Yet another ruling on director liability

Unless the culture of compliance seeps into enforcement, judgments would be mere essays



WITHOUT CONTEMPT

SOMASEKHAR SUNDARESAN

he Supreme Court has spoken yet again — quashing criminal proceedings initiated against the managing director of a company that runs a hotel in New Delhi — about the liability of a managing director in a company charged with crime for no reason other than his being the managing director. Yet, whether this would lead to any reform in the conduct of enforcement agencies is a question that

could end up being rhetorical.

The facts seem straight out of the movie October. A visitor to the hotel fell from the sixth floor to the fourth floor. It was found that a terrace next to the club lounge on the sixth floor was often used as a smoking area, with the hotel not stopping smokers from using the place. The charge was that the hotel did not take adequate precautions to maintain safety.

The managing director was charged on the grounds that he was the only executive director of the company, he chaired all board meetings, and he would therefore, be responsible for all acts of omission or commission by his officials. Indeed, employees involved in hotel operations were charged too, but the managing director had been roped in as an accused only for the reason that he was the chief executive. The Delhi High Court refused to quash the proceedings at the request of the managing

director. The Supreme Court disagreed.
The law declared by the Supreme

Court is that before issuing summons to an individual as an accused, the criminal court is required to be satisfied from the material on record that the person named as the accused needs to be proceeded against. If the court does not find adequate material to rope in an individual as an accused, but later during trial finds material to rope in a person not hitherto named as an accused, it can rope in the accused at that stage too (Section 319 of the Criminal Procedure Code). Yet, summons do get routinely issued against every person named by the prosecutor.

Summons can also get issued after a judge decides that the person named as an accused must be tried for criminality. In the case at hand, indeed, the Delhi High Court agreed that it was rightly issued. All that the charge sheet stated as the ground to rope in the managing director was that he is responsible for the overall operations of the company, and being the only executive director, he would be the accused. It would also imply that if there were other executive

directors, they too would have been roped into the proceedings.

The situation gets even more complex with quasi-civil proceedings, conducted by regulators who have the role of legislature, executive and judiciary, all rolled into one organisation. Recently, the Securities Appellate Tribunal was faced with an appeal where the capital market regulator routinely directed all directors to personally refund money raised without issuance of a prospectus. The tribunal has declared the law unequivocally indeed also relying on Supreme Court judgments — to rule that liability under the law cannot arise merely by designation but from the responsibility and role played by the individual at the relevant time. Implying that "vicarious liability" cannot be automatically imputed, in the absence of a shred of evidence that the individual in question was responsible.

In fact, the Companies Act, 2013, the post-Satyam corporate law that raises the bar of criminality under company law to the level of anti-drug trafficking law when it comes to bail where fraud is alleged, took care to stipulate that for

charging a director, one must apply one's mind to knowledge and involvement applying "board processes". Regulations governing listed companies' obligations made by the capital market regulator too lay down the standard of having to determine knowledge and involvement by applying board processes.

When a director sits on the board of a company, she necessarily has to rely on the processes necessary for the board of directors to be briefed by the management. If the director on the board is unaware despite doing all that a reasonable person would to make herself aware of the goings on in a company, the law would not permit the director to be charged in any proceedings. Yet, in practical application, this standard gets diluted. Enforcement agencies prefer to "err on the side of caution" and rope in everyone they can lay their hands on. leaving the burden of correcting the error to the judicial system. More judgments can follow on the subject, but unless the culture of compliance seeps into enforcement too, these would merely be essays to be relied on after the judiciary has already been burdened with the task of correcting the errors of the enforcement agencies.

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Too little, too late

CHINESE WHISPERS

Vanishing group of ministers

National broadcaster All India Radio

(AIR) on Wednesday afternoon tweeted

that the government had constituted a

"GoM", or group of ministers, to look

Kashmir. The tweet, with the hashtag

"Article 370", came a little after 2 pm. It

fuelled speculation about the ambit of

such a "group of ministers". However,

nearly two and a half hours later.

government sources denied that any

"GoM" was constituted. "Reports

about the government setting up a

government source said. Some also

wondered how AIR could do this

without official confirmation.

Kashmir are not correct," a

GoM on issues relating to Jammu and

into issues concerning Jammu and



After facing a near wipe-out in the 2019 Lok Sabha polls, followed by a string of senior leaders, including legislators, deserting the party, Samajwadi Party President

Akhilesh Yaday (pictured) has decided to dissolve all state- and district-level committees in Uttar Pradesh.Barring UP unit President Naresh Uttam Patel, the former chief minister sacked all other officebearers. As expected, there is a lot of unhappiness because of this. But a section of the party feels Yaday's move was long overdue and should have taken place much earlier or immediately after the Lok Sabha elections. With three sitting Rajya Sabha members crossing over to the BJP recently, there has been much damage, both to the organisation and member morale, they said, and that his "surgical strike" might be "too little, too late".

Reading between the lines

Union minister and senior Bharatiya Janata

Party (BJP) leader Prakash Javadekar was left fumbling for words on Wednesday. At a BJP press meet. Javadekar launched on Congress leader Rahul Gandhi for his comments on Kashmir, which, he said, "insulted" the country and had given Pakistan "a handle" to target India at the United Nations. Gandhi had tweeted about "violence and people dying" in Kashmir, which Pakistan included as part of its petition in the UN to attack India over the situation in the Valley, Javadekar demanded that Gandhi apologise for what he termed the "most irresponsible politics" the country had witnessed. Gandhi's tweets on Wednesday, attacking Pakistan and asserting that Kashmir was India's internal issue, were made due to public anger over his earlier comments, Javadekar said. He wondered if Gandhi's mindset had also changed due to the change in his constituency. When asked to clarify what he meant by his comments about "Rahul's constituency", Javadekar first struggled to explain himself and then said his remarks were not about the constituency but its representative. Gandhi represents the Wayanad constituency in the Lok Sabha. He had represented Amethi for 10 years between 2004 and 2014.

The à la carte approach to economic advice

The set-up in Modi 1.0 and 2.0 is geared to sector-specific guidance rather than macro-economic counsel

SUBHOMOY BHATTACHARJEE

s the economy's numbers point to a large-scale slowdown it is important to focus on the men and women advising the government, specifically Prime Minister Narendra Modi. Both his predecessors, Manmohan Singh and Atal Bihari Vajpayee, had trusted confidants as their chief advisors: Former Reserve Bank of India Governor C Rangarajan for Singh and Vijay Kelkar for Vajpayee. The former became chairman of the Prime Ministers' Economic Advisory Council (PMEAC), after Suresh Tendulkar quit in 2009.

Kelkar often described himself as *paramarshdata* (advisor) in the finance ministry in North Block but his views were often solicited by Vajpayee from across the road in South Block.

Among those who advise Prime Minister Narendra Modi on economic policies, there is no such clear hierarchy. So there is no concept of a confidant in economic

spheres unlike, say, the role National Security Advisor Ajit Doval plays in steering the security of Jammu & Kashmir.

The economic advisors to the Modi government are, instead, more transactional in their role, their importance based on the programme or policy on hand that is sought to be steered. For instance, Parameswaran Iyer, the bureaucrat in charge of Jal Shakti Abhiyan, the water conservation mission, was also the author of the government's massive project to tackle India's water crisis through a set of interventions. The closest someone could come to Rangarajan or Kelkar's position in this government is former RBI Governor, Bimal Jalan. But he, too, has been discreet, offering counsel only on specifics. Other than the report on the RBI's capital reserves, which was put up to its board on Monday, he has authored a report on expenditure management, which the government never made public but has acted on in many cases.

It is no secret that the prime minister prefers not to surround himself with eco-

nomic advisors. His signature economic policies rarely carry the overt imprint of any particular advisor or group—unlike, say, that of the National Advisory Council in the rural employment guarantee programme in Manmohan Singh's government. This predilection has had a discernible impact on the government's handling and defending of macroeconomic issues. Examination

of macro-economic themes has been at a premium in Modi 1.0 and 2.0. When someone has chosen to do so, the markets were caught unawares. Last week, for instance, the Deputy Chairman of Niti Aayog, Rajiv Kumar, talked of an "unprecedented situation for the government [in the] last 70 years... [we] have not faced this sort of liquidity situation where the entire financial sector is in churn and nobody is trusting anybody



else". Kumar's remarks caused the markets to slide because they were unsure if this was the final commentary on the current economic situation or there was more to come.

The reason for the surprise is that between Rajiv Kumar's Niti Aayog and the PMEAC with its five members, it is unclear who has the last word on any macro-economic issues. Part-time Council member Rathin Roy recently raised a debate about whether the Indian economy has reached its limits in terms of expanding consumption, posing it as a structural slowdown since much of the demand for goods and services is confined to a thin upper crust. Another member, Ashima Goyal, has argued that the present slowdown of the economy is largely due to cyclical factors (though she concedes some structural hurdles remain). PMEAC chairman Bibek Debrov has not waded into the debate significantly except to point out that India is vet to become a middle income economy with its attendant problems. It is not known, if this random public airing of concerns have something to do with the Prime Minister's Office (PMO) not tuning in to the debate on macro-themes, except on occasions such as the run-up to the Budget, when a group of economists met Modi for one whole day.

In any case, Kumar's statement, which he claims was misinterpreted, has renewed thinking within the top levels of PM's team about the futility of listening to macro-economic suggestions and instead entrusting the work of advice on sectoral issues to those who will be responsible for running specific projects. So the task of defending programmes such as the GST package, the Insolvency and Bankruptcy Code, the Jan Dhan project, Mudra, Direct Benefit Transfer, housing, electricity and LPG for all, and crop insurance and the pension schemes for the informal sector have all been entrusted to bureaucrats responsible for implementing them. For example, the task of defending demonetisation in Modi's first term was the remit of Shaktikanta Das in his capacity of secretary, economic affairs, instead of the chief economic advisor Arvind Subramanian. Again, GST was implemented and defended by then revenue secretary Hasmukh Adhia.

Niti Aayog, under its CEO Amitabh Kant, has rarely commented on these programmes *ab initio*, examining them only after launch. For example, Ratan Watal, the other member of the PMEAC, chaired the committee to review the framework for digital payments, rationalisation of autonomous bodies of the central government and the transformation of India's gold market, none of them macroeconomic themes.

As a departmental secretary pointed out, this government is keen to listen to the debates that are "finite and quantifiable". From the debate on employment, the Modi government picked up the need to quickly reorganise employment statistics and has begun issuing those from the provident fund scheme every month.

The government is happy to listen to the bimonthly commentaries from the RBI when it resets interest rates, usually in lockstep with the government's thinking. It would similarly adhere to the award of the 15th Finance Commission headed by N K Singh and take on board its comments. But it sits ill with the advice of Chief Economic Advisor in the finance ministry, Krishnamurthy Subramanian, who highlighted the discrepancy in tax estimates in his first Economic Survey. As Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman said in Parliament, the Survey enjoys an arm's length separation from the government's examination of policies of specific ministries. It is unlikely that the PMO will listen in except when there is a specific solution on offer.

INSIGHT

The do-no-harm principle

ANALYSIS BEHIND THE HEADLINES



DHIRAJ NAYYAR

The government's decision to change its mind on what were quite apparently counter-productive economic policy measures such as the surcharge on FPIs and the criminalisation of CSR commitment violations — shows that it is willing to listen. One cannot be sure what triggered the change, whether it was the falling stock market, acute discomfort of industry and even pro-government commentators, or the Prime Minister's Independence Day speech in which he batted for wealth creators by calling wealth creation a national service. If India is to indeed make the "big leap" that PM Modi promised on August 15, one should hope that the government was reacting to its leader.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi has the right instincts on economic policy. Often, he has spoken on the need for the government to get out of business, ease red tape and respect entrepreneurship. At the same time, he has argued in favour of a bigger and more effective role of government in ensuring that basic goods and services reach the poor. Unfortunately, the machinery of government does not always follow these principles. The fact is that the Government of India is a large beast with several layers of bureaucracy which is minded to do its own thing, ministries batting for their own interests and battling to retain their turfs, powerful interest groups influencing (mostly legitimately, occasionally illegitimately) the making of policy. Sure, the prime minister presides, but not everyone in the system is either philosophically or practically aligned. Bad policies can slip through the cracks.

It would, therefore, be very useful and productive if all policies drafted by any department of the government are automatically subject to passing the test of the principles laid down by the prime minister. Call these the do-noharm principles. There are three which the PM has stressed: A. Wealth creation is a national service; B. The government has no business to be in business; C. The government should ensure ease of doing business and ease of living of citizens. Every cabinet note that is drafted seeks various justifications for a policy being proposed. It should have one section on how the proposed policy fares on these three principles. If it violates any of these principles, it should be reviewed to see if it can be improved or it should be junked. Even Budget proposals should be tested on these principles. Decisions like the surcharge on the super-rich, or indeed on FPIs can be pre-empted at an early stage.

If the government is feeling bold about a "big leap", it should review all the major economic/socio-economic policies made in the last decade and see whether they pass the do-no-harm principles. Those which do not should be revised or removed. After all, the challenge in India isn't just making new policies but also ensuring that deadweight baggage from the past is jettisoned.

There is an additional principle, which has not been on Prime Minister Modi's list of mantras but which would be a welcome inclusion. The government should not focus on revenue generation and gathering; it should focus only on growth. If the Ministry of

Finance is driven by the Department of Revenue and its annual tax (and nontax) collection targets, there will be serious negative side effects. The most obvious one is tinkering with tax rates, usually upwards, using surcharges and cesses. The second is harassment of taxpavers as taxmen try to squeeze the last paisa out of the minority who comply with the law. The third is perverse non tax revenue measures like forcing one public sector company to buy another, which is faux strategic disinvestment because it brings none of the efficiency gains from the transfer of management control to a private party or independent board. If anything, it adds to inefficiency by burdening better public sector companies with less efficient ones. All of this may help the government meet its current fiscal target but it comes at the cost of growth. Would it not be so much better to abandon revenue collection fundamentalism and focus on growth? The revenue that will accrue on account of higher growth will far exceed any temporary squeezing exercise.

A country which has made very effective use of an overarching, no-harm-principle in recent times is Bangladesh. The country, which was once considered a basket case, has now emerged as a mighty player in the global textiles market (apart from seriously improving its human development). The textiles sector is the major source of growth, jobs and exports for the country. Conscious of this, the government tests every economic policy against its potential impact on the textiles sector. Any policy that would negatively affect textiles is discouraged.

Of course, India can never be a onesector economy. But if it does make some high principles non-negotiable, it would be much better placed to make a big leap than it is today.

The author is chief economist, Vedanta

LETTERS

Look before you leap

This refers to the editorial "No windfall" (August 28). I agree that the transfer of this large amount should not be seen as a windfall gain and should be used wisely. It should be used for public investment to revive the economy; for example, in the improvement of the infrastructure and carrying out substantive reforms in areas like labour, land etc. The amount should not be wasted to run moribund public sector entities such as Air India. Also it should not be frittered away in prepoll bonanzas considering some state Assembly elections are coming up in the next few months. In case a part of the money is used to re-capitalise the public sector banks (PSBs), it should be done alongside substantive governance and operational reforms of these entities. Merely recapitalising them without initiating substantive reforms will amount to encouraging reckless lending and inefficient functioning.

There should be more substantive efforts to transform PSBs into professionally run, profitable entities. The government must not forget that the money it has received from the Reserve Bank of India as the owner of the central bank is, in fact, taxpayers' money.

Arun Pasricha New Delhi

Where is Naresh Goyal?

This refers to "Goyal structured schemes to siphon off funds" (August 25). It is now crystal clear that Naresh Goyal is not as naïve as he is projecting himself to be. The Enforcement Directorate (ED) has reportedly got evidence that Goyal had siphoned off large amounts of money in foreign jurisdictions by creating a number of tax-evading schemes. The ED has taken possession of various incriminating documents. It is also emerging that either Goyal or companies controlled by him may have routed inflated commission to its own group entity in Dubai. What does all this

indicate? Does this in any way show him as an honest businessman or a kind-hearted employer who has great sympathy for his employees?

My question to readers and followers of the Jet Airways episode is, how long will the country tolerate these types of fugitives? Yes, I repeat, he is a fugitive. He has violated the FEMA rules and there is enough evidence for him to be booked under the antimoney laundering provision. Also, he hasn't paid his employees their dues and has defaulted on bank loans.

I am aware that one of his attempts to flee the country was foiled but there is nothing in the public domain about his current whereabouts. If he is in this country, my appeal to the legal fraternity is please get hold of him, prosecute him and allow the law to take its own course in a time-bound manner. It will reinforce the credibility of the law enforcers in the eyes of the public. We hope Goyal will not be allowed to take asylum in another country to spend the rest of his life peacefully.

Sanjoy Dutta Kolkata

Govt must reciprocate

This refers to the report "RBI approves a record ₹1.76 trillion surplus transfer to government" (August 27). The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) with active support from former governor Bimal Jalan and ex-deputy governor Rakesh Mohan graciously handled a tough situation. The new Economic Capital Framework, recommended by the Jalan panel and accepted by the RBI,

should convince and satisfy all stakeholders. It may be recalled that RBI's reserves, which had peaked to 11.9 per cent of the balance sheet size in 2009, has been depleting since then and is now touching 5.5 per cent. The Jalan panel recommendation to maintain reserves at 5.5-6.5 per cent level has to be seen against this development. In



the central bank's eagerness to support the GoI, the level has been maintained at the minimum. The government should welcome this gesture and, in the coming years, reciprocate by helping RBI to augment its reserves. Ideally, RBI's share capital should be raised from the present level of ₹5 crore to the equivalent of \$100 billion or upwards.

MG Warrier Mumbai

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HAMBONE



Protecting privacy

Data must be treated as personal property of an individual

ustice BN Srikrishna made a telling point recently at a symposium marking the second anniversary of the Puttaswamy judgment which affirmed that privacy was a fundamental right. He said given the parliamentary majority the ruling party enjoys, it should have been possible to pass the data privacy legislation that a committee headed by him drafted, "with the same ease that cash is withdrawn from an ATM". But it has been two years since the Supreme Court recommended specific legislation to protect privacy, and over a year since the Srikrishna Committee submitted its recommendations, and draft legislation, and there has been no movement in terms of turning that draft into law, even though a number of other legislation has been passed by Parliament at an impressive speed.

This is unfortunate as in the absence of a specific privacy protection law on the lines proposed by the Srikrishna Committee, it is difficult to prevent privacy being breached in practice. In this two-year period, there have been multiple disturbing developments that have impacted privacy. For example, the DNA Profiling Bill has been cleared and there are grey areas in that legislation. DNA is not only sensitive personal data — it can uniquely impact the privacy of persons related to the individual whose DNA is stored and tested. The government has also proposed the bulk sale of automobile registration lists, and driving licence data from state motor vehicles departments, to private sector entities. Aadhaar has been linked to income tax returns despite being supposedly voluntary. There are also proposals to link Aadhaar to electoral rolls, which may result in voters being profiled in unconstitutional ways.

There are multiple public interest litigations currently being heard in various courts proposing that Indians should be forced to link Aadhaar to their social media accounts and to the usage of instant messaging services. The petitioners, including the Tamil Nadu government, claim that this would be effective in curbing the spread of fake news. Whether that is true or not, the loss of anonymity on social media would inevitably result in curbs on free speech. The privacy of citizens who may express unpopular opinions, or include in acts of whistle-blowing, would no longer be sacrosanct. Any democracy, which recognises privacy as a fundamental right should give primacy to those freedoms and seek other ways to combat fake news.

There will soon be other privacy issues as the ecosystem of the Internet of Things (IoT) proliferates. Given that a fridge, air-conditioner, or car may now see, hear, record and transmit private conversations, privacy breaches will, in fact, become even more egregious in the near future. Legislation must be "future-proofed" to deal with fresh challenges on the IoT front. These examples should make it clear that it is necessary to balance multiple considerations when it comes to privacy. Data is indeed digital gold, and a national resource. All manner of public services can be enabled by data, and all sorts of business models can be based on data. But data must be acknowledged as the personal property of the individual generating it, and it should not be gathered, stored, or used without the informed consent of those individuals. Until there is a specific privacy legislation built upon that foundational principle, the Puttaswamy judgment of August 2017 will mean very little in practice.

The price of controls

Price caps on sanitary products and hand washes are counterproductive

he National List of Essential Medicines (NELM) committee would be illadvised to bring sanitary products, adult diapers and hand washes under price controls. As with the caps imposed on essential medicines and consumables, the NELM committee is probably motivated by the praiseworthy objective of making these products more accessible to poorer households. On the face of it, this move makes sense: The National Family Health Survey (NHFS) of 2015-16 shows that about only 57.6 per cent of Indian women of reproductive age use sanitary products (48.5 per cent in rural India and 77.5 in urban India). As for hand washes, other surveys have shown that about a fifth of sample sizes cite lack of soap as a reason for not washing their hands after defecation or outdoor manual work. These numbers are unquestionably high, and the societal and health consequences of non-usage of sanitary products and soap are serious. The question is whether price control alone is the optimum approach to these problems. From the supplier point of view, price controls on a range of products from safety blades, milk and life-saving medicines to cement and tyres remain a testimony to the chronic shortage economy that characterised India in the long decades of planning. Indeed, a 2013 decision to put prophylactics under price controls saw a sharp dropoff in sales. The decision was struck down by the court later, and caused the National Pharmaceutical Pricing Authority to extend price controls by making an absurd differentiation between ordinary condoms and those with "special features". Either way, family planning objectives are unlikely to be met.

In both sanitary products and hand washes, the lifting of licensing controls saw an explosion of choice and, in the case of the former, innovations for women. especially in the workplace. It is nobody's case that more Indians should be blocked from access to such products. The issue is whether affordability is the sole factor hampering wider usage. In the case of soap, NGO surveys suggest that ignorance and access to washing facilities (such as a toilet) play as big a role in usage as affordability. In sanitary products, availability could be an additional hurdle rather than affordability alone — the NFHS shows that rates of school or work absenteeism owing to menstruation is roughly the same as the rates in Singapore and Australia. Fixing these problems may demand imagination rather than the hatchet of price controls. Education on basic hygiene is the most important of them. Enhancing distribution is another. In an earlier era, the government leveraged the vast reach of FMCG companies such as ITC, Brooke Bond, Lipton and Hindustan Lever (the later now part of the Hindustan Unilever stable) to distribute its "Nirodh" brand of condoms to meet family planning objectives. There is no reason it cannot encourage similar distribution tie-ups for private sector manufacturers. Including such objectives under the CSR mandate would be one way of putting a flawed law to good use.

Simple economics suggests that greater distribution and usage will automatically lower prices. Then again, NGOs such as Goonj, started by Ramon Magsaysay award winner Anshu Gupta, pioneered a low-cost, reusable, environmentally friendly sanitary product made from waste cloth that is uniquely suited to the needs of low-income working women. Replicating models using such age-old methods would be the best advertisement of India's indigenous capabilities for innovation.

ILLUSTRATION: BINAY SINHA



Is stakeholder capitalism back?

There are reasons to believe that corporate leaders renouncing shareholder primacy are being a little disingenuous

JOSEPH E STIGLITZ

or four decades, the prevailing doctrine in the US has been that corporations should maximise shareholder value — meaning profits and share prices — here and now, come what may, regardless of the consequences to workers, customers, suppliers, and communities. So the statement endorsing stakeholder capitalism, signed earlier this month by virtually all the members of the US Business Roundtable, has caused quite a stir. After all, these are the CEOs of America's most powerful corporations, telling Americans and the world that business is about more than

the bottom line. That is quite an about-face. Or is it?

The free-market ideologue and Nobel laureate economist Milton Friedman was influential not only in spreading the doctrine of shareholder primacy, but also in getting it written into US legislation. He went so far as to say, "there is one and only one social responsibility of business — to use its resources and engage in activities designed to increase its profits."

maximise societal welfare.

The irony was that shortly after
Friedman promulgated these ideas, and around
the time they were popularised and then enshrined
in corporate governance laws — as if they were
based on sound economic theory — Sandy
Grossman and I, in a series of papers in the late
1970s, showed that shareholder capitalism did not

This is obviously true when there are important externalities such as climate change, or when corporations poison the air we breathe or the water we drink. And it is obviously true when they push unhealthy products like sugary drinks that contribute

to childhood obesity, or painkillers that unleash an opioid crisis, or when they exploit the unwary and vulnerable, like Trump University and so many other American for-profit higher education institutions. And it is true when they profit by exercising market power, as many banks and technology companies do.

But it is even true more generally: The market can drive firms to be shortsighted and make insufficient investments in their workers and communities. So it is a relief that corporate leaders, who are supposed to have penetrating insight into the functioning of the

> economy, have finally seen the light and caught up with modern economics, even if it took them some 40 years to do so.

> But do these corporate leaders really mean what they say, or is their statement just a rhetorical gesture in the face of a popular backlash against widespread misbehaviour? There are reasons to believe that they are being more than a little disingenuous.

The first responsibility of corporations is to pay their taxes, yet among the signatories of the new corporate vision are the country's

leading tax avoiders, including Apple, which, according to all accounts, continues to use tax havens like Jersey. Others supported US President Donald Trump's 2017 tax bill, which slashes taxes for corporations and billionaires, but, when fully implemented, will raise taxes on most middle-class households and lead to millions more losing their health insurance. (This in a country with the highest level of inequality, the worst health-care outcomes, and the lowest life expectancy among major developed economies.) And while these business leaders championed the claim that the tax cuts would lead to more

investment and higher wages, workers have received only a pittance. Most of the money has been used not for investment, but for share buybacks, which served merely to line the pockets of shareholders and the CEOs with stock-incentive schemes.

A genuine sense of broader responsibility would lead corporate leaders to welcome stronger regulations to protect the environment and enhance the health and safety of their employees. And a few auto companies (Honda, Ford, BMW, and Volkswagen) have done so, endorsing stronger regulations than those the Trump administration wants, as the president works to undo former President Barack Obama's environmental legacy. There are even soft-drink company executives who appear to feel bad about their role in childhood obesity, which they know often leads to diabetes.

But while many CEOs may want to do the right thing (or have family and friends who do), they know they have competitors who don't. There must be a level playing field, ensuring that firms with a conscience aren't undermined by those that don't. That's why many corporations want regulations against bribery, as well as rules protecting the environment and workplace health and safety.

Unfortunately, many of the mega-banks, whose irresponsible behaviour brought on the 2008 global financial crisis, are not among them. No sooner was the ink dry on the 2010 Dodd-Frank financial reform legislation, which tightened regulations to make a recurrence of the crisis less likely, than the banks set to work to repeal key provisions. Among them was JPMorgan Chase, whose CEO is Jamie Dimon, the current president of the Business Roundtable. Not surprisingly, given America's money-driven politics, banks have had considerable success. And a decade after the crisis, some banks are still fighting lawsuits brought by those who were harmed by their irresponsible and fraudulent behaviour. Their deep pockets, they hope, will enable them to outlast the claimants.

The new stance of America's most powerful CEOs is, of course, welcome. But we will have to wait and see whether it's another publicity stunt, or whether they really mean what they say. In the meantime, we need legislative reform. Friedman's thinking not only handed greedy CEOs a perfect excuse for doing what they wanted to do all along, but also led to corporate-governance laws that embedded shareholder capitalism in America's legal framework and that of many other countries. That must change, so that corporations are not just allowed but actually required to consider the effects of their behaviour on other stakeholders.

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uess what? Trade wars are not "easy to win". They even might be lost. Donald Trump is beginning to have a sinking feeling about this possibility after a bad week. There has been, first, the announcement of new tariffs of \$75 billion by Beijing on American imports. This was in retaliation to Mr Trump's announcement of 10 per cent tariffs on the remaining \$300 billion Chinese-made consumer goods not yet hit by tariffs on September 1 and December 15.

The move by the Chinese leadership is quite worrisome for the White House: It shows, first, that

Xi Jinping is not ready to bend to US pressures. Second, and more importantly, he is playing Trump at his own game and turning the tables on him: The US President is shaping his re-election campaign around the theme that he is the leader making America great again and that he is the one who is — at long last — dealing successfully with the China challenge. However, the moves taken by Beijing are aimed at having a cumulative impact: On the one hand, hitting hard at core support

constituencies of the President — hence the new tariffs on agricultural and farm products and the reinstatement of tariffs on cars and auto parts; on the other hand, increasing concerns about a trade-induced recession. The sharp fall of the markets after the announcement of the Chinese tariffs showed that Beijing is doing a good job in that domain.

CLAUDE SMADJA

Then the G7 was another illustration of how much the Trump administration is isolated in its trade war against China. Even Boris Johnson, the UK Prime Minister, preferred ally of Mr Trump, was compelled to state his opposition to trade wars. Of course, the American President enjoys on many occasions showing that he does not care being isolated. But in the present context this isolation can

only weaken Washington's hand towards Beijing.

Last but not least was the succession of news showing that Trump can use all the superlatives he wants about the state of the American economy, but this does not prevent the slowdown of activity and the prospects of a recession in 2020 becoming increasingly evident. And this might be what could sink the President's re-election hopes. Media reports and leaks from the White House have been mentioning that people close to Mr Trump are increas-

ingly concerned that the continuation of the trade

war and its increasing impact on investment and

economic activity could at some stage create irreparable damage to the President. His erratic behaviour, such as the repeated offer to buy Greenland, or his Twitter "ordering" (sic) "Our great American companies to immediately start looking for an alternative to China, including bringing your companies HOME and making your products in the USA", is setting new heights in the kind of volatility and impulsiveness that has been a hallmark

of this presidency.

The increasing concern about an economic evolution that could ruin his hopes of winning a new mandate in November 2020 has made Trump mention the possibility of new tax cuts to stimulate activity — at a time when the federal deficit is skyrocketing — and unleash the most virulent attacks against Jay Powell, the Chairman of the Federal Reserve, accused of being "a bigger enemy than China". Which will remain as a unique episode in the history of the relationship between the White House (or any administration) and the Federal Reserve.

However, to the President's chagrin, Mr Powell has been undeterred by this kind of attacks. He, like other governors of the Federal Reserve and most of the central bankers, continues to point out that the uncertainties generated by the White House trade

policy — not only against China but also against Mexico or EU countries — are a major reason for the weakening of the world economy. And Mr Powell made it very clear that it was not the job of central banks to run trade policy, and that monetary policy was of limited usefulness for countering the negative impact of trade wars.

Donald Trump tried to cheer up the markets by declaring at the end of the G7 that China wanted to resume the trade negotiations. But Beijing has been completely silent about such a thing. And when the White House tried to use a statement by Vice Premier Liu He that "China is willing to resolve issues through consultation and cooperation (...) while resolutely opposing the escalation of the trade war" to support its assertion, experts were quick to point out that this is the kind of standard statement emanating from Beijing from the beginning.

To make matters worse some people around Trump are seemingly operating under two wrong assumptions: They think they can use the troubles in Hong Kong to pressure Xi Jinping in the trade negotiations. In reality, it is exactly the opposite as events there convince the leadership that it has to stand firm against foreign pressures when its existential interests are at stake. The same people also consider that the approach of October 1, 2019, the 70th anniversary of the foundation of the People's Republic of China, might prompt Beijing to be more flexible to clear the trade conflict before the big event. This is again wishful thinking: It is not at the moment that Xi Jinping wants to celebrate the great rejuvenation of China under his leadership, and the restoration of its status "close to the centre of the global stage" that he can afford to look like he is bowing to the pressure of countries seen as trying to contain China's rise.

Yes, trade wars are not so easy to win and might even be lost.

The writer is President of Smadja & Smadja, a Strategic Advisory Firm; @ClaudeSmadja

Seva as political strategy



NILANJAN MUKHOPADHYAY

NILANJAN MUKHUPADHYAY

ore than a hundred years ago, a 24-year-old nationalist Maharashtrian, pursuing medicine at the National Medical College, Calcutta (now Kolkata), joined a band of volunteers from Ramakrishna Mission. They headed to Bardhaman, about 100 km from the burgeoning metropolis, because rural hinterlands there had been inundated once again by the "Sorrow of Bengal" — the Damodar river. A doctor in the making, he was not only equipped to rescue people from the

rampaging waters, but also treat patients afflicted by the outbreak of a cholera epidemic. The time he spent among flood victims encouraged him to make volunteerism an annual habit.

Thereafter, for as long as he was in Calcutta, the young man joined the medical corps at the Gangasagar fair held every winter at the confluence of River Ganga and the Bay of Bengal. Although he was faithful to the bhawna or sentiment of service or seva, he realised that such volunteering to help people affected by natural calamities or outbreaks of disease enabled one to build personal relationships and provided an entry point when canvassing for a cause or idea. This man, Keshav Baliram Hedgewar, in 1925 established the Rashtriya Swaymsevak Sangh (RSS), which partially grew out of a different sort of volunteerism providing security to Hindus who wanted to take out a religious procession with

full *band baja* through Muslim colonies. The idea of using *seva* or service as a ploy to engage with people on socio-political ideas and beliefs emerged from such activities and explains why *seva* has always been integral to the Sangh's activities.

In Disaster Relief and the RSS, which examines a relatively less emphasised aspect of the RSS' activities, which is one of the primary reason for the immense popularity that it has acquired, Malini Bhattacharjee points out that the founder was "perhaps the first leader during the period (1920s and 1930s) to seriously shape the idea of seva as a means for constructing the Hindu Rashtra". For Hedgewar, a powerful India of the future was dependent on the military regeneration of people and "seva played a key role in this imagination."

Volunteerism indeed played important roles throughout the rise of the Sangh Parivar, and these experiences steeled young *swayamsevaks* for tougher tasks ahead. In his youth, before becoming fully a part of the RSS, Prime Minister Narendra Modi joined volunteers to work with flood victims in Surat. He told this writer that in the 1960s he was "quite active in social work. When I say social work, I do not mean in the manner it is understood now — this NGO business." The premium placed on volunteerism by the RSS is evident in the current *sarkaryavah* (the second in command), Bhaiyyaji Joshi, who was former head of the organisation's *seva* division.

head of the organisation's seva division.

The Hindu Right's volunteerism played an important role during the Partition riots and was instrumental in the RSS' swift spread in north and west India. In a display of exemplary dedication, the swayamsevaks worked day and night with Hindus uprooted from West Punjab and, to a limited extent, East Bengal, who had lost family members and all their possessions.

The author delves at length on disaster relief, examining the involvement of faith-based organisations — Swami Vivekananda played a key role in develop-

ing this facet of Hindu religious organisations — such as the Red Cross Society, which spawned similar bodies. Ms Bhattacharjee brings in perspective from the ground through interviews with swayamsevaks and others. Besides the theoretical portions, which explore what constitutes seva and how this was used by the RSS in nation-building, the book has valuable case studies of the RSS' relief efforts in Odisha after the 1999 Super Cyclone and its involvement in the reconstruction of Kutch in the aftermath of the 2001 earthquake. RSS volunteers succeeded in establishing contact with a wide spectrum of people, and during the course of relief work "new shakhas mushroomed in the villages of coastal Odisha" where the RSS had little association until then.

The author notes the Odisha cyclone struck within a few months of murder of Australian missionary Graham Staines and his sons by a Bajrang Dal activist. The epic natural disaster provided an opportunity to shift focus from allegations over the Sangh's role in the murders, to the dedica-

tion of swayamsevaks after the cyclone. The author's scholarly approach successfully establishes how humanitarism opens up the political space and opportunities that RSS used successfully. She also establishes that the idea of seva as structured in the RSS, although evolving from ancient Hindu precepts of dana, is a constantly evolving form of social engagements. But most importantly, the book establishes the success of RSS in utilising disaster situations, which warrant seva activities, as opportunities for political mobilisation.

Nilanjan Mukhopadhyay is a journalist and author. His latest book is RSS: Icons of the Indian Right. He has also written Narendra Modi: The Man. The Times (2013))

DISASTER RELIEF AND THE RSS: Resurrecting 'Religion' Through Humanitarianism Malini Bhattacharjee

Sage; ₹850, 268 pages







AGREE TO DISAGREE

Congress leader, Rahul Gandhi

I disagree with this Govt. on many issues. But, let me make this absolutely clear: Kashmir is India's internal issue & there is no room for Pakistan or any other foreign country to interfere in it

How long can govt sustain FCI's operations?

Ration-shop sales falling, stocks rising & per unit subsidy up dramatically; govt dues up to ₹2 lakh crore already

VER THE LAST six years, the country's food subsidy bill has roughly doubled, yet the amount of heavily-subsidised food being sold through ration shops has fallen by around 10-15%. If this situation continues, it is not clear how much longer the government will be able to sustain the Food Corporation of India-led procurement-cum-ration-shop system where long-term debt levels have crossed ₹200,000 crore, in addition to around ₹80,000 crore of short-term debt that is rolled over in relatively shorter periods of time. Food subsidy payments rose from ₹92,000 crore in FY14, the year before Narendra Modi became prime minister for the first time, to ₹184,220 crore that has been budgeted for FY20; FCI's sales of foodgrains from all its schemes fell from 52.7 million tonnes in FY14 to 45.2 million tonnes in FY18, the latest year for which data is available. The reason for this, as a BofAML research note points out, is that while FCI's costs of procurement have been rising at a steady pace thanks to the hike in minimum support prices (MSPs) by the government, the prices at which the grain is sold at ration shops has remained unchanged since the National Food Security Act was introduced in 2013 by the UPA; the NFSA also meant the number of beneficiaries jumped from 35 crore to 80 crore. The gap between FCI's costs and its revenues rose from around ₹1,000 per quintal in FY14, to ₹2,200 in FY18 in the case of wheat and, in the case of rice, from ₹1,800 to ₹2,850 in the same period.

While FCI's offtake is slowing, indeed falling, even though FCI's procurement of grain has remained remarkably stable at around 50 million tonnes a year, this has meant a rapid and unsustainable level of stocks; in August 2019, the last month for which data is available, stocks were 71.1 million tonnes as against the recommended buffer of 41.1 million tonnes on July 1. Normally, FCI could think of exporting this stock, but given Indian MSPs are higher than international prices, this can only be done by selling the stocks at a discount, but that is against WTO rules. It gets worse since, given the 90-95% level of subsidies—as compared to the market price—the bulk of FCI's revenues actually depend on how regularly it gets its subsidy payments from the government. Data from BofAML shows that FCI earned just ₹38,357 crore in FY14 from sales while it was to receive ₹90,153 crore from the government to take care of the subsidy element; that is, the subsidy-to-sales ratio was 2.35.In FY19, the ration shop sales were budgeted to be around ₹24,485 crore versus the subsidy of ₹131,787 crore; the subsidy-to-sales ratio worsened dramatically to 5.38.

With the government badly strapped for cash, however, it has not been able to make payments to FCI and, as a result, while the government owed FCI around ₹45,000 crore in FY14, this shot up to around ₹200,000 crore in FY19. Naturally, FCI has had to borrow this amount; since no banks can possibly lend all this, even though bank borrowings have risen, FCI's borrowings from the National Small Savings Fund rose from ₹70,000 crore in FY17—this was its first borrowing—to ₹191,000 crore in FY19. Clearly, this is not a situation that can sustain since, while there is no way the government can possibly pay FCI ₹200,000 crore in one go, FCI can't keep borrowing either. Even if the government issues bonds to pay FCI, this will mean a ₹13,000 crore annual expenditure in just interest costs. Right now, FCI's costs are spiralling and while raising the issue price of foodgrains from ration shops will help—if the government does this—this will slow the pace of growth, but it will do nothing to reduce FCI's existing deficit. Sooner rather than later, a comprehensive solution will need to be found.

Fix multi-brand retail now

FDI-deals already happening in one form or another

IVEN HOW THE NDA government is opposed to foreign direct investment (FDI) in multi-brand retail, it is surprising that global online retailer Amazon is picking up a stake in Future Coupons. Future Coupons is a promoter entity for Future Retail Limited (FRL), a pan-India multi-brand retailer. If Amazon converts the 49% stake it is buying in Future Coupons, it would own a 7.3% stake in FRL. As of now, Amazon does not have a controlling stake in FRL, so the Kishore-Biyani promoted retailer cannot be deemed to be a group company of Amazon. Even otherwise, since the stake in Future Coupons would be housed in an investment arm of Amazon, the investment would be in the nature of an foreign portfolio investment (FPI) rather than FDI. The 5% stake that Amazon holds in Shoppers Stop—also a multi-brand retailing chain—is also housed in an investment entity. What is interesting about the FRL transaction is that Amazon has been granted

a call option to acquire all or part of the promoter's shareholding in FRL, and this is exercisable between the third and tenth years. In other words, Amazon is willing to pay a premium today—around 53%—to be able to acquire the controlling interest in FRL, if and when the law permits. As of now, players like Amazon are technically on the right side of the law in terms of these purchases; that they are able to structure these to their advantage—using FPI entities—is to their credit. But, the fact remains that the investment-arm of Amazon is an associate of Amazon's and, therefore, by association, Amazon is buying into a multi-brand retailer, albeit indirectly. Also, the law does not allow a vendor selling on a marketplace to procure more than 25% from the marketplace or a group company of the marketplace. In this instance, a vendor could, theoretically, procure more than 25% from FRL—since it is not a group company of Amazon—and supply goods on the Amazon marketplace. Also, it is possible that, by virtue of its stake in Future Coupons, Amazon could influence, in some manner, the merchandise that FRL sells to a third-party vendor, which then sells on the Amazon platform. In December 2018, the government had tightened the FDI conditions in the online space, stating that an e-commerce platform with foreign investment cannot exercise ownership or control over the inventory sold on its platform. But, such transactions, experts point out, do leave room for the marketplace to influence inventory. The government, it would appear, isn't unhappy with such deals since they bring in big investments—especially in back-end infrastructure—but doesn't want to formally allow FDI in multi-brand retail given the BJP's traditional opposition to this. But, given that local retailers will benefit from allowing FDI in, and there is little to show that multi-brand retail FDI will hit local *kiranas*, the government would do well to re-look its stance.

TraiERROR

Trai should let go of policy flip-flop on satellite TV, allowing the market to decide

RAI MAY HAVE had the best of intent when it forced satellite TV broadcasting to shift from being a pure bundling space to being an *a la carte* & bouquet space. Instead of TV subscription prices coming down, the consumer is experiencing lots of confusion and an increased price burden. For a basic network capacity fee of ₹130, the consumer was supposed to get 75 non-DD channels of her choice and 25 DD channels. But, picking from the mix of pay channels under February's New Tariff Order has meant a larger draw from the purse because broadcasters have priced individual channels at high levels. In combination with the myriad and complex offerings of bouquets, this has ensured the consumer chooses a package recommended to her than "exercising choice". The regulator, recently, floated another consultation paper, to discuss discounting on the bouquet offerings.

Trai wants broadcasters to bundle channels of similar pricing, and take expensive and niche categories out. As most GEC channels are expensive, this would escalate costs. Moreover, even if the broadcasters were offering niche channels, this was being done at a discounted rate. Besides, why does Trai need to control pricing in a market that has many players? After all, in telecom, it was not Trai but competition that forced prices to come down, and operators to settle at limited plans. With OTT platforms gaining market, broadcasters and distribution platforms have no choice but to reduce prices. Trai's purpose would have been fulfilled anyhow.

US-CHINA TRADE WAR

THE US POLITICAL ESTABLISHMENT HAS SWUNG DRAMATICALLY, FROM VIEWING CHINA AS AN OPPORTUNITY TO REGARDING IT AS AN EXISTENTIAL THREAT

Tilting at windmills, flailing at China

HIS WILL BE the 10th year that I have taught a course at Yale called "The Next China." The course focuses on modern China's daunting economic transitions. It frames the moving target that eludes US president Donald Trump's administration, which is taking dead aim at the Old China (a convenient target for a leader who wants to resurrect Old America). The incoherence of Trump's trade and economic policies, with all their potentially grave consequences for the global economy, is a destabilising by-product of this disconnect. My course starts with the urgency of

the challenges addressed by Deng Xiaoping in the late 1970s. But, its main focus is how the resulting Chinese growth miracle presents president Xi Jinping with four transitional imperatives: the shift from export- and investment-led growth to an economy driven increasingly by domestic private consumption; the shift from manufacturing to services; the shift from surplus saving to saving absorption in order to fund the social safety net desperately needed by China's rapidly ageing middle class; and the shift from imported to indigenous innovation, which ultimately will be decisive for China's goal of being a "moderately welloff society" by the middle of this century.

The confluence of these four transitional challenges would be daunting for any country. That is especially true for China, with its blended political economy—the so-called socialist market system, with an ever-changing balance of power between the Communist Party and a vibrant private sector. It is a very tricky balancing act, to be sure.

I date the pivotal point on the path from Old China to the Next China to early 2007, when then-premier Wen Jiabao correctly diagnosed the high-flying Chinese economy of the time as increasingly "unstable, unbalanced, uncoordinated, and unsustainable." The Four Uns, as they famously came to be



known, sparked a vigorous internal debate in China that led to major rethinking of the Chinese economicgrowth model and a series of new strategic plans and reforms—the 12th and 13th Five-Year Plans (of 2011-15 and 2016-20, respectively) and the so-called Third Plenum Reforms (of late 2013).

Notwithstanding all the criticism of China in the West (to say nothing of the bipartisan political angst now boiling over in Washington, DC), progress on the road to the Next China actually has been quite extraordinary over the past dozen years. The middle-class Chinese consumer has come to life, and the services sector has emerged as an increasingly powerful growth engine. China's outsize current-account surplus has all but vanished, a trend that is crucial to the saving absorption that its domestic economy requires. And the signs of indigenous innovation are everywhere, from e-commerce and fintech to artificial intelligence and breakthroughs in the life sciences.

True, like all sagas of economic development, China's progress since 2007 has been uneven at times, and new challenges have emerged along the way. Wen's Four Uns provide a useful way to frame the pitfalls that still lurk. *Instabil*ity remains an ever-present threat, underscored by China's voracious appetite for debt, which has sparked an aggressive deleveraging campaign aimed at avoiding the dreaded Japan syndrome. Imbalances persist, underscored by private consumption's sub-40% share of Chinese GDP—a shortfall that can be addressed only by a more robust social-safety net (especially pensions and healthcare). Persistent regional disparities, in conjunction with mounting income inequality, are visible manifestations of a lack of coordination. And, of course, despite recent progress in dealing with air pollution, environmental degradation remains central to China's challenging sustainability agenda.

But, the trade conflict with the United States is a new and important sustainability challenge for China. Despite years of denial, there can no longer be any doubt that the US is pursuing a containment strategy vis-à-vis China. From an ever-escalating tariffwar and the weaponisation of trade policy by blacklisting leading Chinese technology companies, to Trump's "order" to the US companies to cease

doing business with China and vice president Mike Pence's declaration of a new Cold War, the US political establishment has swung dramatically, from viewing China as an opportunity to regarding it as an existential threat. And public sentiment has followed suit. A recent survey by the Pew Research Center found that fully 60% of Americans had an unfavourable view towards China—up 13 percentage points from 2018 and the most negative assessment of China since the Pew survey's inception in 2005. Forget about whether this about-face

is justified. I am less concerned than

most about the so-called China threat, but I understand the fear and anxiety that grips the doubters. The real problem is less the merits of the allegations than the deep inconsistencies of Trump's policies to address them.

An anger-driven US president doesn't seem to grasp that bilateral trade implies the possibility of prompt retaliation when one side imposes tariffs on the other. Nor does his administration show any understanding of the linkages between ever-expanding budget deficits, subpar domestic saving, and multilateral trade imbalances. On the contrary, it has embraced a China-centric bilateral fix for a multilateral problem just when America's own lack of fiscal discipline

> virtually assures a widening trade deficit with the world at large. And rather than view

Huawei as a legitimate seem to grasp that competitor in 5G telecommunications, Trump wants to put a chokehold on China's leading tech company. prompt retaliation Never mind the resulting value-chain disruptions which would do great damage to US suppliers, or that targeting Huawei does nothing to address America's own glaring

lack of 5G capability.

An anger-driven US

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imposes tariffs on

the other

Reminiscent of Don Quixote Trump is tilting at windmills. His administration is flailing at antiquated perceptions of the Old China that only compound the problems it claims to be addressing. Financial markets are starting to get a sense that something is awry. So, too, is the Federal Reserve. Meanwhile, the global economy is fray ing at the edges. The US has never been an oasis in such treacherous periods. I doubt if this time is any different. Copyright: Project Syndicate, 2019. www.project-syndicate.org

Jalan report: What next?

The RBI board has transferred ₹1,760bn, including ₹526bn of excess capital, to the fisc, up from 2018's ₹500bn. We expect Delhi to apportion RBI's transfer between recapitalising PSU banks and fiscal support as budgeted in July

INDRANIL SEN GUPTA & AASTHA GUDWANI

Sen Gupta is Chief India economist, and Gudwani is India economist, BofA Merrill Lynch. Views are personal

WE SEETHE just-released Jalan report as a game changer if it is partly used to recapitalise PSU banks to lower lending rates. It will be recalled that RBI had appointed a committee, under its distinguished ex-governor Bimal Jalan, to identify its excess economic capital. The RBI board has decided to transfer a surplus of ₹1,760.5bn, including ₹526.4bn of excess capital, to the fisc, up from ₹500bn last year. This is at the lower end of our ₹1-3bn expectation, with ₹500bn as profit transfer. This begs the question, what will be the new methodology to decide RBI's surplus? It will be set by limits on a contingent risk buffer (5.5-6.5% of balance sheet) and economic capital (of 20-24.5% of balance sheet) and expected shortfall (ES) estimation at 97.5-99.5% confidence intervals.

The Jalan committee has recommended a three-pronged definition of RBI's excess capital. 5.5-6.5% CRB:

South Africa Held with government

Cent

It has proposed a contingent risk buffer (*CRB*) of 5.5-6.5% (including 1% for credit and operational risks) far higher than the 2% average for BRICS central banks (see graphic). The RBI board considered 5.5% sufficient for now.

ES at 97.5-99.5% CF: It will introduce an ES estimation at 97.5-99.5%, replacing VaR to determine risk provisioning for market risk. Informal economic capital band of 20-24.5% of RBI balance sheet: As RBI's economic capital, at 23.3%, is in this range, the RBI board has released the entire net income of ₹1,234bn to the fisc. The Jalan committee has eschewed defining excess RBI capital in terms of revaluation reserves. At 71 rupees to the dollar, the RBI balance sheet would have an appreciation cover of 25% even after releasing ₹2,000+bn (see graphic).

How will RBI's transfer be utilised? We think it will likely be used to recapannounced by finance minister Nirmala Sitharaman on Friday, with the balance transferred to the fisc as already budgeted. This, in turn, should help reduce lending rates. Excessive fiscalisation would cut down RBI OMO.

italise PSU banks by ₹700bn, as

PSU bank recap liquidity-neutral, fiscal deficit-neutral: We highlight that using excess RBI capital to recapitalise PSU banks should be liquidity- and fiscal deficit- neutral. The MoF will infuse capital into PSU banks with excess RBI capital. PSU banks, in turn, will park it in a government account with RBI. ₹1,000bn of excess RBI capital will allow 12% PSU bank (except SBI) loan growth till 2024. Our banking analysts assume that, 1.₹200bn is used to write off NPLs; 2. RoE of 8% with a 20% pay out (see graphic). We take minimum sustainable CET ratio at 8%.

Edited excerpts from BofAML's Jalan Report: What Next? (August 27, 2019)

THE EDITOR

LETTERS TO

RBI's bonanza

It is hard to believe that RBI

deferred to the Centre to the extent of almost emptying its coffers. It is all too evident that the central bank has become less autonomous and more pliant. The government was eyeing the RBI cash for a long time and it did as a first resort what it should have done as a last resort taking what was saved by RBI over the years for a 'rainy day'. 'Exhaust all sources of money' seems to be the principle followed by the Modi government. That the government has had to tap into RBI's reserves is an admission that all is not right with the economy. It would be a grossly exaggerated claim to say that RBI's surplus cash transfer will reverse the slowdown in economic growth and trigger robust economic growth. At best, it might ease some of the fiscal pressure. The payout will make it that much more difficult for us to ensure financial stability in the event of a global economic crisis and an intensification of trade wars. The government is sure to use a portion of the bonanza to meet the shortfalls in revenue collections and recapitalise banks, and it has to make a judicious use of the balance if it is to succeed in justifying the receipt of the windfall. We are okay with the cash transfer if it brings tangible benefits to the country's impoverished multitudes. — G David Milton, Maruthancode

Pakistan's diplomacy

It goes without saying that Pakistan's top brass is currently engaged in threatening India not only to appease and pacify its own people regarding the danger lurking in POK but also to somehow 'console' itself. However, the various wild threats made by Imran Khan may soon prove to be counter productive as they all seem to be lost in transit. Moreover, a barking dog seldom bites.

— Kumar Gupt, Panchkula

RBI's contingency reserves Revaluation reserves are highest among BRICs Ratio of contingency

Central bank	reserves to assets (%)	Currency & gold	
Brazil	3.7	revaluation	
Russia	1.1	account	
India	6.8*	Re 1 impact (approx.)	
China (own capital+ other liabilities)	1.9	Current cover (₹) (ie, ₹50.70/\$)	
South Africa	1.5	Current cover (%)	
Revaluation rese	rves are also high	Cover	
Central bank	Revaluation reserves	25% (₹52.9/\$)	
	to assets (%)	20% (₹56.4/\$)	
Brazil Capital + bond		Potential transfe	
revaluation reserve	3.9	25%	
Russia	20.1	20%	
India	18%*	÷	

7.017	Currency & gold revaluation
7,917	account
400	Re 1 impact
	(approx.)
	Current cover (₹)
19.8	(ie, ₹50.70/\$)
28.1	Current cover (%)
	Cover
7,050	25% (₹52.9/\$)
5,640	20% (₹56.4/\$)
	Potential transfer
867	25%
2,277	20%

Source: BofA Merrill Lynch Global Research

Recapitalising PSU banks ensures can release 800-2,200bn credit availability till 2024/8

Excess RBI capital identified by Jalan panel (₹ bn)

CET ratio	1,000	2,500	2,500
2019	9.1	9.1	9.1
2020	10	12.5	11.9
2021	9.5	11.8	10.7
2022	9.0	11.2	9.5
2023	8.5	10.7	8.5
2024	8.1	10.2	
2025		9.6	- 3
2026		9.2	- 8
2027		8.7	
2028		8.3	
Assumptions (%)			
RoE	8	8	0
Pay out ratio	20	20	20
CET 1 growth	6	6	0
Loan/RWA growth	12	12	12
Recap funds	1,000	2,500	2,500
Provision (for 70% cover)	200	200	200
Growth capital	800	2,300	2,300

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THURSDAY, AUGUST 29, 2019



Food CaFE: TT SRINIVASARAGHAVAN

For well-run NBFCs, liquidity is no longer a problem

The managing director of Sundaram Finance Ltd shares with Sushila Ravindranath the reasons why the country is facing an economic downturn, the various problems facing the NBFC sector, the liquidity crunch, and offers some workable solutions

T SRINIVASARAGHAVAN IS the managing director of the 70-year-old Chennai-head-Sundaram quartered Finance Ltd, which is one of the country's largest and most respected non-banking finance companies (NBFC). It was started primarily to help truck operators purchase commercial vehicles. The company has since grown into one of the most trusted financial services

groups in India. It has a nationwide presence of nearly 640 branches, over 2 lakh depositors, and 3 lakh commercial vehicle and car finance customers. In addition, Sundaram Finance is into mutual funds, housing finance, general insurance, information technology, business process outsourcing and retail distribution of an array of financial services.

Srinivasaraghavan has been involved with all the diversifications and has

played a key role in the company's growth. He has had more than 40 years of experience in the banking and financial services sector, and has been associated with leading trade-related organisations, including the International Finance and Leasing Association of the UK, of which he was the president. He has served on various committees constituted by the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) on NBFCs and related matters, and has been celebrated at various fora.

I have wanted to meet him to understand the economic downturn the country is facing; he has himself seen quite a

few cyclical turns, and ups and downs in the economy. Sundaram Finance has dealt with them all. After many postponements due to his hectic travel schedule, we meet for lunch at Kapila Dasa, at the Express Avenue Mall in Chennai, which is next door to his office. The food is vegetarian.

This restaurant is a nofrills, spacious place, and in spite of the milling crowds outside, one can settle down for a peaceful conversation. We ask for the *rasam* of the day, and the restau-

I ask him about the various problems facing the NBFC sector, and the liquidity crunch. "There has been too much loose talk about NBFCs," he says with a touch of asperity. "One infrastructure company (ILFS) went bust, Dewan Housing Finance Corporation went under, and these two are not NBFCs. The Reliance Anil Dhirubhai Ambani Group is going through its set of problems. There are 9,983 registered NBFCs in the country, and just three have defaulted. Does this constitute a crisis? Since September 2018, how many more companies have defaulted or gone under? The media has gone overboard,

rant's famous spicy corn toast as a starter.

creating a self-fulfilling prophecy." As a consequence, he says, the flow of credit has been cut off by banks. "Collections are used for debt settlement and there is no growth capital available. This entire crisis erupted because of unin-

formed discourse creating its own momentum. This has wide ramifications for the economy. There are many small finance companies serving the last-mile delivery. Those lines have been cut off. Local NBFCs, which help people like small traders, form a separate ecosystem by themselves," he says.

Srinivasaraghavan adds that the mutual funds shut shop for NBFC lending. "They were, any way, lending only to the triple-A rated NBFCs. The small guys were funded by banks and that came down to a trickle. Banks, fortunately, are in a better place now."

We decide to order the main course before we talk about the auto industry. We ask for crispy rawa dosas and uthappams with toppings. There are several varieties of *chutneys* and *sambar* to go with these standard favourites.

I ask him what he thinks has led to the slowdown in the automotive sector. "There has been overcapacity in commercial vehicles. It has been exacerbated by having to shift to Bharat Stage 6 emission norms, and the changing of axleload norms. There are a lot of unknowns surrounding BS6, including higher initial cost, availability of fuel across the country, and so on. These things have to find their own level," he replies.

However, what is more difficult to understand is the steep fall in passenger car sales. He says that banks are major players in funding of cars, "but they do not have a problem with liquidity. Yet people are not buying cars like they did earlier. They are not coming to the showrooms. Is there buyer fatigue? Is it because of Uberisation? Whatever the reason, sales are tanking. We are not very sure what will revive sales. Then there is the introduction of electric vehicles (EVs) to contend with."

On the proposed switchover to electric (of a particular segment of vehicles) by 2025, he questions whether it is practical? "If there are going to be 3.5 million EVs plying on the roads by 2025, will we be ready with batteries and charging stations? Nothing happens overnight."

At the same time, Srinivasaraghavan feels that two-wheelers are the place to begin. He supports his argument, saying that two-wheeler batteries are smaller, offering more possibilities and opportunities. However, he points out that we will be dependent on China for the lithium in the batteries. "Can we let them get a stranglehold on our industry?"

On the weak demand in the housing business, he adds: "There is a demand for housing costing below Rs 1 crore, espe-

We must focus on

infrastructure.

Single-window

clearance will help

a great deal. We

need islands of

excellence working

like city-states.

Local govt has to

get its act together

cially outside city limits. High-cost projects in the heart of the city are not moving so well."

He shares with me another factor that has come into play, and that is the change of government in many states after the elections."There have been too many disruptions. Infrastructure projects are being renegotiated in many of the states. It is time to get our act together."

But how do we do that? While there are no clear answers, he says that we can start by focusing on infrastructure.

"Single-window clearance will help a great deal. Why are our special economic zones not working? We need islands of excellence, working like city-states. Local administration must get its act together. Removing all irritants will be good for

everybody," he says.

As we wait for filter coffee, I ask him how his company is coping with troubled times. "We are over the worst. For wellrun, well-managed NBFCs, liquidity is no longer a problem. The problem is from the demand side. Over the years, we have developed a diversified portfolio. We will be going after pockets of opportunity still available in the market. We have gone through this kind of phase in 2013 as well. We have to tighten our belts, and wait for the cycle to turn."

sushila.ravindranath@ expressindia.com

DAWN RAIDS BY CCI

When the CCI comes knocking

L CHARANYA & **PUNEETH GANAPATHY**

Charanya is partner and Ganapathy is principal associate, Lakshmikumaran & Sridharan

VERTHE LAST few months, officers from the

Dawn raids are CCI's tool to curb anticompetitive practices

investigative wing of the Competition Commission of India (CCI) have been undertaking dawn raids to pursue allegations of anticompetitive practices. The CCI recently conducted its fifth raid (third in the last nine months) on the Indian arm of the French company Mersen, possibly to investigate allegations of bid rigging relating to a railway contract. This sudden increase in dawn raids by the CCI is also the result of a recent Supreme Court judgment (CCI vs JCB), where it was held that the documents seized by the director general (DG) during a search can be used as evidence during the inquiry.

In these raids, companies were often found to be unaware of not only the procedural necessities and requirements that the DG investigation is supposed to follow, but also the rights a company has when such an unforeseen event takes place. Here is a quick guide to prepare for a dawn raid.

When can a dawn raid take place?

▶ The CCI may direct the DG to investigate anticompetitive practices prohibited by the Competition Act, 2002. Such direction can be made by the CCI without seeking any comments or representation from those being investigated.

• An unexpected raid may be conducted by the DG when there is reasonable ground to believe that books/papers are likely to be destroyed, mutilated, altered, falsified or secreted. ▶ The provisions require authorisation from the chief metropolitan magistrate, New Delhi, before such a raid.

What are the most common issues investigated?

▶ Collusive bidding/pricing of goods and services, exclusivity arrangements, price determination agreements and refusal to supply have been the common practices targeted. ▶ Bundling or tying-in arrangements and use of dominance in one market to enter into another will remain perennial issues for growing businesses.

▶ Persons, companies, firms routinely engaged in bidding for tenders by government entities and public sector undertakings must tread with caution.

What are the powers of the DG?

The DG has the power to require the production of records and documents from officials and employees of the company being investigated and may seize them as prescribed under provisions of the erstwhile Companies Act, 1956, as reformulated in the Companies Act, 2013.

▶ The DG is also empowered with the powers of a civil court and may record statements on oath and require the presence of any person. The DG can consequently receive evidence, issue commissions for examination of evidence and requisition public documents from any office.

What you need to do in the event of a raid?

▶ Cooperate and seek time to call an in-house or external counsel. Seek identity of the officials and the search warrant from a magistrate. Ensure and check (1) that the warrant is correctly addressed to your company, (2) whether the warrant specifies any premises or officers of the company, and (3) that the officers of the raid team visiting your company are properly named and authorised in the warrant.

▶ Insist on presence of independent witness/external counsel when being questioned or when a statement is taken.

Do not share any communications, opinions, documents relating to legal advice taken from counsel, as these are protected by privilege. You are entitled to withhold the same from the DG/CCI after politely explaining legal privilege or asking your in-house or external counsel to do so.

• Answer details on the location and storage of information correctly. Keep copies of all answers. Record details of persons, documents, hard drives, email, electronic devices, storage, etc, to which access was given to the officials.

▶ Obtain a detailed record of any seizures made. Do not provide false information or obstruct the investigation.

▶ Follow a preprepared dawn raid checklist creating a central point of contact to calmly handle the investigation.

It is advisable bespoke recommendations are obtained suitable to the needs of a company/business/group structure, after a detailed analysis of likely anticompetitive issues, size of staff and logistics, data repositories and management policies and cross-regulatory and cross-jurisdictional issues.

AST MONTH, WHEN India sent the Chandrayaan 2 to the moon's South Pole, many space experts pointed towards the beginning of a new space race, or the space race 2.0. This brings back the question about what was the space race all about and how did it start in the first place? It was a distinct and unique phenomenon within the phenomenon of the Cold War.

What made it unique and distinct was the time during which it happened. Never before in the history were there two superpowers that were almost equally capable of destroying each other and set up their hegemony globally. Secondly, the global balance of power was seen for the first time. Although great powers always used to exist, but there were no superpowers. There are many takeaways and lessons that can be derived from the space race.

Firstly and most importantly, the space race started as a race to achieve 'absolute power' and not 'relative power', but as the race turned into rivalry, both the superpowers started striving for 'relative power'. As international relations theorist Kenneth Waltz puts in the anarchy of international politics, relative gain is more important than absolute gain. Secondly, the space race was also a race between two ideologies, two political systems and two civilisations (East versus West). Thirdly, the space race shows how ideologies take a back seat if profits, gains and supremacy are ensured by overlooking the ideals. This happened when the Americans used

Decoding the Cold War space race

Nobody won the space race; the world benefited



The author is a senior research fellow at the School of International Studies, Jawaharlal Nehru University, Delhi

Wernher von Braun and his team of engineers to build their space programme, despite knowing about von Braun and his team's Nazi past.

The Cold War space race was a blessing in disguise in many ways, especially in the field of science and technology. The outer space travel required the invention of many new things. It included things like artificial limbs, water purifier, adjustable smoke detectors, satellite television, freeze dried food, space blankets, etc. The standard of engineering got better during the space race because in a competitive race both the superpowers attached a lot of value to their successes as well as failures.

Therefore, the scope of technical errors had to be minimal. This demanded a very high quality of trained individuals who could cater to the extremely precise requirements of rocketry, missile technology and spacecraft. A whole new discipline of engineering bloomed and blossomed during this period.

The space race was also about the clash of towering individuals. While von Braun was the architect of the American space programme, Sergei Korolev took the Soviet space programme to newer heights. But the important lesson learnt during the space race is that the potential of the outer space is huge, which could be utilised for

civilian purposes and for the benefit of the mankind at large. To put it simply, the 'constructive potential' of the outer space outweighed its 'destructive potential'.

Another new area that originated and evolved due to the demand of the times was international space laws, which had to be written. These were signed and ratified as treaties by many countries across the world, and were legally binding in nature. The role played by the media to set the agenda for public debate about the space race was crucial. Many times, the media was used as a tool for spreading false information as well as propaganda. The lesson learnt in this case was that either the

media is used by powerful governments or the media tries to portray their own agenda as the public agenda. Both of this happened during the space race. While the former was the case in the Soviet Union, the latter was seen in the US.

The space race spanned almost two decades. This was the time when drastic, dramatic and welcome changes were happening across the world in almost every area. Many of these happened in parallel with the space race, while a few impacted it directly. The space race was designed in an extremely realist domain. The struggle for hegemonic supremacy was apparent during this period. The outer space was seen as a potent tool that could be used militarily to inflict pain to the adversaries.

Who won the space race?

This can be debated as both the superpowers saw phases in which they were doing better than the other. If one looks at the early period, it appears the race was heavily tilted towards the Soviet Union when it became the first country to launch an artificial satellite, i.e. the Sputnik 1, in 1957. Then, in 1961, the Soviet Union sent the first man (Yuri Gagarin) to space. The space race titled towards the US when it placed the first man (Neil Armstrong) on the moon in 1969. In the 1970s, when NASA budgets increased, the US outspent the USSR and launched far more satellites than any other country, making the NASA the premier space research agency.

The space race that turned into a space rivalry ended in collaboration between the two superpowers during the Apollo-Soyuz Test Project in 1975. So, the question of winning or losing is not an objective one. The binary of victory and loss are measured in absolute terms. There are clear winners and losers in a competition. But here that was not the case. The intention of being a clear winner was certainly there, which led to the start of the space race, but because both the superpowers ended up gaining a lot from the point they started investing in their space programme, none of them won or lost. However, the US stamped its relative superiority over the USSR by the end of the space race.

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

TELLING NUMBERS

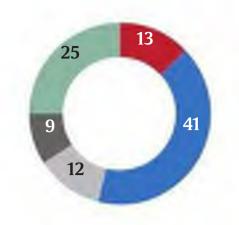
Does political pressure hinder probes? Police reflect in survey

IN A new report that looks at the working conditions of police in India, one key finding is about the political pressure perceived by police, and the extent to which this hampers their investigations. 'Status of Policing in India Report 2019: Police Adequacy and Working Conditions' has been prepared by Common Cause and the Lokniti programme of the Centre for the Study of Developing Societies (CSDS). Among its findings:

28% police personnel believe that pressure from politicians is the biggest hindrance in a crime investigation. Taking into account various kinds of obstacles, 2 in 5 police personnel believe that these pressures are the biggest obstacle in crime investigation. The other obstacles cited were related to society, legal systems and internal working systems in police (see *pie chart*).

personnel reported always facing pressure from politicians in cases of crime involving influential persons. Roughly one third also reported "always" facing pressure from their seniors in the

WHAT POLICE SEE AS OBSTACLES

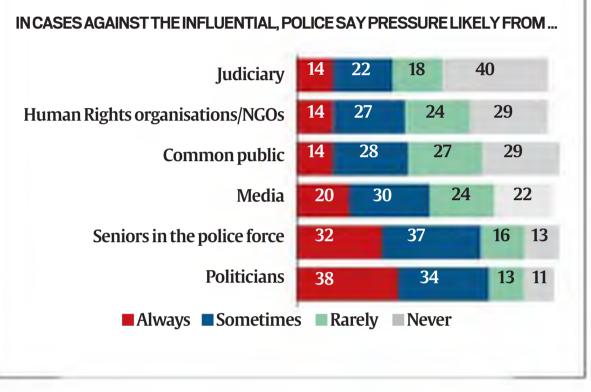


- Related to internal working of
- Related to legal system
- No response
- Related to pressure on police
- Related to society

police force. This proportion drops to one-fifth of the police "always" facing pressure from media, while about 14% reported that they "always" faced pressure from human rights organisations/NGOs, judiciary and the common public in cases involving influential people (see bar graphs).

Source for all data: Common Cause

& Lokniti-CSDS



THIS WORD MEANS

COPROLITE

Faeces in fossil form. A sample from an ancient puma has unearthed the oldest known parasite DNA

SCIENTISTS HAVE found the oldest parasite DNA ever recorded. The discovery was made in the "coprolite" of a prehistoric puma in Argentina. Coprolites are fossilised faeces belonging to animals that lived millions of years ago. Scientists can analyse and study their shape and size and depending on the location they were found in, they can figure out the animal from which they came as well as uncover what those animals ate, London's Natural Museum of History explains. For instance, if there are bone fragments in the faeces, it tells scientists that the animal might have been a carnivore. Tooth marks can reveal how the animal ate.

A team of scientists from Argentina's National Council of Scientific and Technical Research studied a prehisoric puma's coprolite taken from a rock-shelter in Catamarca province. With the help of carbon dating, they were able to esti-



mate the age of the coprolite at between

16,500-17,000 years. Using ancient mitochondrial DNA analysis, they were able to confirm that the coprolite came out of a puma. This led to the identification of the oldest parasite DNA found yet. Parasite DNA has been found in coprolites before, but this is the oldest since the evidence found earlier dated back to a few thousand years ago only.

The study is published in the journal Parasitology.

SIMPLY PUT QUESTION & ANSWER

How the forces protect VIPs

Former PM Manmohan Singh's security cover has been downgraded from SPG to Z plus. How are such decisions made? How are SPG, Z plus, other categories different? Who are the forces deployed in each?

DEEPTIMANTIWARY NEW DELHI, AUGUST 28

THE GOVERNMENT recently downgraded the security cover of former PM Manomhan Singh, from Special Protection Group (SPG) to Z plus of the CRPF. The security cover of several other VIPs too has been downgraded.

How does the government decide the level of protection an individual needs?

The Home Ministry takes the decision based on inputs from intelligence agencies, which include the Intelligence Bureau and the Research and Analysis Wing. They largely give a subjective measure of threat to life or injury to a person from terrorists or any other group, based on information from their sources.

Certain individuals, by dint of their position in government, are automatically entitled to security cover. These include the Prime Minister and his immediate family. The Home Minister and officials such as the National Security Adviser too generally get security cover on the basis of their position.

Since none of the intelligence agencies in India is accountable to any statutory body, barring the internal oversight of the Home and External Affairs Ministries, VIP security is sometimes seen as open to manipulation. A number of protectees, it has been alleged, are under security cover for political reasons and not necessarily due to any real threat.

What are the various protection levels?

There are largely six types of security covers: X, Y, Y plus, Z, Z plus and SPG. While SPG is meant only for the PM and his immediate family, other categories can be provided to anyone about whom the Centre or state governments have inputs about facing a threat. The X category on an average entails just one gunman protecting the individual; Y has one gunman for mobile security and one (plus four on rotation) for static security; Y plus has two policemen on rotation for security and one (plus four on rotation) for residence security; Zhas six gunmen for mobile security and two (plus eight) for residence security; Z plus has 10 security personnel for mobile security and two (plus eight) for residence security.

There are various kinds of cover within these levels. These include security of residence, mobile security, office security and inter-state security. Different VIPs are given different kinds of cover depending on threat perception. For example, if the Chhattisgarh CM is assessed to be facing a threat from Maoists only in his state, the Centre may chose to give him residence and mobile security only in his state, and appropriate security by the concerned state police when he travels out. Similarly, some may have a threat only when they travel, so they are given an escort force. Then, different forces may be engaged for residence and mobile security. Many protectees get residence security from



Manmohan Singh with his security cover in 2015. His cover has **been downgraded from SPG to Z plus.** Renuka Puri/Express Archive

Force Category Amit Shah Z plus **CRPF** NSG Rajnath Singh **Z Plus CISF** Nitin Gadkari **Z Plus CISF** Ajit Doval (NSA) **Z Plus** Kiren Rijiju Zplus **CISF** Ram Vilas Paswan Y **CRPF** X **CRPF** Ravi Shankar Prasad Zplus CISF **Mohan Bhagwat** NSG Mayawati Zplus **Akhliesh Yadav** Zplus State police NSG N Chandrababu Naidu Zplus

WHO PROTECTS WHOM

Raman Singh

Bhupesh Baghel

Farooq Abdullah

Ghulam Nabi Azad

Sarbananda Sonowal

state police and mobile security from a Central Armed Police Force (CAPF).

Who are SPG? Whom do they protect?

The SPG is a force raised specifically for the protection of the PM, former PMs and their immediate family. The force is currently 3,000 strong and protects only four people —PM Narendra Modi, Congress president Sonia Gandhi, her son Rahul Gandhi and her daughter Priyanka Gandhi.

The elite force is highly trained in physical efficiency, marksmanship, combat and proximate protection tactics and is assisted by all central and state agencies to ensure foolproof security. SPG Special Agents assigned to the PM security detail wear black, Western-style formal business suits, with sunglasses, and carry a two-way encrypted communication earpiece, and concealed handguns. They wear safari suits on occasions. Then there are special operations commandos who carry ultramodern assault rifles, and wear dark-visor sunglasses with inbuilt communication earpieces, bulletproof vests, gloves and elbow/knee pads.

The SPG was raised in 1985 in the wake of the killing of PM Indira Gandhi in 1984. Earlier, Delhi police (before 1981) and Special Task Force (raised by the Intelligence Bureau in 1981) provided residence and proximate security to the PM. Following Indira Gandhi's killing, a review committee of secretaries recommended formation of a special group under a designated officer and for STF to provide immediate security cover both in New Delhi and outside as a short-term measure.

In 1985, the Birbal Nath Committee set up by the Home Ministry recommended raising a Special Protection Unit (SPU), and 819 posts were created under the Cabinet Secretariat. The SPU was then re-christened

SPG and the post of Inspector General of Police was re-designated as director.

For three years, SPG functioned under executive orders. In 1988, Parliament passed the SPG Act. Then, the Act did not include former prime ministers. When V P Singh came to power in 1989, his government withdrew SPG protection given to his predecessor Rajiv Gandhi. After Rajiv's assassination in 1991, Singh faced much criticism and the SPG Act was amended to offer protection to all former PMs and their families for at least 10 years.

In 2003, the Atal Bihari Vajpayee government again amended the SPG Act to bring the period of automatic protection down from 10 years to "a period of one year from the date on which the former prime minister ceased to hold office" and beyond one year based on the level of threat as decided by the government. During the Vajpayee regime, the SPG cover of former PMs such as H D Deve Gowda, I K Gujaral and P V Narasimha Rao were withdrawn. Vajpayee himself enjoyed SPG protection until his death last year.

Under the current SPG Act, family members of an incumbent or former PM can decline security cover. Manmohan Singh's daughters declined SPG cover after his tenure ended.

And who are the National Security Guard?

The NSG was founded as a special commando unit for surgical strikes against organised terrorist attacks within the country. It was envisaged in the wake of high casualties and damage during Operation Blue Star in 1984.

According to NSG's website, it is a "Federal Contingency World Class Zero Error Force" to deal with terrorism. It says it is a force "specially trained and equipped to deal with specific situations and therefore to be used only in exceptional circumstances to thwart serious acts of terrorism".

Zplus

Zplus

Zplus

Zplus

Zplus

Yet its mandate of the force has been diluted over the years with the burden of VIP security. NSG has two groups of personnel and officers: Special Action Group (SAG) and Special Ranger Group (SRG). SAG is drawn from the Army and focuses on counter-terror training and action; SRG is used for VIP security.

NSG

NSG

NSG

NSG

State police

demand among politicians. The force has often argued that Black Cat commandos, as NSG personnel are popularly known on account of their combat dress, has become a status symbol and the government must take it off VIP security duties. That has not happened. NSG is not a protection unit; its core abil-

NSG personnel have always been in high

ity is in handling terror, hijacking etc.

with VIP protection in other countries? In the US, the security of the President and

How do these protection levels compare

his family is handled by the Secret Service, which also looks after the safety of the vice president, his immediate family, former presidents, their spouses, and their minor children under age 16. It also provides security to major presidential and vice presidential candidates and their spouses, and foreign heads of state; security for the White House, the Treasury Department building, the vice president's residence, and foreign diplomatic missions in Washington, DC.

is handled by the Protection Command under London's Metropolitan Police Service. It has two branches: Royalty and Specialist Protection (RaSP), providing protection to the Royal Family, the PM and government officials, and Parliamentary and Diplomatic Protection (PaDP), providing security to government buildings, officials and diplomats.

In the UK, VIP security, including of the PM,

Did a planet whack Jupiter and get swallowed?

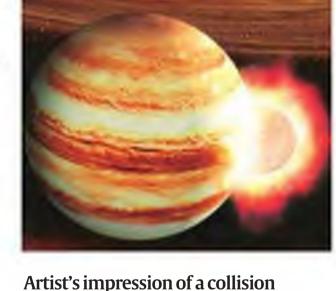
EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE NEW DELHI, AUGUST 28

JUNO, THE NASA probe orbiting Jupiter since 2016, has been sending back information that are giving scientists new insights into the evolution and structure of the planet. One new study suggests that 4.5 billion years ago, when the Solar System was still young, Jupiter received a massive whack from a planet still being formed, and swallowed it up. Another study looks at the reasons why the "stripes" on Jupiter do not run deep into its surface.

Collision with a proto-planet

Information sent by Juno shows that Jupiter's core is not mainly ice and rock as previously thought, but a "fuzzy core" that

National Medical Journal of India



between a young Jupiter and a massive, still-forming protoplanet. Astrobiology Center, Japan, via Rice University

includes lighter elements like helium and hydrogen. This, scientists suggest in the journal *Nature*, could be explained by a head-on collision with a still-forming planet about 10 times the size of Earth.

Researchers from Rice University in the US and Sun Yat-sen University in China worked on the idea that a colossal event stirred up Jupiter's core, diluting it. Computer simulations suggested a growing Jupiter could have disturbed the orbits of nearby "planetary embryos", and that there was at least a 40% chance that Jupiter would swallow a planetary embryo within its first few million years, Rice University said in a statement.

Skin deep stripes

There is a reason why Jupiter's stripes are only skin deep, the Lawrence Livermore National Laboratory (LLNL) of the US said in a statement. A team looked to the Juno mission that revealed how far zonal winds around Jupiter descend – to a depth about 4 percent of Jupiter's radius.

It is these zonal winds — alternating eastwest jet streams — that are seen in photographs as colourful stripes on Jupiter. In a paper in Physical Review Fluids, researchers have shown that these zonal winds can only descend to 3,000 km in the atmosphere.

Magnetic fields can make fluids that conduct electricity (like Jupiter's atmosphere) behave more like honey than water. Deeper into the planet, where the pressure is higher, the atmosphere becomes more conducting and is more strongly influenced by the planetary magnetic field. It's also the same place where the stripes stop, LLNL explained.

10 years of H1N1 influenza: outbreaks in India, infection trends in the states

ANURADHA MASCARENHAS PUNE, AUGUST 28

IN APRIL 2009, the first case of influenza A H1N1 was reported in Mexico. Later the infection spread and a total of 214 countries were affected by the pandemic worldwide. Ten years since, influenza H1N1 has become a seasonal virus, according to the Centers for Disease Control (CDC) in Atlanta. Yet, in India, the past decade saw as many as 1.58 lakh persons being infected by the virus and over 10,000 succumbing to it.

Maharashtra toll highest

An analysis shows that Maharashtra has reported the highest number of cases (33,284) and deaths (3,637) since pandemic influenza struck in 2009. Continuous and intensified surveillance, testing of throat swab samples at both National Institute of Virology

(NIV) in Pune and private laboratories and death audits helped the state health authorities towards early identification of cases. According to Dr Pradeep Awate, Maharashtra's surveillance officer, the surveillance systems and diagnostic capacities in the state are strong, which led to the reporting of the maximum number of cases and deaths. Awareness levels were high especially regarding home-based isolation of persons with the flu. In other states, surveillance may not be as good, experts have pointed out.

Virus in circulation, evolving

Unlike the temperate countries, where peak influenza activity is recorded in winters, in the tropical and sub-tropical countries, the primary peak of influenza activity is during the monsoon. However, in some places, influenza also peaks during winters and in some tropical countries, influenza sustains throughout the year.

THE HIGHEST BURDENS

YEARS WITH THE MAXIMUM HINI STATES MOST AFFECTED **DISEASE BURDEN BYH1N1 IN 2017 Cases Cases Deaths States Deaths** reported reported 2009 27,236 7709 431 981 Gujarat 2010 778 20,604 1,763 Maharashtra 6144 42,592 3619 279 2015 2,990 Rajasthan 2017 38,811 2,266 Madhya Pradesh 802 146 Source: National Centre for Disease Control/ Source: Integrated Disease Surveillance

Overcrowding leads to increased transmis-According to experts at NIV Pune, sciension of airborne infection. Some areas in the tists have tested over 65,000 patients' samples in the past 10 years. If testing is stopped, country may have a sparse population but it would seem there is no disease. But the with diagnostic testing facilities being set virus is very much in circulation. up, more cases are being detected.

Programme

Rajasthan worst hit in 2019

Increased testing in states like Rajasthan and Gujarat has resulted in more cases being reported. According to the National Centre for Disease Control data, Rajasthan is the worst hit this year with 5,040 cases and 206 deaths. From 2010 till mid-August this year, Rajasthan has seen 21,107 cases reported and 1,638 deaths while Gujarat has reported 25,219 cases and 1,897 deaths. This year Gujarat has reported 4,819 cases and 149 deaths, followed by Maharashtra which has registered 2,135 cases and 202 cases.

N-E states also affected

In the National Medical Journal of India, NCDC researchers have, in their 2019 study 'Influenza A (H1N1) in India – changing epidemiology and its implications', reported that 2017 was an unusual year. According to researchers Dr S Kulkarni, Dr S Singh and others, the geography of the influenza A

(H1N1) virus seems to have been affected. While cases used to come mainly from western parts of India and localised to districts like Pune in Maharashtra and Jaipur in Rajasthan, northeastern states like Arunachal Pradesh and Tripura, which had never reported influenza A (H1N1) cases in the past, notified 44 cases in 2017.

This year, Tripura registered 31 cases, Sikkim reported eight, while Meghalaya and Manipur reported two each. According to Dr Kulkarni, in 2017 the virus showed epidemiological characteristics different from previous years. Researchers said these observations require further probe to understand the changing ecological and transmission dynamics, as well as potential changes in awareness and testing. Monitoring of the genetic character of the virus and surveillance for drug resistance in the context of influenza A(H1N1) and other influenza viruses remain a high priority, said Dr Kulkarni.

WORDLY WISE

THERE IS ONE THING THE PHOTOGRAPH MUST CONTAIN, THE HUMANITY OF THE MOMENT.

— ROBERT FRANK

The Indian EXPRESS

Sounded By Sounded Ramnath Goenka

BECAUSE THE TRUTH INVOLVES US ALL

JOIN THE DEBATE

Congress must let its leaders reflect on the causes that led to its defeat in the 2019 general election

ENIOR CONGRESS LEADER Jairam Ramesh caused a flutter some days ago when he warned fellow Opposition leaders that if they were "going to demonise him (Narendra Modi) all the time, you are not going to be able to confront him". He also added that "unless we recognise that he (Modi) is doing things, which people recognise and which have not been done in the past, we are not going to be able to confront this guy". Congressmen such as Abhishek Manu Singhvi and Shashi Tharoor have defended Ramesh's remarks and suggested that the party should nuance its criticism of the prime minister. A flustered Congress leadership, initially, brushed aside the remarks as personal views of the speakers, but it has now sought to discipline the plain-speaking leaders. On Tuesday, the Kerala Pradesh Congress Committee chief, Mullappally Ramachandran, has sought an explanation from Tharoor, the Lok Sabha MP from Thiruvananthapuram, for remarks that have been construed as justification of the prime minister.

The Congress, however, should be thankful to Ramesh and Tharoor for flagging a debate on the party's strategy and tactics against Modi and his politics. Despite the successive drubbing in the general elections, the Congress leadership has refused to reflect on its tactical failures and explained away its defeat on external factors, for instance, the electronic voting machines. The Congress campaign before and during the 2019 general elections had focussed on Prime Minister Modi, turning the polls into a presidential style contest while claiming that the government was a failure on all fronts. It failed to convince the voters who preferred to endorse Modi's leadership and governance claims. While Ramesh wants the Congress to re-examine its stated position on Modi government's record, including its claims on the delivery of public goods such as cooking gas, housing and latrines, Tharoor has sought to warn about the perils of blind criticism. What both these leaders seem to hint at is that the Congress's strategy to focus all its guns on Modi may have backfired and helped the BJP to consolidate its vote. It is an admission that the Opposition's electoral strategies failed, surely, but to call it an endorsement of Modi or the BJP is a stretch. In fact, a rethink of strategies without abandoning core values may help the Congress — and the Opposition — at this moment to recover lost ground.

However, the instinctive response of many Congressmen seems to be to close ranks with the leadership and stall any introspection. The reluctance for honest debate within the party has only hurt its electoral prospects in the past. It ought to change track, even if that will force the leadership on the backfoot.

THE COST OF WATER

Delhi government's waiver scheme should occasion revisiting debates on pricing of scarce resource, while also ensuring equity

T IS TEMPTING to describe the Delhi government's move to waive the pending water bills of consumers as a sop with polls in mind. But the move should occasion a broader debate on water pricing. The arrears for domestic consumers in the city amount to more than Rs 6,000 crore, which includes a late payment surcharge (LPSC) of Rs 3,500 crore. Arrears for commercial consumers amount to Rs 10,000 crore, of which Rs 9,000 crore is LPSC. The surcharge would be completely cleared for domestic consumers and a rebate of 25 to 100 per cent will be offered to them, depending on the colony they live in. For commercial consumers, the LPSC would be cleared if they pay the principal amount before the deadline of November 30. The Delhi government has clarified that the waiver is a one-time move. But the AAP government's admission that lot of the arrears are a result "of wrong meter readings" should occasion discussion on water billing mechanisms, especially at a time when providing piped supply to all households in the country is high on the Centre's agenda.

The Standing Committee of the Ministry of Water Resources, which submitted its report to Parliament in 2015, found that the percentage of districts with over-exploited groundwater level increased from three in 1995 to 15 in 2011. The situation has worsened, since then. Twenty one Indian cities including Delhi, Bengaluru, Hyderabad and Chennai are racing towards zero groundwater by 2020, according to a Niti Aayog study. At the same time, about 80 per cent of rural India lacks access to piped water. In such a situation, subsidies — as well as payment-waiver schemes like the one in Delhi — are likely to draw the criticism that they work to the benefit of the well-heeled. A water pricing policy should facilitate the extension of supply while also ensuring that the affluent do not milk the system. As per the UN's Dublin Principle, water is an economic good and its pricing should, therefore, reflect its scarcity value. But at the same time, policy shouldn't compromise on the principles of equity.

Since water is a state subject, charges for domestic, agriculture and industrial consumers vary across the country. But the determination of water charges for the different sectors is largely ad hoc and the processes are non-transparent. Most states have dragged their feet on the National Water Policy 2012 directive of setting up an independent Water Regulatory Authority. The Delhi loan waiver scheme should occasion revisiting this policy document.

FRAMED

Controversy over photograph of Melania Trump and Justin Trudeau demonstrates the power and peril of still images

HE PHOTOGRAPH, AT first glance, might seem like a medium whose time has gone. The ubiquity of images, of every mundane thought and moment being shared world wide on the web with an Instagram-filtered visual aid, has made a photograph that reveals more than the sum of its pixels a rare commodity. But the picture of US First Lady Melania Trump, leaning in to air-kiss Canadian Prime Minister Justin Trudeau at the end of the G7 summit in France is indeed worth a thousand words. And then some.

Social media is abuzz (as it always is), making much ado about nothing. Melania's kiss, the *faire la bise*, is the common greeting, the way to be polite in France and much of Europe. And it is likely that most of the people who are trying to mischievously read more into the photograph are aware of this. But the fact is that the picture does indeed lend itself to analysis. And the point of focus isn't the First Lady's embrace with Trudeau, its her husband. The brash Donald Trump is captured with downcast eyes, looking sombre, even defeated. It is a side of Trump we do not know. A single frame has made one of the most polarising figures in world politics appear a man filled with subtleties.

Like words, it appears, the image has lost none of its power due to its ubiquity. A good, well-timed picture can, in the words of poet Eminem, "take the moment, freeze it and own it, squeeze it and hold it". Of course, the danger of the picture, of immortalising a moment, is reading too much into it. Melania Trump is being made to be an anti-Donald Trump figure on Twitter, and Trudeau her Disney prince, the one to rescue her from an ogre. And Trump, in one reading, is a tragic figure, the underdog who has to look on. Both the readings make sense in a still frame. Neither is probably true in life.

In mutual interest



The dousing of fires for now opens up space to repair ties between the government and the RBI

IN AUGUST LAST year, Mark Carney, Governor of the Bank of England told *Bloomberg* about fixing common errors that happen over history and the attempt by the central bank he heads to ensure a change in thinking to make the system as resilient as possible to "unknown unknowns". The questions on the minds of central bankers like him are: "What's the shock that could happen? Do I have enough capital? If somebody fails, can I clean up the mess in an orderly way?"

A few days ago, the chief of the world's most powerful central bank, the US Federal Reserve, Jeremy Powell, said at the annual meeting in Jackson Hole, Wyoming, that the Fed was examining the monetary policy tools it has used both in calm times and in (a) crisis. Powell, who has come under a savage attack from the US President Donald Trump, said that the Fed is now assessing whether it should expand its toolkit. All these indicate the fraught times for the world's central banks, in the backdrop of fears of a possible recession, the effectiveness of monetary policy and growing political assaults on these banks in the face of a global slowdown.

Like some of its peers, the Reserve Bank of India, too, should be fortifying itself considering the risks on the horizon. But it may have been partly blinded because of a controversy that erupted late last year on the level of reserves which it maintains, and the quantum of profits or surplus that it should distribute to the government — the owner of the bank. There has been a possible closure to that with the RBI board approving the recommendations of a committee headed by Bimal Jalan, based on which, the central bank will transfer Rs 1.76 lakh crore to the government, including the surplus and excess provisions. The committee has also outlined a clear and transparent policy for the distribution of RBI's profits over the next few years, which should lead to less conflict. More importantly, it has also set new benchmarks for building capital buffers to equip a central bank which dons multiple hats — that of a monetary policy authority, a regulator of the financial sector and the payments system, debt manager for both the Centre and state governments and the is-

A bilateral agreement on the distribution of surplus or profits and a flexible approach may have worked in India until the blow up last year. But, what makes it easier in the case of many other central banks is that the quantum to be paid out is built into the law — either as a fixed percentage of current net profit or based on a clearly defined criteria. There may not be an optimal model for this but a beginning has been made which should lead to less conflicts, a more transparent process, smoothening of profit flows over the next few years and building up of adequate capital for a

modern central bank.

suer of currency. Such a wide mandate for a central bank, including fostering financial stability, will in the normal course call for bullet-proofing against multiple risks relating to credit, operations, contingent risks, financial stability and revaluation of assets.

Wiser, after the balance of payments crisis in 1991, the RBI started building adequate buffers in the form of a few reserve funds. But, over the past decade, successive governments, desperate to raise revenues, have sought hefty payouts from the central bank, arguing that it was far more capitalised than not just its emerging market peers but also in comparison to some of the leading global central banks. Such comparisons may be meaningless considering that quite a few of them have fully convertible currencies. The first major pitch for large transfers of surplus profits from the RBI came during the tenure of Raghuram Rajan as Chief Economic Advisor, a thread which was picked up by his successor, Arvind Subramanian.

The Jalan committee's review, however, shows that the RBI's realised risk provisions have dropped below levels equivalent to 1988-89, with progressively higher transfer of surpluses to the government over the last few years. This has been pronounced in recent years with such transfers as a proportion of the bank's net income averaging 90 per cent between 2014-18 — a sharp spike compared to the average of a little over 50 per cent in the years up to 2004. The committee's analysis shows that 90 per cent of the net income was transferred to the government when risk provisioning was 10 per cent over the past few years. All this coincides with the period when the government was struggling to meet its mandated deficit targets. The committee's report also says that close to 73 per cent of the RBI's economic capital is in the form of unrealised revaluation balances. which reflect changes in the market movements of domestic and foreign securities and gold. Those balances, which may have led many to seek higher payouts, can't be tapped into, the committee has recommended — a sensible practice.

A bilateral agreement on the distribution

of surplus or profits and a flexible approach may have worked in India until the blow up last year. But, what makes it easier in the case of many other central banks is that the quantum to be paid out is built into the law — either as a fixed percentage of the current net profit or based on clearly defined criteria. There may not be an optimal model for this but a beginning has been made which should lead to less conflict, a more transparent process, smoothening of profit flows over the next few years and building up of adequate capital for a modern central bank. The UK has already done that with the Bank of England and the Treasury, having signed an MoU last year on their financial relationship which lays the ground rules for determining the bank's capital, dividend payments, among others.

As Adair Turner, former head of the UK Financial Services Authority wrote in the Financial Times recently, central bank watching is a preoccupation for many professional economists as minor rate changes matter a lot to asset managers, macro hedge funds, invest ment banks and their clients, but not as much for consumers and businesses. The issue of the independence of the Indian central bank is now threatening to degenerate into a spectator sport with personalities looming larger than institutions or the sovereign. Even in such a scenario, if both sides have agreed to adopt a new approach to determine the economic capital of the central bank and on future distribution of its profits, it may have to do largely with the fact that two senior members of the committee, Bimal Jalan and Rakesh Mohan, have been on both sides of the divide — in the finance ministry and the RBI.

The dousing of fires for now opens up a window of opportunity to unveil a calibrated public spending programme or to set aside sufficient capital for a new institution to finance long term projects. And if policymakers on both sides can shut out the noise, it could be an opportune time to repair ties between the government and the RBI and to forge a respectful relationship.

The writer is consulting editor, The Indian Express



THE DARKEST HOUR

ADM Jabalpur was a test for the Supreme Court. Only the dissenter passed it

SEEMA CHISHTI

COSTA GAVRAS' 1982 film *Missing* is a haunting story of what a military dictatorship does to its citizens as they go, well, missing. The real-life story set in Chile was also about the actions of the US government, which even had a lawsuit filed against it. The way a society responds to enforced disappearances or "detentions" by the state is often seen as a marker of the health of a democracy. That could well be why the habeas corpus or produce the person writ is a sacred one, that ties democracy to each of its citizens against the power of the state.

On Independence Day, Justice D Y Chandrachud, made a revealing personal statement which holds great relevance to-day. The Supreme Court judge spoke of how "with seven to eight hours of dictation left in the day, when I finished dictating" the order annulling the infamous ADM Jabalpur judgment of 1976, he "told his Secretary that they would close for the day". He had "told a parent he was wrong." "I know he (former Chief Justice Y V Chandrachud) believed through his life that ADM Jabalpur was wrong."

The senior Chandrachud was among the four SC judges who sat on the five-judge habeas corpus bench for 37 working days from December 1975 to February 1976, and ruled that personal liberties in India were not to be necessarily upheld in the face of the executive after declaring Emergency. The hearings started on December 15, 1975. The government's arguments were centred around how the political executive had rights in

The ruling, however, was 4-1. All the judges wrote separate judgments. But the net result was upholding the executive's prerogative to detain people and so, a citizen had no right to move a habeas in a high court. Justice Beg, amazingly, went on to speak of the 'care and concern bestowed by the state authorities upon the welfare of detenus who are well-housed, well-fed and well-treated is almost maternal'.

would stake its claim to form government in the next two or three days "since the times of war or during an Emergency to restrict personal liberty. When Justice H R Khanna, the only one who was ultimately to dissent, asked the attorney general, Niren De, if "supposing some policeman, for reasons of enmity, not of state, kills someone, would there be a remedy?" De is said to have replied: "My Lord, not so long as the Emergency lasts."

Several senior advocates including Shanti

Bhushan, Soli Sorabjee, V N Tarkunde, argued the habeas cases and maintained that with the remedy of habeas denied, the securing of a citizen's life and liberty was "dead". The ruling, however, was 4–1. All the judges wrote separate judgments. But the net result was upholding the executive's prerogative to detain people and so, a citizen had no right to move a habeas in a high court. Justice Beg, amazingly, went on to speak of the "care and concern bestowed by the state authorities upon the welfare of detenus who are well-housed, well-fed and well-treated is almost maternal."

ADM Jabalpur is seen as one of the darkest spots in the history of the Supreme Court. The motives of those gave that judgment have been a matter of great speculation ever since. Notably, Justice Y V Chandrachud maintained that he had read the law right, even if it was not right to follow it. This does not hold much water now.

Another unique reasoning accorded was of rescuing the Court by going along with the government. On January 30, 1976, a resolu-

tion was moved in the Lok Sabha, recommending changes which would have resulted in significantly changing the Constitution to clip the wings of the judiciary. Legal scholars like Upendra Baxi felt had the Court acted differently in *ADM Jabalpur*, "it would have imperiled the Courts' existence". That argument about saving the Court reminds of the apocryphal tale about the American military officer in Vietnam arguing that they had to destroy a village to save it.

Once the Janata Party government was in place after Indira Gandhi lost the elections, in 1978, Justice YV Chandrachud had said: "I regret that I did not have the courage to lay down my office and tell the people, well, this is the law." But one man had that courage at the time — Justice H R Khanna. He was superseded, his dissent, now legendary, formed the grounds of the rejection of *ADM Jabalpur* in 2017.

The then government did not stop at Justice Khanna. From nine high courts,16 judges who had anything to do with upholding personal liberties were swiftly transferred within two months. As legal scholar Gautam Bhatia put it in *Transformative Constitution*, Justice Khanna's dissent would constitute a "contrapuntal" or something that appears as a counterpoint, often solitary, against the tide at the time, but something that conceals the kernel of the future and the way ahead, which lives on to speak forcefully, another day.

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AUGUST 29, 1979, FORTY YEARS AGO



URS LOSING GROUND Devaraj Urs Government had been reduced THE RULING KARNATAKA Congress reto a minority". ceived a further setback, with its majority Janata's Hand for Urs in the 225-member Assembly reduced to THE JANATA PARTY will be willing to come to five after six more of its MLAs joined the Congress-I. The strength of the Congress-I the rescue of the Karnataka Chief Minister has gone up to 41 and the Karnataka Devaraj Urs if he seeks its help. This was Congress has fallen to 114 MLAs. The clearly indicated by the Janata Parliamentary Congress-I, which had a strength of 14 MLAs Party leader Jagjivan Ram. According to inat the time of the July split, has gained 35 formation available with Ram, Urs has not more in the past fortnight, including six yet formally approached the Janata central leadership for help. from the Janata. President of the ad-hoc KPCC (I) committee, S Bangarappa, at a LORD'S FUNERAL press conference in Bangalore said his party

LORD'S FUNERAL
BRITISH PRIME MINISTER Margaret Thatcher
cut short her holiday vacation to hurry back

to London for urgent security talks at 20 Downing Street following Monday's bloody bombing in which 23 people, including Lord Mountbatten and 18 soldiers were killed Buckingham Palace announced that Lord Mountbatten's funeral ceremonies will be held at the Westminster Abbey. Thereafter, the body will be taken to Komsey Abbey near his Hampshire home at Broadlands for a private burial. The former war hero is related through his great grandmother Queen Victoria, to most of Europe's royal houses. The Earl made plans for his funeral in 1976, expressing the wish that all the nations whose soldiers served under him in World War II should be represented.

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—THE GUARDIAN

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5 THE IDEAS PAGE

The consensus builder

Arun Jaitley brought together states with vastly different views on the GST to ensure the country's economic integration



Sushil Kumar Modi

HE WAS ARGUABLY the greatest consensus builder of modern India. What Sardar Patel did for the country's polity, Arun Jaitley did for the Indian economy. He brought about economic integration in a federation as diverse and as vast as India, something which no modern federation has achieved. But for him, GST would have remained a pious intention — something everyone agreed to but had a different version of. Even though Arun ji made immense contributions in every field that he handled, in this article I would confine myself to the implementation and evolution of GST. This process is something I was closely associated with and I had the opportunity to observe and interact with him the most.

The biggest stumbling block was the issue of CST compensation, which the previous government had announced and made an allocation in the Union Budget but never gave to the states. Arun ji ensured that the compensation was given to the states on the basis of the recommendation of the Empowered Committee of State Finance Ministers (EC). This fostered an environment of trust between the Centre and the states: the latter could now feel positive about being compensated for GST losses.

The Constitution Amendment Bill (CAB) had been hanging fire since 2010 – there were differences between the Centre and the states on crucial issues such as a constitutional guarantee for compensation, subsumation of entry tax and inclusion of petrol and diesel. Arun ji met a group of state finance ministers in December 2014 to resolve the differences. The rough edges were further smoothed when he joined the EC in its deliberations and the result was the 122nd CAB, which virtually everyone agreed to in principle as well as in broad details. It was a testimony to Arun ji's negotiating skills that the CAB was debated and passed unanimously by Parliament and ratified by the state legislatures.

Initially, the GST Council had to grapple with the contentious issues of dual control – which a dual GST implied – and the rate path under the new tax regime. The Council's first five or six meetings were devoted exclusively to arriving at a consensus on these thorny issues. It was only Arun ji's credibility in a body split down the middle (between the Centre and the states), his skills of persuasion, wisdom, commitment to a united vision, democratic way of functioning and his ability to take everyone along that ultimately helped in forging a consensus.

The vexed issue of compensation got resolved when he suggested protecting the revenues of the states at a compounded annual growth rate of 14 per cent over the base year revenue levels; this masterstroke got even the states, which were till then demanding compensation of several kinds to agree to the compensation mechanism. In the meetings of the Council, Arun ji sat for long hours, patiently heard everyone out and evolved a common

He virtually never discussed in the Council issues that had not been previously deliber-



ated by the committee of officers from across the country. He also put into place an arrangement whereby every meeting of the Council was preceded by a meeting of the officers of the state and the Centre. This meeting of the Officers' Committee proved to be a key strategy in consensus-building: The technical details were thrashed out in such meetings and the Council could then have the benefit of discussing issues over which a broad consensus had already evolved. The Council would then refine this through protracted discussions.

He formed group comprising about a dozen senior ministers from across the political spectrum, and representing varied view points on the matter, for discussing and resolving the issues that eluded consensus. The issue would get discussed threadbare in the group and almost invariably get resolved in the next meeting of the

Another strategy that he often adopted on particularly contentious issues was to refer the matter for detailed analysis by and consideration of one of the many specialised committee of officers that were constituted for aiding and advising the Council in the exercise of its functions. The issues concerning the real estate sector were particularly vexing and the committees sat over them more than two times and were also directed to hold joint meetings. As Chairman of the Council, Arun ji urged nonmember states to join in these deliberations so that the issue could be resolved. The tax rate on lottery was another issue which seemed headed for voting. But Arun ji saved the day by calling for a dual rate structure which found favour with all the concerned states. At times, he would defer discussions on a contentious issue, allow people to mull over it and approach the discussion in the next meeting from a different angle.

The tax rates in case of government works and the tax structure of the restaurant sector had been hotly debated in the Council with feelings running high among the different sides. But the master strategist that he was,

Arun ji managed to convince everyone in the next meeting by proposing a middle way and concentrating on the agreed points. The issue of taxing powers in territorial waters was another contentious issue, wherein not much was at stake yet feelings ran high. Arun ji explained the constitutional provisions and yet accommodated the viewpoint of the states by charting a middle path. It eventually became Section 9 of the IGST Act.

The taxation of branded food products was also hotly debated in the Council and when the issue seemed to run into legal hurdles, Arun ji actually suggested a formulation for the draft notification. He often let the states argue their position at length, heard every possible viewpoint patiently and resolved the issue by calling for some give and take, but never allowing matters to reach a flashpoint without compromising on the basic principles. Even the most trenchant advocates of a viewpoint were goaded into coming around to a common view. The issue of TDS and TCS were resolved by deferring them till such time as everyone was ready for these taxes while the universal applicability of the national e-way bill system was resolved by permitting flexibility to the states in case of intra-state movements.

Being associated with and having observed the proceedings, I can unhesitatingly state that it was Arun Jaitley who translated the prime minister's vision of GST into reality. This was particularly trying in the initial period when the alliance holding office at the Centre did not have as much representation in the Council as it now has. It is testimony to the immense respect he commanded across the political spectrum that a body comprising the Centre, 29 states and seven union territories did not ever have to resort to voting. He was a politician, an officer and a thorough gentleman. But above all, he was the ultimate consensus builder, ever prepared to walk the last mile and take that extra step to take everyone along.

The writer is deputy chief minister, Bihar

Reforming the Law Commission

"Ben Stokes's batting to win England the third Test match of the current Ashes series was one of the most extraordinary demonstrations of sporting excellence

The government should enshrine in law, the composition, tenure, functions and work procedure of the panel



AHIR MAHMOOD

WHAT THE OTHERS SAY

of the last 50 years."

OVER A MONTH ago, the media reported that Cabinet will soon take a call on reconstituting the Law Commission (IE, July15). There has been no further public information on the progress in the matter. The last commission had gone out of office a year ago, on August 31, 2018.

The Law Commission of India — the old-

est amongst the national-level parastatal bodies – remains an odd one even in its 65th year. Unlike its sister organisations, established much later, it has no fixed composition, no defined eligibility criteria for its chair and members, and no set functions — everything rests on the government's will. The terms of reference are specified afresh each time it is reconstituted as if it were an ad hoc body. It is an enigma to many as to why this oldest commission is still being treated in such a casual way while three of the other national commissions of later years, those for the Scheduled Castes, Scheduled Tribes and Backward Classes, are now regulated by the Constitution and there is a parliamentary charter for each of the national commissions for human rights, minorities, women, children and safai karmcharis.

The Law Commission is a legacy of the country's colonial past. In 1833, our British rulers unified, under a centralised dispensation, the three presidencies they had been ruling for long, and planned to enforce the English common law in the whole of what they called "British India". To translate their plan into action they constituted many law commissions. The work of these bodies transformed India into a common law country. After the fourth commission completed its work towards the end of 19th century, the rulers, sensing the beginning of an uprising for home rule, did not continue the exercise.

In the eighth year of Independence, the Government of India decided to revive the British legacy of appointing law commissions to study, research and report on legal matters specified in their terms of reference. The first commission, set up in 1955 for a threeyear term, assumed charge on September 1 that year and vacated office on August 31, three years later. From September 1, of a given year, to the same date three years later was then irrationally adopted as the fixed term for the commission for all time to come irrespective of when a new commission was constituted and entered office. Consequently, each of the later commissions worked for less — some for much less — than three years, leaving their assigned work half way.

Though the commission's job requires research-oriented juristic learning, which cannot essentially be the outcome of judicial experience, the commission has been a haven for retired judges. The chairpersons of the four pre-independence Law Commissions — C H Cameron, John Romilly, Whitley Stokes and Thomas Macaulay — were eminent jurists, not judges, and so were many of their members. Independent India initially main-

tained the tradition by appointing the distinguished jurist M C Setalvad as the chairman of its first Law Commission. The policy was later changed, and with the sole exception of the fifth commission which was headed by a non-judge (the first law secretary KVK Sundaram), the commission has always been headed by judges. Members of the commission are also

generally drawn from the judiciary, and the member-secretary is always from the bureaucracy. Of course, there have been some immortal names among them. The eighth commission was headed by the legendary judge Hansraj Khanna who had sacrificed his chance of being CJI by dissenting from the infamous majority judgment in the habeas corpus case of the Emergency days (ADM Jabalpur, 1976). The inimitable juristjudge V R Krishna Iyer served as a member of the commission before being elevated to the apex court bench in 1973.

Reports of the commission are generally written individually by members including the chairman and placed before the full commission for discussion and adoption. Quite a few of these reports have been on the Hindu and Christian family laws, but none on the Muslim personal law. The apex court had once suggested that the issue of reform of Muslim law be entrusted by the government to the Law Commission which should work on it in consultation with National Minorities Commission (Sarla Mudgal, 1995). Commenting on it, the civil servant-turned-politician Mani Shankar Aiyar remarked: "What faith will the minorities have in the pronouncements of an all-Hindu Law Commission?" (Confessions of a Secular Fundamentalist, 2004).

The 18th Law Commission, with former

Supreme Court judge A R Lakshmanan as the chairman and I as its only full-time member, was 50 per cent Muslim but the community still did not have "faith" in it. Three of the four reports written by me for the commission were criticised by Muslim clerics for their indirect "adverse effect" on the community's supposedly sacrosanct law and my learned chairman shied away, for fear of a "backlash", from endorsing my fourth report, seen as directly touching the Muslim law. In light of this experience, I strongly feel that if the commission has to work without regard for extra-legal and political considerations it must have a governing statute defining its powers and responsibilities, and limitations.

Before constituting the 22nd Law Commission — though the exercise is long overdue — the institution should, in my opinion, be placed under a proper parliamentary charter. The government of the day, which has conferred constitutional status on the National Backward Classes Commission, overhauled the governing law of the National Human Rights Commission and set up a Rashtriya Kamdhenu Ayog for the preservation of bovines, will do well to determine by legislation, the composition, tenure, functions and work procedure of the Law Commission. It should be a predominantly jurists' commission, not a retired judges' collective with a sprinkling of legal scholarship and jurisprudential expertise.

The author is former chairman of National Minorities Commission and member, Law Commission of India



Poised for a leap

Fundamentals of Indian economy are sound. Growth is on the horizon

He put into place an

arrangement, whereby every

preceded by a meeting of the

meeting of the Council was

officers of the state and the

Centre. This meeting of the

Officers' Committee proved

to be a key strategy in

technical details were

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Council would then refine

could then have the benefit

IF YOU LOOK at the global markets for investors today, two big blocks will come to mind immediately - India and Africa. Unsurprisingly, these emerging markets have attracted maximum foreign investment over the last two decades. India, being the bigger of the two, remains a hot favourite with foreign investors. Narendra Modi's India has received \$250 billion FDI in the last six years, which is equal to the foreign investment in the 14 years prior to 2014. At present, the confidence appears to be slightly low in the Indian corporate world, which can be attributed to their concern over the global economy, where the GDP is likely to come off by over 60 to 70 bps.

Contrary to what detractors are saying, the RBI made a responsible gesture by handing over a big surplus of Rs 1.76 lakh crore to the government. It is in the national interest because it will support the government with the ammunition not only to combat the potential economic slowdown but also help spur investment and sectoral stimulus

The government is making an all-out effort to put the economy back on the eight percentage plus growth rate. But the private sector appears to have shown little appetite to fight shoulder-to-shoulder with the government. Our private sector and indeed the economists across the ideological spectrum were aware that Modi-1 was about laying the foundation for a robust, modern economy. It was going to be a bit bumpy, but very

fruitful in the long run.

Many claim there is a feeling of fatigue in the world's sixth leading economy after a long run of high growth. Even at the forecasted rate of 6.30 per cent, the Indian economy continues to be the fastest growing among the top global economies. The notso-impressive growth rate of 5.8 percent in one quarter shouldn't lead to fears

Yes, there is a slowdown. But we have not entered uncharted territory.

Modi-1 had inherited a largely informal, cash economy with a burgeoning, chaotic unorganised sector. Of course, India had changed beyond recognition following the reforms of the 1990s, but large parts of the economic activity had remained ensconced in the past. The Modi government embarked on game changing plans to formalise the economy. Demonetisation and GST were the two bold changes the government had to make in the national interest.

Another factor that has contributed to the slowdown is less-than-normal rainfall in the recent past (thankfully, this year the monsoon is good). Unfortunately, this factor is generally overlooked in the debate. The elections may also have contributed to the slowdown. Forced by the code of conduct during the elections, the government was unable to spend on schemes or announce big reforms. As a result, the growth in capex had slipped to 2 per cent from the previous quarter of 12 per cent and impacted in GDP by around 80

bps. India's slowdown is also firmly linked to the global trend and the ongoing US-China trade war is not helping matters.

It will be a great service to your country if you do not panic. Our economy is on a very sound footing. Our macro indicators are all good. Consider this: Forex reserves are an alltime high at \$491 billion; CPI inflation is tracking at 3.2 per cent and has remained below the 4 per cent mark for nearly 12 months. Core inflation has also decelerated meaningfully in the last 12 months. Gross FDI flows remains robust tracking at close to 2.4 per cent of GDP on a 12-month trailing basis.

PMI manufacturing and services for July saw an improvement compared to a slowdown in previous month. This is encouraging and it suggests that the economy has shown improvement and also accelerated the job creation.

The juggernaut of the Indian economy has generated so much energy over the years that a strong momentum has been in motion for the last few decades. It's continuing to propel the economy forward. The government was not exactly sitting idle before Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman announced a series of welcome measures at a press conference last week and reiterated her resolve to fix the problem at another meet on Tuesday.

Some in the industry have argued that there was a crisis of confidence between lenders and borrowers and between the government and industry. They had urged the

government to look into it. The FM has done exactly that. The infusion of Rs 70,000 crore to PSU banks will shoot up lending to the tune of Rs 5 lakh crore, assuming banks leverage it seven times. The government is launching structural changes in the agriculture sector, such as modifying the Essential Commodities Act.

Government spending is going to pick up following the good monsoon. Consumption will rise as we are entering the festive season. Growth will come. It will come from improving exports, from investment and from disinvestment. The government is encouraging private investment, as announced in the budget. The foreign investors' shares have been increased. It is bound to attract more investment from abroad. We believe that government can exceed the disinvestment target for the year, which stands at Rs 1.14 lakh crore.

The forecast is not exactly gloomy for the next quarter and beyond, but yes, it's not in double digits immediately. With PM Modi's continued focus on reforms, credit flow and ease of doing business and with his infectious optimism, it's very likely that we will achieve the \$5-trillion mark by 2024/2025 assuming we hit the average GDP of 7.5 per cent and rupee-dollar remains stable around 70.

The writer is national spokesperson of the BIP and former managing director, Deutsche Bank, India. Views are personal

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

INVISIBLE TRAGEDIES

THIS REFERS TO the article, 'When his heartbeat dropped' (IE, August 28). It has been 24 days since the abolition of Article 370 and the curfew being imposed in the Kashmir Valley. A section of media shows pictures of Kashmir where it looks as though the "life is normal". How long will the people be trapped in their houses? Does the government have a plan to end the curfew? **Dhaval Trivedi,** Pune

THIS REFERS TO the article, 'When his heartbeat dropped' (IE, August 28). The writer has expressed his anguish over losing the life of the baby, yet to born to his sister, likely because of the communication blackout in the Valley. This story has been brought to us as the brother of the unfortunate woman is a journalist. But, as the article says, many similar stories may have gone unnoticed. **Vandana,** *Chandigarh*

RIGHTS REVOKED

THIS REFERS TO the article, 'The verdict of history' (IE, August 28). There will be from time-to-time an over-arching executive, which seeks to change the fundamental nature of a constitutional democracy for its ideological ends. In such times, the judiciary is meant to stand up for the Constitution's "basic structure". The right to free speech and expression stands revoked in Kashmir. People born on Indian soil, "natural cit-

LETTER OF THE WEEK AWARD

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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,

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izens" could well be denied citizenship in Assam, even as the flawed NRC process hangs over the entire country as a threat. The Supreme Court consists of the finest legal minds in the country. It must have the moral courage to not be swayed by arguments of national or cultural insecurity. There is reason why the judiciary is independent and does not contest elections.

Shatam Ray, via email

epaper indianex mess.com

बिज़नेस स्टैंडर्ड वर्ष 12 अंक 165

निजता की रक्षा

प्तास्वामी फैसले (इसी फैसले ने यह सनिश्चित किया था कि निजता एक मल देखते हुए वह डेटा प्राइवेसी (निजता) विधेयक सिमिति की अनुशंसा और मसौदा कानून भी

न्यायमुर्ति बीएन श्रीकृष्ण ने हाल ही में पारित किया जा सकता था जो उनकी अध्यक्षता वाली समिति ने तैयार किया था। उन्होंने कहा कि यह विधेयक उतनी ही आसानी से पारित अधिकार है) की दूसरी वर्षगांठ के अवसर पर हो सकता था जितनी आसानी से एटीएम से आयोजित एक परिसंवाद में एक उल्लेखनीय पैसे निकाले जाते हैं। सर्वोच्च न्यायालय ने बात कही। उन्होंने कहा कि सत्ताधारी दल को निजता की सरक्षा के लिए विशिष्ट कानन की संसद में जिस प्रकार का बहुमत प्राप्त है, उसे अनुशंसा करीब दो वर्ष पहले की थी। श्रीकृष्ण

वर्षभर पहले सौंपे जा चुके हैं। इस बीच संसद में कई विधेयक पारित किए गए लेकिन इस मसौदे को कानून में बदलने को लेकर कोई हलचल नजर नहीं आ रही है।

यह बहुत खेद की बात है कि श्रीकृष्ण समिति द्वारा प्रस्तावित निजता संरक्षण कानून की अनुपस्थिति में व्यावहारिक रूप से निजता का बचाव करना काफी कठिन है। दो वर्ष की इस अवधि में ऐसी कई घटनाएं हुई हैं जिन्होंने निजता को प्रभावित किया है। उदाहरण के लिए डीएनए प्रोफाइलिंग विधेयक मंजूर हो गया और इस विधान में भी कई ऐसे पहलू हैं जिन पर शंका है। डीएनए न केवल संवेदनशील व्यक्तिगत डेटा है बल्कि यह उन लोगों की निजता को पूरी तरह प्रभावित कर सकता है जिनका डीएनए परीक्षण किया गया है और

जिसे भंडारित किया गया है।

सरकार ने यह प्रस्ताव भी रखा है कि राज्यों के मोटर वाहन विभागों से वाहन पंजीयन सूची और वाहन चालन लाइसेंस के डेटा को भी निजी क्षेत्र की संस्थाओं को बेचा जाए। स्वैच्छिक माने जाने के बावजूद आधार को आय कर रिटर्न से जोड़ दिया गया है। आधार को निर्वाचन सुची से जोडने का भी प्रस्ताव है जबिक इससे मतदाताओं की असंवैधानिक प्रोफाइलिंग होने का खतरा है।

विभिन्न अदालतों में तमाम जनहित याचिकाएं लंबित हैं जिनमें कहा जा रहा है कि देश के नागरिकों को अपना आधार सोशल मीडिया अकाउंट और इंस्टैंट मेसेजिंग सेवा से जोडने को कहा जाए। तमिलनाड सरकार समेत विभिन्न याचियों का कहना है कि ऐसा करने

से फेक न्यूज पर प्रभावी तरीके से अंकुश लगाया जा सकेगा। यह सही हो अथवा नहीं लेकिन सोशल मीडिया पर गोपनीयता का समाप्त होना वाक स्वतंत्रता पर भी असर डालेगा। अलोकप्रिय विचार रखने वाले या जरूरी खलासे करने वाले नागरिकों की निजता तब बरकरार नहीं रह सकेगी। ऐसा लोकतंत्र जो निजता को मुल अधिकार मानता हो उसे फेक न्यूज का मुकाबला अलग तरीकों से करने वालों और आजाद खयाल लोगों को वरीयता देनी चाहिए।

इंटरनेट के प्रसार के इस दौर में निजता से जुड़े अन्य मसले भी जल्दी सर उठा लेंगे। चूंकि एक फ्रिज, वातानुकूलक या कार अब निजी बातचीत को सुन और देख सकते हैं, रिकॉर्ड कर सकते हैं तथा उसे आगे भेज सकते हैं तो ऐसे में निकट भविष्य में निजता का

मसला और गंभीर होता जाएगा। कानून ऐसा हो कि भविष्य में उसका फायदा न उठाया जा सके। उसे आगामी चुनौतियों के लिए पहले से तैयार रहना चाहिए। ये उदाहरण स्पष्ट करते हैं कि निजता के क्षेत्र में कई चुनौतियों पर ध्यान देना होगा। डेटा वाकई डिजिटल सोना और राष्ट्रीय संसाधन है। इसके माध्यम से तमाम जन सेवाओं को शुरू किया जा सकता है और इस पर तमाम कारोबारी मॉडल स्थापित किए जा सकते हैं। परंतु इसे लोगों की व्यक्तिगत संपदा मानना होगा और इसे एकत्रित करने, भंडारित करने या बिना सहमति के इस्तेमाल नहीं करना चाहिए। जब तक निजता के बुनियादी उसूलों पर आधारित कानून नहीं बनता, अगस्त 2017 के पुत्तास्वामी फैसले का कोई खास मतलब नहीं होगा।



वैश्विक और घरेलू माहोल तथा विकास संबंधी दुविधा

देश में एक असंभव त्रयी का मेल और वैश्विक स्तर पर प्राकृतिक, आर्थिक, तकनीकी और भू-राजनैतिक उथलपुथल के कारण तमाम बड़ी चिंताएं उठ खड़ी हुई हैं। जानकारी प्रदान कर रहे हैं अरुणाभ घोष

विकल्प मौजूद हैं, उन पर घरेलू दुविधाओं और वैश्विक स्तर पर हो रहे तमाम बडे बदलावों का बहुत अधिक प्रभाव है। घरेलू स्तर पर रोजगार, वृद्धि और स्थायित्व की एक असंभव त्रयी हमारे सामने है जहां तीन लक्ष्यों में से ज्यादा से ज्यादा दो पूरे हो सकते हैं। उदाहरण के लिए सौर पार्क स्थायी बुनियादी ढांचे में अंतरराष्ट्रीय निवेश आकर्षित करते हैं लेकिन वे उतने रोजगार नहीं पैदा कर सकते जितने कि वितरण वाली ऊर्जा अधोसंरचना। प्राकृतिक ढंग से कृषि कार्य को बढ़ावा देना मिट्टी की सेहत के लिए अच्छा है। यह कार्बन उत्सर्जन कम करने और जल संरक्षण तथा श्रम को भी प्रोत्साहन देने वाला है लेकिन इससे कृषि उत्पादन में जो मुल्य वर्धन होगा वह उर्वरक उद्योग को होने वाले नुकसान की भरपाई नहीं कर सकता। देश के औद्योगिक उत्पादन में अहम हिस्सेदारी और वाहन तथा वाहन कलपूर्जा उद्योग को देखते हुए इलेक्ट्रिक वाहनों के इस्तेमाल की ओर आक्रामक पहलकदमी नए उभरते औद्योगिक क्षेत्र पर खेला गया दांव है लेकिन यहां भी दो विपरीत परिस्थितियों के बीच संतुलन कायम करने की स्थिति बनेगी।

बाहरी माहौल हमारे चयन को और बाधित करता है। जलवायु परिवर्तन ने प्राकृतिक वातावरण को बहुत गहरे तक प्रभावित किया है। हमारी जैव विविधता को नुकसान पहुंचा है और जैव रासायनिक

श के समक्ष विकास के जो भी प्रक्रिया में गड़बड़ी पैदा हुई है। औद्योगीकरण की आपूर्ति। इसके लिए मजबूत कारोबारी में गिरावट उत्पादक वृद्धि का धीमा होना और असमानता में इजाफा होने के कारण पश्चिमी देशों ने वैश्विक एकजुटता से मुंह मोडा है। यह भरोसा कमजोर हुआ है कि बाजार आधारित वृद्धि से सामाजिक न्याय मिल सकता है। कृत्रिम मेधा, बड़े डेटा, स्वचालन, क्वांटम गणना आदि विसंगतिकारक तकनीक ने विभिन्न देशों के बीच प्रतिद्वंद्विता पैदा की है और इससे तकनीक हासिल करने या उसका संरक्षण करने की प्रवृत्ति में भी इजाफा हुआ है। लोकलुभावनवाद और राष्ट्रवाद ने कई देशों में अंतरराष्ट्रीय व्यवस्था को चुनौती देना शरू कर दिया है। ऐसे में विभिन्न गठजोडों की स्थिरता, कुटनयिक नियमों और सैन्य संबद्धता को प्रभावित किया है। इसके साथ ही मध्यस्थता के लिए जरूरी रहे संगठन भी तनाव महसूस कर रहे हैं। देश में इस असंभव त्रयी को हासिल करना और वैश्विक स्तर पर प्राकृतिक, आर्थिक, तकनीकी और भूराजनैतिक विसंगतियों के कारण सात बड़ी चिंताएं पैदा हो गई हैं।

 ऊर्जा और संसाधन सुरक्षाः ये दोनों संसाधन सुरक्षित करने, सुरक्षित मार्ग, सुरक्षित भंडारण और सक्रिय अंतरराष्ट्रीय संस्थानों पर निर्भर करते हैं। केवल हाइडोकार्बन का आयात कम करने से बात नहीं बनेगी। नई तरह की निर्भरता पैदा होगी। मिसाल के तौर पर स्वच्छ ऊर्जा उत्पादों का कारोबार और सेवाओं या बैटरी आदि के लिए अहम खनिजों रिश्ते कायम करने होंगे, आपूर्ति शृंखला बनानी होगी और प्रभावी बहुपक्षीय संस्थानों

2. आर्थिक और पर्यावरण संबंधी कूटनीतिः भारत ने पेरिस समझौते के जरिये जलवायु परिवर्तन के मामले में नेतृत्व क्षमता दिखाई। उसने सहयोग आधारित ऊर्जा सुरक्षा के लिए अंतरराष्ट्रीय सौर गठजोड़ की पहल की। अगले महीने भारत मरुस्थलीकरण से निपटने के लिए संयुक्त राष्ट्र के सम्मेलन की मेजबानी करेगा। परंतु ये तो समय-समय पर होने वाले हस्तक्षेप हैं। सन 2022 तक जब भारत जी 20 देशों की बैठक की मेजबानी करेगा, तब तक उसे अपने व्यापारिक, वित्तीय और आर्थिक हितों को ऊर्जा, जलवायु और स्थायित्व के साथ जोडना होगा। विश्व स्तर पर एक अधिक स्थायी एजेंडे की आवश्यकता होगी।

3. रोजगार और व्यापार का माहौल: अमेरिका और चीन के बीच व्यापार युद्ध वैश्विक व्यापार वृद्धि को प्रभावित करता रहेगा। जाहिर है अंतरराष्ट्रीय व्यापार कुछ समय तक रोजगार वृद्धि में सहायक नहीं होगा। भारत को घरेलू स्तर पर रोजगार पैदा करने होंगे। ऊर्जा परिवर्तन का दौर धीमी होती अर्थव्यवस्था में रोजगार का माध्यम बन

4. जलवायु जोखिम और बुनियादी निवेश: देश की वृद्धि अब जलवाय के

जोखिम से जुड़ी हुई है। आवास, परिवहन और उद्योग खासकर तटीय इलाकों में उद्योग जैसी बुनियादी सुविधाओं में निवेश को जोखिम उत्पन्न होगा। जलवायु परिवर्तन के कारण वित्तीय संकट उत्पन्न होने के संकेत नजर आने लगे हैं। केंद्रीय बैंकों को इस पर ध्यान देने की आवश्यकता है।

5. कार्बन सीमा समायोजन और **व्यापारिक गतिरोध:** कारोबारी विवाद स्वच्छ ऊर्जा की राह रोक रहे हैं। विभिन्न देश इसके बढते बाजार में अपने हिस्से के लिए जूझ रहे हैं। भविष्य में जलवायु और ऊर्जा संबंधी विवाद बढेंगे। सन 2019 के अंत तक यूरोपीय संघ 2050 तक कार्बन निरपेक्षता का समझौता कर सकता है। इसके तय होने के बाद देखना होगा कि जलवायु परिवर्तन को लेकर गंभीरता नहीं दिखा रहे देशों को दंडित करने के लिए कार्बन सीमा समायोजन कर कब लगाया जाता है। अमेरिका का रुख इस दिशा में काफी ढीला है। चीन कह सकता है कि उसके उत्सर्जन 2030 के पहले उच्चतम स्तर पर होंगे। वैश्विक व्यापार तंत्र में मची अफरातफरी देश के ऊर्जा चयन और विकास विकल्पों पर

6. घरेलू लोकलुभावनवाद और भू-राजनैतिक जोखिम: विकसित देशों में बढती असमानता के कारण विरोध बढ़ रहा है। इससे निपटने के लिए लोकलुभावनवाद का अदूरदर्शी निर्णय लिया जा रहा है। कहीं और लिए जा रहे ऐसे निर्णय पड़ोसी देशों के माध्यम से भारत के लिए भू-राजनैतिक जोखिम पैदा कर सकते हैं। ईरान-अमेरिका विवाद इसका उदाहरण है। उसने देश की ऊर्जा सुरक्षा पर असर डाला है। चीन और अमेरिका के तनाव के कारण चीन ने अहम खनिज आपूर्ति रोकने की धमकी दी है। ऐसे में भारत के लिए अन्य देशों के साथ तकनीकी सहयोग करना और निवेश जुटाना मुश्किल हो रहा है। **7. झटकों पर झटके:** सन 2008 में

केवल वैश्विक वित्तीय संकट नहीं आया था बल्कि उसके साथ वैश्विक खाद्य संकट भी उत्पन्न हुआ था। ऊर्जा की बढ़ी कीमतें, उर्वरक की बढ़ी लागत, खाद्य भंडार की कमी, अनाज से जैव ईंधन बनाना, मुद्रा का अवमुल्यन और विपरीत मौसम आदि के कारण खाद्य कीमतें तेजी से बढ़ीं। भारत को भविष्य में ऐसे झटकों से बचने की तैयारी रखनी होगी। इनमें जल संकट, कृषि नुकसान, ऊर्जा आपूर्ति से जुड़ा तनाव, बढ़ते व्यापारिक विवाद, विपरीत मौसम की घटनाओं के चलते बीमा कंपनियों और वित्तीय संस्थानों का दिवालिया होना और पर्यावरण के चलते विस्थापित लोगों के आंदोलन आदि इसमें शामिल हैं। जलवायु को लेकर किए जाने वाले प्रयोग भविष्य में कृषि जैव विविधता आदि को लेकर अप्रत्याशित परिणाम ला सकते हैं। उदाहरण के लिए समताप मंडल में सल्फेट के कण डालना। इसके कारण पर्ण अशासित क्षेत्रों में राजनीतिक संघर्ष भी उत्पन्न हो सकते हैं।

यह कहना सही नहीं होगा कि हमारी विकास संबंधी दुविधा आसानी से दूर हो जाएगी। परंतु इसमें ग्रामीण अर्थव्यवस्था, स्थायी शहरीकरण और हरित औद्योगीकरण के लिए अवसर भी हैं। इससे भारत को नई प्रतिस्पर्धी बढ़त मिल सकती है।

रिजर्व बैंक की राहत पाकर कहीं बेपरवाह न हो जाए सरकार

वित्त मंत्री निर्मला सीतारमण ने बजट पेश करने के डेढ़ महीने बाद गत शुक्रवार को अपनी पहली बडी नीतिगत घोषणा की जिसे बंबई स्टॉक एक्सचेंज (बीएसई) ने भी काफी पसंद किया। बीएसई का बेंचमार्क सेंसेक्स सोमवार को कारोबार के दौरान करीब 800 अंक चढ गया। अमेरिका-चीन व्यापार वार्ता बहाल होने की उम्मीदों ने भी समूचे बाजार का मनोबल बढाया लेकिन सीतारमण की घोषणाओं के अनुकूल असर को भी नजरअंदाज नहीं किया जा सकता है। सोमवार शाम को इससे भी बडी घोषणा की गई। भारतीय रिजर्व बैंक (आरबीआई) के निदेशक मंडल की बैठक में विमल जालान समिति की अनुशंसाएं स्वीकार कर लिए जाने की जानकारी एक बयान में दी गई। जालान समिति ने आरबीआई की आकस्मिक निधि के लिए जरूरी पूंजी, मुद्रा एवं स्वर्ण भंडार संबंधी प्रावधानों की समीक्षा कर कुछ सुझाव दिए थे। इन सुझावों को स्वीकार करने का मतलब है कि आरबीआई को अपने आरक्षित भंडार से 1.76 लाख करोड़ रुपये सरकार को देने होंगे। इसमें से 52,637 करोड़ रुपये अधिशेष आकस्मिक निधि संबंधी प्रावधानों के मद में और 1.23 लाख करोड़ रुपये लाभांश के तौर पर दिए जाएंगे। लाभांश की राशि में से 28,000 करोड़ रुपये तो आरबीआई कुछ महीने पहले ही

इस तरह वर्ष 2019-20 में सरकार को आरबीआई से कुल 1.48 लाख करोड रुपये का राजस्व ही मिलेगा। इस साल के आम बजट में आरबीआई से 90,000 करोड़ रुपये का राजस्व मिलने का प्रावधान रखा गया था। इस तरह केंद्र सरकार को इस साल अब 58,000 करोड रुपये की अतिरिक्त राशि ही मिलेगी। यह भारत के सकल घरेलू उत्पाद (जीडीपी) का महज 0.3 फीसदी है। इसके बावजूद शेयर बाजारों ने आरबीआई से सरकार को बड़ी राशि मिलने की घोषणा का दिल खोलकर स्वागत किया और मंगलवार को बाजार 147 अंक चढ गया। सरकार की राजकोषीय स्थिति थोड़ी बेहतर होने और उसकी उधारी पर दबाव कम होने

अंतरिम लाभांश के तौर पर

सरकार को दे चुका है। सरकार

ने उस राशि को 2018-19 के

अपने राजस्व का हिस्सा भी



ए के भट्टाचार्य

की आशा में सरकार के 10 वर्षीय बॉन्ड का प्रतिफल भी सुधरना शुरू हो गया।

हालांकि खतरा यह है कि बाजार में उत्साह का यह दौर सरकार के भीतर यह भ्रम पैदा कर सकता है कि अर्थव्यवस्था की सारी चिंताएं खत्म हो चुकी हैं और समस्या का समाधान निकाल लिया गया है। ऐसा होना बेहद खतरनाक होगा। कोई भी कदम अर्थव्यवस्था की गहरे तक धंसी समस्याओं को दूर करने का सुनिश्चित एवं टिकाऊ तरीका नहीं है। अभी तक अपनाए गए कदमों की अपनी सीमाएं हैं और सरकार बाजार की सोच बदलने में कामयाबी को लेकर अधिक खुशी न ही मनाए तो बेहतर होगा।

शुक्रवार को वाहन क्षेत्र के लिए घोषित पैकेज पर गौर करते हैं। इससे वाणिज्यिक एवं यात्री वाहनों की बिक्री बढने में मदद मिलेगी क्योंकि मार्च 2020 के पहले इन वाहनों की खरीद पर मिलने वाले कर लाभ का फायदा हर करदाता उठाना चाहेगा। इसी तरह बीएस-4 इंजन वाले वाहनों को पंजीकरण के 10-15 साल बाद तक परिचालन की अनुमति मिलने से भी वितरकों के पास धूल खा रही गाड़ियों की मांग बढ़ सकती है। पंजीकरण मानकों में ढील देने और पुराने वाहनों के लिए स्क्रैप नीति लाए जाने से भी गाड़ियों की बिक्री बढ़ने की उम्मीद जगी है।

लेकिन इन उपायों का असर कम अवधि तक ही रहेगा। अगले साल में गाड़ियों की मांग को लेकर वाहन क्षेत्र और सरकार फिक्रमंद बनी रहेगी। वाहन उद्योग का जीडीपी में करीब सात फीसदी हिस्सा है। समूते विनिर्माण क्षेत्र का करीब आधा वाहन उद्योग में ही है और सीधे एवं परोक्ष तौर पर करीब 80 लाख लोगों को रोजगार देता है। बिजली के बगैर चलने वाली गाड़ियों की दीर्घावधि

मांग को लेकर दुनिया भर में आशंकाएं जताई जा रही हैं और भारत भी इससे अछूता नहीं रह सकता है। तकनीक का प्रभाव, सहभाजन अर्थव्यवस्था का उदय और युवाओं के बीच सवारी गाडियां खरीदने की बढती प्रवृत्ति के चलते गाड़ियों की मांग में सुस्ती जारी रहेगी। केवल इस वर्ष के लिए वाहन क्षेत्र की सुस्ती दूर करना ही काफी नहीं है।

सरकार के लिए इतना ही अहम मुद्दा यह है कि वित्त मंत्री की कई घोषणाओं के तीव्र एवं सहज क्रियान्वयन पर ध्यान बना रहे। राहत उपायों की घोषणा मौजूदा आर्थिक सुस्ती के नुकसान को दूर करने की शुरुआत भर है। इन घोषणाओं के जमीनी स्तर पर त्वरित क्रियान्वयन से ही तय होगा कि यह राहत पैकेज कितना असरदार होगा? मसलन, पुराने वाहनों की स्क्रैप नीति को जल्द से जल्द अंतिम रूप दिया जाना चाहिए। अगर यह विचार विभिन्न मंत्रालयों की विरोधाभासी राय का शिकार हो जाता है तो स्क्रैप नीति लाने में देरी होगी और इच्छित सुधार अधिक दूर हो जाएगा।

सार्वजनिक बैंकों के

पुनपूँजीकरण के लिए फौरन 70,000 करोड़ रुपये जारी करने के फैसले के भी क्रियान्वयन के लिए सजग तैयारी एवं योजना की जरूरत पडेगी। क्या अपेक्षाकृत सेहतमंद एवं बकाया कर्ज की वसली में बढिया प्रदर्शन करने वाले बैंकों को पुनर्प्जीकरण योजना का इस्तेमाल योग्यता-आधारित तरीके से करना चाहिए ? क्या इस पैकेज के साथ सार्वजनिक बैंकों के एकत्रीकरण का नया दौर भी शरू करना चाहिए? सूक्ष्म, लघु एवं मध्यम इकाइयों के बकाया कर्ज का एकमश्त समाधान करने वाली योजना के संदर्भ में भी ऐसी ही सजगता की जरूरत है। बकाये का निपटान करने का असर कर्जदारों के बीच भुगतान अनुशासन पर प्रतिकृल रूप से न पडे। आखिरकार, जालान समिति की अनुशंसाओं के मुताबिक 58,000 करोड रुपये की अतिरिक्त राशि मिलने के बाद सरकार को जेब ढीली करने के दबाव से बचना होगा। कर राजस्व में गिरावट के खतरे असली हैं. लिहाजा इस अतिरिक्त राशि का इस्तेमाल प्रोत्साहन के बजाय इस राजस्व कमी की भरपाई में करना

कानाफूसी

टाइम बैंक का अनूठा प्रयोग

मध्य प्रदेश की कांग्रेस सरकार राज्य में अपनी तरह का अनूठा टाइम बैंक यानी समय बैंक बनाने जा रही है। सरकार का इरादा इस पहल के जरिये बुजुर्गों और अकेले रहने वाले लोगों को सहायता प्रदान करना है। इस योजना के तहत लोग स्वेच्छा से दुसरों की सहायता कर सकते हैं। वे जितना समय दूसरों की सहायता में लगाएंगे उतने घंटे एक तरह की सामाजिक सुरक्षा योजना के तहत उनके निजी खाते में जमा कर दिए जाएंगे। जब वे बुजुर्ग हो जाएंगे और उन्हें सहायता की आवश्यकता होगी तो उन्हें उतने घंटे की सहायता स्निश्चित की जाएगी जितने उन्होंने दूसरों की सेवा में लगाए होंगे। प्रदेश के कैबिनेट मंत्री पीसी शर्मा का कहना है कि अगर इस पर पूर्ण सहमति बन गई तो यह अपनी तरह का अनुठा प्रयोग होगा।

जाति पर बवाल

छत्तीसगढ़ सरकार द्वारा गठित एक उच्चस्तरीय समिति ने प्रदेश के पूर्व मुख्यमंत्री अजीत जोगी का अनुसूचित जनजाति से होने का दावा खारिज कर दिया है। हालांकि अभी तक समिति की रिपोर्ट सार्वजनिक नहीं है लेकिन इस पर प्रतिक्रिया देते हुए जोगी ने कहा है कि समिति का निष्कर्ष गलत है। उन्होंने आरोप लगाया कि समिति प्रदेश की कांग्रेस सरकार से प्रभावित है। समिति का गठन सन 2018 में छत्तीसगढ़ उच्च न्यायालय के आदेश पर हुआ था। समिति ने पाया कि

जोगी कंवर समुदाय से ताल्लुक रखने के अपने दावे के पक्ष में ठोस सबूत प्रस्तुत नहीं कर पाए हैं। समिति ने बिलासपुर के जिलाधिकारी को अधिकृत किया है कि वह अनुसूचित जाति, अनुसूचित जनजाति एवं अन्य पिछड़ा वर्ग (सामाजिक दर्जा प्रमाणन नियमन) नियम 2013 के अनुरूप आगे कदम उठाएं। समिति ने अतीत में जोगी को जारी किए तमाम जाति प्रमाणपत्रों को भी खत्म करने की बात कही है।

आपका पक्ष

मुफ्त के बदले सुविधा विस्तार पर हो जोर

दिल्ली सरकार ने पानी का बिल

माफ करने की घोषणा की है। मुख्यमंत्री अरविंद केजरीवाल ने कहा कि ई, एफ, जी, एच श्रेणी की चार कॉलोनियों में रहने वाले लोगों के मीटर अगर चालू हैं तो पानी का बकाया माफ कर दिया जाएगा। इससे पहले दिल्ली सरकार ने प्रति माह 20 हजार लीटर तक पानी का बिल माफ करने की घोषणा की थी। इसके अलावा दिल्ली सरकार ने बिजली के बिलों में भी 50 प्रतिशत सब्सिडी की घोषणा की थी। इसके तहत अगर कोई व्यक्ति 200 यूनिट कर प्रति माह बिजली खर्च करता है तो उसका बिल आधा हो जाएगा। दिल्ली सरकार ने बसों में महिलाओं को मुफ्त सफर करने की भी घोषणा की है। वहीं दिल्ली मेट्रो में महिलाओं को मुफ्त सफर करने पर विचार कर रही है लेकिन मेट्रो तथा केंद्र सरकार से इसकी मंजूरी अब तक नहीं मिल सकी



सरकार की आधी-आधी हिस्सेदारी है। दिल्ली सरकार की घोषणाओं पर गौर करें तो दिल्ली में बिल माफ करने के बजाय पानी की आपूर्ति पर अधिक ध्यान देने की जरूरत है। आज भी कई कॉलोनियों में पानी की आपूर्ति ठीक से नहीं हो पाती है। अगर

पानी का बिल माफ करने की -पीटीआई

पर्यावरण के लिहाज से सीएनजी बसों के बदले इलेक्ट्रिक बसों

सफर मुफ्त करने की। वहीं मेट्रो की बात करें तो अभी भी दिल्ली की कई जगहों में मेट्रो नहीं पहुंच सकी है जिसके विस्तार की जरूरत है। मेट्रो में सफर मुफ्त करने के बजाय अगर दिल्ली सरकार फंड मुहैया कराये तो उन जगहों में भी मेट्रो पहुंच सकती है। दिल्ली में अगले साल विधानसभा चुनाव होने हैं। ऐसे में दिल्ली में सत्ताधारी आम आदमी पार्टी की सरकार मुफ्त वाली घोषणाओं के जरिये मतदाताओं को लुभाने की कोशिश करते दिख रही है। आम लोगों को अगर अपने-अपने क्षेत्र में विकास देखना है तो उन्हें मुफ्त मिल रही चीजों के बदले सुविधाओं के विस्तार पर अधिक जोर देने की जरूरत है। उदाहरण के लिए अगर पानी सिर्फ दो समय आता है तो उसे 24 घंटे ध्यान देने की जरूरत है, न कि : आपूर्ति करने की जरूरत है, न

मोहित कुमार, नई दिल्ली नदी जोड़ो परियोजना पर हो काम बारिश आने के पहले कई योजनाएं तो बनती हैं, मगर उन पर अमल

सही होगा।

होना बड़ा मुश्किल काम है। अधिकारियों के साथ जनता भी इस काम में सहयोग करेगी तो बाढ की समस्या का समाधान होने से कोई रोक नहीं सकता है। देश की सभी निदयों को आपस में जोड़ना होगा और पानी को एक जगह जमा करके जरूरत के मुताबिक सभी जगह पहुंचाना होगा। बाढ़ के पानी के निकलने के लिए रास्ते बनाए जाने चाहिए। बाढ़ पीड़ितों की राशि सही हाथों में पहुंचाना भी सुनिश्चित करना होगा। कुल मिलाकर बाढ की समस्या का स्थायी समाधान तभी हो सकता है जब सरकार और आम जन अपनी जिम्मेदारी समझते

कि दो समय दो-दो घंटे आने

वाले पानी के लिए बिल माफ

करने की जरूरत है।

हुए मिलकर काम करें। ओमप्रकाश मालवीय, भोपाल



है। दिल्ली मेटो में केंद्र और राज्य 🗄 पिछले दिनों दिल्ली सरकार ने घोषणा की

को चलाने की जरूरत है जिस पर दिल्ली सरकार को अधिक दिल्ली में बस की बात करें 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।



असफलताओं में ही सफलता के सूत्र छिपे होते हैं

कश्मीर पर बेजा बयान

कश्मीर पर दिए गए अपने विवादास्पद बयान को पाकिस्तान द्वारा इस्तेमाल किए जाने के बाद राहुल गांधी सफाई देने को विवश अवश्य हुए, लेकिन उन्हें यह अहसास हो तो बेहतर कि उन्होंने राष्ट्रीय हितों को नुकसान पहुंचाने के साथ ही अपनी और अपने दल की फजीहत कराई है। उन्हें यह भी आभास होना चाहिए कि अब वह कितनी भी लीपापोती कर लें, क्षति की भरपाई होना मुश्किल है। यह पहली बार नहीं जब राहुल ने राष्ट्रीय हितों को ताक पर रखने का काम किया हो। डोकलाम विवाद के समय वह सरकार को भरोसे में लिए और यहां तक कि उसे सूचित किए बिना चीन के राजदूत से मिलने चले गए थे। समझना कठिन है कि श्रीनगर से लौटाए जाने पर उन्हें देश-दुनिया को गलत संदेश देने वाली यह टिप्पणी करने की क्या जरूरत थी कि वह उस बर्बरता का अहसास कर रहे हैं जो कश्मीरी झेल रहे हैं। इस पर हैरत नहीं कि पाकिस्तान ने उनके इस बेजा बयान को अपनी ढाल बना लिया और उनका हवाला देते हुए आनन-फानन संयुक्त राष्ट्र को शिकायती चिट्ठी लिख दी।

माना कि संकीर्ण राजनीतिक कारणों से राहुल गांधी और उनके कुछ साथियों को जम्मू-कश्मीर से अनुच्छेद 370 हटाने का फैसला रास नहीं आया है, लेकिन क्या वे देशहित से अधिक महत्व दलगत राजनीतिक हितों को देना पसंद कर रहे हैं? दर्भाग्य से वे ऐसा करते ही दिख रहे हैं। यही काम कुछ अन्य दलों और खासकर वाम दलों के नेता भी कर रहे हैं। वे यह जानते हुए भी कश्मीर जाने की जिद पकड़े हैं कि अभी वहां हालात सामान्य बनाने की कोशिश हो रही है। माकपा नेता सीताराम येचुरी ने श्रीनगर जाने के लिए सुप्रीम कोर्ट की शरण ली और दलील यह दी कि वह अपने बीमार नेता को देखने जाना चाहते हैं। इस दलील के चलते सुप्रीम कोर्ट ने उन्हें वहां जाने की इजाजत दे दी, लेकिन कोई भी समझ सकता है कि उनका मकसद कश्मीर के हालात का राजनीतिक फायदा उठाना है। अनुच्छेद 370 हटाने के ऐतिहासिक फैसले के बाद कश्मीर में सुरक्षा के व्यापक कदम उठाना समय की मांग है। इन कदमों के चलते वहां के लोगों को कछ परेशानी होना स्वाभाविक है. लेकिन इस नतीजे पर पहुंचने का कोई मतलब नहीं कि सरकार को कश्मीरी जनता की परवाह नहीं। सच तो यह है कि इसी परवाह के कारण वहां अतिरिक्त सतर्कता बरती जा रही है। बेहतर हो कि सभी दलों के नेता वहां के हालात शांत करने में योगदान देने के साथ ही इस बुनियादी बात को भी समझें कि यह समय कश्मीर को लेकर एकजुटता दिखाने का है, न कि

एक और नया कानून

वैसे तो हमारे देश में अपराध रोकने के लिए कई कानून हैं। पिछले 70 वर्षों में कई कानून बने और समाप्त भी किए गए। पिछले पांच वर्षों से मॉब लिंचिंग पर लगाम लगाने के लिए केंद्रीय स्तर पर कानून बनाने की मांग उठ रही है। परंतु देखा जा रहा है कि अब राज्यों ने अपने स्तर पर मॉब लिंचिंग के खिलाफ कानून बनाना शुरू कर दिया है। राजस्थान सरकार के बाद अब बंगाल की ममता सरकार भी मॉब लिंचिंग रोकने के लिए विधानसभा के चालु सत्र में ही विधेयक पारित कर नया कानून लागू करने की तैयारी में है। इस कानून में मॉब लिंचिंग के दोषियों को उम्रकैद तक की सजा के प्रावधान होने की बात कही गई है। मॉब लिंचिंग की घटनाओं से निपटने के लिए शहर व ग्रामीण इलाकों में पृथक नोडल ऑफिसर नियुक्त होंगे। इस बाबत जिला पुलिस व पुलिस कमिश्नरेट में टास्क फोर्स तैयार किए जाएंगे, जो मॉब लिंचिंग की घटनाओं पर नजर रखेंगे। राज्य प्रशासन ने किसी अंचल में मॉब लिंचिंग की घटना होने या इसकी आशंका होने पर वहां निगरानी बढाने का फैसला किया है। हाल में राज्य के विभिन्न इलाकों में मॉब लिंचिंग की घटनाओं में इजाफा हुआ है। कोलकाता भी इससे अछूता नहीं रहा है। सुप्रीम कोर्ट ने पिछले साल राज्य सरकारों को ऐसी घटनाओं की रोकथाम के लिए जरूरी कदम उठाने को कहा था। ममता सरकार अब तत्पर हुई है। राज्य के एक वरिष्ठ मंत्री ने बताया कि इस विधेयक का उद्देश्य कमजोर लोगों के संवैधानिक अधिकारों की रक्षा करना और भीड द्वारा की जाने वाली हत्याओं को रोकना है। इसमें अपराध में शामिल लोगों के खिलाफ कार्रवाई का प्रावधान किया जाएगा। हमला कर घायल करने के लिए विधेयक में तीन साल से उम्रकैद तक का प्रावधान होगा। मौत के मामले में दोषियों को सश्रम उम्रकैद और पांच लाख रुपये तक का जुर्माना लगाया जाएगा। यही नहीं मॉब लिंचिंग के लिए उकसाने वालों पर भी कडी कार्रवाई की जाएगी। परंतु यहां एक सवाल यह है कि इस बंगाल में अस्पताल व नर्सिंग होम में तोड़फोड़, डॉक्टर व अन्य स्वास्थ्य कर्मियों के साथ मारपीट करने वालों पर कार्रवाई के लिए राज्य सरकार ने एक कानन बनाया था जिसमें सख्त कार्रवाई का प्रावधान है। परंतु देखा जा रहा है कि कानून होने के बावजूद घटनाएं नहीं रुक रही हैं। क्या सिर्फ नया कानून बना देने से मॉब लिंचिंग रुक जाएगी? इसके लिए जागरूकता के साथ-साथ जरूरी है कि कानून का लोग सम्मान करें। ऐसा माहौल बनाया जाए, ताकि कोई भी व्यक्ति कानून को अपने हाथ में न ले।

खेल संस्कृति विकसित करने का मंत्र

अर्थव्यवस्था के लिहाज से खेलों के मोर्चे पर

आखिर हम क्यों पिछड़े हुए हैं? प्रतिभाओं

की निश्चित रूप से कोई कमी नहीं है। कुछ

दशकों पहले तक शारीरिक क्षमताओं की

दृष्टि से जरूर स्थितियां बहुत खराब थीं,

लेकिन पोषण के मानकों में सुधार के साथ ये

बाधाएं कुछ कम हुई हैं। हालांकि जब खेल

से जुड़े बुनियादी ढांचे की विकसित देशों के

मानदंडों से तुलना करते हैं तो जरूर गहरी

खाई दिखती है। उपकरणों, प्रशिक्षण मैदान,

कोचिंग, प्रतिस्पर्धा, शारीरिक-मानसिक तैयारी

एवं देखभाल के अलावा खुराक और ऐसे ही

तमाम पैमानों पर खस्ताहाल सुविधाएं कमजोरी

बयान करती हैं। सरकारी निवेश भी कुछ प्रमुख

खेल केंद्रों तक सिमटकर रह गया है। दूरदराज

के केंद्र और समाज के विपन्न तबके इन

अंतरराष्ट्रीय खेलों के प्रतिस्पर्धी माहौल में

यह बेहद आवश्यक है कि प्रतिभाओं को कम

उम्र में ही पहचान कर उन्हें सही तरीके से तराशा

जाए। किसी किशोरवय संभावनाशील खिलाडी

के अभिभावक अक्सर द्विधा में रहते हैं कि

संसाधनों-सुविधाओं से अभी तक वंचित हैं।

हम अपनी क्षमताओं से काफी कमतर हैं।



स्वस्थ एवं खुशहाल समाज के निर्माण में खेलों की अहम भूमिका होती है। इसे देखते हुए हमें देश में खेल संस्कृति को बढावा देना होगा

र वर्ष 29 अगस्त का दिन राष्ट्रीय खेल दिवस के रूप में मनाया जाता है। देश के सबसे महान खिलाड़ियों में से एक और हॉकी के निर्विवाद सर्वकालिक उम्दा खिलाड़ी मेजर ध्यानचंद का जन्म 29 अगस्त को ही हुआ था। यह उपयुक्त ही है कि उनके जन्मदिन के उपलक्ष्य में राष्ट्रीय खेल दिवस मनाया जाए। इस अवसर पर तमाम रस्म अदायगी वाले कार्यक्रमों से इतर देश में खेलों की स्थिति का आकलन करना उपयोगी होगा। खेल मानव संस्कृति और सभ्यता के अभिन्न अंग हैं। प्रथमदृष्टया खेल भले ही शारीरिक एवं मानसिक स्पर्धा का माध्यम लगते हों, लेकिन वास्तव में ये कुछ वांछित विशेषताओं को साकार रूप देते हैं। ऐसे में खेलों को मानवीय उत्कृष्टता का प्रतिमान मानना उचित ही होगा।

मौजूदा दौर में पक्षपात और पूर्वाग्रह जैसे भाव जहां जीवन के प्रत्येक क्षेत्र को दूषित कर रहे हैं वहां खेल प्रवीणता एवं योग्यता के दुर्लभ पर्याय बने हुए हैं। मौजूदा डिजिटल दौर में आर्टिफिशियल इंटेलीजेंस और मशीन लर्निंग का वर्चस्व बढने की आशंका है। आज ऐसे अभिभावकों की भरमार है जो चिंतित रहते हैं कि उनके बच्चे खेल के मैदान की तुलना में मोबाइल-कंप्यूटर पर ज्यादा खेल रहे हैं। मैदानी खेल के स्वाभाविक फायदों के बारे में चर्चा की जितनी आवश्यकता आज है, उतनी शायद पहले कभी नहीं रही। खेलने-कूदने वाला समाज ही स्वस्थ और तंदुरुस्त समाज होता है। वैसे भी स्वास्थ्य एवं प्रसन्नता एक दूसरे के पूरक हैं। स्वस्थ एवं खुशहाल समाज के निर्माण में खेलों की महत्वपूर्ण भूमिका है।

विश्व के अग्रणी राष्ट्रों की कतार में शामिल होने की हमारी आकांक्षा अभी पूरी नहीं हुई है। यह सफर जारी है। हमारी आर्थिक वृद्धि और सैन्य क्षमताओं के बावजूद कला, संस्कृति और खेलों में निहित सॉफ्ट पावर की अहमियत को कम करके नहीं देखा जा सकता। जब तक हम इन मोर्चों पर निरंतर रूप से बेहतर प्रदर्शन नहीं करेंगे तब तक विकासशील से विकसित राष्ट्र बनने की यह यात्रा पूर्ण नहीं हो पाएगी।

खेलों के बारे में कहा जाता है कि उनमें दुनिया को बदलने की शक्ति होती है। हमारे समक्ष तमाम आसन्न चुनौतियों के अलावा एक महत्वपूर्ण लक्ष्य यह भी होना चाहिए कि हमें एक खेल संस्कृति को पुष्पित-पल्लवित करना है। भारतीय समाज को खेल देखने वाले से खेल खेलने वाले समाज में बदलना होगा। हमें महज सहभागिता से आगे बढ़कर खेल में जीतने का मंत्र भी तलाशना होगा।

आज खेलों की अहमियत को नकारा नहीं जा सकता। हम ऐसे अनुभवों के भी साक्षी होते हैं जब अपने क्रिकेटरों, पहलवानों, मुक्केबाजों, निशानेबाजों, एथलीटों, शटलरों और शतरंज के ग्रैंड मास्टरों के प्रदर्शन पर गौरवान्वित होते हैं। हालांकि एक विडंबना यह भी है कि ऐसे पल विख्ले ही आते हैं। एक कडवा सत्य यह भी है कि अपनी आबादी और



लाखों में एक खिलाड़ी को ही सफलता मिलती है। वे भविष्य के प्रति व्याकुल रहते हैं। मसलन खेल में वांछित उत्कृष्टता के लिए जिस दौर में बच्चा तैयारी करता है तो उसे अकादिमक और अन्य कार्यक्रमों के साथ समझौता करना पड़ सकता है। एक आशंका यह भी सताती है। कि यदि गलाकाट प्रतिस्पर्धा और अनिश्चितता के चलते वांछित परिणाम नहीं मिले तब क्या होगा? ऐसे सवालों के कोई आसान जवाब नहीं, सिवाय इसके कि देश का सामाजिक-आर्थिक ढांचा ऐसा बनाना होगा कि खेलों में

इसके अतिरिक्त मानसिकता में भी परिवर्तन लाना अत्यंत आवश्यक है। हमें समाज में खेल संस्कृति का विकास करना होगा और पांच वर्ष से 75 साल की आयु तक के सभी लोगों को कोई भी खेल खेलने के लिए प्रोत्साहित करना होगा। उपयोगितावादी दृष्टिकोण से ही कायाकल्प नहीं होने वाला। खेल को केवल एक करियर के रूप में ही नहीं देखा जाना चाहिए। इससे होने वाले स्वास्थ्य लाभ, प्रसन्नता और मनोरंजन भी खेल संस्कृति को

ईमानदार प्रयास करने वालों को सार्वजनिक

जीवन में वापसी के बढ़िया अवसर मिल सकें।

इसके साथ ही यह भी स्मरण रहे कि शिखर पर पहुंचने का कोई शॉर्टकट नहीं होता। यह बड़ी शर्मनाक बात है कि हमारी नेशनल एंटी डोपिंग एजेंसी को वर्ल्ड एंटी डोपिंग एजेंसी ने प्रतिबंधित किया हुआ है। डोपिंग के संताप से निपटने के लिए हमने अभी तक पर्याप्त कदम नहीं उठाए हैं। खेल नियमों और खेल भावना के दायरे में ही होने चाहिए। खेल में जितनी जीत मायने रखती है उतना ही महत्वपूर्ण होता है खेल के मूल्यों को सहेजकर रखना। पूरा दम लगाकर खेलों, लेकिन सही तरीके से। खेल के स्तर को आगे ले जाओ, लेकिन लक्ष्मण रेखा कभी न लांघो। ये कुछ परंपरागत पंक्तियां नहीं बल्कि ऐसी सुक्तियां हैं जो खेल संस्कृति को ध्रुव तारे की मानिंद चमकाती हैं। यही वे कारण हैं जिनकी वजह से हम कोई खेल देखते या खेलते हैं। खेल में किसी भी तरह की बेईमानी न केवल विरोधी के साथ धोखा है, बल्कि उन करोड़ों खेल प्रशंसकों के भरोसे से छल भी है जो भावनात्मक रूप से उनसे बहुत बंधे होते हैं। हर साल 29 अगस्त को ध्यानचंद को भारत

रत्न देने की मांग भी उठती है। वह सर्वोच्च सम्मान के सुपात्र भी हैं। हालांकि यदि हम खेलो में अपनी संभावनाओं के अनुरूप सफलता हासिल कर लेते हैं तो यह इस दिग्गज खिलाडी के प्रति कहीं अधिक बड़ी श्रद्धांजलि होगी। वर्ष 2028 के ओलंपिक में शीर्ष 10 में आना, वर्ष 2030 में विश्व कप फुटबॉल, टेनिस में कुछ ग्रैंड स्लैम हासिल करना और कुछ बड़े गोल्फ खिताब जीतने का लक्ष्य खा जा सकता है। यह लक्ष्य दूर की कौड़ी भले ही लगे, लेकिन इसे हासिल किया जा सकता है। वैसे भी लोग कहते हैं कि कोई छोटा लक्ष्य तय करने से कही बेहतर है कि लक्ष्य ऊंचा रखा जाए, भले ही उसमें सफलता कितनी ही कठिन क्यों न हो खेलो इंडिया, जीतो इंडिया।

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झूट में जीते पाकिस्तान की त्रासदी

बीते कुछ समय से पाकिस्तानी टीवी चैनलों पर कश्मीर संबंधी जो बहस हो रही है उस पर हमें भी गौर करना चाहिए। विशेषकर इसलिए कि उससे सीख लेकर हम भारत-पाक समस्या और यहां हिंदू-मुस्लिम संबंधों की गुत्थियों को भी सुलझा सकते हैं। लंबे समय से पाकिस्तानी लोग एक झूठ में जी रहे हैं अथवा यह कहें कि जीने पर मजबूर किए गए हैं। पाकिस्तानी जनता तीन बातों से चिकत और क्षुब्ध है। पहली, कश्मीर को भारत में 'मिला लेने' से न तो कश्मीर में, न शेष भारतीय मुसलमानों में कोई आग लगी। दूसरी, यूरोप, अमेरिका और अरब देशों ने इस पर लगभग कोई प्रतिक्रिया व्यक्त नहीं की। तीसरी, संयुक्त राष्ट्र में भी कुछ न हुआ। उलटे कई मुस्लिम देशों ने भारत का मुखर-मौन समर्थन किया। इसी बीच प्रधानमंत्री नरेंद्र मोदी का संयुक्त अरब अमीरात और बहरीन में अभूतपूर्व स्वागत हुआ। अमीरात सरकार ने तो अपना सबसे बड़ा सम्मान मोदी को दिया। यह सब देख पाकिस्तानी नेता और जनता अचंभित है। वे इसे झुठलाने, दुनिया को परमाणु युद्ध की आशंका से डराने और उससे 'कुछ करने' की विनती के सिवा कुछ नहीं कर पा रहे। दरअसल पाकिस्तानी जनता को सत्ताधारियों. फौजी जनरलों और मुल्लाओं ने कुछ और समझा रखा था। अब वह जनता सच परखने की कोशिश कर रही है।

यह सच है कि जिस अंधविश्वास में पाकिस्तानी जनता को रखा गया उससे स्वयं अग्रणी मुस्लिम देश दूर हो रहे हैं। वे जीवन और दर्शन को यथार्थतः ले रहे हैं। अंतरराष्ट्रीय मुस्लिम उम्मत की ताकत की खामख्याली टूटना और भारत का उन्नित करते जाना पाकिस्तानियों के लिए सचाई का सामना करने जैसा है। उन्हें तो बताया गया था कि भारत पर इस्लामी राज था और फिर होगा तथा भारत का अंत निकट है। अब पाकिस्तानियों को उन्हीं के जानकार बता रहे हैं कि वह सब झूठ था तो वे हैरान-परेशान हैं। पाकिस्तान के साथ मुस्लिम देशों के न खड़े होने को इमरान खान ने 'व्यापारिक हितों' की विवशता कहकर हल्का करने की कोशिश की, लेकिन व्यापारिक हित तो सदैव थे। फिर धनी मुस्लिम देशों की यह 'विवशता' भी तो भारत की तुलनात्मक बढ़ती मजबूती का ही सुबूत है। पहले तो ऐसा नहीं हुआ था। पाकिस्तानी जिन बातों से खासे खिन्न हैं उनमें मुख्य यह है कि उन्हें जम्मू-कश्मीर से अनुच्छेद 370 हटा दिए जाने के बाद ऐसे घटनाक्रम की आशा नहीं थी, क्योंकि उन्हें कई बुनियादी मुद्दों पर झूठी बातें रटाई गई हैं। उन्हें भारत, विश्व और मुस्लिम



तो वहां सेना को इतनी



देशों की बाबत हमेशा झूठा या अतिरंजित इतिहास और वर्तमान पढ़ाया जाता रहा। वही झुठ अब उघड़ रहा है। उनमें पाकिस्तानी सेना को लेकर भी एक गुमान था, जो इस बार अलग तरह से टूट रहा है। कुछ हद तक ये बातें भारतीय हिंदुओं और मुसलमानों के लिए भी अर्थ रखती हैं। इसका सुंदर उदाहरण श्रीनगर में एक कश्मीरी मुसलमान की प्रतिक्रिया है। किसी पत्रकार से बातचीत में वह बिफर पड़ा, ''हुर्रियत वाले आरएसएस के एजेंट हैं। उन्होंने हमें अंधेरे में रखा। हमसे कहा कि आजादी के लिए लडो। ये अनुच्छेद 370 तो हमारा है ही। धोखेबाजों ने कभी बताया ही नहीं कि अनुच्छेद 370 बचाने के लिए लड़ो।'' यह प्रतिक्रिया क्या दिखाती है? पहले तो यह कि यह अनुच्छेद भारत से अलगाव का आधार बनाया गया था। दूसरे, कश्मीरी मुसलमानों को इस अनुच्छेद, भारतीय जनता, सरकार एवं विश्व समुदाय के बारे में गलत तस्वीर दिखाई गई। यदि कश्मीरी मुसलमानों को सही बातें मालूम होतीं तो उनका रुख यथार्थवादी होता। यही हमारा सबक है। यथार्थ समझना-समझाना। भ्रमित लोगों में पाकिस्तानियों के साथ भारतीय हिंदू-मुसलमान भी हैं।

राजनीति का यथार्थ शक्ति केंद्रित है। शक्ति हथियारों के साथ-साथ मनोबल और विचारों में भी होती है। पाकिस्तानियों की तरह कश्मीरी मुसलमानों को भी बरगलाया गया। हमें सच्चे विचारों से मुकाबला करना

चाहिए था, जो नहीं किया गया। यदि करते तो हालात अलग हो सकते थे। उसे आज भी सुधारा जा सकता है। सबक यह है कि शांति और सद्भाव भी केवल बराबरी में पैदा होता है। यदि पाकिस्तानी जनता में यह मतवादी भाव न भरा गया होता कि भारत 'हिंदू लोकाचारों वाला, गाय-पूजक, लड़ने से बचने वाला शांतिप्रेमी यानी कमजोर' देश है तो वहां सेना को विशेष स्थान मिलना संभव न होता। पाकिस्तानी जनता को सदैव बताया गया कि सेना को विशेष संसाधन देना इसलिए जरूरी है ताकि वह भारत को ठिकाने लगा सके। यदि उसे मालूम होता कि न तो भारत को हराना संभव है, न भारत ने उसे कोई कष्ट दिया है तो हालात अलग होते। इसके साथ ही पाकिस्तान में हजारों युवक कश्मीर में जिहाद के नाम पर मरने-मिटने को जेहादी संगठनों में शामिल न होते। जैसे कि चीन के उइगर मुसलमानों की 'मदद' हेतु वहां कोई जिहादी भर्ती नहीं हुई। भारतीय मुसलमानों में भी कई झूठ प्रचारित रहे हैं। यहां दशकों से कुछ बड़े मदरसों और सेक्युलर-वामपंथी, बौद्धिक तंत्र ने तरह-तरह के झूठ से उलझाए रखा। 'हिंदू सांप्रदायिकता', 'अल्पसंख्यक हित' के नाम पर झठ की खेती होती रही। अब देख सकते हैं कि जिस हद तक यहां उस झूठ का पर्दाफाश होता गया उस हद तक नेहरूवादी, सेक्युलर-वामपंथी कमजोर और अप्रासंगिक होते गए।

अभी मोदी ने जी-7 बैठक में ठीक ही ध्यान दिलाया कि 'पाकिस्तान 1947 से पहले भारत का ही अंग था। इसलिए हम आपसी बातचीत से मसले सुलझा लेंगे।' भारत के अंदर हिंदू-मुस्लिम संबंध और भारत-पाक संबंधों की गुत्थियां आपस में मिलती हैं। कई गुत्थियां मतवादी झूठ को बर्दाश्त करने, बल्कि उसे आदर देने से बनी हैं। झूठ का पर्दाफाश होना कई सामाजिक समस्याओं के समाधान की कुंजी है। पाकिस्तानी, भारतीय जनता के बीच सच को बेलाग रखा जाना चाहिए। मतवादी अंधविश्वास को उसकी जगह दिखानी चाहिए। मानवीय विवेक किसी भी मतवाद से ऊपर है, इस सचाई को सद्भाव के साथ, लेकिन दुढ़ता से रखना चाहिए। सभी धर्म और धर्मावलंबी समान आदर के पात्र हैं. इसे स्वीकार करके ही मसलमानों का सच्चा विकास होगा। जो इसे समझ रहे हैं वे शांति से आगे बढ़ रहे हैं। जो मतवादी भ्रम में फंसे हैं वे ही परेशान हैं।

> (लेखक राजनीति शास्त्र के प्रोफेसर एवं वरिष्ठ स्तंभकार हैं)

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मानव और संभावनाएं

आज से लगभग ढाई हजार वर्ष पूर्व जब लुंबिनी में राजमाता महामाया ने बालक सिद्धार्थे को जन्म दिया था तो किसी ने यह कल्पना नहीं की होगी कि कालांतर में वही शिशु इस धरती पर मानवता, करुणा, अहिंसा प्रेम, दया, धर्म और कल्याण के दिव्यतम पुरुष और आने वाली पीढ़ियों के लिए प्रेरणापुंज के रूप में स्थापित हो जाएगा। अपने राजमहल के अलौकिक भोग-विलासी जीवन से बिल्कुल इतर सिद्धार्थ ने जब एक वृद्ध व्यक्ति, बीमार तथा असहाय मानव और अंतिम संस्कार के लिए ले जाई जा रही अर्थी को देखा तो उनको इस नश्वर संसार और मानव जीवन से विरक्ति हो गई। जीवन की सुख-सुविधाओं से उनका दम घुटने लगा। उनको यह लगने लगा था कि इस संसार में मानव जीवन से बढ़कर और कोई दूसरा छलावा नहीं हो सकता है। वह अपने सोते हुए बेटे और पत्नी का त्याग कर राजप्रासाद से निकल गए। वर्षों की कठोर तपस्या और साधना के पश्चात जब सिद्धार्थ को सच्चा ज्ञान प्राप्त हुआ तो एक महामानव का अवतार हो चुका था।

सच पूछिए तो इस धरती पर जन्म लेने वाले हर इंसान में बुद्ध बनने की अपार संभावनाएं भरी होती हैं लेकिन दुर्भाग्यवश हम अपनी प्रतिभा को पहचान नही पाते हैं और जब तक हम खुद को जानते और समझते हैं तो तब तक बहुत देर हो चुकी होती है। धीरूभाई अंबानी के जीवन की गाथा कम हैरतअंगेज नहीं है भारत रत्न से सम्मानित और मिसाइल मैन के रूप में विख्यात एपीजे अब्दुल कलाम का संपूर्ण जीवन अपार संभावनाओं की अद्भुत कहानी है। मंद बुद्धिवाले महान वैज्ञानिक थॉमस अल्वा एडिसन की कालजयी उपलब्धियां मानव में छुपे चमत्कारिक अवतार का अविश्वसनीय इतिहास हैं।

विश्व इतिहास में ऐसे महान व्यक्तित्वों के जीवन की गाथाएं हमें यही संदेश दे जाती हैं कि मानव जीवन अपार जादुई संभावनाओं से भरा हुआ होता है और यदि कोई व्यक्ति खुद को समय पर पहचान ले तो वह देवता बन सकता है, बुद्ध बन सकता है।

श्रीप्रकाश शर्मा

विदेश भ्रमण का बढ़ता क्रेज

मीनाक्षी भटनागर

गत दिनों भारतीय रिजर्व बैंक ने एक रोचक आंकड़ा जारी किया, जिसके मुताबिक इस साल जून के महीने में देश के लोगों ने लगभग चार हजार करोड़ रुपये सिर्फ विदेश भ्रमण पर खर्च किए हैं। यह पिछले साल इसी माह में खर्च की गई राशि से डेढ़ गुनी अधिक है। वहीं इस साल की पहली तिमाही यानी अप्रैल से जून में विदेश यात्राओं पर भारतीयों का खर्च करीब 11300 करोड़ रुपये रहा, जो पिछले साल की इसी अवधि में करीब 7000 करोड़ रुपये था। यह इस बात की पुष्टि कर रहा है कि देश में विदेश यात्रा को लेकर क्रेज बढ़ रहा है। रिजर्व बैंक के इस आंकड़े की गवाही वर्ल्ड टूरिज्म ऑर्गनाइजेशन की रिपोर्ट भी दे रही है। उसकी ओर से जारी किए गए आंकड़ों के अनुसार साल 2017 में 2.4 करोड़ भारतीयों ने विदेश यात्रा की थी, वहीं इस साल यह संख्या बढ़कर पांच करोड़ हो जाएगी। इससे पता चलता है कि विदेश यात्रा करने को लेकर अब भारतीयों की सोच बदल रही है। बाहर की दुनिया अब न तो उन्हें पराई लग रही है और न ही अपनी पहुंच से दूर। इसका एक बड़ा कारण भारतीय लोगों की

2017 में 2 .4 करोड़ भारतीयों ने विदेश यात्रा की थी, वहीं इस साल यह संख्या बढ़कर पांच करोड हो जाएगी

आमदनी में इजाफा होना है। पहले बड़ी आबादी गरीब थी, उसके लिए रोटी, कपड़ा और मकान की व्यवस्था ही मुश्किल होती थी, पर जैसे-जैसे भारतीय संपन्न हुए हैं उनमें पर्यटन दूसरे शौक पूरा करने की इच्छा भी बलवती हुई है।

इसके अलावा इन दिनों हमारे यहां विदेश यात्रा सामाजिक प्रतिष्ठा से भी जुड़ गई है। ऐसे में इस बात की बहुत संभावना है कि कुछ लोग देश के अंदर मनोरम प्राकृतिक दृश्यों का आनंद लेने के बजाय जैसे-तैसे विदेश हो आने और इस तरह समाज में अपना रुतबा बढ़ाने की भावना से भी ग्रस्त हों। शायद इसी कारण प्रधानमंत्री नरेंद्र मोदी ने लाल किले के प्राचीर से दिए गए अपने भाषण में लोगों से देश के अंदर ज्यादा से ज्यादा भ्रमण करने की अपील की है। जब लोग देश के अंदर पर्यटन करेंगे तो देश का पैसा भी देश में रहेगा और उन स्थलों क

विकास भी होगा। इसका एक अन्य फायदा यह होगा कि स्थानीय स्तर पर रोजगार के अवसर पैदा होंगे जिससे अर्थव्यवस्था को गति मिलेगी।

हालांकि कई लोगों में पर्यटन का शौक होता है। वे नई-नई जगहों को देखना चाहते हैं। उसका अनुभव लेना चाहते हैं। वैसे भी यात्रा करने के फायदे भी बहुत होते हैं। इससे वहां की खूबियां देखने और उनसे सीखने को मिलता है। जिसे बाद में अपने और समाज के विकास के लिए इस्तेमाल में लाया जा सकता है। इसीलिए तमाम गणमान्य लोगों ने अधिक से अधिक भ्रमण करने को कहा है। इतिहास ऐसे घुमक्कड़ लोगों के अनुभवों से भरा पड़ा है। लेकिन उनकी इस सक्रियता के पीछे अपने को श्रेष्ठ साबित करने की मंशा नहीं थी, बल्कि वे दुनिया को ज्यादा से ज्यादा देखना-समझना चाहते थे। और दूसरों की अच्छाइयों को अपने यहां लागू करना चाहते थे। विदेश भ्रमण करने में कोई बुराई नहीं है, लेकिन एक भारतीय होने के नाते हम यह भी ध्यान रखें कि हमारे अपने पर्यटन स्थल कैसे विकसित हों और दुनिया के लोगों की नजरों में कैसे आएं। जाहिर है इसके लिए हमें इन स्थलों का भी रुख करना होगा। (लेखिका स्वतंत्र पत्रकार हैं)

बेरोजगारी के बाद अब मंदी का शोर

दोहरी रणनीति से गायब होगी मंदी शीर्षक से प्रकाशित डॉ. भरत झुनझुनवाला का लेख पढ़ा। इससे सहमत होना कठिन है कि भारत मंदी का शिकार बन चुका है। केवल कार निर्माताओं अथवा बिस्किट निर्माता के कह देने भर से इस निष्कर्ष पर पहुंचना जल्दबाजी है। कार वाले तो बीएस-6 ईंधन के प्रयोग की बात सुनते ही चौकस हो गए और मंदी का रोना रोने लगे। यदि आर एंड डी पर निरंतर खर्च वहां चलता होता तो खपत कम होने अथवा बीएस-6 से डरने की नौबत शायद न आई होती, पर इस सेक्टर में मुनाफाखोरी की प्रवृत्ति व्यापक है। उधर पार्ले की पुकार पुरे बिस्किट-निर्माताओं के समूह की पुकार जैसी महसूस नहीं हो रही। 5 या 10 रुपये मूल्य की वस्तु पर जीएसटी 50 पैसे से एक रुपये होगा। जनता के लिए ये कहीं भी अधिक नहीं है कि जो खपत घटा दे। वास्तव में पार्ले की खपत इस वित्तीय वर्ष की प्रथम तिमाही में घटी है भी नहीं, केवल उसकी वृद्धि दर गत तिमाही की दर से कम है। मंदी का शोर वही विपक्ष कर रहा है, जिसने 2014-19 के दौरान बेरोजगारी का जमकर शोर मचाया था, पर हुआ क्या? उन कथित बरोजगारों ने उसी सरकार को पुनः सत्तासीन करा दिया और विपक्षी प्रचार की पूरी हवा निकाल दी। इसलिए अबकी बार मंदी का शोर मचाना शुरू किया गया है, पर इसमें भी दम नहीं है। डॉ. झुनझुनवाला लिखते हैं कि सर्विस सेक्टर ही मंदी से उबारने वाला बन सकता है, पर उन्होंने सॉफ्टवेयर क्षेत्र में प्रथम तिमाही में हुईं रिकॉर्ड 85,000 नई भर्तियों का जिक्र तक नहीं किया है! आगे भी यहां बंपर भर्तियां चलते रहने का अनुमान है तो कथित मंदी का दम तो निकलना प्रारंभ भी हो चुका है।

अजय मित्तल, मेरठ

मेलबाक्स

नारी का गौरवशाली अतीत

देश में स्त्री अनुपात का जनसंख्या में कम हो जाना इंगित करता है कि हम अपने गौरवशाली अतीत से कितने विमुख होते जा रहे हैं। अतीत में यहां स्वयंवर रचा जाता था, जहां इतनी स्वतंत्रता नारी को प्राप्त थी कि वह अपने लिए योग्य वर स्वयं चुनती थी। सीता राम का स्वयंवर इसका एक उदाहरण है। हमारे यहां गार्गी व सावित्री जैसी विदुषी पैदा हुई, जो विद्वान पुरुष व ऋषियों से शास्त्रार्थ करती थीं, उन्हें हराती थीं। यह अपने आप में प्रमाण है कि उस काल में भी नारी को कितनी स्वतंत्रता प्राप्त थी। हमारे यहां भारतीय संस्कृति में कोई भी धार्मिक कर्मकांड आदिकाल से लेकर आज तक बिना पित के पूर्ण नहीं होता। पत्नी यज्ञ आदि में पित के साथ बैठती है। आज भी विवाह संस्कार के समय स्त्री पुरुष से वचन लेने के उपरांत ही वामांगी होती है। यदि इन वचनों को गहराई से समझें तो पता चलेगा कि हजारों वर्ष पूर्व रचित इन संस्कारों में स्त्री को कितनी स्वतंत्रता व अधिकार दिए गए थे। स्त्री की शिक्षा और संस्कार पुरुष से भी पहले बताए गए, कहा गया कि एक पुरुष योग्य होने पर मात्र एक परिवार का भला करता है, जबकि स्त्री दो परिवार का। देवताओं में भी महिला चरित्रों की प्रधानता दिखती है। रानी लक्ष्मीबाई, दुर्गावती, देवी अहिल्याबाई होल्कर क्या नारी स्वतंत्रता के बिना ही अपने इन रूपों में प्रकट हो पाई होंगी? सम्मान स्वरूप आज भी अभिवादन में राधे-राधे या पुरुष से पहले स्त्री चरित्र यथा सीताराम या राधा-कृष्ण किया

जाना स्त्री की महत्ता को ही प्रकट करता है। डॉक्टर हेमा शर्मा, स्याना, बुलंदशहर

व्यापार बना नक्सलवाद

सर्वज्ञात है कि माओवाद और नक्सलवाद की शुरुआत जमीदारों के अत्याचार के खिलाफ और जल जंगल जमीन के हक के लिए हुई थी। लेकिन अब ये गैरकानूनी क्रांति वीभत्स होकर उन्हीं गरीब लाचार लोगों का शोषण कर रही है, जिनके हित के लिए बीते कल में इन्होंने हथियार उठाए थे। आज छत्तीसगढ़ के नक्सिलयों द्वारा नारा गुंजायमान किया जाता है कि जल जंगल जमीन हमारी है, हमें हक चाहिए और जमीन मांगने वाले यही लोग उस पर बना स्कूल तोड़ देते हैं। सच यही है कि स्थानीय आदिवासियों को विकास चाहिए और नक्सिलयों को मुफ्त की रकम। सरकार कह रही है कि इनके आर्थिक स्रोत बंद करने पर नक्सलवाद रुक जाएगा लेकिन ये आर्थिक स्रोत बंद कैसे होंगे? उद्योगपितयों से उगाही करने का इन्होंने व्यापार बना लिया है। उद्योगपति भी अपनी सुरक्षा की खातिर इन्हें धन मुहैया कराते हैं। नक्सलवाद को रोकने के लिए सबसे पहली इसी गठजोड़ पर चोट करनी होगी।

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

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

हताशा के कदम

म्मू-कश्मीर से धारा 370 हटने के बाद पाकिस्तान की झुंझलाहट लगातार बढ़ रही है। हालांकि इस मामले को उसने अंतरराष्ट्रीय बिरादरी के सामने भी रखा और मदद की गुहार लगाई, मगर कोई कामयाबी नहीं मिल पाई। जो अमेरिका पहले मध्यस्थता करने की बात कर रहा था, उसने भी कह दिया कि यह दोनों देशों के बीच का मामला है, वे आपस में बैठ कर इसका समाधान निकालें। इस तरह पाकिस्तान हताश है। इसी हताशा में वह कुछ ऐसे कदम उठाने का प्रयास करता है जिससे भारत को सबक सिखाया जा सके, उसे परेशान किया जा सके। मगर अब तक के उसके सारे कदम बेअसर साबित हो चुके हैं। इसी सिलसिले में वह भारत के साथ अपने सारे हवाई मार्ग बंद करने पर विचार कर रहा है। पाकिस्तान के विज्ञान एवं प्रौद्योगिकी मंत्री फवाद चौधरी ने ट्वीट कर कहा कि प्रधानमंत्री यह फैसला जल्दी ही करने वाले हैं। इससे संबंधित कानूनी पहलुओं पर विचार चल रहा है। मगर यह समझ से परे है कि ऐसा करके आखिर पाकिस्तान को हासिल क्या होगा! इससे महज उसकी कुछ खुनस ही मिटेगी।

अगर पाकिस्तान भारत आने-जाने वाले विमानों को अपनी सीमा से होकर नहीं गुजरने देने का फैसला करता है तो निस्संदेह विमानन कंपनियों का खर्चा बढ़ेगा। मगर ऐसा नहीं कि इससे सिर्फ भारत को नुकसान होगा, पाकिस्तान को भी राजस्व घाटा उठाना पड़ेगा। फिर यह पहली बार नहीं होगा, जब पाकिस्तान अपने हवाई मार्ग भारत के लिए बंद कर देगा। बालाकोट पर हवाई हमले के बाद भी उसने ऐसा किया था। इसकी वजह से भारत से उड़ान भरने वाले विमानों को कुछ लंबा रास्ता तय करके दूसरे देशों में पहुंचना पड़ता था। मगर फिर उसने हवाई रास्ते खोल दिए। ऐसे फैसलों से विमानों को थोड़ा अधिक समय उड़ान भरनी पड़ती है, उनका खर्च बढ़ जाता है। जाहिर है, इसका असर मुसाफिरों पर भी पड़ता है। मगर ऐसा कभी नहीं हुआ कि बड़े पैमाने पर उड़ानें रद्द करनी पड़ी हों। इसलिए अगर इस बार भी वह ऐसा फैसला करता है, तो भारतीय या दूसरी विमानन कंपनियों के लिए बहुत घबराने की बात नहीं होगी।

जब दो देशों के बीच तनाव बढ़ता है तो इस तरह के फैसले संभावित होते हैं। पुलवामा के बाद भारत ने पाकिस्तान के साथ कई कारोबारी रिश्ते तोड़ लिए थे। इसी तरह बालाकोट और फिर धारा 370 हटने के बाद पाकिस्तान ने भी कई कारोबारी गतिविधियों पर विराम लगा दिया। अब वह पाकिस्तान के रास्ते अफगानिस्तान के साथ भारत के व्यापार पर भी अंकुश लगाने पर विचार कर रहा है। वह भारत से अफगानिस्तान के लिए जाने वाली सड़कों को भी बंद करने पर विचार कर रहा है। जाहिर है, इससे वाणिज्यिक वाहनों को थोड़ा लंबा रास्ता तय करना पड़ेगा, जिससे माल ढुलाई का खर्च बढ़ेगा। पर पाकिस्तान को इसका भी नुकसान उठाना पड़ेगा। पहले ही भारत के साथ उसके व्यापारिक रिश्ते खत्म होने से उसे बड़े पैमाने पर घाटा उठाना पड़ रहा है। वहां की आर्थिक स्थिति ठीक नहीं है, ऐसे में खुनस में उठाए गए कदम उसके ही लिए परेशानी का सबब बनेंगे। इमरान खान जिस तरह खुद को पाकिस्तान की तरक्की के लिए समर्पित बताते रहे हैं, उससे लगता रहा है कि वे भारत के साथ रिश्ते बेहतर बनाने के पक्ष में हैं। पर हवाई रास्ते बंद करने और व्यापार रोक देने जैसे कदमों पर उनके विचार करने से यही जाहिर है कि वे बातचीत के जरिए समाधान के पक्ष में नहीं हैं।

हिंसा की जमीन

जधानी दिल्ली सहित देश के अलग-अलग हिस्सों में मंगलवार को पीट-पीट कर मार डालने की जो दहला देने वाली घटनाएं सामने आईं, उनसे एक बार फिर यह सवाल उठा है कि आखिर लोग इतने असहिष्णु और हिंसक क्यों होते जा रहे हैं। किसी को बच्चा चोर समझ कर, तो किसी को डायन बता कर मार डालने की घटनाएं वाकई चिंताजनक हैं। पुरानी दिल्ली स्टेशन के बाहर मंगलवार को एक मदरसे के शिक्षक को पटरी पर दुकान लगाने वाले कुछ दुकानदारों ने पीट-पीट कर मार डाला। बात सिर्फ इतनी थी कि इस शिक्षक ने हेडफोन उठा कर देखा और पसंद न आने पर खरीदने से इंकार कर दिया। इसी को लेकर विवाद हो गया, जो उनके लिए जानलेवा साबित हुआ। मुंबई में एक वृद्ध ठेले वाले को कुछ लोगों ने पीट-पीट कर इसलिए मार दिया कि उसने कुछ लोगों को वहां कचरा फेंकने से मना किया था। बिहार के नवादा जिले के एक गांव में एक वृद्ध महिला को डायन बता कर पीट-पीट कर मार डाला गया। इसी तरह उत्तर प्रदेश के संभल में भीड़ ने बच्चा चोर होने के शक में एक व्यक्ति की हत्या कर दी। ऐसे ही एक मामले में मेरठ में एक महिला को बांध कर पीटा गया। ये सारी घटनाएं बताती हैं कि देश में कैसा खौफनाक भीड़ तंत्र बन चुका है, जिसका कानून-व्यवस्था में न कोई भरोसा है, न ही उसका कोई खौफ।

ऐसी घटनाएं पिछले कुछ सालों में ज्यादा बढ़ी हैं। कभी 'गोरक्षक' कानून-व्यवस्था को हाथ में लेते हैं और 'गोतस्करों' को ठिकाने लगा देते हैं तो कभी बच्चा चोरी के शक में अनजान व्यक्ति भीड़ का शिकार हो जाता है। कई बार ऐसी घटनाएं धर्म-विशेष के लोगों के साथ हुई हैं, जिन्हें 'जय श्रीराम' का नारा लगाने को मजबूर करते हुए पीट-पीट कर मार दिया गया। कुछ घटनाओं को लेकर तो कहा जा सकता है कि इन्हें अंजाम देने वाले किसी न किसी रूप में प्रेरित होकर ऐसा करते होंगे, लेकिन राजधानी दिल्ली में जिस मदरसे के शिक्षक को हेडफोन पर विवाद के कारण मार डाला गया, वह ज्यादा गंभीर चिंता का विषय है। इस घटना को अंजाम देने वालों ने जरा भी नहीं सोचा कि कुछ रुपए की चीज के पीछे वे एक व्यक्ति को जिस तरह मौत के घाट उतार रहे हैं उसका हश्र क्या हो सकता है। इस घटना से हर आदमी के भीतर यह खौफ पैदा होना स्वाभाविक है कि रास्ते चलते न जाने क्या विवाद हो जाए और लोग पीट-पीट कर मार डालें! ऐसी घटनाओं के पीछे सबसे बड़ा कारण ही यही है कि लोगों में कानून-व्यवस्था का भय खत्म हो गया है। शायद वे जानते हैं कि पुलिस कुछ नहीं करेगी। इस घटना में भी पुलिस ने कुछ पटरी दुकानदारों के खिलाफ गैर-इरादतन हत्या का मामला दर्ज कर लिया। हैरानी की बात है कि भीड़ भरे बाजार में किसी ने उस शिक्षक को बचाने की कोशिश भी नहीं की।

समाज में बढ़ती इस तरह की हिंसक प्रवृत्ति एक लोकतांत्रिक और सभ्य राष्ट्र के लिए शर्मनाक है। इस तरह की घटनाओं का ग्राफ जिस तेजी से बढ़ रहा है, उससे साफ है कि देश में कानून-व्यवस्था का कोई मतलब नहीं रह गया है। ऐसी घटनाएं पुलिस और समाज दोनों के लिए चुनौती बन गई हैं। ऐसे अपराधियों से निपटने के लिए कानून भी काफी हैं, लेकिन उप तंत्र में सब

बेअसर साबित हो रहे हैं।

कल्पमधा

अहंकारी हमेशा केवल अपने महान कार्यों का वर्णन करता है और दूसरों के सिर्फ कुकर्मों का। -स्पिनोजा

मतभेदों में उलझता जी-7

ब्रहमदीप अलूने

जी-7 समूह के देश दुनिया में पूंजीवाद का प्रतीक हैं और इसमें रूस का होना या न होना भी बड़ा मुद्दा रहा है जो सदस्य देशों के बीच विरोधाभास को बढ़ाता रहा है। इस समूह के देशों की आपसी असहमतियों का आक्रामक कूटनीतिक प्रदर्शन भी चुनौतीपूर्ण रहा है। क्रीमिया पर रूस के आधिपत्य के बाद लोकतांत्रिक मूल्यों के नाम पर वर्ष 2014 में रूस को जिस तरह से समूह से बाहर का रास्ता दिखाया गया था, उसे लेकर भी आपसी मतभेद सामने आते रहे हैं।

श्विक आर्थिक मुद्दों पर विचार और परामर्श 🧖 के विकसित देशों के सबसे बड़े संगठन जी-7 का फ्रांस में शिखर सम्मेलन ऐसे समय पर आयोजित हुआ जब अमेरिका की रूस से कूटनीतिक तकरार और चीन से आर्थिक तनाव चरम पर है। दुनिया के विकसित और अग्रणी राष्ट्रों के इस समूह में जहां एक ओर आर्थिक, सामाजिक, राजनीतिक, कूटनीतिक और राष्ट्रीय नीतियों को लेकर गहरे मतभेद सामने आ रहे हैं, वहीं दूसरी ओर युद्ध, राष्ट्रवाद, दक्षिणपंथ के उभार, मुक्त बाजार के साथ अप्रवासन का विरोध और परमाण् हथियारों का जखीरा जुटाने की होड़ के बीच शांति और समग्र विकास के प्रति प्रतिबद्धता में गहरा अंतर्द्वंद दिखाई साफ नजर आ रहा है।

दरअसल, अमेरिका, फ्रांस, इटली, कनाडा, जर्मनी, जापान और इंग्लैंड जी-7 के सदस्य राष्ट्र हैं। जो स्वतंत्रता, समानता, लोकतंत्र और मानवाधिकारों

की रक्षा के प्रति अपनी प्रतिबद्धता का इजहार करते रहे हैं। उच्च आय और विकास के उच्च पैमाने स्थापित करने वाले जी-7 के राष्ट्राध्यक्ष हर साल अलग-अलग देशों में शिखर सम्मेलन आयोजित करते हैं और आर्थिक गतिविधियों के साथ ही जलवायु परिवर्तन, गरीबी, असमानता, सुरक्षा, पर्यावरणीय संकट जैसे सामाजिक सरोकारों और वैश्विक समस्याओं से जुड़े विषयों पर भी विमर्श करते हैं। इन सबके बीच यह भी दिलचस्प है कि अमेरिकी राष्ट्रपति डोनाल्ड ट्रंप के उभार के बाद महाशक्ति अमेरिका की भूमिका वैश्विक हितों से ज्यादा अमेरिकीवाद पर केंद्रित हो गई है और इसके प्रभाव से जी-7 भी अछूता नहीं है। जी-7 समूह के देश दुनिया में पूंजीवाद का प्रतीक हैं और इसमें रूस का होना या न होना भी बड़ा मुद्दा रहा है जो सदस्य देशों के बीच विरोधाभास को बढ़ाता रहा है। इस समूह के देशों की आपसी असहमितयों का आक्रामक कूटनीतिक प्रदर्शन भी चुनौतीपूर्ण रहा है।

क्रीमिया पर रूस के आधिपत्य के बाद लोकतांत्रिक मूल्यों के नाम पर वर्ष 2014 में रूस को जिस तरह से समृह से बाहर का रास्ता दिखाया गया था, उसे लेकर भी आपसी मतभेद सामने आते रहे हैं। अब ट्रंप ने जी-7 को रूस के बिना अधूरा बताया है, वहीं अन्य देश ट्रंप की नीतियों को लेकर सहज नहीं लग रहे।

जी-7 दुनिया के औद्योगिक देशों का समूह है लेकिन इन देशों में से अधिकतर अपनी बड़ी अर्थव्यवस्था के मुकाबले वैश्विक अर्थव्यवस्था में बहुत कम भागीदारी कर रहे हैं। भारत और चीन की चुनौती इस समृह के सामने बरकरार है। युरोपीय संघ का सबसे बड़ा देश जर्मनी है और उसका मुसलिम शरणार्थियों के प्रति उदार रवैया ट्रंप के आक्रामक राष्ट्रवाद के विरोध में नजर

ट्रंप को शांति और समृद्धि के लिए खतरा बता चुके हैं। हाल में ट्रंप ने फ्रांस के राष्ट्रपति इमैनुएल मैक्रों की आर्थिक नीतियों की कड़ी आलोचना करते हुए आरोप लगाया था कि फ्रांस गूगल जैसी बहुराष्ट्रीय कंपनियों पर कर लगाने की तैयारी कर रहा है। ट्रंप प्रशासन ने कहा था कि फ्रांस की ओर से लगाया गया कर अन्यायपूर्ण ढंग से अमेरिकी टैक कंपनियों को नुकसान पहुंचाने वाला है। वहीं, फ्रांस का कहना था कि अन्य देशों की कंपनियां उनके यहां या तो कॉर्पोरेट कर देती ही नहीं हैं या देती भी हैं तो बहुत ही कम। करों को लेकर असहमति से उत्तेजित ट्रंप ने वाईन को लेकर फ्रांस की आलोचना करने से गुरेज नहीं किया

और धमकी दी की उनका देश फ्रेंच वाइन के आयात पर शुल्क लगाने पर विचार कर रहा है। अमेरिका वाइन की खपत और आयात करने वाला दुनिया का सबसे बड़ा देश है। वह जिन देशों से वाइन आयात करता है, उनमें फ्रांस भी शामिल है।

मध्य पूर्व को लेकर भी यूरोप और अमेरिका के मतभेद जगजाहिर हैं। ईरान संकट पर फ्रांस के राष्ट्रपति मैक्रों चाह रहे हैं कि परमाणु करार टूटे नहीं। मैक्रों को जर्मनी और ब्रिटेन का भी समर्थन हासिल है। ये देश चाहते हैं कि ईरान और अमेरिका के बीच रिश्ते सुधरें जिससे इलाके में तनाव कम हो। ईरान पर अमेरिकी प्रतिबंध से जापान और फ्रांस जैसे देश प्रभावित हुए हैं। फ्रांस चाहता है कि ईरान पर लगी अमेरिकी पाबंदी में ढील दी जाए जिससे तेल आयात का रास्ता साफ हो। इसके अलावा ब्रेग्जिट को लेकर ब्रिटेन और अमेरिका के संबंध खराब हो चुके हैं। ट्रंप की बयानबाजी ने



आता है। जर्मनी के बड़े राजनेता जिकमार गैबरियल ब्रिटेन की आंतरिक राजनीति को प्रभावित किया है। ट्रंप जापान की आलोचना कर चुके हैं। इसी तरह जी– ने ब्रिटेन से व्यापार को लेकर जहां बातचीत की बात 7 के एक और बड़े देश कनाडा के साथ भी कही, वहीं हाल में ब्रिटिश प्रधानमंत्री बोरिस जॉनसन ने कहा है कि अगर अमेरिका ब्रिटेन के साथ व्यापार सौदा चाहता है तो उसे ब्रिटिश व्यापार पर से प्रतिबंध हटाना होगा। जी-7 शिखर सम्मेलन के दौरान जॉनसन ने स्वीकार किया कि अमेरिका में ब्रिटिश व्यवसायों के लिए बहुत बाधाएं हैं। ब्रिटेन की कंपनियों के लिए अमेरिकी बाजार में बड़े पैमाने पर अवसर की संभावनाएं देखते हुए जॉनसन अमेरिकी नीतियों में सुधार के हिमायती है। यहां यह भी उल्लेखनीय है कि रक्षा क्षेत्र में यूरोप में सबसे ज्यादा खर्च करने वाले ब्रिटेन ने अमेरिका समर्थित नाटो को हमेशा समर्थन

दिया है। ब्रिटेन में कई अमेरिकी सैन्य अड्डे बने हुए हैं और दोनों देशों की सेना गृह युद्ध और आतंकवाद से प्रभावित कई देशों में सैनिक कारवीई में साझीदार भी रही है। इसके बाद भी आर्थिक हितों को लेकर दोनों देश आमने-सामने हैं। जाहिर है, न्यूयार्क और लंदन दुनिया के दो बड़े वित्तीय केंद्र भले हों लेकिन अमेरिका और ब्रिटेन के बीच व्यापार में सहयोग का भविष्य इतना आसान नहीं दिखता।

यूरोप की तीसरी बड़ी अर्थव्यवस्था इटली के चीन से रिश्ते भी अमेरिका को नागवार गुजर रहे हैं। इस साल मार्च में बेल्ट एंड रोड प्रोजेक्ट को लेकर इटली और चीन के बीच बंदरगाह, पुल और बड़े बिजली संयंत्र लगाने को लेकर हुए समझौते को भी ट्रंप के लिए झटका माना गया। रोम में आयोजित एक समारोह में प्रधानमंत्री गिउसेप कोंटे और चीनी राष्ट्रपति शी जिनपिंग की मौजूदगी में दोनों देशों के

> अधिकारियों ने उनतीस अलग-अलग समझौतों पर हस्ताक्षर किए थे। इस समझौते के साथ इटली बेल्ट एंड रोड प्रोजेक्ट से जुड़ने वाला जी-7 समूह का पहला देश बन गया। चीन की इस परियोजना से अमेरिका ने दूरी बना रखी है। जहां तक जापान का सवाल है, अमेरिका और जापान के बीच व्यापारिक टकराव देखने को मिलता रहा है। येन और डॉलर की प्रतिद्वंद्विता दोनों देशों के आपसी संबंधों को चुनौतीपूर्ण बना रही है। इस साल ट्रंप ने जापान की यात्रा कर यह दावा किया था कि हम अमेरिका के निर्यात की बाधाएं और व्यापार असंतुलन को दूर करना चाहते हैं और हमारे संबंधों में पारस्परिकता सुनिश्चित करना चाहते हैं। ट्रंप ऊंची कर दरों की वजह से अमेरिका को होने वाले अरबों डालर के नुकसान के लिए

अमेरिकी संबंध बद से बदतर देखे गए हैं। पिछले साल ट्रंप ने कनाडा के प्रधानमंत्री जस्टिन ट्रंडो को 'बेईमान और कमजोर'तक कह दिया था।

बहरहाल दुनिया में अमेरिका की अर्थव्यवस्था का महत्त्व बरकरार है और उसके सहयोग के बिना साझा हितों की कल्पना नहीं की जा सकती। जाहिर है, ट्रंप को नियंत्रित और संतुलित रख ही जी-7 अपने उद्देश्यों में कामयाब हो सकता है लेकिन यह इतना आसान नहीं है। जी-7 के अन्य देश अमेरिका से उदार नीति की अपेक्षा करते हैं, जबकि ट्रंप 'अमेरिकी फर्स्ट' के लिए कृत संकल्पित हैं।

कथा नए स्कूल की

प्रेमपाल शर्मा

हाल में बुलंदशहर के अपने गांव के रास्ते में दोस्त ने बताया कि यहां खुर्जा और बुलंदशहर के बीच अल्पसंख्यकों के लिए कुछ नए स्कूल खुले हैं। योजना तो पिछली सरकार की थी लेकिन बन कर अब तैयार हुए हैं। देखने की उत्सुकता हुई और गाड़ी उधर मोड़ दी। जीटी रोड के मुख्य सड़क मार्ग से गांव की पतली-पतली गलियों के बीच लगभग एक किलोमीटर का रास्ता पार करके हम स्कूल पहुंचे। ऐसी भव्य इमारत! चमाचम! बीस कमरे, सुंदर-सा प्रवेश द्वार, खेल का मैदान, नए लगे पेड़। मन ऊर्जा से भर गया।

लेकिन उत्साह ठंडा होने में भी देर नहीं लगी। स्कूल छठी से लेकर बारहवीं तक का है लेकिन अभी सिर्फ दो कक्षाएं ही चलती हैं- नवीं और दसवीं की। पिछले वर्ष सिर्फ नवीं कक्षा ही चल रही थी। क्यों ? यहां तो चारों तरफ बच्चों के लिए स्कूल है ही नहीं और इतनी अच्छे स्कूल में दाखिला क्यों नहीं ? क्योंकि सरकार ने दो साल में अभी सिर्फ एक शिक्षक दिया है। उसे शिक्षक मानो, प्रिंसिपल मान लो या क्लर्क, वही सभी कुछ है। स्कूल की अकेली

शिक्षिका अचानक हमारे पहुंचने से अचकचा गई। फर्श पर एक साथ दो कक्षाओं के बीच में उनकी कुर्सी थी। एक तरफ नवीं क्लास के बच्चे तो दूसरी तरफ दसवीं के। काश हार्वर्ड, कैंब्रिज के शिक्षाविद हमसे भी कुछ सीख पाते कि कैसे अकेले शिक्षक के बूते भारत में पूरा स्कूल चलाया जाता है।

जब ठीक-ठाक कक्षाएं हैं तो फर्श पर क्यों बैठे हैं? यह पूछने पर शिक्षिका ने व्यावहारिक बात बताई- 'मैं बीच में बैठ कर

दुनिया मेरे आगे दोनों क्लासों को तो भी संभाल लेती हूं।' हमने पूछा-क्या सभी विषय पढ़ा लेती हैं ? तो वे बोलीं-'क्या करें, मैं हूं अर्थशास्त्र की लेकिन बारी-बारी से सभी विषय पढ़ाने ही पड़ते हैं।' आप और शिक्षकों की मांग क्यों नहीं करते लिखित में ? क्या डीएम और उच्च शिक्षा अधिकारियों को बताया? ऐसे प्रश्नों पर वे हकलाने लगीं कि कहीं कोई

आफत न खड़ी हो जाए। लब्बोलुआब यह कि बार-बार कहने के बावजूद न शिक्षक नियुक्त हुए ,न क्लर्क और इसीलिए जो बच्चे दाखिला लेना भी चाहते हैं। मसलन छठी, सातवीं क्लास में, वे भी नहीं आ पाते। इस बारे में गांव के प्रधान को भी सारी हकीकत पता

है लेकिन वे दिल्ली रहते हैं यानी कि उनकी पत्नी गांव की प्रधान बनी हैं और पूरे परिवार के साथ में दिल्ली में रहती हैं। प्रधानी के दायित्व गांव में उनके छोटे भाई संभालते हैं, यानी कि भारतीय लोकतंत्र में खड़ाऊ प्रधानी। साल में असली प्रधान पत्नी तो मुश्किल से ही आती है, उनके पति कभी-कभी आते हैं जैसे पिछले बार एक सरकारी कार्यक्रम में पेड़ लगाने और फिर चुनाव के दौरान आए थे।

खुशी की बात यह थी कि

बच्चों के चेहरे पर अद्भुत

मुस्कुराहट थी। खिले-खिले ऊर्जा से भरे हुए। मानो घर के रोजाना के कामों से मुक्ति उन्हें स्कूल में रह कर ही मिलती हो। जुलाई के महीने में जरूर संख्या कुछ कम रहती है क्योंकि उन दिनों ये सब बच्चे खेतों में धान की रोपाई करने जैसे कामों में लगे रहते हैं। शिक्षिका समझदार लगती थीं क्योंकि उन्होंने कहा, इनके लिए पेट भरना ज्यादा जरूरी है बजाय स्कल के और इसीलिए हम इसे नजरअंदाज कर देते हैं। वाकई लड़िकयों की कॉपी में लेख को देख कर लगता था, काश इनके पंखों को और उडने का मौका मिलता!

कुछ लड़िकयां अपने मां-बाप के साथ घर पर सिलाई और कढ़ाई-बुनाई का काम भी संभालती

हैं। जाहिर है, बच्चे तो पढ़ना चाहते हैं लेकिन सरकार और समाज की ऐसी नीयत, व्यवस्था और विवशता के चलते दुनिया की सबसे नौजवान आबादी अभी भी सबसे निरक्षर आबादी है। काश, कभी डीएम या शिक्षा अधिकारी भी मुख्य शहर से सिर्फ तीन किलोमीटर पर स्थित इस स्कूल का दौरा कर पाते! शायद उन्हें अपने आला अफसरों और नेताओं की खुशामद से ही फुर्सत नहीं मिलती! काश प्रधान गांव में ही रहता और दिल्ली से लोकतंत्र नहीं चलाता! और यह भी कि यह स्कूल मुक्त सड़क के किनारे होता जहां बच्चों के आने-जाने की सुविधा रहती।

पता लगा कि स्कूल बनवाने के लिए तो सरकार चार करोड़ रुपए तक देती है लेकिन जमीन ग्राम सभा जिसकी कीमत दस लाख से अधिक नहीं होगी। और ग्राम सभा वहीं जमीन देती है जो किसी बियाबान में उसके अधिकार में है। इसीलिए न स्कूल जाने के रास्ते सही होते हैं, न आबादी और जरूरत के हिसाब से बनाए जाते हैं। और न फिर उनकी खैर खबर ली जाती है। चार करोड़ का ठेका तो तुरंत पूरा हो गया, अल्पसंख्यकों के लिए किए जाने वाले कामों की भी खानापूर्ति हो गई, सही शिक्षा का सपना न जाने कब पूरा होगा।

बदलते सुर

रमीर से धारा 370 को निष्क्रिय किए जाने के 💆 बाद से ही पूर्व कांग्रेस अध्यक्ष राहुल गांधी सरकार को आड़े हाथों लेते रहे हैं। लेकिन अब अचानक उनका कैसे हृदय परिवर्तन कैसे हो गया है ? उनके स्वर एकदम बदल गए और वे सरकार के समर्थन कह रहे हैं कि मैं कई मामलों में सरकार से असहमत हूं पर कश्मीर में पाकिस्तान हिंसा भड़का रहा है और वह दुनियाभर में आतंकवाद का प्रमुख समर्थक बना हुआ है, कश्मीर का मसला भारत का आंतरिक मामला है इसमें किसी दूसरे देश के हस्तक्षेप की जरूरत नहीं है। अगर राहल अब हकीकत को मान रहे हैं तो बहुत अच्छी बात है। उन्होंने भले ही सरकार से अपनी वैचारिक भिन्नता बताई हो, किंतु देश के साथ उन्होंने सरकार के साथ खडे होकर खुद, पार्टी, जनहित और देशहित में दिल से जो कहा वह सराहनीय है। इस तरह कांग्रेस ने एक बेहतर संदेश विपक्षियों को दिया है कि आंतरिक मतभेद चाहे कितने भी हों लेकिन राष्ट्रहित में हमें हमेशा सरकार के साथ एकजूट होकर खड़े होना चाहिए।

• शकुंतला महेश नेनावा, इंदौर

बौखलाया पाक

जम्मू-कश्मीर से धारा 370 को हटाए जाने के बाद से पाकिस्तान बुरी तरह बौखलाया हुआ है। इस बौखलाहट में वह दुनिया के दूसरे देशों के आगे इस मामले में दखल देने की फरियाद करता घूम रहा है। लेकिन सारी दुनिया पाकिस्तान की मंशा को जानती है, इसलिए किसी भी देश ने उसे कोई तवज्जो नहीं दी और इस मामले में इसका साथ देने से भी इंकार कर दिया, यहां तक कि मुसलिम देशों ने भी इस मुद्दे पर उसका साथ देने से साफ मना कर दिया। इस

बौखलाहट में आकर पाकिस्तान ने परमाणु युद्ध की हो। केंद्र सरकार को अब व्यापक व समग्र रूप से यह धमकी भी दे डाली। यह उसकी सबसे बड़ी प्रयास करना चाहिए कि पाई-पाई पैसे का सदुपयोग नासमझी है। वह शायद भूल चुका है कि भारत के देश व जनहित में हो, ताकि सरकार के इस फैसले की साथ हर युद्ध में उसकी करारी हार हुई है। जंग हमेशा नुकसानदायी होती है, पाकिस्तान के सत्ताधारी और कट्टरपंथी इस बात को क्यों नहीं समझते। बल्कि अगर पाकिस्तान को खुद एक बेहतर राष्ट्र बनना है तो उसे अपने यहां पल रहे आतंकी संगठनों पर नकेल कसनी चाहिए। पाक को यह बात याद रखनी चाहिए कि परमाणु बमों का असर आज तक नागासाकी और हिरोशिमा के लोग भूगत रहे है।

आलीचना करने वाली का मुह बंद ही सके।

• हेमा हरि उपाध्याय, खाचरोद (उज्जैन)

अनुठी पहल

उत्तर प्रदेश की राज्यपाल ने एक अनुकरणीय पहल करते हुए टीबी पीड़ित एक बच्ची के इलाज का परा खर्चा उठाने का संकल्प

लिया और सबसे अच्छी बात यह

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

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

परमाणु युद्ध किसी मसले का हल नहीं हो सकता। • राजेश कुमार चौहान, जलंधर

सदुपयोग हो पैसे का

रिजर्व बैंक ने केंद्र सरकार को पौने दो लाख करोड रुपए हस्तांतरित करने का फैसला किया है। देश का पैसा, देश को मिले और जनहित में अगर इसका सदुपयोग होता है तो यह निर्णय बहुत ही सराहनीय व स्वागत योग्य है। लेकिन अब तक जो भी देखने और सुनने में आया है कि केंद्र सरकार देश व जनहित में जितनी भी अच्छी योजनाएं बनाती है, पैसा देती है, उस पैसे का उपयोग कम, दुरुपयोग ज्यादा होता है। चाहे वह बैंकों से कर्ज लेकर भाग जाने का मामला हो या इन योजनाओं में भ्रष्टाचार, कमीशन खोरी का मामला

कि तत्काल बाद राजभवन के कई अधिकारियों ने इसी तरीके की पहल करते हुए टीबी पीड़ित बच्चों को इलाज के लिए गोद लिया। काश, आज भारत में सभी साधन संपन्न लोग अगर इसी तरीके से पहल करते हए शिक्षा से वंचित या इलाज से वंचित गरीब बेसहारा बच्चों को गोद लेकर के उनकी परवरिश की जिम्मेदारी उठा लें तो हम एक सशक्त और मजबृत समाज की स्थापना कर सकेंगे।

• रमेश माहेश्वरी, सुल्तानपुर कामयाबी का शिखर

कुछ शख्सियतें ऐसी होती हैं जो कामयाबी के पीछे नहीं बल्कि कामयाबी उनके पीछे भागती है और ऐसे में वे आसमान में इतनी सीढियां लगा

लेती हैं कि उनके साथ चलने वाले काफी पीछे छूट जाते हैं। पीवी सिंधू, हिमा दास, दुती चंद से लेकर मैरीकॉम, सानिया मिर्जा और गीता फोगाट तक आसमान में चमकने वाले कुछ सितारे ऐसे ही हैं जो सफलता के उस मुकाम पर हैं जहां पहुंचना मश्किल तो नहीं पर फिलहाल भारतीय महिला खिलाड़ियों के लिए आसान भी नहीं है। खेलों का हम सभी से नाता रहा है। देश में खेलों को प्रोत्साहन मिलने के साथ इन दिनों बड़ी संख्या में महिलाएं इसमें करियर बना रही हैं। बात चाहे क्रिकेट या हॉकी की हो या तैराकी और फुटबॉल की हर क्षेत्र में प्रतिभाओं की भरमार है। लेकिन प्रतिभा तभी निखरती है जब उसे तराशा जाए। आज महिलाएं आत्मनिर्भर, स्वनिर्मित और आत्मविश्वासी हैं जिन्होंने पुरुष प्रधान चुनौतीपूर्ण क्षेत्रों में भी अपनी योग्यता प्रदर्शित की है। वे केवल शिक्षिका, नर्स, डाक्टर न बन कर इंजीनियगिंर, वैमानिकी, सेना, पत्रकारिता जैसे नए क्षेत्रों को अपना रही हैं। राजनीति के क्षेत्रों में महिलाओं ने नए कीतिमीन स्थापित किए हैं।

बीसवीं सदी के उत्तरार्द्ध और अब इक्कीसवीं सदी के प्रारंभ में बराबरी व्यवहार वाले जोड़े बन रहे हैं। नौकरी वाली नारी के साथ पुरुष की मानसिकता में भी बदलाव आया है। पहले नौकरी वाली औरत के पित को औरत की कमाई खाने वाला कह कर चिढाया जाता था। लेकिन आज यह सोच बदल चुकी है। स्त्री अब अत्मनिर्भर है। महिलाओं के संबंध में भारत के प्रथम प्रधानमंत्री पंडित जवाहर लाल नेहरू ने कहा था कि यदि आपको देश का विकास करना है तो महिलाओं का उत्थान करना होगा। महिलाओं का विकास होने पर समाज व देश का विकास स्वतः हो जाएगा।

• अमन सिंह, बरेली

नई दिल्ली