेजी अखबार चाइना डेली की पहली खबर थी-हांगकांग की अशांति में आतंक के निशान। इसी दिन इस अखबार के संपादकीय में लिखा गया कि अगर हांगकांग में हिंसा थमी नहीं तो जोरदार पलटवार के अलावा और कोई उपाय नही। हांगकांग में चीन के नियम लागू करने का हठ दिखा रहा यही चीनी नेतृत्व कश्मीर पर भारत को उपदेश दे रहा है और इस क्रम में इसकी सुध लेना जरूरी नहीं समझ रहा कि वह खुद उइगर मुसलमानों से किस तरह पेश आ रहा है? चीनी नीति-नियंताओं के रुख से जो स्पष्ट होता है वह यही कि चीन भारत से अपने लिए जैसे व्यवहार की अपेक्षा रखता है वैसा व्यवहार भारत से करने को तैयार नहीं।

चीन को भारत से तो यह अपेक्षा है कि वह उसे किसी और, खासकर पश्चिम की निगाह से न देखे, लेकिन वह खुद भारत को पाकिस्तान की निगाह से देखने की अपनी नीति छोड़ने को तैयार नहीं दिखता। वुहान में कायम समझबूझ को आगे बढ़ाने चीनी राष्ट्रपति भारत आने वाले हैं। उनकी यात्रा यह स्पष्ट करेगी कि चीन के पाकिस्तान प्रेम में कोई कमी आने वाली है या नहीं? इस यात्रा का नतीजा कुछ भी हो, भारत के प्रति चीन के आम लोगों का नजरिया अपनी सरकार से भिन्न दिखता है। चीनी नागरिक यिंदू यानी भारत को अपनी जैसी पुरातन संस्कृति वाला देश

मानते हैं। भगवान बुद्ध के कारण वे भारत को विशेष आदर की दृष्टि से देखते हैं। वे भारतीयों से मिलते समय उत्साह भी दिखाते हैं और अपनत्व भी। उनकी लोक कथाओं और कलाओं में बुद्ध के जीवन के नाना प्रसंग उपस्थित हैं। इन प्रसंगों का स्मरण विभिन्न चीनी ओपेरा में भी होता है। चीन रवींद्र नाथ टैगोर की स्मृतियों को भी अपने संग्रहालयों में संरक्षित किए हुए है। वहां के लोग भारत को अपनी जैसी विरासत वाला देश मानते हैं और शायद इसी कारण बीजिंग में दोनों देशों के बीच सांस्कृतिक आदान-प्रदान को इंगित करने वाला समारोह जिस मंच पर आयोजित हुआ वह चीन की दीवार और ताजमहल की छवि से लैस था।

इसमें दोराय नहीं कि भारत विकास के मामले में चीन को चुनौती देने के लिए कमर कस रहा है, लेकिन यह समझने की जरूरत है कि चीन कहीं आगे निकल गया है। बीजिंग और शंघाई जैसे शहर चीन की चमत्कारिक प्रगति को पुष्ट करते हैं। चीन न केवल ढांचागत परियोजनाओं को विशाल रूप देने, बल्कि उनका आनन-फानन निर्माण अपने बलबूते करने में पारंगत हो गया है। बतौर उदाहरण शंघाई बंदरगाह। दुनिया के इस सबसे बड़े बंदरगाह में हर सप्ताह 60 जहाज माल लाते-ले जाते हैं। आधुनिक तकनीक से लैस इस बंदरगाह को महज 256 लोग संचालित करते हैं। मजदूरों की संख्या घटती-बढ़ती रहती है, लेकिन वह कुछ दर्जन तक ही सीमित रहती है। शंघाई से इस बंदरगाह तक पहुंच के लिए समुद्र पर करीब 35 किमी लंबा पुल बना है। इसे महज चार साल में तैयार कर लिया गया था। चीन ने ऐसे कई करिश्मे किए हैं। आमतौर पर भारत में शंघाई को मुंबई जैसे शहर के तौर पर जाना जाता है, लेकिन सच यह है कि आमची मुंबई पीछे छट गई है। शंघाई न केवल अपनी भव्यता में अमेरिका और यूरोप के शहरों से टक्कर ले रहा है, बल्कि करीब ढाई करोड़ आबादी के बाद भी कहीं अधिक साफ-सुथरा और सुव्यवस्थित दिखता है। यही कारण है कि वह देशी-विदेशी पर्यटकों से गुलजार रहता है। चीन ने तेज विकास के साथ अपने लोगों को समृद्ध भी बनाया है और इसका प्रमाण बीजिंग, शंघाई के साथ-साथ दुनिया के सभी बड़े शहरों में चीनी पर्यटकों की बढ़ती संख्या से मिलता है। निःसंदेह चीन सरकार का भारत के प्रति रवैया दोनों देशों की दोस्ती में एक दीवार है, लेकिन चीन की तेज तरक्की से बहत कुछ सीखा जा सकता है और वह सीखा भी जाना चाहिए। (लेखक दैनिक जागरण में एसोसिएट एडीटर हैं)

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सफलता की कसौटी

19वीं सदी के फ्रांस के मशहूर उपन्यासकारों में गुस्ताव फ्लोबेर का नाम बड़े सम्मान से लिया जाता है उनके साहित्य ने दुनिया में अनेक लोगों को अपने सपनों को साकार करने के लिए अद्भुत रूप से प्रेरित किया है। मानव द्वारा देखे गए सपने और उनके साकार होने के संदर्भ में उनका यह कथन काफी प्रेरणादायी है, 'मैं यह पूरी तरह यकीन करता हूं कि यदि कोई व्यक्ति हमेशा आकाश की तरफ देखता रहे तो अंततः उसके शरीर में पंख लग सकते हैं।' इस कथन में छुपे हुए सारगर्भित संदेश का प्रत्यक्ष अभिप्राय यही है कि सपनों की दुनिया और हकीकत के संसार में केवल समय का फासला होता है। साथ ही इस दुनिया में इंसान द्वारा ताउम्र देखे गए सपने हर हाल में साकार होते हैं, लेकिन सच पूछिए तो सपने देखना भी आसान कार्य नहीं है और हर को सपने नहीं देख सकता है। आखिर हम सपने क्यों नहीं देख पाते हैं? दुनिया की विभिन्न विधाओं में कामयाब और महान पुरुषों के जीवन को संजीदगी से पढ़ें तो एक सच अपने संपूर्ण स्वरूप में हमारे सामने प्रकट हो जाता है और वह यह है कि सपने देखने के लिए कल्पनाशील मस्तिष्क के साथ-साथ सृजनशील प्रतिभा की उपस्थिति बहुत ही अनिवार्य है। इतना ही नहीं, जब हम खुद की प्रतिभा को पहचान नहीं पाते तो वैसी स्थिति में भी सपने देखने का कार्य संभव नहीं हो पाता है।

दुनिया में सपने को साकार करना तभी संभव नहीं होता है जब हम असफलता से डर जाते हैं। असफलता का भय महज सपनों को साकार करने से रोकता ही नहीं है, बल्कि सपने देखने की राह में भी एक बड़े अवरोध सरीखा कार्य करता है। प्रसिद्ध अमेरिकी व्यवसायी क्लेमेंट स्टोन जब यह कहते हैं कि चांद को छूने का लक्ष्य रखो. यदि आप इसमें असफल हो भी जाते हैं तो भी आपको सितारों को हासिल करने से कोई नहीं रोक सकता है। आशय यही है कि जीवन में कामयाबी सपने देखने से हासिल होती है और सपने देखने के लिए आत्मविश्वास सबसे बड़ी कसौटी है। असली सपने वही होते हैं जो आपको सक्रिय रखते हैं।

श्रीप्रकाश शर्मा

'उमराव जान' में जान डालने वाले खय्याम

भारतीय सिनेमा के दिग्गज संगीतकार मोहम्मद जहर खय्याम हाशमी का सोमवार को निधन हो गया। कम ही लोगों को पता होगा कि खय्याम ने अपने फिल्मी करियर के पहले पांच साल शर्मा जी के नाम से संगीत दिया था। 18 फरवरी, 1927 को पंजाब में जन्मे खय्याम के परिवार का फिल्मों से दूर-दर तक कोई नाता नहीं था, लेकिन उस दौर के कई नौजवानों की तरह खय्याम पर केएल सहगल का नशा था। वे उन्हीं की तरह गायक और एक्टर बनना चाहते थे। इसी जुनून के चलते वे छोटी उम्र में घर से भागकर दिल्ली आ गए। घर में खूब नाराजगी हुई, लेकिन फिर बात इस पर आकर टिकी कि पंडित हुसनलाल-भगतराम की शागिर्दी में वे संगीत सीखेंगे। कुछ समय बाद वे किस्मत आजमाने मुंबई चले गए, पर जल्द समझ में आया कि अभी सीखना बाकी है। संगीत सीखने की चाह उन्हें दिल्ली से लाहौर बाबा चिश्ती (संगीतकार गुलाम अहमद चिश्ती) के पास ले गई। लाहौर तब फिल्मों का गढ़ हुआ करता था। खय्याम ने कई संगीतकारों की तुलना में कम काम किया, लेकिन जितना भी किया बेमिसाल

माना जाता है। फिर चाहे आखिरी मुलाकात

का दर्द लिए फिल्म बाजार का गाना-'देख लो

फिर से

खय्याम ने १९४७ में शुरू हुए अपने फिल्मी करियर के पहले पांच साल शर्मा जी के नाम से संगीत दिया था

आज हमको जी भरके' हो। या उमराव जान में प्यार के अहसास से भरा गाना हो 'जिंदगी जब भी तेरी बज्म में लाती है मुझे, ये जमीं चांद से बेहतर नजर आती है हमें...।'

खय्याम के फिल्मी सफर की बात करें तो उन्होंने 1947 में अपना सफर शुरु किया हीर रांझा से। रोमियो जूलियट जैसी फिल्मों में संगीत दिया और गाना भी गाया। 1950 में फिल्म बीवी के गाने 'अकेले में वो घबराते तो होंगे' से लोगों ने उन्हें जाना जो रफी ने गाया था। 1953 में आई फुटपाथ से खय्याम को पहचान मिलने लगी और उसके बाद तो ये सिलसिला चल निकला। 1958 में फिल्म 'फिर सुबह होगी' में मुकेश के साथ 'वो सुबह कभी तो आएगी' बनाया, 1961 में फिल्म 'शोला और शबनम' में रफी के साथ 'जाने

क्या ढूंढती रहती हैं ये आंखें मुझमें रचा' तो 1966 की फिल्म 'आखिरी खत' में लता के साथ 'बहारों मेरा जीवन भी सवारो' लेकर आए। खय्याम ने 70 और 80 के दशक में कभी-कभी, त्रिशूल, खानदान, नूरी, थोड़ी सी बेवफाई, दर्द, आहिस्ता आहिस्ता, दिल-ए-नादान, बाजार, रजिया सुल्तान जैसी फिल्मों में एक से बढ़कर एक गाने दिए। यहां साहिर लुधियानवी की शायरी में डूबा और खय्याम के संगीत में निखरा कभी-कभी का एक एक गीत याद आता है-'मैं पल दो पल का शायर हूं.../ कल और आएंगे नगमों की खिलती कलियां चुनने वाले/मुझसे बेहतर कहने वाले तुमसे बेहतर सुनने वाले/कल कोई मुझको याद करे, क्यों कोई मुझको याद करे/मसरूफ जमाना मेरे लिए, क्यूं वक्त अपना बर्बाद करे/मैं पल दो पल का शायर हूं...।'

खय्याम भले ही संगीत प्रेमियों से जुदा हो गए हों, पर बहुत सारे संगीत प्रेमियों के लिए वाकई उनसे बेहतर कहने वाला कोई नहीं होगा। वह दौर जिसे हिंदी फिल्म संगीत का गोल्डन युग कहा जाता है, उसके अंतिम धागों से जुड़ी एक और डोर खय्याम के जाने से टूट गई है। (साभार : बीबीसी में वंदना)

सार्थक फैसले पर निरर्थक बहस क्यों?

समावेशी विकास की दिशा में सार्थक कदम शीर्षक से लिखे अपने आलेख में उपराष्ट्रपति एम वेंकैया नायड ने कश्मीर मुद्दे को भारत का आंतरिक मामला बताते हुए अनुच्छेद-370 एवं 35-ए को हटाने संबंधी प्रधानमंत्री नरेंद्र मोदी के सार्थक फैसले पर होने वाली बहस को जिस तरह से निरर्थक बताया है, वह उचित है। वस्तुतः इस मुद्दे पर वही लोग अपनी असहमति का राग अलाप रहे हैं जो कश्मीरियत को भारत की संस्कृति से अलग बताकर कश्मीर को भारत का हिस्सा मानने में संकोच करते थे। जबकि महर्षि कश्यप की साधना स्थली कश्मीर पर शासन करने वाले भारतीय राजाओं का एक लंबा इतिहास है। भारत में विलय से पहले भी कश्मीर रियासत पर भारतीय राजा हरि सिंह का शासन था। ऐसे में आजाद भारत में अस्थायी अनुच्छेद-370 के द्वारा मुस्लिम बहुल कश्मीर को विशिष्ट बना देना एक सोची-समझी साजिश का हिस्सा था। जिस पर विभिन्न दलों के नेताओं ने समय-समय पर अपनी प्रतिक्रिया व्यक्त करके इसे हटाने की पुरजोर मांग भी की थी, लेकिन पिछले 72 वर्षों में कोई भी केंद्र सरकार अनुच्छेद-370 पर वैसा साहसिक निर्णय नहीं ले सकी जैसा वर्तमान मोदी सरकार ने ले लिया है। जबिक भारत के शासन-तंत्र को नेहरू शासन की इस ऐतिहासिक भूल को बहुत पहले सुधार लेना चाहिए था, लेकिन आज देश खुश है, क्योंकि अब भारत को राष्ट्रीय एकता के सूत्र में बांधने वाला एक विधान-एक निशान कश्मीर से लेकर कन्याकुमारी तक लागू हो चुका है। इससे पहले अनुच्छेद-370 के कारण भारत के बहुत से कानून कश्मीर में लागू नहीं हो पाते थे, इससे देश का एक महत्वपूर्ण राज्य न केवल देश की विकास योजनाओं से वंचित रहता था, अपितु शेष भारत से उसका जुड़ाव भी नहीं

मेलबाक्स

हो पाता था। इस दृष्टि से मोदी सरकार की इस राष्ट्रहितैषी सार्थक पहल पर अब किसी तरह की निरर्थक बहस का कोई औचित्य नहीं है।

डॉ. वीपी पाण्डेय, अलीगढ़

पीओके भारत का हिस्सा

भारत के परमाणु हथियार मोदी प्रशासन में सुरक्षित नहीं हैं, पाक प्रधानमंत्री इमरान खान द्वारा दिया गया एक निरर्थक, स्तरहीन और बचकाना बयान से ज्यादा कुछ नहीं है, क्योंकि अमेरिकी दौरे के दौरान इमरान ने खुद माना था कि उनके देश में 30 से 40 हजार आतंकवादी हैं। इस बयान से स्पष्ट है कि किस देश के परमाणु हथियार सुरक्षित हाथों में नहीं है। भारत विश्व का सबसे जिम्मेदार एवं परिपक्व लोकतांत्रिक देश है, लेकिन जैसे ही भारत सरकार ने जम्मू कश्मीर से अनुच्छेद 370 को हटाया मानो पाक का मानसिक संतुलन ही बिगड़ गया है। पाक द्वारा राजनयिक रिश्ते तोड़ना, कला-संस्कृति और भारतीय चैनल्स के प्रसारण पर रोक से आमजन में सरकार के प्रति जबरदस्त रोष व्याप्त हो गया है। वही अंतरराष्ट्रीय स्तर पर चीन को छोड़ संयुक्त राष्ट्र सुरक्षा परिषद समेत मुस्लिम बहुल देशों का साथ न मिलने से पाक की किरकिरी हुई है। पाक द्वारा भारत से परमाणु युद्ध के खतरे का भय दिखा कर विश्व बिरादरी के समक्ष दुष्प्रचार को बंद करना होगा। सर्वविदित है कि 1950 से लेकर आज तक पाक अधिकृत कश्मीर की 24 विधानसभा सीटों को जम्मू कश्मीर विधानसभा में खाली छोड़ा जाता है, क्योंकि पाक अधिकृत कश्मीर जम्मू कश्मीर का ही अभिन्न

अंग था, है और हमेशा रहेगा। जिस पर पाक ने जबरदस्ती

70 साल पहले कब्जा किया था, हर हाल में उसे भारत को लौटाना ही होगा।

दीपक गौतम, सोनीपत

शक्ति का दुरुपयोग

चाहे मसूद अजहर को वैश्विक आतंकी घोषित करने की बात हो या फिर हांगकांग में लोकतंत्र की बहाली, चीन हमेशा अपने सुपर पावर को दिखाता रहा है। उसने संयुक्त राष्ट्र संघ में कश्मीर का मामला उठा तो दिया, लेकिन जब कोई देश हांगकांग का मामला उठता है तो वह उसे धमकाता है। इसने जुन 1989 में बीजिंग स्थित थ्येन आनमन चौक पर लोकतंत्र समर्थकों पर टैंक चढ़वा दिया था, जिसमे सैकड़ों लोग मारे गए थे। उनका दोष केवल इतना था कि वे लोकतंत्र की मांग कर रहे थे। लेकिन चीन को यह मांग नागवार गुजरी और उसने क्रूरता की सारी हदें पार कर दी कश्मीर में ऐसा कुछ भी नहीं है फिर भी चीन इस मामले को वैश्विक मुद्दा बनाने की कोशिश कर रहा है। ऐसा कर वह भारत की छवि खराब करने में लगा हुआ है।

नीरज कुमार पाठक, नोएडा

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

इन्स्ता

प्रकार के स्थान के खिलाफ पाकिस्तान ने जिस तरह के भड़काऊ और गैर-जिम्मेदाराना बयान दिए हैं, वे क्षेत्रीय शांति के लिए बड़े खतरे का संकेत हैं। भारत ने अमेरिका को यह बात साफ तौर पर कह दी है। सोमवार को अमेरिका के राष्ट्रपति डोनाल्ड ट्रंप के साथ फोन पर आधे घंटे की बातचीत में प्रधानमंत्री नरेंद्र मोदी ने पाकिस्तान का नाम लिए बिना साफ कह दिया कि जम्मू-कश्मीर का विशेष राज्य का दर्जा खत्म कर देने के भारत के फैसले के बाद पड़ोस के कुछ नेताओं की बयानबाजी से माहौल बिगड़ा है। दरअसल, पिछले कुछ दिनों में जिस तरह के घटनाक्रम सामने आए हैं वे इस बात का स्पष्ट संकेत हैं कि कश्मीर मसले पर पाकिस्तान कुछ न कुछ ऐसा करता रहेगा जिससे वैश्विक नेताओं की नींद भी उड़ी रहेगी। ट्रंप की भारत के प्रधानमंत्री के साथ फोन पर बातचीत इस बात का संकेत है कि कश्मीर मसले को लेकर अमेरिका भी चिंतित है और अनुच्छेद 370 को निष्प्रभावी कर दिए जाने के भारत के फैसले के साथ है। फोन-वार्ता की कूटनीति तब शुरू हुई जब पिछले शुक्रवार को अनुच्छेद 370 को बेअसर किए जाने के मामले को सुरक्षा परिषद में ले जाने के ठीक पहले पाकिस्तान के प्रधानमंत्री ने अमेरिकी राष्ट्रपति को फोन किया था और उनसे समर्थन मांगा था।

लेकिन पाकिस्तान का यह पैंतरा उस पर ही उलटा पड़ गया है। ट्रंप ने भारत के प्रधानमंत्री के साथ बात करने के बाद इमरान खान को फोन कर नसीहत दी कि भारत के खिलाफ जो भी बोलें, संभल कर बोलें। हालांकि यह देखने वाली बात है कि इमरान खान ट्रंप की कितनी सुनते हैं और कितना उस पर अमल करते हैं। इस वक्त पाकिस्तान जिस तरह से बौखलाया हुआ है वह उसकी हताशा का परिचायक है। सुरक्षा परिषद में भी पाकिस्तान ने चीन की मदद से जो दांव चला था, उसमें भी वह पिट गया है। इससे भी उसकी बौखलाहट बढ़ना स्वाभाविक है। यह पहले ही स्पष्ट था कि सुरक्षा परिषद का दरवाजा खटखटाने से पाकिस्तान को कुछ हासिल नहीं होने वाला, लेकिन वह इसे ही अपनी कामयाबी बता कर खुश है कि उसने कश्मीर मुद्दे का अंतरराष्ट्रीयकरण कर दिया है। हालांकि दुनिया हकीकत समझ रही है, इसीलिए चीन को छोड़ कर कोई भी देश, यहां तक कि इस्लामी देशों का संगठन (ओआइसी) भी उसके साथ नहीं है।

ट्रंप के साथ बातचीत में प्रधानमंत्री मोदी ने साफ कर दिया है कि पाकिस्तान किसी बड़ी साजिश को अंजाम दे सकता है। पाकिस्तान का अब तक जो चरित्र और रिकार्ड रहा है, उसे देखते हुए ऐसी शंकाओं को खारिज भी नहीं किया जा सकता। तीन दशकों से ज्यादा समय से वह सीमापार आतंकवाद जारी रखे हुए है। छह अगस्त को इमरान खान ने कहा था कि पुलवामा जैसे हमले हो सकते हैं, फिर पंद्रह अगस्त को यह कह दिया कि कश्मीर की वजह से युद्ध हुआ तो विश्व जिम्मेदार होगा। पाकिस्तान की छटपटाहट अब इस बात को लेकर ज्यादा है कि कश्मीर मसले पर उसकी कूटनीतिक चालें धरी रह गईं और जिस तरह वह दुनिया को गुमराह करना चाह रहा था, उसमें उसे निराशा हाथ लगी। इसके अलावा, भारत के प्रधानमंत्री से फोन पर बात करने के बाद टुंप ने इमरान खान को फोन कर संयम बरतने की जो नसीहत दी, उसका मतलब पाकिस्तान अच्छी तरह समझ रहा है। जम्मू-कश्मीर के विशेष दर्जे को खत्म करना भारत का अंदरूनी मामला है, इसमें पाकिस्तान को किसी भ्रम में नहीं रहना चाहिए। अब सभ्य पड़ोसी होने के नाते उसे सबसे पहले सीमापार आतंकवाद बंद करना होगा। यही बात ट्रंप ने उसे समझाने की कोशिश की है।

संजीदगी का संगीत

गुही है कि संगीत की दुनिया में शब्दों को अपनी धुनों से जिंदगी देने वाले मोहम्मद जहूर खय्याम हाशमी अकेले शख्य नहीं थे। लेकिन अपने जीते-जी उन्होंने इस मामले में जितना और जैसा दिया, उसने न केवल उन गीतों को अमर कर दिया, बल्कि खुद उन्हें भी संगीत के हर पल दर्ज हो रहे इतिहास के पन्नों पर शानदार अक्षरों में दर्ज कर दिया। संगीत को अगर सुकून की शक्ल में कहीं खोजा जाएगा तो वहां खय्याम की धुनों से लैस शब्दों वाले गीतों का सहारा लेना किसी भी संगीत से मुहब्बत करने वालों की मजबूरी होगी। हालांकि मजबूरी कोई अच्छी बात नहीं है, लेकिन खय्याम की धुनों की पनाह में जाकर वहां उठी लहरों में डूबते-उतरते हुए कोई इंसान शायद खुद को निहाल हुआ महसूस करे। यह दिलचस्प है कि संगीत की दुनिया में जोर-आजमाइश करने से पहले खय्याम ने दूसरे विश्वयुद्ध के दौरान एक सिपाही के तौर पर काम किया था। यानी यह माना जा सकता है कि गोलीबारी, धमाकों और तबाही से दो-चार दुनिया की त्रासदी और उसका हासिल देख लेने के बाद उन्होंने जिंदगी का रास्ता चुना और उसमें संगीत के जरिए अलग-अलग रंग भरे, जिसने अपने हर सुनने वाले को अपना हिस्सा बनाया!

दरअसल, पंजाब में एक पारंपरिक जीवन-शैली वाले परिवार में जन्मे खय्याम ने किशोरावस्था पार करने के बाद जब सामने की दुनिया को देखना शुरू किया तो उस दौर में उन पर गायक और अभिनेता बनने का सुरूर चढ़ा। इसी जुनून ने उन्हें घर की दीवारों से आजाद कर दिया और फिर वे पहले दिल्ली और बाद में मुंबई पहुंच गए। लेकिन अभिनय के शौक से शुरू हुई बात आखिर संगीत सीखने तक पहुंची और फिर वही उनका सफर बन गया। फिल्मी दुनिया के अपने शुरुआती दिनों में खय्याम संगीतकार रहमान के साथ मिल कर संगीत तैयार करते थे और उनकी जोड़ी का नाम शर्मा जी और वर्मा जी था। लेकिन बाद में रहमान पाकिस्तान चले गए और फिर खय्याम ने अपने बूते संगीत की दुनिया में अपनी जगह बनाई। 1947 में 'हीर रांझा' से अपना सफर शुरू करने वाले खय्याम बाद के दिनों में 'रोमियो जूलियट' से आगे बढ़ते हुए 'कभी-कभी' और 'उमराव जान' जैसी फिल्मों तक पहुंचे, जिन्होंने उन्हें ऐसी ऊंचाई पर खड़ा कर दिया जो अब हमेशा उनकी जगह बनी रहेगी। इसके अलावा, सत्तर और अस्सी के दशक के दौरान 'त्रिशूल', 'खानदान', 'नूरी', 'थोड़ी-सी बेवफाई', 'दर्द', 'आहिस्ता–आहिस्ता', 'दिल–ए–नादान', 'बाजार', 'रजिया सुल्तान' जैसी फिल्में उनकी धुनों में मौजूद जिंदगी की गवाह हैं।

हालांकि एक समय यह कहा जाता था कि खय्याम एक बहुत बदिकस्मत इंसान हैं, जिनका संगीत हिट तो होता है, मगर जुबली के मोर्चे पर कामयाब नहीं हो पाता। लेकिन उसी दौर में उन्होंने 'कभी-कभी' का संगीत तैयार किया और अपने से जुड़ गई इस बेमानी धारणा को भी तोड़ दिया। इस फिल्म के गीत आज अपनी धुनों की वजह से कैसा असर रखते हैं, यह शायद अलग से बताने की जरूरत नहीं है। 'पद्मभूषण' से सम्मानित हो चुके खय्याम को 'उमराव जान' में बेहतरीन संगीत के लिए राष्ट्रीय फिल्म पुरस्कार दिया गया और वे संगीत नाटक अकादमी सम्मान से भी नवाजे गए। अपने संगीत में संजीदगी और गहराई का जादू उतारने वाले खय्याम की शख्सियत का एक खास पहलू यह भी था कि उन्होंने अपनी जिंदगी भर की कमाई को एक ऐसे ट्रस्ट के नाम करने का ऐलान किया था, जो जरूरतमंद कलाकारों की मदद करता है। जाहिर है, एक शानदार संगीतकार और बेहद संजीदा इंसान के तौर पर सबके बीच मौजूद रहे खय्याम की कमी अब संगीत से मुहब्बत करने वाले हर शख्स को महसूस होगी।

कल्पमधा

नशा तात्कालिक आत्महत्या है। उसका सुख सिर्फ नकारात्मक है, दुख का क्षण भर भूलना। -बर्टेंड रसल

मंदी की आहट और उपाय

जयंतीलाल भंडारी

पिछले एक वर्ष के दौरान वैश्विक आर्थिक रफ्तार मंद पड़ने के कारण भारत में भी आर्थिक मंदी का जो असर शुरू हुआ, वह अब ज्यादातर क्षेत्रों को अपनी चपेट में ले चुका है। इसका देश की अर्थव्यवस्था पर प्रतिकूल प्रभाव पड़ रहा है। आट अगस्त को भारतीय रिजर्व बैंक ने वैश्विक सुस्ती के मद्देनजर वर्ष 2019-20 के लिए विकास दर का अनुमान घटा कर 6.9 फीसद कर दिया है। अन्य रेटिंग एजेंसियों

ने भी विकास दर घटने की रिपोर्टें दी हैं।

प्र छले महीने विश्व बैंक ने दुनिया की अर्थव्यवस्थाओं के आकार के आधार पर जो रिपोर्ट जारी है, उसके अनुसार ब्रिटेन और फ्रांस ने पिछले साल भारत को पीछे कर दिया है। इस रिपोर्ट के अनुसार भारत 2017 में दुनिया की पांचवीं सबसे बड़ी अर्थव्यवस्था वाला देश था। अब भारत सातर्वे स्थान पर आ गया है। अर्थव्यवस्था के आकार के आधार पर अमेरिका सबसे बड़ी अर्थव्यवस्था वाला देश है। दसरे स्थान पर चीन, तीसरे पर जापान, चौथे पर जर्मनी, पांचवें पर ब्रिटेन और छठे स्थान पर फ्रांस है। वर्ष 2017 में भारत की अर्थव्यवस्था का आकार 2.65 लाख करोड़ डॉलर था, जबकि ब्रिटेन 2.64 लाख करोड़ डॉलर और फ्रांस 2.59 लाख करोड डॉलर की अर्थव्यवस्था वाले देश थे। साल 2018 में ब्रिटेन की अर्थव्यवस्था का आकार 2.82 लाख करोड डॉलर और फ्रांस की अर्थव्यवस्था का आकार 2.78 लाख करोड़ डॉलर हो गया है, जबिक

भारत की अर्थव्यवस्था का आकार 2.73 लाख करोड डॉलर रहा। स्थिति यह रही कि 2018 में भारतीय अर्थव्यवस्था की तुलना में ब्रिटेन और फ्रांस की अर्थव्यवस्था तेजी से आगे बढी।

निश्चित रूप से वर्ष 2018 की विश्व बैंक रिपोर्ट में भारतीय अर्थव्यवस्था का पिछड़ना चिंताजनक है। पिछले साल देश के आर्थिक परिदृश्य पर तेजी से बढ़ती हुई चार अहम आर्थिक चुनौतियां संपूर्ण अर्थव्यवस्था को चिंतित करती दिखाई दीं। एक, कच्चे तेल की बढ़ती कीमतों ने आर्थिक संकट को बढ़ाया। दूसरा, डॉलर की तुलना में रुपए की कीमत में करीब बीस फीसद की वृद्धि हुई। रुपए की तुलना में अमेरिकी डॉलर का मूल्य सत्तर रुपए पर पहुंच गया। परिणामस्वरूप रुपए की घटती हुई कीमत और महंगाई बढने से अर्थव्यवस्था की परेशानियां बढीं। तीन, देश का राजकोषीय घाटा तेजी से बढ़ा और

चार, आयात बढ़ने और निर्यात पर्याप्त नहीं बढ़ने से विदेशी मुद्रा कोष में कमी आई। यह उल्लेखनीय है कि केंद्रीय सांख्यिकी कार्यालय (सीएसओ) द्वारा जारी सकल घरेलू उत्पाद (जीडीपी) के आंकड़ों के अनुसार वित्त वर्ष 2018-19 में निवेश में कमी, विनिर्माण क्षेत्र की धीमी वृद्धि और कृषि क्षेत्र में कमजोरी से पूरे वित्त वर्ष के लिए जीडीपी 6.8 फीसद रह गई। ऑटोमोबाइल क्षेत्र में भी स्थिति निराशाजनक रही। इन्हीं कारणों से अर्थव्यवस्था की गति सुस्त रही। पिछले एक वर्ष के दौरान वैश्विक

आर्थिक रफ्तार मंद पड़ने के कारण भारत में भी आर्थिक मंदी का जो असर शुरू हुआ, वह अब ज्यादातर क्षेत्रों को अपनी चपेट में ले चुका है। इसका देश की अर्थव्यवस्था पर प्रतिकल प्रभाव पड़ रहा है। आठ अगस्त को भारतीय रिजर्व बैंक ने वैश्विक सुस्ती के मद्देनजर वर्ष 2019-20 के लिए विकास दर का अनुमान घटा कर 6.9 फीसद कर दिया है। अन्य रेटिंग एजेंसियों ने भी विकास दर घटने की रिपोर्टें दी हैं। रेटिंग एजेंसी क्रिसिल ने चालू वित्त वर्ष 2019-20 के लिए आर्थिक विकास

क्रिसिल ने मंदी को प्रमुख कारण बताया है। गौरतलब है कि जीएसटी लागू होने के बाद उत्पन्न समस्याओं से भी भारतीय अर्थव्यवस्था की मुश्किलें बढ़ी हैं। बीती 30 जुलाई को भारत के नियंत्रक एवं महालेखा परीक्षक (सीएजी) ने संसद में 2017-18 के लिए वस्तु एवं सेवा कर (जीएसटी)

दर का अनुमान 7.2 फीसद से घटा कर सात

फीसद कर दिया है। विकास दर में कमी के लिए

पर पेश अपनी रिपोर्ट में कहा कि जीएसटी संबंधी खामियों के कारण पहले साल के दौरान जीएसटी कर संग्रह काफी कम रहा। इस रिपोर्ट में कहा गया कि जीएसटी लागू होने के बाद इससे केंद्र के राजस्व (पेट्रोलियम और तंबाकू पर केंद्रीय उत्पाद कर छोड़ कर) में वित्त वर्ष 2016-17 की तुलना में 2017-18 के दौरान दस फीसद गिरावट दर्ज की गई। सीएजी ने रिपोर्ट में राजस्व विभाग, केंद्रीय अप्रत्यक्ष कर एवं सीमा शुल्क बोर्ड (सीबीआईसी) और जीएसटी नेटवर्क की असफलताएं रेखांकित कीं। रिपोर्ट में कहा गया कि रिटर्न व्यवस्था और तकनीकी व्यवधान की जटिलता की वजह से बिल मिलान, रिफंड के ऑटोजनरेशन और जीएसटी कर अनुपालन व्यवस्था संबंधी भारी किमयां सामने आई हैं।

भारतीय अर्थव्यवस्था के पिछड़ कर सातवें स्थान पर आने के बाद सरकार के सामने सबसे पहली



चुनौती अर्थव्यवस्था को रफ्तार देने की है। आर्थिक वद्धि को पटरी पर लाने के लिए सरकार को नई रणनीति बनाना होगी। नई रणनीति के तहत आर्थिक वृद्धि को बढ़ाने के लिए बुनियादी ढांचे पर खर्च बढ़ाना होगा, वैश्विक कारोबार में वृद्धि करनी होगी, करों और जीएसटी को सरल तथा प्रभावी बनाना होगा, श्रम सधारों को लाग किया जाना होगा और ज्यादा प्रत्यक्ष विदेशी निवेश की आवक सुनिश्चित करनी होगी।

अर्थव्यवस्था को गति देने के लिए निर्यात पर खास ध्यान देने की जरूरत है। पिछले वित्त वर्ष 2018-19 में भारत का निर्यात नौ फीसद बढ कर तीन सौ इकतीस अरब डॉलर पर पहुंच गया था, यद्यपि निर्यात का यह रिकॉर्ड स्तर है लेकिन निर्यात के तीन सौ पचास अरब डॉलर के लक्ष्य से कम ही है। इसी तरह पिछले वित्त वर्ष में देश का आयात भी करीब नौ फीसद बढ कर पांच सौ सात अरब डॉलर

मुल्य का रहा। ज्ञातव्य है कि जीएसपी व्यवस्था के तहत अमेरिका विकासशील लाभार्थी देश के उत्पादों को अमेरिका में बिना आयात शुल्क प्रवेश की अनुमति देकर उसके आर्थिक विकास को बढ़ावा देता है। इसी परिप्रेक्ष्य में भारत को वर्ष 1976 से जीएसपी व्यवस्था के तहत करीब दो हजार उत्पादों को शुल्क मुक्त रूप से अमेरिका में भेजने की अनुमित मिली हुई थी। अमेरिका से मिली व्यापार छूट के तहत भारत से किए जाने वाले करीब 5.6 अरब डॉलर यानी चालीस हजार करोड़ रुपए के निर्यात पर कोई शुल्क नहीं लगता था। आंकड़े बता रहे हैं कि जीएसपी के तहत तरजीही के कारण अमेरिका को जितने राजस्व का नुकसान होता है, उसका एक चौथाई भारतीय निर्यातकों को प्राप्त होता था।

इसमें कोई दो राय नहीं है कि वैश्विक मंदी और निर्यात की चुनौतियों के बीच निर्यात मौकों को

मुट्टियों में लेने के लिए हमें रणनीति के साथ आगे बढना होगा। देश में निर्यातकों को सस्ती दरों और समय पर कर्ज दिलाने की व्यवस्था सुनिश्चित की जानी होगी। पिछले कुछ सालों में निर्यात कर्ज का हिस्सा कम हुआ है। ऐसे में किफायती दरों पर कर्ज दिया जाना जरूरी है। इसके अलावा सरकार को अन्य देशों की गैर शुल्कीय बाधाएं, मुद्रा का उतार-चढ़ाव और सेवा कर जैसे निर्यात को प्रभावित करने वाले मुद्दों से निपटने की रणनीति पर चलना होगा। कर प्रक्रियाओं को सहज बनाना आवश्यक है। निर्यातकों को टैक्स क्रेडिट मुहैया कराने के पहले अत्यधिक जांच-परख से बचाना होगा। इसके अलावा निर्यातकों की

जीएसटी रिफंड संबंधी कठिनाइयों को दूर करना होगा और ब्याज सब्सिडी बहाल करनी होगी।

अर्थव्यवस्था को रफ्तार देने के लिए उपभोग और क्रय शक्ति बढ़ाने जैसे कदम उठाने होंगे। बाजार और अर्थव्यवस्था के लिए आर्थिक और वित्तीय नीतियों में निरंतरता की जरूरत है। ऐसे में कर्ज बाजार के दबाव को दूर करना सरकार और आरबीआइ का एजेंडा होना चाहिए। वैश्विक मंदी के बीच रोजगार बढाना भी सरकार के लिए बड़ी चनौती है। अगर रोजगार के मौके पैदा नहीं होंगे तो अर्थव्यवस्था गति नहीं पकड पाएगी। मंदी की वजह से ज्यादातर क्षेत्रों में नौकरियों का संकट खडा हो गया है। भारत में यह संकट सबसे ज्यादा ऑटोमोबाइल उद्योग में गहराया हुआ है। ऐसे में उद्योगों को बचाने और उन्हें रफ्तार देने के लिए ठोस रणनीति बनानी होगी। तभी अर्थव्यवस्था पटरी पर लौट पाएगी।

सिमटते संसार का दुख

अंबालिका

अगजकल सुबह-सुबह चाय की चुस्की और अखबार के पन्ने पलटते हुए भी हम अपने साथ अपना स्मार्टफोन जरूर रखे रहते हैं। इस चक्कर में होता यह है कि अखबार में कुछ पढ़ते हुए हम कई बार खुद को उस सामग्री में एकाग्र नहीं कर पाते हैं या उसे गंभीरता से नहीं पढ़ पाते हैं। वजह यह कि हर कुछ देर में हमारे फोन में नोटिफिकेशन यानी किसी संदेश की घंटी बजती रहती है और हम उसे देखने के मामले को जरा देर के भी नहीं टालते। तरह-तरह के ऐप और सोशल वेबसाइट को साथ लिए स्मार्टफोन तड़के ही हमसे थोड़ी ज्यादा ही तेजी की मांग करता हुआ चेतावनी जैसी कोई सूचना दे देता है। फेसबुक, वाट्सऐप पर सुबह के स्वागत के संदेश मिलने लगते हैं। अब उसे देखने के बाद आप चाहें या न चाहें, प्रत्यत्तर देना शिष्टता का तकाजा है। इन संदेशों का सिलिसला सप्ताहांत में ज्यादा होता है, मानो किसी कंपनी के कर्मचारी को अपना लक्ष्य पूरा करना हो। बात त्योहारों की कीजिए तो बला का तुफान लाती हैं। ये वेबसाइट। होली से लेकर दिवाली मुबारक तक सारे रिश्ते अकेले ही निभा लेते हैं ये स्मार्टफोन और इसमें

टिके गिने-चुने संदेशवाहक या संप्रेषण ऐप।

खैर, दुनिया की जो जरूरत है, सो है। अब तकनीक के जमाने में बैलगाडी की बात तो नहीं की जा सकती न! एक मंच पर आने की होड में चीजों का सामान्यीकरण होना भी स्वाभाविक है। लेकिन बात तब दुखद हो जाती है, जब तकनीक के प्रभाव में आकर मानव-स्वभाव ही बदलने लगे। इंसान होने का मूल धर्म ही अगर मशीनों की बलि चढ़ जाए तो

उत्तर भविष्य की कल्पना का दुनिया मेरे आगे आधार क्या हो? मानवता का जन्म एक दूसरे के साथ मिल

कर रहने के लिए हुआ है। मनुष्य प्रेम, दया, ममता, परोपकार आदि भावनाओं का चलता-फिरता रूप है। एक दूसरे के दुख-सुख में साथ रहना, कठिनाइयों में हिम्मत बढ़ाना, मिल-बांट कर जीना-ये मानव धर्म है। पास बैठा कोई व्यक्ति अगर रो रहा हो तो उसके आंसू पोंछना, राह चलते कोई गिर गया हो तो उसे सहारा देना जैसे न जाने कितने ही पर्याय हैं जो मनुष्य के हिस्से में प्रकृति की देन हैं।

लेकिन आज मनुष्य खुद को ही खोता जा रहा है तो वह औरों की मदद भला क्या करे! फेसबुक, वाट्सऐप का 'भूत' लोगों के सिर चढ़ कर बोल रहा है। लोग आसपास की दुनिया से कटते जा रहे हैं।

कोई गिरता हो गिरे, कोई रोता हो रोए, किसी को फर्क नहीं पड़ता। बाहर रास्तों में, बाजार में, बस स्टॉप पर या किसी भी सार्वजनिक जगह पर, यहां तक कि दफ्तर में समय मिलने पर आज लोग फोन को ही अपनी दुनिया बना बैठे हैं। कोई अनहोनी हो जाए तो उसे भी कैमरे की गिरफ्त में लेकर तूरंत सोशल मीडिया पर साझा करना लोगों का काम बन गया है। इस माजरे को आखिर क्या नाम दिया जाए? ये कैसी 'स्मार्टनेस' है जो लोगों को

लोगों से दूर किए जा रही है!

किसी कोने में बैठ कर फोन

को देखते रहना, ये किस युग में जी रहे हैं हम लोग? हथेली में टिके और अंगुली के स्पर्श भर से चलने वाले स्मार्टफोन का उपयोग सही हो या गलत, इसका जिम्मा फोन कंपनी नहीं ले सकती। यह व्यक्ति की व्यावहारिक बुद्धि तय करती है। प्रश्न उठता है कि क्या आज का मनुष्य इतनी बुद्धि को अपने ऊपर हावी रखता है कि वह सोशल वेबसाइटों का गलत और गैरजिम्मेदार प्रयोग न करे? उत्तर बहुत सीधा है- हां, बिल्कुल। मनुष्य अवश्य इतना परिपक्व और जिम्मेदार है कि उसे सही-गलत का फर्क मालुम हो। तब फिर समस्या कहां है? क्यों सोशल वेबसाइटों को लोग सांप्रदायिक, धार्मिक, अनैतिक अटकलों का मंच बना

रहे हैं? क्यों सोशल मीडिया पर 'साइबर क्राइम' हो रहे हैं? इन मसलों पर चिंतन जरूरी है।

ये स्मार्टफोन बड़ों से ज्यादा बच्चों को हानि पहुंचा रहे हैं। बच्चों को पता है कि रिश्ते फोन ही निभाते हैं। उनके अंदर पारिवारिक रिश्तों की गरमाहट नहीं पनप रही। दादी अगर बीमार है तो वे उनके पास बैठ कर अपना समय बिताना नहीं चाहेंगे। वे या तो वीडियो गेम खेलेंगे या फेसबुक पर अपनी मित्रमंडली के साथ व्यस्त होंगे। दूरदराज के रिश्तों में तो जैसे दरार ही डाल दी है इस सोशल मीडिया ने। होली या ईद की छुट्टी पर बधाइयों के संदेश भेज कर ही छुट्टी हो जाती है। गलती से अगर किसी ने घर आने की चाह प्रकट कर दी तो गृह मालिक और मालिकन के चेहरे उतर जाते हैं, क्योंकि आज के एकल परिवार अपनी निजता को ज्यादा जरूरी समझते हैं।

सवाल है कि क्या हथेली भर की एक मशीन मनुष्य को प्रभावित करने में इतनी सक्षम है कि वह ज्ञान-विस्मृत हो जाए? क्या वैश्वीकरण के छत्र में आकर व्यक्ति अपना गुण-धर्म भूलता जा रहा है? क्या सोशल नेटवर्किंग का जाल मानवीय संवेदनाओं को नहीं जकडता जा रहा? अभी भी वक्त है कि इन सोशल वेबसाइटों का ग्रास बनने से पहले मनुष्यता को जागृत कर लें तभी हम भविष्य के संकट से बच पाएंगे।

संकट की दस्तक

किसी भी देश की राजनीतिक स्थिरता आर्थिक विकास के लिए बोनस की तरह होती है, पर हाल के दिनों में कुछ ऐसी खबरें आई हैं जो इंगित करती हैं कि भारतीय अर्थव्यवस्था संकट की राह पर बढ़ रही है। केंद्रीय सांख्यिकी संगठन (सीएसओ) द्वारा जारी आंकड़ों के अनुसार 2018-19 में देश की जीडीपी विकास दर 6.8 प्रतिशत रही है जो बीते पांच सालों में सबसे कम है। आर्थिक गतिविधियों के दो बड़े क्षेत्र-कृषि और विनिर्माण- गंभीर चुनौतियों का सामना कर रहे हैं। कृषि क्षेत्र में तो वृद्धि दर 2019 की पहली तिमाही में -0.1 प्रतिशत रही।

निवेश को बढ़ाने के लिए सरकार ने कई तरह के प्रयत्न किए हैं पर अब भी हालात सुधरते नहीं दिख रहे हैं। वित्त वर्ष 2018-19 में मुश्किल से 9.5 लाख करोड़ के निजी निवेश के आवेदन मिले जो 2004-05 के बाद चौदह वर्षों में न्यूनतम है। जीडीपी के लिहाज से विश्व की सबसे बड़ी अर्थव्यवस्थाओं में भारत फिर फिसल कर सातवें स्थान पर आ गया है। इसके साथ ही 2019 की पहली तिमाही में भारत ने सबसे तेजी से बढ़ती अर्थव्यवस्था का तमगा भी गंवा दिया है।

निवेश के साथ ही उपभोग की मोर्चे पर भी स्थिति बिगड़ती हुई ही दिखाई दे रही है। घरेलू यात्री वाहनों की बिक्री पिछले वर्ष की तुलना में 20.55 प्रतिशत घट गई। आवधिक श्रम बल सर्वेक्षण की रिपोर्ट के अनुसार देश में बेरोजगारी दर बीते 45 सालों में सर्वाधिक है। राजकोषीय मोर्चे पर भी स्थिति बहुत संतोषजनक नहीं रही है, हालांकि सरकार ने कतिपय प्रयत्नों जैसे कि सरचार्ज, सेस लगाकर और विभिन्न सरकारी एजेंसियों के बजट में

कटौती करके राजकोषीय घाटे को स्थिर बनाए रखने की कोशिश जरूर की है। निवेश को आकर्षित करने और लोगों को अत्यधिक कर्ज देने के उद्देश्य से बीते दिनों में रिजर्व बैंक ने लगातार चौथी बार रेपो रेट में कमी करके उसे 5.40 फीसद पर ला दिया है।

हालांकि भारतीय अर्थव्यवस्था सुस्ती के दौर से भले ही गुजरती दिखाई पड़ रही हो मगर किसी बहुत बड़े भंवर या संकट की स्थिति में नहीं है। ऐसे में सरकार कुछ बड़े और कड़े फैसले लेकर भारत की आर्थिक वृद्धि दर को फिर बढ़ा सकती है।

शिव शंकर यादव, इलाहाबाद विश्वविद्यालय

किसी भी मुद्दे या लेख पर अपनी राय हमें भेजें। हमारा पता है : ए-८, सेक्टर-७, 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

लक्ष्य की ओर

प्रधानमंत्री ने जो संकल्प दोहराए अगर उन पर संजीदगी से अमल हो तो अर्थव्यवस्था को लक्ष्य तक पहुंचाने में काफी हद तक कामयाबी मिल सकती है। प्रधानमंत्री ने अर्थव्यवस्था को अगले पांच सालों में पांच अरब डॉलर तक पहंचाने का लक्ष्य रखा है। उन्होंने कहा कि यह लक्ष्य बडा है पर सब साथ मिलकर प्रयास करें तो इसे हासिल करना कठिन नहीं है। अर्थव्यवस्था की मजबती सभी क्षेत्रों के सम्मिलित सहयोग से आती है। उसमें कोई भी क्षेत्र कमजोर रह जाता है तो वह विकास दर को ऊपर नहीं बढ़ने देता। इसलिए केंद्र सरकार ने सभी विभागों व देश की सभी राज्य सरकारों को

इसमें सहभागी बनाने की कोशिश की है।

इससे बेहतर नतीजों की उम्मीद बनती है। जीएसटी जैसे फैसलों के नतीजे अब नजर आने शुरू होंगे। कौशल विकास व मेक इन इंडिया जैसे कार्यक्रमों के परिणाम भी अब दिख सकते हैं, पर इसके लिए औद्योगिक क्षेत्र पर ध्यान केंद्रित करने के साथ-साथ अंदरूनी और बाहरी बाजार के आकार में विस्तार पर भी गंभीरता से ध्यान देना होगा। निर्यात के मामले में हम लंबे समय से पीछे हैं। अगर इसकी दर में बढ़ोतरी होती है तो औद्योगिक

क्षेत्र का विकास होगा और

सरकार जिन समस्याओं से पार पाना चाहती है नीति आयोग की संचालन परिषद की बैठक में उसमें कामयाबी मिल सकती है। अलग धारा

रोजगार की नई संभावनाएं बनेंगी । इस तरह

अजीत कुमार गौतम, गोरखपुर, उत्तर प्रदेश

जम्म्-कश्मीर से धारा 370 हटाए जाने पर कांग्रेस आंतरिक ऊहापोह के दौर से गुजर रही है। इसके अनेक बड़े नेताओं ने जहां इस मुद्दे पर केंद्र सरकार का समर्थन किया है वहीं अपनी पार्टी कांग्रेस की आलोचना भी की है। जनार्दन द्विवेदी, ज्योतिरादित्य सिंधिया और कर्ण सिंह आदि नेताओं के बाद अब हरियाणा के पूर्व मुख्यमंत्री ने भी इस मुद्दे अपनी ही पार्टी को 'भटकी हुई पार्टी' करार दे दिया है। पार्टी लाइन से ऊपर उठ कर कांग्रेस को

देश से जुड़े इस संवेदनशील मुद्दे पर सरकार का समर्थन करना चाहिए। आज कांग्रेस अपने जन्म के बाद सबसे बुरे दौर से गुजर रही है। धारा 370 से इतर भी इसके अनेक नेता अनेक मुद्दों पर मौजूदा केंद्र सरकार का दिल खोलकर समर्थन कर रहे हैं। आपातकाल के दौरान परिवार नियोजन कांग्रेस का एक प्रमुख आंदोलन रहा था। अब कम से कम इसी मुद्दे पर कांग्रेस केंद्र सरकार का समर्थन करके जनता से वाहवाही लूट सकती थी, लेकिन उसका परिवार केंद्रित आलाकमान इतनी भी दरियादिली न दिखला सका। दरअसल, कांग्रेस अपनी हटधर्मिता से अप्रत्यक्ष रूप से ही सही, खुद देश को कांग्रेसमुक्त करने में भाजपा का सहयोग कर रही है।

• सतप्रकाश सनोठिया, रोहिणी, नई दिल्ली

दरियादिल खय्याम

कभी-कभी, उमराव जान, रजिया सुल्तान, नूरी, बाजार, त्रिशुल और अन्य कई फिल्मों को अपने स्रीले संगीत से सजाने वाले संगीतकार खय्याम का निधन भारतीय संगीत जगत की अपूरणीय क्षति है। उन्होंने अनेक फिल्मों में इतना कर्णप्रिय संगीत दिया कि वे अपने संगीत के कारण ही जानी जाती हैं। द्वितीय विश्व युद्ध में सेना में कई मोर्चों पर तैनात रहने वाले खय्याम को पद्मभूषण और संगीत नाटक अकादमी पुरस्कार से नवाजा गया था। कभी-कभी और उमराव जान फिल्मों के लिए उन्हें सर्वश्रेष्ठ संगीत का फिल्म फेयर पुरस्कार भी मिल चुका था। खय्याम ने संघर्षरत और जरूरतमंद कलाकारों के दर्द को समझ कर उनकी सहायता के लिए अपने 90वें जन्मदिवस पर जीवन भर की मेहनत की कमाई करीब बारह करोड़ रुपए एक ट्रस्ट बना कर दान कर दी। यह उनकी दरियादिली का भी जीता जागता उदाहरण है।

• संजय डागा, देवी अहिल्या कालोनी, हातोद