

Destigmatising mental health

Most patients and their families prefer being in the denial mode



HUMAN FACTOR

SHYAMAL MAJUMDAR

Earlier this week, Siddhartha Mukherjee, a Pulitzer Prize winning author and a world-renowned doctor, raised an important point on mental health issues. The doctor drew parallels between the stigma that cancer faced in the 1950s and that mental health faces today. Cancer patients, he said, "were then stuffed

in the back of hospitals" till increasing awareness removed the stigma attached with the illness. His talk at a public event centred around three forces, which he felt needed to be addressed. The first force is political — for mental health to be recognised as a public health crisis, stakeholders in the political domain must come together and work towards setting up national institutes for mental health.

The second force is social — advocacy on destigmatising mental health. In the case of cancer, women like Rose Kushner, Betty Ford, and 'Happy' Rockefeller played an important role, helping the focus to shift to "empathy, a desire to relieve suffering, and a want to cure and to treat". Mukherjee, who is also an assistant professor of medicine at the Columbia University Medical Center, said mental health requires such advocates. And the third force is biological — genetic or pharmaceutical. This entails making

efforts and carrying out research to understand the molecular mechanism so that people having mental health issues would not be victimised.

He should know from personal experience, as he has two uncles who have schizophrenia and bipolar disorder. One of his cousins was also diagnosed with schizophrenia and institutionalised. Mukherjee had initially blocked out anything to do with mental illness and didn't want to understand it partly because he was "too fearful of understanding" till the time he picked up courage to write a book, *The Gene: An Intimate History*.

The doctor is bang on. In India, as in many parts of the world, the first reaction of mental health patients and their families is denial. Most are bent on convincing the doctor that the diagnosis is a colossal error, or that the so-called broken psyche would mend itself. That's because of a lack of awareness that all mental

health patients are not lunatics and the disease is entirely curable if detected on time.

One of the main reasons for this is the acute shortage of mental health consultants in India. According to the World Health Organization (WHO), there were 0.301 psychiatrists and 0.047 psychologists for every 100,000 patients suffering from a mental health disorder in India. The lack of mental health care workers, however, is hardly a new issue. In 1982, the government began implementing the National Mental Health Programme with the broader aim of integrating mental health care with general care. But rollout has been slow. As of 2015, more than three decades after the programme launched, it has been prevalent only in 27 per cent of districts.

The recently conducted National Mental Health Survey says the treatment gap of any mental disorder in India is as high as 83 per cent, and around 150 million people in India need care for their mental health condition. Corporate India also needs to take this seriously. It is alarming that 42.5 per cent of the employees in the private sector suffer from depression or some form of anxiety disorder. The

WHO estimates that India will suffer economic losses amounting to \$1.03 trillion from mental health conditions between 2012 and 2030.

Poor communities also tend to ignore mental illnesses as they are not obviously disabling. People very rarely die because of them, and families that struggle to make ends meet do not consider that mental health is something that money should be spent on.

In 2018, the Live Love Laugh Foundation, a charity that aims to create awareness on mental illness, commissioned a study, "How India Perceives Mental Health", across eight cities in India. The study showed that while 87 per cent of the respondents had some awareness of mental illness, 71 per cent also used terms associated with stigma. More than a quarter admitted that they would always be indifferent towards people with mental illness.

That needs to be addressed urgently. If individuals continue to view mental illness with apprehension and resistance, it will remain difficult for people with mental health concerns to seek the support they require. That is where institutions supported by the government have a huge role to play.

Google is prince of mobile payments

Cash may be king in India but millions of Indian consumers are using Google Pay to spend and transfer money

NEWLEY PURNELL

The leading player in the battle for mobile payments in India isn't either of China's pioneers, Alibaba Group Holding Ltd. or Tencent Holdings Ltd. It isn't Apple Inc, Visa Inc or even PayPal Holdings Inc. It's Google.

The Alphabet Inc unit has for years tried to diversify its revenues beyond advertising by pushing into new fields like cloud computing and hardware. While its profits remain healthy, it needs new ways to make money as the specter of regulation looms at home and around the globe. Its booming new business in the world's largest untapped digital market could be the engine of expansion that it has been looking for.

In India today, the company has one of its fastest-growing hits ever with Google Pay, a two-year-old app that millions of consumers are using to spend and transfer tens of billions of dollars.

Resembling a chat app and available in local languages, Google Pay was the most downloaded financial technology app world-wide last year, according to SensorTower, a research and marketing firm for the app industry.

Indian consumers use it to buy train tickets, pay bills and even to purchase lunchtime meals from street vendors. Tiny mom-and-pop shops around the country now display a logo with a large "G" and Google's blue, red, yellow and green colors, signaling that merchants accept payments via the app, which is free for all to use.

"There's good reason for Google being bullish," said Satish Meena, a New Delhi-based analyst with research firm Forrester. "They're getting good traction. The opportunity in India is massive."

The app has been downloaded more than 180 million times since it launched in September 2017 and in the first half of this year, it clocked more downloads world-wide than PayPal or its Venmo app. It also outpaced Alipay, from Alibaba affiliate Ant Financial Services Group, data from SensorTower showed.

"India is setting the global standard on how to digitise payments," Caesar Sengupta, Google's vice president for

its Next Billion Users initiative and payments, said Thursday at an event in New Delhi. In the past year, the service has processed transactions worth more than \$110

billion on an annualised basis via the government's popular real-time payments platform, he said.

Analysts estimate Google Pay is now used as much as or more than any other service, including apps backed by Tencent and Paytm, which counts among its investors Warren Buffett's Berkshire Hathaway Inc, SoftBank Group Corp and Alibaba.

Google offers other payment systems branded Google Pay around the world, but Google Pay in India is the only service of its kind offering real-time payments without the use of credit or debit cards between individuals and businesses.

Shop owners can display a printed QR code for shoppers to scan, or two



DIGITAL INDIA The value of mobile payments in India is well behind China's, but is ahead of the US. But it could nearly double to hit \$450 billion a year by 2023, according to a 2018 report from Morgan Stanley

individuals can open the app, hold their phones together and use audio pairing to connect and make payments.

Hundreds of millions of Indians are entering the digital economy for the first time thanks to inexpensive mobile data and smartphones. Cash still rules, but most Indians have bank accounts and for simple payments they are skipping plastic and going straight to mobile.

The catalyst for mobile-payment growth came in 2016, when India's government nullified the largest-denomination cash notes in circulation to curb

corruption. That triggered a crunch and consumers had to stand in long lines for ATMs. Many downloaded mobile wallets like Paytm's, learned more about digital payments and became comfortable making them.

Google, sensing an opportunity to get a digital payments foothold in the country of 1.3 billion, has used its massive war chest to capture users with an advertising blitz and cash awards.

The value of mobile payments in India is well behind China's, but is ahead of the US. The value of mobile payments could nearly double to hit

\$450 billion a year by 2023, according to a 2018 report from Morgan Stanley, with Google wringing as much as \$4.5 billion annually out of the business should it introduce advertising or other new services.

Google has an early lead but isn't without challenges. The biggest one on the horizon is Facebook's WhatsApp. The platform has 400 million users in India, more than any other country, and it rolled out a trial payments service to a million users in February 2018.

Two months later, the Reserve Bank of India said payment-related data needed to be stored in the country and a complete rollout of the service has stalled. WhatsApp says it adheres to those rules and hopes to be able to fully launch the service to all users in India in the coming months.

Analysts say that Google, having fully launched Google Pay before the guidelines were issued, hasn't been affected. A Google spokesman didn't immediately respond to a request for comment on Google Pay's adherence to data localisation guidelines.

"One year ago no one knew about this app," said Surender Singh, a sales clerk in a New Delhi smartphone shop.

While customers still use rival apps, Google Pay's usage is surging more than others, with nine or 10 people a day using it at his shop to buy items like chargers and headsets, spending as much as \$40 per transfer, he said.

"If people don't have credit cards or cash, they use Google Pay," said Singh.

Source: The Wall Street Journal

CHINESE WHISPERS

Principal surname

Guess which surname has the largest share in the list of 13 principal secretaries who have served the prime ministers of India in the last half a century. If you ignore the difference in how they spell their surnames, Mishra has so far won this race by a wide margin. As many as four Mishras have till now headed the Prime Minister's Office (PMO). That is almost a third of all principal secretaries at the PMO so far. Of course, one of them, Nripendra, would spell his surname Misra. But the three others spelt their surnames Mishra and they were: S K Mishra, who served Chandra Shekhar, Brajesh Mishra, who served Atal Bihari Vajpayee, and P K Mishra, who is now serving Narendra Modi. One of the Mishras is ahead of the rest in another area — holding the office for the shortest time. S K Mishra held it for six months and 13 days!

Multifaceted Mamata



West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee (pictured) was in New Delhi for the last three days. Apart from meeting Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Wednesday, and Home

Minister Amit Shah, Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal, senior Congress leader Ahmed Patel, and also West Bengal cadre bureaucrats on Thursday, she also hosted journalists for lunch at New Delhi's Banga Bhavan. Banerjee, however, did not partake of the Bengali spread. She said she took only a bowl of curd for lunch, and stuck to a non-carbohydrate diet for dinner, not eating either rice or bread for the past 20 years. Apart from running her party and the state, Banerjee keeps herself busy sketching and painting and also writing poetry. She plans to release seven songs — she has written the lyrics and scored the music herself — during the Durga Puja festivities. She said she had taught herself to sketch whatever she saw from her car when she was on the road rather than fiddle with her phone.

The next MP Congress chief?

Who will be the next Madhya Pradesh Congress president? There are many contenders and each one is confident about his prospects. But bitter fighting has made the choice difficult for party's President Sonia Gandhi. After former state unit chief Arun Yadav tweeted his unhappiness recently — "I fought for 15 years with the help of faithful party workers. If I had any clue about what was going to happen in the next eight months, I might not have put my life in danger fighting with a poisonous and corrupt ideology. I am really hurt" — Gandhi called him to Delhi and had a 20-minute one-to-one meeting, fuelling speculation that he was the top contender for the post. Yadav held the post for four years and was succeeded by Kamal Nath just six months before the Assembly polls last year.

INSIGHT

Should the govt borrow to fund capex?



JYOTI MUKUL

A crucial indicator of a company or an organisation's prospects is its strategy towards creating productive assets. For the Union government, that used to be defined by its planned expenditure. But the distinction of planned and non-planned expenditure was removed in 2017. Now, the Centre's spending is categorised as capital and revenue expenditure.

Capital expenditure, when undertaken by companies, shows the level of private investment in the economy. Any debt taken on this account is considered healthy so long as the companies are not overleveraged and are paying back on time. Companies not going in for debt and relying only on equity financing is bad for a vibrant financial market. Even for shareholders, it could mean the company is risking its capital and is being too aggressive by solely relying on equity financing. So why is it that when governments take loan to fund capital expenditure, it raises question?

The National Highways Authority of India and the Indian Railways are two government organisations that take care of a major part of transport infrastructure of the country. While the railway accounts for around 20-25 per cent of the Centre's total capital expenditure, the ministry of road transport and highways constitutes another 7-8 per cent. Both earn some revenue but

are also dependent on the Union government for meeting their expenses. These sectors require huge investment and constant maintenance. The Railways have to additionally bear some manpower cost quite like public sector undertakings and unlike other government departments.

Over the years, however, both the NHAI and the Railways have become heavily dependent on borrowings. In the current year, for instance, NHAI's borrowing target has been hiked by 21 per cent. It has an approval to raise ₹75,000 crore during the year while government support is just ₹36,691 crore. NHAI's cumulative borrowings stood at ₹184,500 crore at the end of March 2019. If one looks at the Railways, long-term borrowings of its arm, Indian Railway Finance Corporation, stood at ₹114,854 crore while short-term was ₹4,96,679 crore on March 2018, according to the latest available data from its annual report.

There are two reasons for such heavy borrowings by these organisations — less-than-required government fund infusion in these sectors over the years, made worse by tepid private investment.

In the case of NHAI, the share of government funding in its total expenditure was a little over 75 per cent in FY08 but has fallen to around 25 per cent. For the Railways, however, funds from the government that flow in as gross budgetary support constitute a higher chunk of 41 per cent of its capital expenditure. The Railways also has the advantage of a much larger resource generation capacity since it is essentially a commercial organisation. The NHAI, by contrast, does not run any commercial operation. Even the toll income that comes to it from highways built with government fund-

ing or the engineering, procurement and construction (EPC) model are used for maintenance work.

Though the public-private partnership route has in the past been more successfully exploited by the NHAI than by the Railways, the lack of investment appetite forced the government to keep funding road construction. The natural fallout was an increase in borrowings which is now forcing the NHAI to revisit the build-operate-transfer (BOT) route. A multi-pronged approach to road construction — where the platter of offerings would include BOT, toll-operate-transfer, infrastructure investment trust and hybrid annuity — has been envisaged. This is expected to ease the need to borrow.

Analysts may have forced the Prime Minister's Office to ask the highway ministry to look at asset monetisation rather than road construction, but this is nothing new for Union road minister Nitin Gadkari since he himself

had been talking about it for almost two years now. But should this mean that the government should move away from government funded route of EPC? The industry itself wants the government to continue with EPC. The reason being that the liquidity provided by government funds to these companies is crucial in these times.

From lenders or purely fund raising point of view, money could more safely be deployed with the government entities like the NHAI and the IRFC than with private companies. Nonetheless, these organisations should go slow on borrowings and not venture into high cost projects. However, considering the slowdown, any spending cut on their part will hit the sector hard.

LETTERS

Too many cooks...



This refers to "Misuse of agricultural credit" (September 19). It has been rightly pointed out that there is disproportional disbursement of rural credit far in excess with their actual output. The basic flaw in agricultural and allied credit is the multiplicity of institutions playing various roles without any coordination. Banks disburse credit purely from the financial angle to meet priority sector norms -- that is, target-oriented financial lending. Their approach to rural finance is safety-oriented and directed towards credit recovery to prevent NPAs (non-performing assets) and ultimate accountability of the disbursing official. The seasonal requirements under agriculture including the period for cultivation and harvesting apart from the technicalities involved in the process are known to them more in theory than in practice. Untimely credit defeats the purpose.

Then there is pressure on land due to successive inheritances reducing the feasibility of cultivation. The purpose of subsidy is to partially finance agricultural and allied activity; it should not be given as a dole. However, the latter is the practice than the exception. Lastly, the technical institutions also maintain safety in their approach thus benefiting large farmers at the cost of small and marginal ones. The financially backward farmers follow traditional styles of cultivation as they are neither financially strong nor are aware

of improved modes of cultivation. For the small and marginal farmer, the only way to raise funds is diversification of portfolio and borrowing from moneylenders at exorbitant rates of interest. A solution to this problem is to do away with the multiplicity of institutions and set up a single body, coordinating technical, infrastructural and financial assistance functions apart from furnishing information on market pricing for a specific geographical area.

The same applies to allied activities also like fishery, forestry and animal husbandry. This will ensure timely financial disbursement, product quality, functional control and return on investment. This will also be in line with the single window approach for credit being emphasised by the government. Capital investment for such an enterprise should be made by the government, banks and technical institutions. Cooperative farming should be made mandatory depending on land area to ensure efficiency of cultivation. Subsidy should be the capital for the institution and not personal funding. Personal subsidy should be replaced by institutional expertise. The capital investment and management skills should be jointly vested with banks, technical institutions and government in consultation with the gram panchayats to ensure credit is directed in a timely manner. Finally, a uniform budgetary target for such institutions is a must to ensure coordinated functioning. Ultimately, it is social confidence that will prevent misdirected credit, the dependence on moneylenders and the removal of rural indebtedness. This

may appear idealistic but will ultimately save costs.

C Gopinath Nair Kochi

A welcome move

This refers to "New proposal in the works to give Dipam more teeth" (September 18). The proposal to arm the Department of Investment and Public Asset Management (Dipam) to carry out strategic sales of public sector units (PSUs) is a welcome step. There are approximately 250 odd PSUs under the central government and most of them are in urgent need of capital to augment their capacity and be competitive. The internal accruals of most of the PSUs are not great and the government is in no position to infuse capital as it itself battles lower revenue figures. The most desired option under the circumstances is to go for strategic sales of these companies that will bring both much needed capital and technology to these PSUs.

It is often said that the government has no business to be in business. In our context, this has largely remained a mere statement, without resulting in anything substantial. Hopefully the current move to empower Dipam will have a discernible impact on the disinvestment process.

Sanjeev Kumar Singh Jabalpur

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

HAMBONE



Global economic turmoil

There are limits to what central banks can achieve

The new forecast of the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development shows that global growth in the current year will slip to its slowest since the financial crisis, largely because of the ongoing trade war. On Wednesday, the Federal Open Market Committee (FOMC) of the US Federal Reserve reduced policy interest rates by 25 basis points to support the US economy. This was after the European Central Bank pushed interest rate on its deposit facility further into negative territory and announced a plan to restart asset purchase without an end date. However, aside from the decision to reduce policy rates, the other commonality in both the central banks was the division among officials. In a way, this reflects the state of the global economy and difficulties in policymaking.

For instance, the Fed saw three dissent votes in the FOMC meeting. Also, there was a clear spilt among officials in projecting the course of the policy. Similarly, several member countries in the European Union were not in favour of restarting quantitative easing. Asset purchase by the ECB, among other things, could lead to dislocation in financial markets and escalate trade tensions. It will increase the supply of euros in the system and put downward pressure on the exchange rate, which would help exporters in the region. The market condition would encourage global money managers to shift from Europe to other countries, particularly the US, which will strengthen the dollar. US President Donald Trump accused the ECB of manipulating the euro in the past. Clearly, its latest move will not please Mr Trump, who firmly believes that the US is being treated unfairly by its trading partners. Also, this would encourage other countries, both in the developed and emerging markets, to manage their currencies more aggressively, potentially leading to further escalation in trade tensions. The US-China trade war is anyway affecting the global economy significantly. A recent note by the Fed, for instance, showed that trade policy uncertainty in the first half of 2018 accounts for a decline in global gross domestic product by about 0.8 per cent by the first half of the current year.

Trade uncertainty is likely to remain a drag on global growth in the foreseeable future. While the central banks are doing their bit to contain the damage, there are limits to what they can achieve in an unsupportive policy environment. Fed Chairman Jerome Powell in his remarks at the recent Jackson Hole conference, for example, noted: "...while monetary policy is a powerful tool that works to support consumer spending, business investment, and public confidence, it cannot provide a settled rulebook for international trade." Besides slower economic growth and trade and currency issues, the global economy also has to deal with higher oil prices and geopolitical tension in West Asia. An escalation would affect the global growth.

The ongoing uncertainty in the global economy will only add to India's problems and could prolong the slowdown. While emerging market countries like India tend to benefit from monetary accommodation in the advanced economies because of higher capital flows, an increase in risk aversion in the global financial system could reverse flows. In the given global economic situation, policymakers in India should redouble efforts to build investor confidence through reforms that would increase the ease of doing business and by protecting macroeconomic stability.

Closure for Ayodhya

Justice Gogoi's deadline is a big step forward

With Chief Justice Ranjan Gogoi setting the date of October 18 to conclude the hearing on the nine-year-old Babri Masjid-Ram Janambhoomi case, an end to a controversy that has been at the root of India's debilitating polarisation is finally in sight. With the prospect of a judgment by the three-judge bench in mid-November, before Justice Gogoi retires, Indians could earn respite from the unending uncertainty over an issue that is out of sync with the aspirations of a modern nation-state. The case, involving a 70-year-old land title dispute, has proved so contentious after the 1992 demolition of the mosque by Hindu devotees, that it has covered the terms of no less than four chief justices (Justice Gogoi being the fourth). It came to the apex court in 2010 as appeals by the Akhil Bharatiya Hindu Mahasabha (ABHM) and the Sunni Waqf Board against an Allahabad High Court judgment. The ABHM and the Waqf Board are two of the three entities that were awarded one-third each of the disputed territory (the Nimohi Akhara, as ascetic sector, was the third awardee) by the high court, which appeared to have based its judgment on unprovable myth. Much water has flowed down Ayodhya's Saryu River since, with the building of a temple over the site of the demolished mosque becoming the basis of the Bharatiya Janata Party's election manifesto. Meanwhile, the case acquired a life of its own with multiple interveners (including maverick politician Subramanian Swamy), threats against lawyers, and a (failed) high-profile mediation effort that included the lifestyle guru Shri Shri Ravishankar.

Justice Deepak Misra, the previous chief justice, partially cleared the way for his successor by declining to refer to a larger Bench a point of law over whether a mosque is integral to Islam or not — a 1994 Supreme Court judgment had declared it was not. Given the febrile atmosphere ahead of the 2019 parliamentary elections, further hearings were suspended till after the polls. Under Justice Gogoi, it is fair to say the Supreme Court's three-judge Bench hearing the case has proceeded with business-like speed. After declaring on August 3 that the mediation efforts had failed, the Supreme Court began daily hearings on August 6. The Supreme Court is uniquely placed to make a strictly legal judgment on this festering issue based on the principle of equality of religions as enshrined in Article 14 of the Constitution.

The critical point in all this, of course, will be the response of the executive. There can be no doubt that starting with the decision by a Congress government to not appeal a fateful district court judgment to open the disputed site (locked by the government since 1949) to inadequate security arrangements when *kar sevaks* gathered in Ayodhya to demolish the mosque to serial communal riots, successive political executives have failed to ensure law and order. It is imperative that irrespective of its agenda, the current regime should now listen to what the Supreme Court says. In a statement on Wednesday to a local language newspaper, Home Minister Amit Shah has said that everyone would have to accept the court's verdict. That, for the moment, should be considered a sign of hope.

ILLUSTRATION: BINAY SINHA



The ever-changing meaning of violence

Depending on the community involved, violence is classified differently in India and given different names

A riot is defined as a violent disturbance of the peace by a crowd. The word is understood elsewhere to mean the fury of society against the state. For example, the Paris riot in 1968, which began with student protests against imperialism and capitalism. Or the Los Angeles riot of 1992, following the acquittal of the police officers who assaulted Rodney King.

In 2011, after the fatal police shooting of a man named Mark Duggan, there were riots in cities across England in which five were killed and 3,000 arrested.

This word does not capture the meaning of a riot as it is understood in India, that of organised violence against citizens by other citizens. During an episode of such violence, the state steps aside and allows, till it naturally cools down, the passion of the majority to reveal itself as arson, rape, loot and murder. Elements of the state often actively participate in the violence, feeling the same strong emotions as the mob it is meant to subdue.

Even the best governed states do not appear to have the capacity to control the damage and our most competent chief ministers have failed on this count. It is also true that the violence is justified in the minds of many, including those

who lead the state.

In an interview with *The Indian Express* published on September 16, the chief minister of Uttar Pradesh was asked: "The Muzaffarnagar riots took place under the last government but of the 44 cases decided, there has been acquittal in 43 cases. Why isn't your government filing appeals?"

The chief minister replied: "The charge sheets in the Muzaffarnagar cases were filed by the previous government. The (riots) were the result of biased policies and failure of that government under which the whole society was differentiated on the basis of caste, belief and religion. There is nothing like that in our government. On the question of appeal, we will do that if needed. If there is no need, why should we unnecessarily intervene in the matter of the court?"

The root of such violence is an underlying sentiment existing perennially in a large part of our society, and kept stoked through politics. An external trigger then sets it afire: An assassination in 1984, an act of vandalism in 1992 or an incident on a train in 2002.

The other difference between the riot abroad and the riot here is that of spontaneity. The riots referred to in the instances above were not anticipated. In



AAKAR PATEL

Industrial growth could flounder on water

We continue to disregard the fact that water is India's most important and completely unreformed infrastructure sector. Lack of water could become a key constraint to sustained industrial growth in India. Over the last decade, industrial shutdowns due to water shortages have become increasingly common. Thermal power plants take up the highest proportion of industrial water used in India. According to the World Resources Institute, India lost about 14 terawatt-hours of thermal power due to water shortages in 2016, cancelling out more than 20 per cent of growth in total electricity generation since 2015. During 2013-16, water scarcity forced at least one shutdown for 14 of India's 20 largest thermal power plants, which lost more than \$1.4 billion in potential revenue. Grasim Industries started reducing production of staple fibre at its plant in Nagda, Madhya Pradesh, in 2012. In 2016, the Rashtriya Ispat Nigam, had to operate on reduced capacity due to a severe water crisis.

At the same time, conflicts with farmers are intensifying in several locations. Following protests in 2014, Coca Cola scrapped a planned expansion of its plant near Varanasi in Uttar Pradesh. In 2015, a petition was filed with the National Green Tribunal against Bajaj Energy's power plant at Burogaon, Uttar Pradesh, for unlawfully using water from an irrigation dam. Earlier this year, the US Supreme Court overturned a lower court's ruling and revived a 2015 lawsuit by fishermen and farmers negatively impacted by the Tata Power's Mundra plant in Gujarat. Since 40 per cent of our 399 thermal power plants are located in water-stressed areas, they have repeatedly got into conflicts with farmers, especially in Maharashtra and Rajasthan.

It is undeniable that Indian industry has among the highest water footprints in the world, both because it is excessively dependent on fresh water and because it tends to dump its untreated waste into rivers and groundwater. The good news is that the water footprint can be dramatically reduced through technologies and investments, which have a short payback period. The best example is thermal power. The overwhelming

water-use in these plants is in their cooling towers and nearly 90 per cent of India's thermal power generation uses fresh water for this purpose. It has been estimated that by converting all thermal power plants in India from once-through open-loop to closed-cycle cooling systems using recycled water, about 65,000 million litres per day of fresh water can be saved. A large quantity of water is also consumed in the ash-handling process. Ash residue is converted to slurry using fresh water and transported to nearby dykes for disposal, leading to massive wastewater discharge. Recapturing and recycling this water has a significant potential for water savings. The payback period for investments in these wastewater treatment and recycling systems is usually not more than three years. A growing market for treated wastewater is an additional incentive.

Thus, alternatives exist and are easily available and affordable. Why are they still not being widely used? Once again it is a matter of what has been incentivised by policy. Since there is no regular water audit of the industrial sector and water is easily — and almost freely — available, its misuse is rampant. A recent study finds that India's thermal power plants are consuming excessive amounts of water, in many cases beyond permissible limits, set by the Union Ministry of Environment.

Government needs to make comprehensive water audits a recurring feature of industrial activity so that we know current water use, monitor changes and work out the most cost-effective basket of water-efficient technologies and processes to reduce water demand and increase industrial value added per unit of water consumed. In their annual reports, companies must provide a statement of their water footprint for the year. This should include activity-wise volume of fresh water used and the volume of water that was reused or recycled in each line of production. This must include beyond-the-fence upstream and downstream water-use in their total supply chain.

There must also be a commitment with a clear road map and timeline that a company will reduce its water footprint by a definite amount within a specified period.



MIHIR SHAH

Simultaneously, we must develop benchmarks for water-use in each activity to enable transparent target-setting. The starting point could be large units in water-intensive industries such as thermal power, paper and pulp, textiles, food, leather (tanning), metal (surface treatment), chemical, pharmaceutical, oil, gas and mining. A few of our best companies, in both the public and private sector, are already showing the way forward in this regard.

Such water audits would also help identify training requirements and the most effective way of achieving behavioural change. Water saving is best delivered when both behavioural and technological changes are simultaneously adopted. In order to more credibly move industry along this path, central and state governments need to set an example by undertaking water audits in their own premises and setting targets for reducing water use.

Government must also facilitate setting up of knowledge institutions that would provide information on industry-specific good practices in wise water use; undertake to develop expertise in water audits and water-use advisory services; provide details of exemplar case studies that are relevant to the different industrial sectors operating in India; and provide a gateway for accessing information about water-saving and water efficient technologies in rain-water harvesting, recycling and reuse, water conserving devices and support to help behaviour change.

Once such systems are in place, there is enough experience from across the world to show that significant economies can be effected in water use. Reported water savings range from 15-90 per cent of current water use, depending on the industrial sub-sector considered, the individual process investigated or the combination of water-saving measures analysed, with the most common figures being within the 30-70 per cent range.

Given the emerging scenario of industrial shutdowns and water conflicts, compliance with these reforms should be voluntary, based on the enlightened self-interest of each company. Government just needs to actively facilitate and enable such change.

The writer is Distinguished Professor, Shiv Nadar University and former Member, Planning Commission, Government of India

The IAS de-constructed



BOOK REVIEW

A K BHATTACHARYA

This book is highly recommended for those who aspire to be civil servants. Coming from an author who served as an Indian Administrative Service (IAS) officer with distinction but quit perhaps realising the limitations of this premier all-India service, the book provides an authoritative account of what an IAS aspirant needs to focus on and the notions she should disabuse herself of.

The easy style, often fun-filled and peppered with self-deprecating humour, makes the book eminently readable. The author provides a theoretical basis to why the IAS

has failed to deliver on its promise of providing better governance and why it is caught in its own trap of red-tapism. You may not always agree with him. But it is a perspective that comes from his vast experience and solid research. More importantly, he achieves all this without sounding bitter, didactic, dreary or pessimistic.

Equally notable is the author's ability to laugh at the IAS and its system that is stuck in a time warp. This, however, may not be enough to cushion the hard blow dealt by his trenchant criticism to the spirit of the civil service aspirant. The book picks many holes in India's governance structure, largely managed by the IAS, and yet its criticism has an optimistic touch. That delicate balance has been achieved by the author right through and enhances the book's credibility.

You don't give it up mid-way as a rant from a former IAS officer, who gave up service before finding the holy grail of becoming a secretary in the Union government,

after being slotted in a "selection" grade and later being "empanelled" to become a joint secretary at the Centre. Mr Raghunandan also makes a valid observation on how the IAS system does not encourage officers to become specialists, preferring generalists but he hopes this would change soon. There is, thus, plenty of criticism, but each of the nine chapters also provides a road map for improving the system.

From tips on how to deal with files to those on managing postings and transfers, securing promotions and to building leadership skills, the author also offers hope and promise that all is not lost for the IAS. Thus, it presents the tedious prospect of a young IAS officer deciphering the nitty-gritty of leafing through files with colourful stickers serving as pointers. It lists out the many tricks an IAS aspirant should learn quickly to beat the examination system that has been put in place to filter out the wheat from the chaff. In the end, the reader will be sad to learn of the deep problems from which the service suffers. But in the process, he will also be wiser about dealing with the challenges.

The depth of the book's analysis of what ails the IAS becomes evident when it discusses two specific issues of governance. The two issues pertain to the manner in which the IAS structure refused to empower the local tier of governance in spite of Constitutional amendments and the IAS' inability to create a more practical and contemporary framework for securing honest and corruption-free behaviour from civil servants.

Both issues have been analysed on the basis of recent research and Mr Raghunandan's experience. He shows how the government's laudable goals of decentralising governance failed to grow roots because of the collective refusal of the IAS network to make itself less powerful and share power with officials in lower rungs of governance.

What is not entirely clear, however, is why the political class did not force that devolution of power or decentralisation in spite of its commitment to that idea and the obvious gains it would have seen for its local leaders. This analysis may appear simplistic, but it does rightly highlight the basic reason the dream of an empowered third

tier of governance was shattered.

The second issue Mr Raghunandan raises is the need for a more holistic approach to corruption and ethics among civil servants. His thesis that ethical conduct and corruption are not simplified lessons in morality, but they exist in a broader context of society and governance goals. An upright officer whose rudeness becomes a barrier to smooth and easy communication to the people or beneficiaries may not help the administration become more effective. The author believes that younger civil servants are relatively more conscious of the multi-layered concepts of ethical conduct and honesty. Hopefully, senior civil servants and the political establishment would heed to this advice too and introduce changes in norms that should determine the conduct of an IAS officer.

This review will not be complete if adequate praise is not showered on the Afterword section, written by the author's elder sister, Renuka Vishwanathan, also an IAS officer and who was known for her ability to fight against deep prejudices against women in the civil service. Not

surprisingly, she recalls how Gopi Arora, then finance secretary, had wondered if she would be able to work in a division in the finance ministry and oversee the government's policy response on the economy, which then required 24-hour monitoring. She writes that she finally got that job and discharged her responsibilities, hopefully without having Arora to regret his decision.

Mr Raghunandan rues the fact Ms Vishwanathan exceeded her brief of only focusing on the state of women in the civil service. But this book is even more rich because of her crystal-clear analysis of how the IAS is no longer a meritocracy, how the bureaucracy is not a democrat and how the bureaucracy can improve itself manifold with better skilling and more appropriate use of technology.

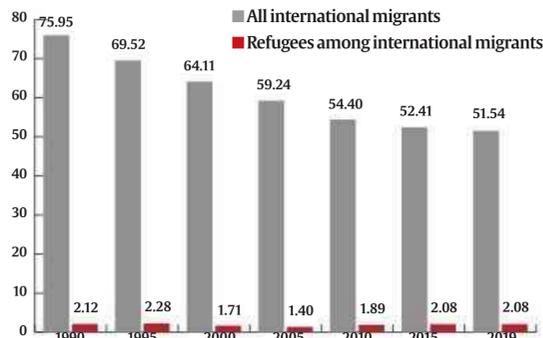
EVERYTHING YOU EVER WANTED TO KNOW ABOUT BUREAUCRACY BUT WERE AFRAID TO ASK

T R Raghunandan
Penguin, 310 pages, ₹399

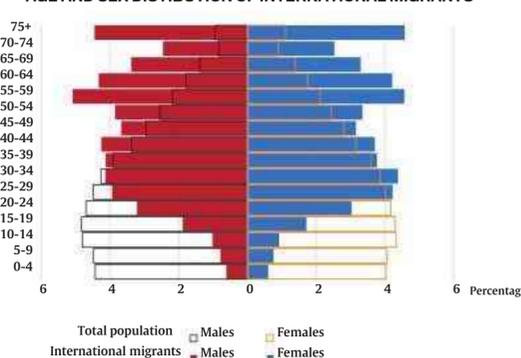
TELLING NUMBERS

International migrant count slopes downward in India

INTERNATIONAL MIGRANTS AND REFUGEES IN INDIA (IN LAKH)



AGE AND SEX DISTRIBUTION OF INTERNATIONAL MIGRANTS



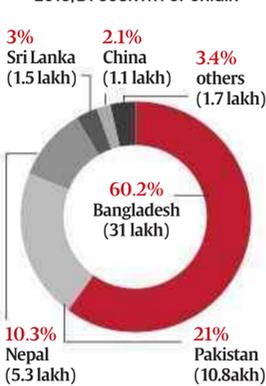
ON WEDNESDAY, the UN Population Division released the dataset International Migrant Stock 2019. While the size of the Indian diaspora in other countries was reported in *The Indian Express* on Thursday, the exhaustive dataset also showed striking trends in international migration into India. The number has been consistently going down in the last three decades; from 75.9 lakh in 1990, the international migrant population is 51.5 lakh in 2019, the dataset showed.

The United Nations said in a statement that these estimates were based on official national statistics of foreign populations gathered from censuses. "These numbers reflect any person who is moving or has moved across an international border, regardless of citizenship status or motive — meaning the data encompass people who have moved either intentionally or involuntarily," it said.

The 51,54,737 international migrants in 2019 represent just 0.4 per cent of the total population of India. In contrast, the international migrant population across all countries is 27.2 crore, who represent 3.5 per cent of the total global population. Of these 27.2 crore, 1.75 crore are Indian migrants living in various countries.

Of the international migrants in India in 2019, the country of origin for 31 lakh — or just over 60 per cent — was Bangladesh. Another 21 per cent were originally from Pakistan and 10

INTERNATIONAL MIGRANTS IN INDIA, 2019, BY COUNTRY OF ORIGIN



Source: All graphics based on data from International Migrant Stock 2019, UN

per cent from Nepal. The proportion of refugees among the international migrants has varied over the years. While the actual count is down from 2.12 lakh in 1990 to 2.08 lakh in 2019, their proportion among all international migrants has increased, from 2.8 per cent in 1990 to 4 per cent in 2019.

The proportion of women among international migrants in India, at 48.8 per cent, is higher than the 47.9 per cent proportion of women among international migrants across countries.

SIMPLY PUT QUESTION & ANSWER

On UNGA side, a climate meet

PM will attend Monday's high-profile special summit aimed at identifying concrete and urgent solutions, but India has said it is already doing its best — UN Secy Gen's new asks should be for developed nations

AMITABH SINHA
 PUNE, SEPTEMBER 19

UN SECRETARY General António Guterres has convened a special Climate Action Summit on Monday, at the start of the annual General Assembly session, in a bid to nudge countries to do more to fight climate change. He has told world leaders to come with 'concrete' and 'realistic' proposals to enhance the actions that they are already taking.

While Prime Minister Narendra Modi is among several leaders due to attend the Secretary-General's meeting, India has already said it was in no position to upgrade its climate action plan. Instead, it has reminded the developed world that they have been woefully short of fulfilling their obligation of providing money and technology to developing countries to help them deal with the impacts of climate change.

Why a special summit?

This is not the first time that a special meeting on climate change is taking place on the sidelines of the General Assembly session. A similar meeting happened last year. But this year, the meeting has a bigger profile, with close to 60 heads of state or government, including France's President Emmanuel Macron, German Chancellor Angela Merkel, and British Prime Minister Boris Johnson, likely to attend.

But what makes this meeting different from earlier efforts is the intention of the Secretary-General not to let this become another talk shop. Bring concrete plans, not speeches, Guterres is reported to have told the world leaders in a letter inviting them for the meeting. More specifically, he has asked countries to bring their action plans in line with the objective of reducing global greenhouse gas emissions by 45 per cent by 2030, and to "net zero" by 2050. In addition, he has also identified nine areas in which he would like the countries to do more.

What are the climate action plans he is talking about?

Under the 2015 Paris Agreement, every signatory nation is supposed to finalise and submit a set of time-bound actions that it would take to combat climate change. The first set of action plans, called nationally determined contributions or NDCs, was submitted in 2015. The Paris Agreement also says that the NDCs should be updated every five years, with each subsequent NDC being stronger and more ambitious than the previous one.



Swedish climate activist Greta Thunberg, 16, at a demonstration at the US Supreme Court Thursday. She has taken part and is set to take part in a series of events, including speaking in US Congress, a climate strike, and the UN Climate Action Summit. Reuters

As per the five-year cycle, countries have to submit their second NDCs by next year. But the Secretary-General is asking the countries to make specific additional commitments at Monday's meeting. In addition, he has also appealed to the countries to promise not to set up any new coal plants after 2020, stop subsidies on fossil fuels, and levy additional taxes on polluters. Importantly, he has asked all countries to commit to net zero emissions by 2050.

Why has India refused?

India has said its NDC already represents its "best effort", keeping in mind its development imperatives. In a discussion paper released earlier this week, the government said the "new asks" from the Secretary-General, "in particular net zero emissions, mean a sweeping change across the entire economy". It has said this target should be kept only for developed countries.

"This can be a global aspirational goal and developed countries must be on track to take measures and legislate for net zero emissions by 2050. But it cannot be a goal for developing countries as the technologies have not progressed and aren't all available yet for developing countries. And the past performance on both finance and technology front is just not reassuring for them," it has said.

In the discussion paper, India has repeatedly

called out the developed world for their failure to provide adequate finance and technology to developing countries. It has pointed out that the finance needs specified by the developing countries in their NDCs in 2015 adds up to \$4.4 trillion. India alone requires \$206 billion by 2030 to implement only the adaptation programmes in agriculture, forestry, water resources, and infrastructure. The total cost of carrying out all the promised actions in the NDCs would cost \$2.5 trillion by 2030.

What the developed countries have made available is meagre in comparison. Developed countries have promised to mobilise at least \$100 billion every year from 2020 for the developing countries. But even on that count, they are way behind the target as of now.

"As per latest data available of Climate Funds Update, the actual pledges from developed to developing countries for climate finance is around only \$30 billion, whereas deposits and approval are around \$26 billion and \$19 billion respectively," India has said.

It has said any call for climate actions at this stage "should be set in motion a serious discourse on climate finance required to take climate actions effectively".

India has said while it will continue to "do its best" on climate actions, it would not commit to any long-term goal, like a net-zero emission target for 2050, at this stage. Under

the Paris Agreement, countries are supposed to undertake a stock-take of their actions in 2023 to see whether these were in line with the objective of keeping the global rise in temperature to below 2°C from the pre-industrial times.

"Given this, India will be better placed to consider a mid-term assessment of its actions and suitably recalibrate through re-examination and improvement when the global stock-take takes place in 2023. For the present, India may only be in a position to elaborate or clarify its post 2020 climate actions already pledged in its NDC," it has said.

So, what is expected to come out of Monday's meeting then?

A new UN report just ahead of Monday's meeting says at least 112 countries had expressed their intent to revise their NDCs, with 75 of them promising to enhance its ambition. The other 37 have proposed to bring more data and information in their NDCs. In addition, at least 53 countries had said they were working to finalise long-term strategies, like a net-zero goal by 2050. Only 14 countries, together accounting for 26 per cent of global emissions, had categorically said they would not revise their NDCs.

Many countries are likely to make these announcements at Monday's meeting.

How a 65-year-old maths problem was solved

An algorithm, a supercomputer, 2 mathematicians, unused power from 5 lakh home PCs: for 'fun and philosophy'

KABIR FIRAQUE
 NEW DELHI, SEPTEMBER 19

TAKE THE number 9. It can be expressed as the sum of 0, 1 and 8, which are respectively the cubes of 0, 1 and 2. Or take 17, which is 1 + 8 + 8, or the sum of the cubes of 1, 2 and 2. How many other numbers from 1 to 100 can be expressed as the sum of the cubes of three integers (whole numbers, positive or negative)?

This is a puzzle with its roots in 1954-55, when it was described by University of Cambridge mathematicians. It is not as easy as it may look. While 9 and 17 provide solutions with positive cubes, some numbers require negatives. For example, 11 is 27 - 8 - 8, which can be expressed as (-8) + (-8) + 27, or the sum of the cubes of -2, -2, and 3. Other numbers can be much trickier, requiring large cubes that include negatives. Such as 51, which is the sum of the cubes of -796, 602 and 659,

or (-504,358,336) + 218,167,208 + 286,191,179. As it turns out, not every number has a solution. During their search for solutions, mathematicians have deduced a rule showing that certain numbers cannot be expressed as the sum of three cubes. For the numbers that do not come under this rule, they kept looking for solutions, and found them one by one.

Just two solutions were proving elusive — for 33 and 42. In March this year, a solution was finally found for 33. This month, the same mathematician teamed up with another to find a solution for 42, putting the problem finally to rest.

The point of it all, if any

Why should it matter whether we can or cannot express a certain number as the sum of three cubes? "Mostly it's just a bit of fun," said Andrew Booker of the University of Bristol, the mathematician who worked on the solutions for both 33 and 42. "More seri-

ously," Booker added in his email to *The Indian Express*, "as number theorists, our interest in this sort of problem borders on philosophical, along the lines of 'Is it even possible to solve this problem?'"

There are many mathematical problems that are easy to state but hard to solve; it has also been discovered that there are problems that are actually impossible to solve.

In March, the journal *Research in Number Theory* published Booker's solution for 33 as the sum of three cubes, which he had found using a computer algorithm. Now, Booker and another mathematician, Andrew Sutherland of the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, have used the same algorithm to solve for 42.

Tough search and discovery

Some numbers can be expressed as the sum of three cubes in more than one way. For example, 10 is 1 + 1 + 8 (the cubes of 1, 1 and 2) and also 64 - 27 - 27 (the cubes of 4, -3, -3).

For any integer, there is a conjectural formula for the average density of the solutions, Booker said. "For 33 and 42 that density is particularly low," he said.

Booker spent weeks on a supercomputer before he found an answer for 33. For 42, Booker and Sutherland used Charity Engine, a crowdsourced platform that harnesses unused computing power from over 500,000 home PCs. It needed over a million hours of pooled computing, which translated into much less in real time. "We had some teething problems with getting the code up and running on their network, but once we got going it took less than a week to find the solution," Booker said.

The number 42 is the sum of the cubes of (i) 12,602,123,297,335,631; (ii) 80,435,758,145,817,515; and (iii) minus 80,538,738,812,075,974. And 33 is the sum of the cubes of (i) 8,866,128,975,287,528; (ii) minus 8,778,405,442,862,239; and (iii) minus 2,736,111,468,807,040.

Brick by brick, how a municipality, govt, builders created a crisis in Kochi

SHAJU PHILIP
 KOCHI, SEPTEMBER 19

ON MONDAY, Kerala's Maradu municipality will report to the Supreme Court on its compliance with the court's order, passed on May 8, to demolish four posh apartment complexes that have come up close to the backwaters of Kochi in violation of Coastal Regulatory Zone (CRZ) rules.

But around 350 families who live in the apartments have refused to leave, giving up their homes and investments that are estimated to add up to Rs 350 crore.

Flats, builders, residents

The apartments are on the banks of canals that are part of the network of backwaters in Kochi's highly developed Maradu suburb. The Jain Coral Cove complex was built by Jain Housing and Constructions; the twin towers of Holy Faith H2O by Holy Faith Builders; the Golden Kayaloram complex by KP Varkey and VS Builders; and Alfa Serene by Alfa Ventures. Together, these complexes

have 343 dwelling units. Residents include filmmakers, businessmen, professionals, as well as elderly retirees. Members of this roughly 1,500-strong community have been living in the apartments for up to eight years.

2005-07: Early problems

In 2005-06, the then CPM-controlled Maradu panchayat (it became a municipality in 2010) issued five permits to build apartment complexes. No construction took place on one of these permits.

As per directives issued by the Kerala Coastal Zone Management Authority (KCZMA) and the state Science and Technology Department in 2005, self-government bodies were required to obtain the Authority's clearance for construction in coastal areas. However, then Maradu panchayat secretary M Ashraf failed to forward the applications for the permits to KCZMA for CRZ clearance.

The vigilance wing of the Town Planning Department subsequently stumbled upon anomalies in 31 building permits, including the ones issued to the real estate devel-

opers. The state's Local Self Government Department asked for the revocation of the permits and, in May 2007, the Maradu panchayat issued notices to all the builders.

Case in the High Court

After all four builders moved the Kerala High Court against the Maradu panchayat notices, a Single Judge Bench issued an interim order staying all action by the panchayat, including existing 'stop' memos issued to the builders. The interim order gave the panchayat liberty to issue fresh 'stop' memos that would be legally tenable — however, neither the Maradu local body nor the KCZMA did anything.

The builders grabbed this opportunity to complete the construction, and then moved court to have the buildings numbered by the local body. Apartments started selling, their buyers confident that all issues would be sorted out ultimately.

In 2013, when the flats were already occupied, Maradu municipality appealed the 2007 Single Bench order, alleging anomalies in the building permits, including violations

of CRZ norms. The KCZMA joined the case.

But the Division Bench gave them no relief, and instead blasted the municipality and its secretary. In its June 2, 2015 order, the court said that if the local authority had failed to comply with the KCZMA's directives on the local authority's obligations while processing applications for the permits, the permit-holders couldn't be held responsible.

"We must record our anguish about the manner in which the Maradu municipality and its secretary had conducted themselves. They were merely issuing permits and allowing the builders to proceed with the constructions. After substantial progress was made, the municipality had become suddenly wiser on receipt of a letter from the government. Therefore, this is a situation which has been created by the municipality itself and the entire blame for this should be accepted by them," the Division Bench said.

Appeal in Supreme Court

In 2016, the KCZMA moved a special leave petition in the Supreme Court against the Maradu municipality. It said that the

area is part of a tidally influenced water body, a critically vulnerable coastal area where construction is strictly restricted, and that the permissions were given in violation of statutory provisions.

The Supreme Court, after hearing KCZMA and Maradu municipality, said no finding had been recorded either by the Single Bench or the Division Bench on whether the area was in CRZ Category-III, II, or I. On November 27 last year, the court formed a three-member committee to ascertain whether the areas where the buildings stood were in CRZ-III or in other categories. The only question was whether the area falls in CRZ-III, the court said.

The committee, comprising a government secretary, the Ernakulam district collector, and the Maradu municipality secretary, said in its report that the currently applicable Kerala Coastal Zone Management Plan was approved in 1996, in which Marad was a panchayat area, and hence in CRZ-III category. But since the panchayat was upgraded to a municipality in 2010, the area was shown in CRZ-II category

in the draft CZMP prepared as per the CRZ Notification 2011, and submitted to the Union Ministry of Environment and Forests. Until the government approves the CZMP draft, the CZMP of 1996 would remain valid.

What builders say

According to the builders, as Maradu municipality falls under CRZ-II as per the CZMP approved earlier this year, the buildings are in compliance with CRZ norms as of today. They have said that Marad panchayat had passed resolutions thrice before 2010 against CRZ-III categorisation, and had asked the Authority for a correction.

The builders had banked on earlier verdicts related to CRZ violations, in which the courts had generally favoured them. In 2003, while considering a petition against Lakeshore Hospital on the banks of a canal in Maradu, the High Court had said it was "at a loss to understand how this rule (CRZ) could be pressed into service". The government, too, had told the court that the CZMP had been incorrectly prepared, and that a fresh one would be issued.



SMOKING IS INDISPENSABLE IF ONE HAS NOTHING TO KISS.
— SIGMUND FREUD

The Indian EXPRESS

FOUNDED BY
RAMNATH GOENKA

BECAUSE THE TRUTH INVOLVES US ALL

TAXING TIMES

Sluggish tax collections are likely to upset spending plans. Government needs to explore other ways to shore up revenues

ASLOWING ECONOMY has taken its toll on the government's tax revenues. Advance tax collections have grown by a mere 6 per cent between April to mid-September this year, as against a growth of 18 per cent over the same period last year. Within direct taxes, corporate tax collections have grown by just 6.5 per cent over the period, while personal income taxes have grown by a mere 3.5 per cent over this period, lower than even the nominal GDP growth of 8 per cent in the first quarter of 2019-20. With direct tax collections now having to more than double over the next six-odd months to meet the budgeted target of Rs 13.35 lakh crore, a slowing economy will exacerbate the situation: The Centre will find it difficult to meet the fiscal deficit target of 3.3 per cent of the GDP this year.

There is concern on the indirect tax side too. A slowdown in consumption — private consumption grew by just 3.1 per cent in the first quarter of 2019-20 down from 7.2 per cent in the previous quarter — will further drag down the goods and services tax (GST) collections. By some estimates, the required monthly run-rate for GST collections has already jumped to around Rs 1.18 lakh crore per month for the rest of 2020. Achieving this, with consumption sputtering, will be challenging. But it isn't just the Centre alone. State finances will also be under pressure this year. First, subdued tax revenues mean that the divisible tax pool, 42 per cent of which is shared with states, will be lower than what has been budgeted for, reducing tax devolution to states. Second, last year, devolution to states was carried out on the basis of the revised revenue estimates of 2018-19 presented in the Budget. But actual tax collections, as per the Controller General of Accounts, were significantly lower. This implies that devolution to states last year may have been higher than what was required. It is possible that this adjustment is being undertaken in the current financial year which will further reduce tax devolution. Then, there are also concerns that revenue collected through the compensation cess may not be enough to compensate states this year.

Part of the shortfall in the Centre's tax revenue this year will be made up by the RBI transferring Rs 58,000 crore more than what was budgeted for. But this alone may not be enough. One option before the Centre is to ramp up its stake sales in PSUs. While the government has budgeted to collect Rs 1.05 lakh crore through disinvestment this year, it could opt for a more aggressive disinvestment/privatisation programme to alleviate fiscal concerns, while generating resources to ramp up its capital expenditure.

VAPOURISED

Ban on e-cigarettes smacks of hypocrisy and an arbitrary exercise of executive authority

SMOKING IS INJURIOUS to health, and the use of tobacco products has been linked to a host of diseases, including various cancers and cardiovascular ailments. According to WHO, tobacco causes over 10 million deaths annually in India. In the US, the figure stands at 4,80,000. "Vaping", or the use of e-cigarettes (called ENDS or Electronic Nicotine Delivery Systems), has resulted so far in seven confirmed deaths in the US. Cigarettes, chewing tobacco and related products continue to be legal in India, and through being heavily taxed as well as via the government's stake in domestic tobacco giants, significantly add to the earnings of the exchequer. However, on Wednesday, the Union government announced an ordinance banning ENDS. In terms of first principles as well the purported concern for citizens' health, the ban on e-cigarettes smacks of hypocrisy and an arbitrary exercise of executive authority.

The Promulgation of the Prohibition of Electronic Cigarettes Ordinance provides for imprisonment of up to one year and/or fines up to Rs 1 lakh for the first offence, imprisonment of up to three years and a fine up to Rs 5 lakh for a subsequent offence. Those possessing ENDS must suo motu turn them over at the local police station, else face the harsh consequences of the executive decree. Meanwhile, the tobacco industry has welcomed the move and share prices of ITC and VST Industries registered a sharp increase in the wake of the ban. In the worst-case scenario, vaping will be as bad as smoking. And like cigarettes, ENDS must be regulated, come with health warnings, not be sold to minors, etc. Like other "sin goods", they can be taxed to the point of disincentivising their use. By banning ENDS and maintaining the status quo on tobacco products, the government is in danger of giving the impression that it is protecting the tobacco industry's interests against a disruptor in that market.

The e-cigarette ban is a symptom of a larger malaise — governing by the brute force of a hammer when the subtlety of a scalpel is required. "Vaping" is as much a social and cultural phenomenon as it is a public health issue. For older smokers, it can offer a path to quitting and for the youth, it can be aspirational. That the Centre has refused even to engage with this aspect, and, instead moved to push vaping underground by banning it shows laziness in engaging with a complex problem. Prohibition does not work. A conversation about the reasons for addiction just might.

PULP HORROR

Shyam Ramsay, who headed up the Ramsay Brothers, bows out of a world that is stranger than any potboiler

JUST A YEAR after the world discovered moving pictures, and audiences flung themselves out of the way of the Lumière brothers' train, it discovered horror in George Melies' *The House of the Devil* (1896). About 90 years later, the genre came to Indian audiences through the goregrinding work of the Ramsay Brothers. The death of Shyam Ramsay, who headlined the productions of the seven Ramsay brothers, brings down the curtain on that era, when audiences thrilled to horror that was anything but sophisticated and thought-provoking.

The Ramsays did cheap and wholly satisfying productions focused on gore, tears, adrenaline and other bodily fluids. They were following the great tradition of pulp horror, which was one of the mainstays of Hollywood from the time of Lon Chaney. Its thread leans towards Cthulhu, zombie apocalypse and House of Wax, and diverges from the rather more cerebral line of *Nosferatu* and *Frankenstein*. Pure entertainment, it does not tax the little grey cells and was the rage for decades in American cinema before the Ramsay Brothers got in on the act.

It is believed that horror flourishes in good times, when people enjoy being reminded of the dark side. But humanity's appetite for the macabre is actually a reflection of reality. One of the pictures running to full houses in Delhi during the 1984 "riots" was James Cameron's debut *Piranha II: Flying Killers* (tagline: "Now they can fly!"). Ramsay films like *Do Gaz Zameen ke Neeche* and *Darwaza* appeared in the Seventies, when India had its first brush with autocracy. American audiences during the Cold War had sublimated fears of invasion by embracing *Invasion of the Body Snatchers*. And now that reality everywhere is outstripping cinema for bizarre creativity, a new wave of horror may be imminent. The Ramsays, who started it all, will be missed.

The Hindi scare

Idea of one country, one language was bequeathed to us by colonialists



SOWMYA DECHAMMA

UNLIKE IN THE past when the Hindi Divas would go by rather uneventfully, the day got special attention this year. Tweeting in Hindi, Union Home Minister Amit Shah said: "Today, if one language can do the work of uniting the country, then it is the most spoken language, Hindi. There is so much influence of English on us that we cannot talk in Hindi without its help." The minister also said that people should realise that if languages are lost to foreign influence, "we will be severed from our culture".

Do we then assume that after 72 years of independence, the country is not united enough? What is it that divides India that the country needs a unifying factor that can only be a language? And does that language have to be Hindi?

For a country that often ascribes all its ills to colonialism, it is strange that India needs to subscribe to a very European notion — one country, one language. The idea that a language represents a nation is one of colonialism's gifts to us. The complex process of modern nation building in colonial countries involved questions of cultural unity. How could a country claim historical and cultural continuity, stretching back to centuries, other than through language, especially its written form? Language and literature held the key to this project of cultural continuity from a unique and great past. Almost all European nations had such projects, which they bequeathed to the nations they colonised. Despite having several languages and dialectal differences, European nations adopted their national languages through an elitist and exclusionary project. Today, this idea of linguistic unity is being contested from several quarters, including by immigrants from India. There are, of course, exceptions like Switzerland which has been a relatively stable country for long without ever having a single national language.

It is ironic that our animosity towards English makes us blind to the fact that English gave us the idea of a singular nation: One nation, one language. At no time in the history of the Subcontinent was there a need to showcase national unity through one lan-

guage or one culture until after colonialism.

The imposition of Mandarin, Russian or Urdu have rarely fulfilled all the aims of those who initiated such projects. Does Urdu unify Pakistan? All totalitarian regimes — communist, militarist, right-wing or even social-welfarist — seem to share an anxiety about plurality. For, that could lead to questions being asked from the powers that be. Plurality is chaos, while a unitary entity is controllable. Given this, should Hindi sustain the burden of the country's history, its people, and their contesting cultures? And can it do so?

To quote Shah again: "To preserve our ancient philosophy, our culture and the memory of our freedom struggle, it's important that we strengthen our local languages and that there is at least one language, Hindi, that the nation knows." What is our ancient philosophy and culture is matter for another debate. But is Hindi the carrier of such a history?

What exactly is "Hindi"? Modern standard Hindi evolved from the interaction of early speakers of Khari Boli with speakers of different languages from the northern part of the Subcontinent and elsewhere. Although the current push is for a standardised and Sanskritised Hindi, spoken Hindi has largely been influenced by Persian — and then English, among other languages. The history of Hindi is much more recent than many languages of India, say Tamil, Kannada, Telugu, and so on.

Why does such a recent and diverse history become so important today? What is so threatening about English? Is this only a sense of culture, a belonging, or does it also denote certain socio-economic and political asymmetries? Hindi, in relation to English, does denote several asymmetries. But then, so does Hindi in relation to more than 780 other Indian languages, especially a Sanskritised Hindi that cannot, and probably will not, get rid of its associations with caste. That is why most marginalised castes and indigenous communities of India prefer English, a language devoid of caste memory and a language that provides mobility.

While diversity is in itself important, we need to also talk about the knowledge sys-

tems that are steeped in every spoken language — one that has its own history, literature (oral or written), relationship with the local economy, with people's lives, the way they understand the world around them and the relationships with other languages around them. As American linguist, Nancy Dorian writes: "A good many people, especially those who speak unthreatened languages, are likely to have trouble imagining that they themselves could ever be brought to the point of giving up on their own ancestral language and encouraging their children to use some other language instead".

A multitude of languages means resistance, empowerment, many life-worlds, many knowledge systems and mobility. That is why all totalitarian regimes seek to erase such multitudes. Forget resistance, how can people speak in another tongue as fluently as a native speaker whose language also happens to be the national language? The first step towards autocracy is erasure of tongues, erasure of speech.

If English, as the cultural studies scholar Madhava Prasad argues, is a bane for a modern democracy — since a majority of Indians do not have access to it — can Hindi be a boon for democracy? Given the present government's policies — on education, language, pretty much everything — it is difficult to find democratic intent in its promotion of Hindi.

Tony Joseph, drawing from recent work in genetics, archaeology, and linguistics, points to how the Harappan Civilisation precedes the Sanskrit/Vedic culture. This means Sanskrit was never the language of Harappan Civilisation. There are pointers towards the undeciphered language of the Harappan Civilisation as being proto-Dravidian. Do we then declare the Dravidian language group — or one Dravidian language — as the national language? I vote for my language, Kodava.

The writer is currently a Fulbright Fellow at Queens College, City University of New York. She teaches comparative literature at the University of Hyderabad

FORGING TRADE ALLIANCES

Joining RCEP should be seen as an extension of New Delhi's Look East policy



ALOK BANSAL

THE REGIONAL COMPREHENSIVE Economic Partnership (RCEP) aims to bring the 10 countries of ASEAN with Australia, New Zealand, South Korea, India, China and Japan to create the world's largest trading block. If it comes into being, RCEP will constitute more than 40 per cent of the global population and almost half of world's economy. It consists of three of the six largest economies of the world, especially, the two fastest growing large economies — India and China. Out of the top 16 countries with the largest GDP, six belong to the proposed RCEP.

There is a huge debate in India over joining RCEP. India's allies in Southeast Asia, as well as Australia, want India to join it to balance China. On the other hand, many in India feel that RCEP will aggravate India's burgeoning trade deficit with China. The Indian industry feels that China does not provide a level playing field for items that they could export, especially in fields like pharmaceuticals, information technology, films, indigenous medicines, wellness and yoga. Some of these are founded on opacity that surrounds the Chinese government's decision making.

There is a tendency in Indian industry to seek protection, whenever any steps towards globalisation are taken. The "Bombay Club" long used for protectionism, protested when liberalisation was introduced and tried to prevent imports for as long as they could. However, it is an acknowledged fact that globalisation did benefit the Indian economy, it brought in newer technology and made

Indian industry far more competitive. RCEP does provide Indian industry a huge market to grow and expand, provided it transforms and the government frees it from bureaucratic controls that have been stifling growth.

There is a tendency amongst many in India to undermine the entrepreneurial skills of Indians. When import access was given to Chinese goods, it did not eliminate Indian industry. Of course, some industries which are uneconomical, have not modernised and imbibed new technologies will fall by the way side. More significantly, opening up markets and reducing tariffs will benefit consumers. The automobile, telecom and even IT boom would not have been feasible without liberalisation. Similarly, the recent spurt in solar power generation is directly a result of the availability of cheap imported solar films.

The apprehensions about China's non-tariff barriers are not unfounded. But, China's track record shows that it has scrupulously followed multilateral arrangements. By entering RCEP, India may be able to get greater market access to even China as it is vulnerable due to its ongoing trade war with the US. More significantly, with China facing the demographic crunch, India could easily edge it out, if we go for economies of scale, made feasible by a large trading block like RCEP.

India's presence in this trading block could lead to a large number of multinationals shifting their production facilities from China to India, as that would enable them to access Chinese markets, without being pres-

ent there, to comply with US sanctions. This could also bring in huge investments from many companies in the West.

With the Trans-Pacific Partnership having unraveled, it is quite feasible that a post-Trump US administration may join RCEP if it takes off. More significantly, RCEP is nothing but a natural follow up of India's Act East policy. India's main strength lies in the services sector and it must therefore, ensure that RCEP includes unbridled access for Indian service providers as well as a liberalised visa regime for people working in these fields. Similarly, protection will need to be ensured for some sensitive industries crucial for national security. Some temporary protection may be required for certain sectors of agriculture, crucial for food security. RCEP is one sure shot way of forcing China to provide a level playing field. India has the largest arable land and one of the largest pool of scientists, engineers, technicians, so there is no reason for India to be concerned.

This is also one way of controlling China and keeping it in check. In a big grouping like this, China is unlikely to have its way, nor is it going to antagonise everyone. India's absence from RCEP will virtually handover this significant grouping to China, which is certainly not in India's interest. RCEP is a huge opportunity which India should not miss.

The writer is director, India Foundation and adjunct professor at New Delhi Institute of Management (NDIM). Views are personal

SEPTEMBER 20, 1979, FORTY YEARS AGO

CONGRESS EXODUS

AN EXODUS FROM the Congress has begun in West Bengal, mainly in protest against the Bangalore AICC resolution accepting the leadership of Charan Singh and suggesting an electoral alliance with the CPM. While the North Calcutta District Committee led by Prafulla Kanti Ghosh has en bloc joined Congress (I), a large number of Congressmen have either resigned or are resigning from the party, although their next move is yet to be decided. Twenty influential leaders, including Gopaldas Nag, Bholanath Sen, Santosh Roy and DP Chattopadhyaya announced their resignation at a press conference. The Cooch Behar and the Central Calcutta DCCs have also

en masse resigned from the party. According to Roy, many other DCCs have conveyed their readiness to fall in line.

APOLITICAL RSS

RSS CHIEF BALASAHEB DEORAS reiterated in Indore that the RSS would never assume power because it believed in reforming society keeping itself aloof from politics. Talking to journalists, he declared that the RSS had no interest in elections. Its active participation in the 1977 election was an exception to help restore democracy and the Constitution. It could not be made a precedence. Addressing volunteers of the RSS, Deoras said that the word Hindu Rashtra had

been used in its wider sense indicating a geographical and cultural identity. The term "Hindu" depicted not only geographical but a specific cultural unit embracing every person living in India.

TARAKI ALIVE?

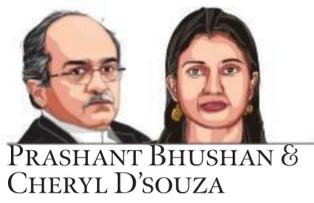
REPORTS OF THE former Afghan president, Nur Mohammed Taraki's death remained unconfirmed. One diplomatic source quoted a reliable Afghan informant in Kabul as saying that the 62-year-old poet-politician was still alive, the Associated Press said. Earlier, Radio Pakistan had said Taraki died from gunshot wounds received in a shootout on Friday at his official residence.



13 THE IDEAS PAGE

Courts of injustice

The fate of close to two million people excluded from the NRC in Assam rests with the Foreigners Tribunals. The constitutionality and conduct of these quasi-judicial bodies are questionable



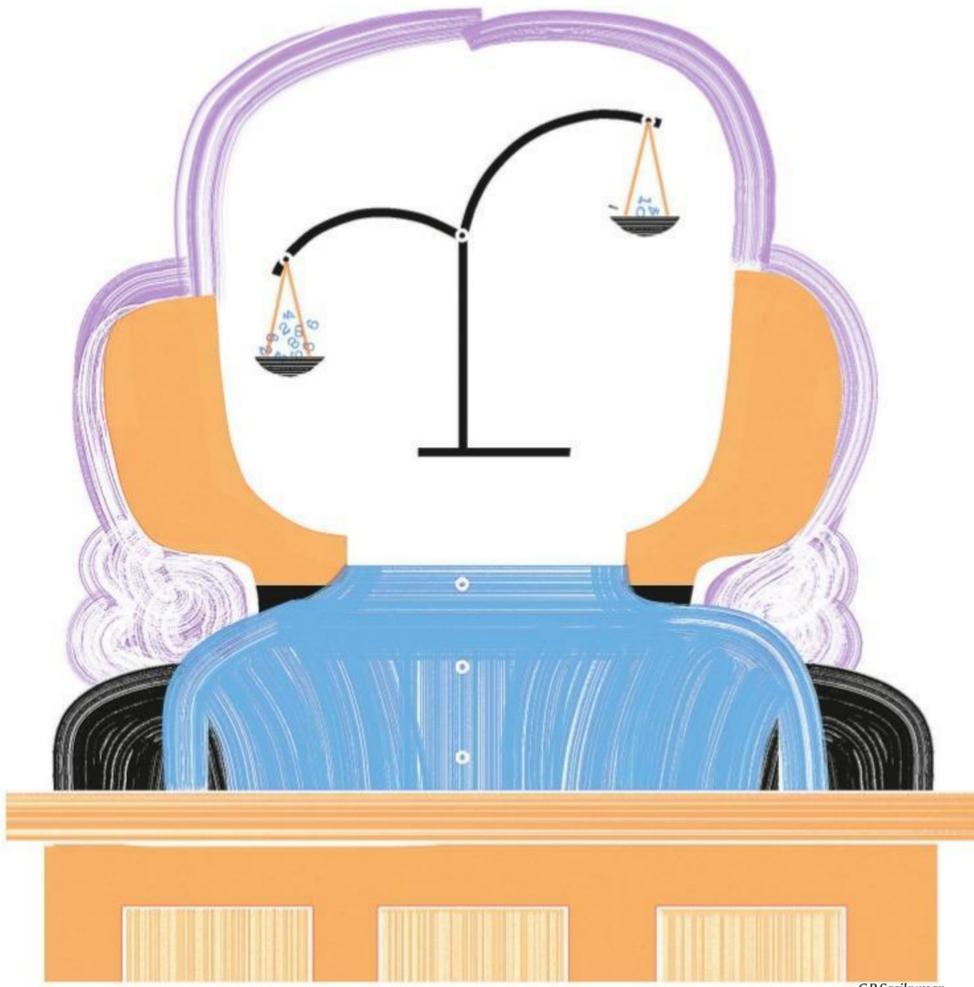
PRASHANT BHUSHAN & CHERYL D'SOUZA

OVER 1.9 MILLION people have been excluded from the final National Register of Citizens (NRC) in Assam. The herculean executive exercise, mandated and closely monitored by the Supreme Court, has incurred a staggering expenditure of over Rs 1,200 crore and immeasurable cost in terms of human suffering and death. The buck now passes to the Foreigners Tribunals. The fate of close to two million people who have been excluded from the NRC rests with these one-man tribunals. The constitutionality of these quasi-judicial bodies — from the appointment of its members, arbitrary procedure for its functioning and the nature of its orders — have always been in question. Yet, the numbers of these tribunals are being increased, from the existing 100 to more than 200, to adjudicate upon citizenship claims. The Supreme Court recently ruled that the order of the Foreigners Tribunals will prevail over the NRC order on citizenship and declined to create an appellate forum for appeal from the tribunals.

Foreigners Tribunals were set up by an executive order in 1964 in contravention of Article 323B of the Constitution, which requires the legislature, by law, to provide for adjudication of matters by tribunals. The matters that can be decided by the tribunal, listed within the Article, do not include citizenship. "Judicial experience" was an essential appointment criteria for its members, as stated in the 1964 order. However, the eligibility was relaxed in June 2019 by a notification, calling for applications from retired civil servants and advocates with just seven years of practice, to be appointed on a contractual basis, through an interview conducted by a panel of high court judges. Two hundred and twenty one members were recently appointed without any written test and no transparency in the selection process. The members of the tribunal are selected by the Gauhati High Court, but the appointment is done through the home and political department of the Assam government. The tenure of tribunal members and extension of their terms is based on a review of "performance" conducted by the Gauhati HC.

The minutes of the monitoring committee of the HC reveal that the government is also asked to send its appraisal of tribunal members to the court. The performance report of the government has a special column — "percentage of foreigners declared". Extension is often given to those who have declared the maximum number of persons as foreigners — the low scorers are "terminated". Pay and allowances of members is regulated by the government. "Impartiality is the soul of the judiciary, independence is the life blood of the judiciary", held a Constitution Bench in *UOI v R. Gandhi* (2010). In the absence of security of tenure and dependence on the government, these tribunals cannot function freely and impartially. There is no mechanism for receiving complaints against members of a tribunal, giving a free hand to such members to adjudicate, most often without any judicial experience, on citizenship — the right to all rights.

Apart from those excluded from the NRC, who now have to appeal in the Foreigners Tribunals within a period of 120 days, the Assam Border Police and the Election Commission refer cases to the tribunals. Inquiry reports submitted by Assam Border Police to the tribunal, while making a reference, are often blank. There are allegations that poor and unlettered are randomly picked up and, on non-production of citizen-



CR Sasikumar

ship documents, referred to the tribunals. Further, the Election Commission, since 1997, under the pretext of a "strict scrutiny" of the voter list, started an exercise that marked D or "doubtful" against any person in the list, arbitrarily, without any investigation. In the absence of investigation, even decorated army officers have been referred as illegal immigrants to the tribunals.

These tribunals have the power to regulate their own procedure for disposal of cases expeditiously. The section 3(1) of the Foreigners Tribunals Order requires that the tribunal shall serve on the person to whom the question relates, a copy of the main grounds on which he is alleged to be a foreigner. However, in practice, these are rarely mentioned in the notices issued by the tribunals. With no grounds to rebut and the burden of proof on the person alleged to be a foreigner, it becomes impossible to present a cogent case before the tribunal. Most of those declared foreigners by the tribunals are poor and do not have access to legal aid to represent them through the procedural spiral. If a person does not appear before the tribunal, either for lack of understanding of the notice issued or in the absence of any notice, such persons are declared as foreigner by an ex parte order. According to a question in the Lok Sabha in July this year, the minister of state in the Ministry of Home Affairs stated that as many as 63,959 persons have been declared foreigners through ex parte proceedings in Assam between 1985 and (February) 2019. The order of the tribunals can be challenged before a division bench of the Gauhati High Court in writ jurisdiction, most often distant and beyond the means of the poor.

Once a person is declared a foreigner, s/he can be detained under Section 4 of the Foreigners Act, 1946. There are close to 1,000 detainees in six detention centres across

Assam. Pending deportation, these persons languish in sub-human conditions with little or no access to legal aid or rights such as adequate healthcare and education. According to the government's own figures, only four such declared foreigners have been deported since February 2013. Since there is no agreement with Bangladesh to deport declared foreigners, their detention seemingly is indefinite.

Assam. Pending deportation, these persons languish in sub-human conditions with little or no access to legal aid or rights such as adequate healthcare and education. According to the government's own figures, only four such declared foreigners have been deported since February 2013. Since there is no agreement with Bangladesh to deport declared foreigners, their detention seemingly is indefinite.

Diversity, plurality and inclusivity form the bedrock of the Indian Constitution, which abhors systematic targeting of the minorities and xenophobia. Unfortunately, in *Sarbananda Sonowal* (2005), the Supreme Court itself laid the ground for xenophobia. Relying on unverified reports about the influx of foreigners, the apex court declared the Illegal Migrants (Determination by Tribunals) Act unconstitutional on the ground that it placed the burden of proving a person to be a foreigner on the state. These tribunals were manned by proper judges and the percentage of those declared foreigners was low. The Supreme Court declared that the Union had failed to protect the State of Assam against "external aggression" caused by the huge influx of illegal migrants from Bangladesh! This astounding judgment has since set the tone for all future proceedings under the Foreigners Act.

Bhushan and D'Souza are advocates at the Supreme Court of India

WHAT THE OTHERS SAY

"President Trump considers retaliation after the attack on Saudi oil facilities. But he has few options and fewer allies." — THE NEW YORK TIMES

For Boris, cues from Cameron

The former UK prime minister sought to build a partnership of equals with India. Brexit crisis must not overshadow those gains



JITESH GADHIA

THE PUBLICATION OF David Cameron's long-awaited memoirs could not have come at a more awkward time for the former British prime minister. Cameron bided his time for more than three years, hoping that the outcome of the 2016 Brexit referendum — which prompted his resignation — would be resolved. A Brexit settlement would have allowed a more sober and objective analysis of his six years as premier and 11 years as Conservative Party leader. Instead, the release date (planned many months ago) falls in the middle of the most serious political and constitutional crisis which the United Kingdom has faced since the Second World War.

Judging from the visceral reaction from many quarters, it currently feels like Cameron's legacy will forever be overshadowed by Brexit, in the same way as another former British PM, Anthony Eden, remains inextricably associated with the Suez Crisis.

As someone who had the privilege of working closely with Cameron, his efforts to build a modern partnership with India deserve more charitable treatment from historians. Throughout his tenure, Cameron did more than any other holder of his office to reach out proactively to India, as an emerging superpower, and to recognise the outsized contribution made by over 1.5 million members of the British Indian diaspora.

Cameron signalled his clear geopolitical priority from the outset, choosing India for his first major official visit overseas after his election in 2010. He visited India on three separate occasions during his premiership, often leading large trade delegations encompassing not just business interests but the whole spectrum of political, educational, scientific and cultural relations which connect the world's largest and oldest democracies. It is quite telling how, in over 700 pages, Cameron is almost more effusive about the importance of India than the historic special relationship with the US.

It is clear that Cameron had a more expansive world view and an appreciation of the rise of emerging economies, especially in Asia. Unlike the current Trumpian doctrine, which views global cooperation as a "zero sum game", he understood the opportunity of harnessing the aspirations of India's young population to build shared prosperity. Cameron was also sensitive to being "tinged with colonial guilt" and sought to build a genuine partnership of equals.

These intentions were backed up by appointing a Minister for Business Engagement with India, who worked across different government departments, and a diaspora champion in the form of Priti Patel MP, who is now Amit Shah's direct counterpart as Home Secretary serving in Boris Johnson's cabinet. Cameron describes the diaspora as the "greatest weapon" in the UK's engagement with India. Cultivating the British Indian community provided a double benefit — both political and diplomatic — and explains

why Cameron was a regular visitor to mandirs, gurdwaras and mosques. Indeed, his memoirs include a photograph with his wife Samantha, dressed in a shalwar kameez, celebrating Vaisakhi during the 2015 General Election campaign. This election also provided a British first: A campaign song in Hindi, which went viral on social media.

In November 2015, having won that election with an outright majority, Cameron went to great lengths to welcome Prime Minister Narendra Modi on his first official visit to the UK. During the visit, Modi addressed a rare joint session of the British Parliament, travelled up the River Thames lit up in the colours of the Indian flag, and was received in Downing Street, decorated in a festive display for Diwali. Modi was also a guest at the official country retreat of Chequers and served with specially prepared vegetarian food.

However, the high point was undoubtedly the event in front of a 60,000-strong crowd at Wembley Stadium, referenced in the memoirs as "the largest-ever gathering of the Indian diaspora in the UK" where Modi received a rousing reception. Cameron obliged with a strong endorsement of Modi, amplifying his election slogan in Hindi: "Achhe din zaroor aayenge" and was "hugged on stage". This cemented the personal chemistry, always important between world leaders. Even Manmohan Singh is mentioned in the book as a "saintly man" who was "robust on the threats India faced" and told Cameron that if another terrorist attack like that in Mumbai in July 2011 was repeated then India would have to take military action against Pakistan.

So, the most revealing aspect of the book is Cameron's deep understanding of the terrorist threat which emanates from across India's border. He describes the Afghanistan-Pakistan border as the "mother lode of Islamist extremism" and in a fascinating section describes his attempts to build greater trust between Hamid Karzai and former Pakistan President Asif Ali Zardari, hosting them both at Chequers in 2013. He laments the lack of breakthrough and says of Pakistan "as we know, it is the military that makes the key decisions".

This perhaps explains why Cameron broke with normal British Foreign Office convention during his visit to Bengaluru in 2010 to address IT workers at the Infosys campus. Responding to a question, he made an unequivocal statement: "We cannot tolerate in any sense the idea that this country [Pakistan] is allowed to look both ways and is able, in any way, to promote the export of terror, whether to India or whether to Afghanistan or anywhere else in the world." This clarity, conviction and courage explains why Cameron is so well respected in India.

His successor, Boris Johnson, is also an Indophile but whether he will be able to make the same impact will depend partly upon how he handles the vexed question of Brexit in the coming weeks but also, crucially, on whether he is prepared to take a similarly principled position against cross border terrorism. The biggest lesson from David Cameron is that a balanced view on the politics of the Indian subcontinent is no view at all.

The writer is a British Member of Parliament in the House of Lords

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

ADDRESS INSECURITY

THIS REFERS TO the article, 'For the demographic dividend', (IE, September 19). India's National Population Policy, 2000 had a progressive goal to understand and address the issue of population growth. The country is on the course of achieving population stabilisation with its national TFR clocking very close to the replacement rate. But at times, social insecurities, economic uncertainty and a perceived sense of discrimination impacts family planning decisions. This aspect needs serious consideration at the policymaking level. **Sudip Kumar Dey, Kolkata**

BSP'S FALL

THIS REFERS TO the editorial, 'The elephant trap' (IE, September 18). BSP MLAs in states other than UP are not willing to do Mayawati's bidding mainly because she wants to use them as bargaining chips. Other parties are also not always ready to throw in their lot with the BSP because of its record of renegeing on alliances. Mayawati seems to be strict only when it comes to safeguarding her political interests. **Tarsem Singh, Mahipukur**

FINES ARE NEEDED

THIS REFERS TO the report, 'Transport

LETTER OF THE WEEK AWARD

To encourage quality reader intervention, The Indian Express offers the Letter of the Week award. The letter adjudged the best for the week is published every Saturday. Letters may be e-mailed to editpage@expressindia.com or sent to The Indian Express, B-1/B, Sector 10, Noida-UP 201301. Letter writers should mention their postal address and phone number.

THE WINNER RECEIVES SELECT EXPRESS PUBLICATIONS

strike to slow down city today' (IE, September 19). Transporters have a right to go on strike. The amendments to the Motor Vehicle Act were mooted more than 10 years ago. The heavy fines became necessary because traffic rules were flouted on a large-scale. **AL Agarwal, Delhi**

THE Urdu PRESS

BEYOND THE STARS

CHANDRAYAAN 2'S VIKRAM Lander reaching so close to its goal has received a warm and soaring response in editorials in the Urdu press.

Using Allama Iqbal's famous ghazal their being more lands ahead of the moon, *Urdu Times*, on September 8, speaks of how the ISRO chief K Sivan was "consoled by Prime Minister Narendra Modi who boosted his morale and sent a message to youngsters that they must not be disappointed by failure, and keep trying".

Roznama Rashtriya Sahara in its editorial on the same day writes: "No country has gone onto the South Pole of the Moon but India has landed there, even if contact is lost. This may be a partial failure but ISRO has dedicated its best efforts for this mission." The paper writes that "all of India is very proud of the landing".

Urdu Times in an editorial on September 12 'Katauti' or Cut, strikes a different note. It speaks of a "thousand employees at ISRO have been receiving lesser wages now, by at least Rs 10,000 each. The employees are very discouraged and are saying that despite working towards such an important national

mission, instead of a wage hike, they are getting a wage cut." The paper says: "The government has no dearth of funds, it has recently taken Rs 1.76 lakh crore from the RBI, despite this being a very controversial decision. But when it is not giving this to government servants and reducing peoples' salaries, why should common citizens hope they will get Rs 15 lakh in their accounts?"

FAROOQ'S ARREST

ON SEPTEMBER 19, *Inqilab* quotes a "reputable English language daily," as saying that Farooq Abdullah's detention is "unbelievable". The editorial argues that "the Centre will have to prove how the chairman of the National Conference, a sitting Lok Sabha MP, a former Rajya Sabha MP, a former Union minister and a former chief minister is a threat to public safety, and why the Public Safety Act (PSA) has been used against him, which is invoked against terrorists." The paper writes that "the irony is that just days before the lockdown on August 5, he met PM Modi with a team of representatives including his son and also former chief minister, Omar Abdullah." It adds: "Atal Bihari Vajpayee trusted him enough to call him to

the Agra summit in July 2001."

On September 18, *Munsif* asks why the PSA has been imposed on Farooq Abdullah. "A few days after the CPM chief and a Congress leader secured conditional permission to go to Srinagar, the PSA has suddenly been imposed on an ex-chief minister. This indicates that the BJP, after 43 days, is scared that if the restrictions are removed and if curfew is relaxed, the people will hit the streets and the government's assertions of control and peace will fall flat on the ground." The paper recalls that "just after August 5, the Home Minister Amit Shah had clearly lied and said in the House that no one was arrested. He had also said that Abdullah was fully free and there were no restrictions on anyone to meet him but other ex-chief minister was stopped from entering the state soon after."

Etemaad, the AIMIM daily, sees a connection with the United Nations General Assembly (UNGA) and events in Kashmir. On September 18 it says, "on the eve of the UNGA, the government appears worried that if any leader from the Valley speaks on Article 370, it would hurt them a lot, hence the actions against Farooq Abdullah." The paper believes, though, that this act has hurt the BJP's bid to

"woo locals and agitated a lot of people".

HINDI WOES

SIASAT ON SEPTEMBER 17 has an editorial on the imposition of Hindi titled 'Hindi domination may prove to be problematic for the BJP'. The editorial says: "People in South India and now political parties too are criticising the government's move to impose Hindi." The paper writes that "in states where regional languages are very important, like West Bengal and Kerala, where the BJP has used these languages to build a base, it will be hit".

Etemaad on September 16 writes: "At a time when the concern at the UN is the preservation of the mother tongue and various steps are being taken to do that, the BJP has started an argument to promote a particular agenda and a point of view which is just not acceptable." It writes that "India is an example of unity in diversity where many different languages are spoken and we must preserve them all, rather than a One Nation-One Language domination. If done, this would weaken the beauty of India's federal character."

Compiled by Seema Chishtii

बिज़नेस स्टैंडर्ड

वर्ष 12 अंक 184

उम्मीद की किरण

सर्वोच्च न्यायालय के मुख्य न्यायाधीश रंजन गोगोई ने नौ वर्ष पुराने बाबरी मस्जिद-राम जन्मभूमि मामले में सुनवाई समाप्त करने के लिए 18 अक्टूबर की तारीख तय कर दी है। इसके साथ ही उस विवाद का अंत करीब नजर आ रहा है जो देश के ध्व्नीकरण की जड़ रहा है। माना जा रहा है कि न्यायाधीशों का तीन सदस्यीय पीठ गोगोई की

सेवानिवृत्ति से पूर्व ही, नवंबर के मध्य तक इस मामले में फैसला दे सकता है। इसके बाद देश के लोगों को शायद इस लंबी अनिश्चितता से निजात मिल जाएगी। यह एक ऐसा मुद्दा है जो आधुनिक राष्ट्र-राज्य की आकांक्षाओं से कतई मेल नहीं खाता। यह मामला जमीन के मालिकाने के 70 साल पुराने विवाद का है और सन 1992 में हिंदुओं

द्वारा मस्जिद को गिराए जाने के बाद इतना जटिल हो गया कि इसे हल करने में चार मुख्य न्यायाधीशों का कार्यकाल खप गया। गोगोई उनमें से चौथे हैं।

यह मामला सन 2010 में इलाहाबाद उच्च न्यायालय के निर्णय के खिलाफ अखिल भारतीय हिंदू महासभा और सुनी वक्फ बोर्ड की अपील के रूप में सर्वोच्च अदालत के समक्ष आया। महासभा और वक्फ बोर्ड उन तीन पक्षों में शामिल थे, जिनके बीच उच्च न्यायालय ने विवादित क्षेत्र को बराबर-बराबर बांटने को कहा था। तीसरा पक्षकार निर्माही अखाड़ा था। ऐसा प्रतीत हो रहा था कि उच्च न्यायालय का निर्णय मिथकों पर आधारित है। तब से अब तक अयोध्या की सरयू नदी में काफी पानी बह चुका है। तोड़ी गई मस्जिद

के स्थान पर राम मंदिर का निर्माण करने की बात भारतीय जनता पार्टी के चुनावी घोषणा पत्र का आधार बन चुकी है। इस बीच हस्तक्षेप करने वाले विभिन्न लोगों (सुब्रमण्यन स्वामी सहित) के कारण, अधिवक्ताओं को धमकी मिलने तथा बहुचर्चित गुरु श्री-श्री रविशंकर द्वारा मध्यस्थता के नाकाम प्रयास के चलते यह मामला लगातार सुर्विखों में बना रहा। पूर्व मुख्य न्यायाधीश दीपक मिश्रा ने अपने उत्तराधिकारी का मार्ग आंशिक रूप से प्रशस्त किया था। कोई मस्जिद इस्लाम का अभिन्न हिस्सा है या नहीं, यह तय करने का निर्णय उन्होंने एक बड़े पीठ को सौंपने से मना कर दिया था। सर्वोच्च न्यायालय सन 1994 में कह चुका है कि ऐसा आवश्यक

नहीं है। सन 2019 के आम चुनाव के पहले के माहौल को देखते हुए मामले की सुनवाई चुनाव तक स्थगित कर दी गई थी। यह कहना उचित होगा कि गोगोई के नेतृत्व में सर्वोच्च न्यायालय के तीन न्यायाधीशों के पीठ ने मामले की सुनवाई काबिले तारीफ तेजी से की है। तीन अगस्त को मध्यस्थता के विफल होने की घोषणा के बाद सर्वोच्च न्यायालय ने 6 अगस्त से रोजाना सुनवाई शुरू की थी। सर्वोच्च न्यायालय ही इस स्थिति में है कि वह संविधान के अनुच्छेद 14 में धर्मों की समानता के सिद्धांत के आधार पर इस मामले पर कानूनी निर्णय ले सकता है।

इन सबके बीच कार्यपालिका की प्रतिक्रिया भी काफी महत्वपूर्ण होगी। इसमें दो राय नहीं कि मामले की शुरुआत तब हुई

जब कांग्रेस की एक सरकार ने एक जिला अदालत के विवादित स्थल को खोलने (सरकार ने इसे 1949 से बंद कर रखा था) के निर्णय के खिलाफ अपील नहीं करने का फैसला किया, उसके बाद जब अयोध्या में मस्जिद ढहाने के लिए कारसेवक एकत्रित हुए तो सुरक्षा के पर्याप्त इंतजाम नहीं थे। देश को सांप्रदायिक दंगों तक का सामना करना पड़ा लेकिन राजनीतिक नेतृत्व का नून व्यवस्था लागू करने में नाकाम रहा। ऐसे में आवश्यक है कि अपने एजेंडे से परे मौजूदा सरकार सर्वोच्च न्यायालय की बात सुने। बुधवार को एक स्थानीय समाचार पत्र ने गृहमंत्री अमित शाह के हवाले से कहा कि अदालत का निर्णय सबको मानना होगा। फिलहाल यह बात उम्मीद जगाती है।



अजय मोहन

बाह्य मानक : सही कदम गलत उपाय

ब्याज दरों के पारेषण को लेकर आरबीआई ने बाहरी मानक की जो व्यवस्था अब की है, उसे काफी पहले अपना लिया जाना था। इस बारे में विस्तार से बता रहे हैं देवाशिष बसु

जब नीति निर्माता गलत वजह से सही कदम उठाते हैं तो क्या होता है? खुशकिस्मती से इसका नतीजा बेहतर आ सकता है लेकिन ज्यादा आशंका यही रहती है कि वे कुछ अनचाहे और गलत परिणामों की जमीन तैयार कर रहे हों। भारतीय रिजर्व बैंक (आरबीआई) द्वारा 4 सितंबर को जारी परिपत्र का हथ्र भी कुछ ऐसा ही हो सकता है। इस वर्ष 1 अक्टूबर से बैंकों को अपने ऋण की ब्याज दर को बाहरी मानक से जोड़ना होगा। अब वे अपने आंतरिक अपारदर्शी मानक का प्रयोग नहीं कर पाएंगे। यह उपभोक्ताओं के लिए अच्छी खबर है। इसलिए नहीं कि उनके ऋण सस्ते हो जाएंगे बल्कि अब बैंकों को अपने पुराने कर्जदारों को भी नई व्यवस्था अपनाते का अवसर देना होगा और नए तथा पुराने कर्जदार अब समान हो जाएंगे।

बीते 20 वर्षों तक आरबीआई ने बैंकों को कर्जदारों के साथ मनमाना, अपारदर्शी और भेदभावकारी व्यवहार करते रहने की इजाजत दी। बैंकों को नए कर्जदारों के बारे में ज्यादा जानकारी नहीं होती लेकिन वे उन्हें पुराने कर्जदारों की तुलना में सस्ती ब्याज दर पर कर्ज देते हैं। जबकि पुराने कर्जदार लंबे समय से महीना दर महीना अपना ऋण चुकाते रहते हैं और बैंकों को उनके अच्छे व्यवहार

के बारे में भी काफी कुछ पता होता है। नए और पुराने दोनों कर्जदारों के कर्ज की ब्याज दर को बाहरी मानक से जोड़ने के साथ ही इस भेदभाव का अंतर हो जाएगा। परंतु इस बारे में कोई बात ही नहीं कर रहा है। इसका कारण यह है कि आरबीआई के इस कदम का उद्देश्य भेदभाव समाप्त करना और स्पष्टता तथा पारदर्शिता लाना नहीं है। उसकी कोशिश केवल दरों के पारेषण में सुधार लाने की है। यह सरकार का एक अहम राजनीतिक लक्ष्य है। आर्थिक वृद्धि लाने के सबसे लोकप्रिय तरीकों में एक ब्याज दरों में कटौती करना भी है। हर वित्त मंत्री इसकी मांग करता है। लचीली दर व्यवस्था में जब ब्याज दरें बढ़ती हैं तो बैंक इसका लाभ उपभोक्ताओं को देने के इच्छुक नहीं नजर आते। यही कारण है कि आरबीआई ने अपने परिपत्र के माध्यम से इस समस्या को हल करना चाहा और वह भी केंद्र सरकार के दबाव में। काफी संभव है कि ऐसा करते हुए वह कुछ अन्य किस्म की दिक्कत खड़ी कर दे।

पारेषण का संक्षिप्त इतिहास

आरबीआई ने करीब 20 वर्षों तक इस अनुचित

व्यवस्था का समर्थन किया। सन 1994 में हमारे यहां प्रधान ऋण दर (पीएलआर) की व्यवस्था आ गई थी और अप्रैल 2003 में मानक पीएलआर भी आ गई। ये दोनों दरें पर्याप्त मौद्रिक पारेषण सुनिश्चित कर पाने में नाकाम रहीं। आरबीआई ने पाया कि इससे इन दोनों मानकों की शुरुआत का उद्देश्य ही नाकाम हो गया। यहां तक कि जब उसे पता था कि बैंक आंतरिक मानकों के साथ मन मुताबिक छेड़छाड़ कर रहे हैं तब भी सात वर्ष बाद आरबीआई ने दोबारा आधे-अधूरे मन से आधार दर के रूप में एक और आंतरिक मानक प्रस्तुत करने का प्रयास किया। जाहिर है यह भी पारेषण सुनिश्चित कर पाने में नाकाम रहा।

वर्ष 2016 में एक और प्रयोग किया गया। फंड आधारित ब्याज दर की न्यूनतम लागत (एमसीएलआर) के रूप में। प्रयास वह था कि दरों में बदलाव का कर्ज लेने वालों तक सहज पारेषण हो क्योंकि जमा की न्यूनतम लागत में आरबीआई की रीपो दर के साथ उतार-चढ़ाव आता। परंतु एमसीएलआर भी एक आंतरिक मानक थी और इसलिए पारेषण नहीं हुआ। मनीलाइफ फाउंडेशन ने गत वर्ष सर्वोच्च न्यायालय में एक जनहित याचिका दायर कर यह भेदभाव समाप्त करने की गुजारीश की। अदालत ने

आरबीआई को इस पर अपना जवाब देने को कहा। गवर्नर ऊर्जित पटेल के नेतृत्व में आरबीआई ने आखिरकार 20 वर्ष बाद 5 दिसंबर को बाहरी मानक अपनाते की बात कही। इसके तत्काल बाद पटेल पद छोड़ गए और नए गवर्नर ने इस विचार को रद्द कर दिया और बैंकों में कामकाज पहले की तरह चलता रहा।

यह बैंकों का दुर्भाग्य ही था कि आर्थिक वृद्धि औंध मुंह गिरी और सरकार व्यग्र होकर हालात सुधारने के तरीके तलाश करने लगी। मंदी के दौर में जब राजनेता और कारोबारी एक दूसरे की आंख से आंख मिलाकर नहीं देखते हैं तब वे एक बात पर अवश्य सहमत हैं कि ब्याज दरों में कटौती करने से वृद्धि को गति मिलेगी। अब मुद्रास्फीति की दर कम है और आरबीआई दरों में कटौती कर रहा है लेकिन अब भी पारेषण नहीं हो रहा है। इसकी वजह एकदम वही है जिसे आरबीआई दो दशक तक लागू करने से बचना रहा: बाहरी मानक को लागू करना। पिछले तमाम वित्त मंत्री जहां बैंकों के प्रतिरोध के आगे कुछ नहीं कर सके, वहीं इस सरकार ने एक कड़ा फैसला लिया है। उसने बैंकों को आदेश दिया है कि वे बाहरी मानक का पालन करें।

अनचाहे परिणाम

यह कदम उपभोक्ताओं के लिए तो बेहतर है लेकिन क्या इससे अन्य तरह की समस्याएं पैदा हो सकती हैं? पहली बात, क्या रीपो दर उचित मानक है? कई अन्य लचीली दरें वाले ऋण मसलन आवास ऋण आदि 15 वर्ष के लिए होते हैं। इन ऋणों को दीर्घावधि की बाह्य मानक दर से जोड़ा जाना चाहिए। आरबीआई को पहले इसका विकास करना चाहिए था। बैंकों की दलील है कि आरबीआई को उन्हें इस बात के लिए मजबूर नहीं करना चाहिए दीर्घावधि के ऋण को रीपो दर जैसे उच्च अस्थिरता वाले अल्ट्रावधि के मानक से जोड़ा जाए। बैंकों को हर तिमाही दरों में बदलाव की इजाजत दी गई। दूसरा, बैंक यह दावा करते रहे हैं कि चूँकि जवाबदेही में लचीलापन नहीं है इसलिए वे पारेषण नहीं कर सकते। अपने बचाव के लिए बैंकों ने तत्काल बचत खाता दर को बाहरी मानक से जोड़ना शुरू कर दिया। इससे भ्रम की स्थिति पैदा होगी और तमाम बचत करने वाले बैंकों से दूर हो जाएंगे। तीसरा गड़बड़ पहलू यह है कि बाहरी मानक केवल बैंकों पर लागू होते हैं, गैर बैंकिंग वित्तीय कंपनियों पर नहीं। परंतु उनकी भी बहुत बड़ी बाजार हिस्सेदारी है और वे हर हाल में बैंकों से अधिक ब्याज दर लेते हैं।

ऐसे में सही कदम तो यही होता कि इन तमाम मुद्दों को व्यवस्थित ढंग से सुलझाया जाता। आरबीआई के पास इस समस्या पर विचार करने के लिए एक दशक से अधिक वक्त था। हर बार दरों में कटौती के बाद मंत्रालय की ओर से पारेषण की मांग उठी लेकिन समुचित हल के बारे में कोई बात नहीं हुई। इस बीच बैंक भी मनमाने दर वसूलते रहे। ऐसे में इस बार सरकार ने कमजोर पारेषण पर सवाल उठाया तो आरबीआई ने प्रतिरोध नहीं किया। बैंक और आरबीआई दोनों को अब कहीं अधिक गंभीर पोरण का सामना करना होगा।

ऐपल कर रही ब्रांड विस्तार जियो से तुलना है बेकार



जिंदगीनामा

कनिका दत्ता

ऐपल ने जैसे ही अपनी अल्ट्रा-प्रोमियम (उच्चवर्गीय उत्पाद) स्थिति को छोड़कर कीमतों की जंग में शामिल होने की शुरुआत की, भारतीय पत्रकारों ने इसे 'जियो जैसी कोशिश' करार देने में गुरेज नहीं किया। ऐसी टिप्पणियां खबरों की सुर्खी बनने के लिहाज से भले ही ठीक हों लेकिन सुविचारित नहीं हैं।

अंतर बहुत छोटा लेकिन महत्वपूर्ण है। ऐपल के साथ रिलायंस ने कीमतों की ऐसी जंग शुरू की जहां अपने प्रतिस्पर्धियों से मुकाबले के लिए वह लोगों को लगभग नि:शुल्क सेवाएं दे रही थी। ऐपल के साथ यह बात नहीं है बल्कि कंपनी ने अपनी बुनियादी रूप से अत्यंत महंगे उत्पादों की नीति में बदलाव किया है। इसमें विभिन्न बाजार क्षेत्रों मसलन दूरसंचार, उपभोक्ता हाईटेक, इंटरनेट प्रसार आदि में सावधानी से लक्षित प्रतिस्पर्धियों पर लगातार हमले शामिल हैं।

अपने ब्रांड को तमाम मूल्य वर्ग में विस्तारित कर ऐपल ने एक बड़ी छलांग लगाई है लेकिन यह काफी हद तक काल्पनिक है। यह बाजार हिस्सेदारी हासिल करने के लिए किसी सेवा को मौजूदा सेवा प्रदाताओं से सस्ती दर पर देने का मामला नहीं है। यह उससे अलग है। बल्कि ऐपल के नए साहसी कदम ने भारतीय कंपनियों में नई नीतिगत सोच की बीज को अपने मांडल सेंट्रो से पूरी तरह बदल दिया। यह कार इतनी लोकप्रिय थी कि गत वर्ष जब इसे दोबारा बाजार में पेश किया गया तो यह हाथोहाथ बिकी और ऑर्डर लेने बंद करने पड़े।

ऐसे कई कदम बाजार को उन्मत्त बनाने के उद्देश्य से भी उठाए गए। वाणिज्यिक वाहनों और बस बाजार के एकाधिकार को वोल्वो ने चुनौती दी। कंपनी ने जल्दी ही प्रीमियम बस सेवा के लिए अपना नाम कर लिया। सन 1990 के दशक के आरंभ में प्रॉक्टर ऐंड गैबल ने महंगे और बढ़िया किस्म के वॉशिंग पाउडर और अन्य उत्पाद बाजार में उतारे। हिंदुस्तान लीवर (तत्कालीन नाम) और जॉनसन ऐंड जॉनसन जैसे प्रतिस्पर्धियों को जवाबि प्रतिक्रिया देने में जुझना पड़ रहा था। दूसरी ओर, भारतीय कंपनियों के तरकश में कीमतों के मोर्चे पर मुकाबला करना ही इकलौता तौर

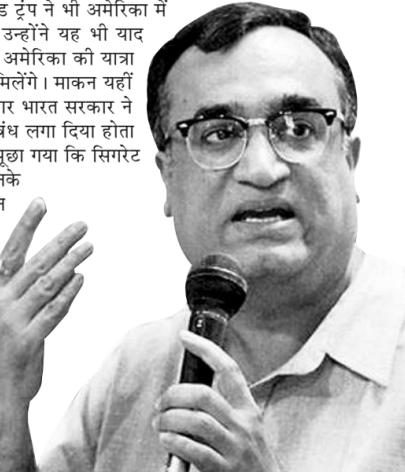
रहा है। इसमें समस्या यह है कि प्रतिस्पर्धी बहुत आसानी से आपका पीछा कर लेते हैं। करसन नहीं पेटेल के निरमा डिजिट पाउडर ने हिंदुस्तान लीवर को परेशानी में डाल दिया था लेकिन बाद में नकदी की मजबूत स्थिति का लाभ उठाया और वैसा ही उत्पाद पेश कर दिया। निरमा के ग्राहक बने रहे लेकिन वह दोबारा हिंदुस्तान लीवर को कड़ी चुनौती नहीं दे पाया। दैनिक उपयोग की उपभोक्ता वस्तु कंपनी के विजय केयर ने शैंपू के एक रूप्ये के संशोधन में उतारे। इससे कंपनी के यकीनन फायदा हुआ। उसने ऐसा करके जैसे कमाए लेकिन जल्दी ही प्रतिस्पर्धी कंपनियों ने उसकी नकल कर ली। भारतीयों द्वारा प्रवर्तित कंपनियों में टाटा मोटर्स एक अपवाद रही है। उसने सन 2000 के मध्य में एस नामक मिनी ट्रक लॉन्च करते वक्त नीतिगत सोच के क्षेत्र में मजबूती दिखाई। कंपनी ने इस मिनी ट्रक को छोटा हाथी नाम दिया था और इसने माल दुलाई के क्षेत्र में एक अहम कमी को दूर किया। परंतु इसी समूह की अब बंद हो चुकी टाटा टेलीसर्विसेज ने प्रति सेकंड बिर्लिंग की शुरुआत कर दी, जो कीमतों की जंग को ही जन्म दिया, जिसकी कीमत खुद कंपनी को चुकानी पड़ी। अगर जियो की विस्तारित 'स्वागत पेशकश' जिसे नियामकीय और आक्रमक कीमत से जुड़े परीक्षणों में उचित पाया गया, उसने अगर बाजार में उथलपुथल मचाई तो ऐसा केवल इसलिए हुआ क्योंकि अन्य प्रतिस्पर्धी कंपनियों जहां आर्थिक दबाव में थीं, वहीं जियो की मूल कंपनी रिलायंस इंडस्ट्रीज के पास इतनी नकदी मौजूद थी कि वह आसानी से जियो का विस्तार करती रह सकती।

वैश्विक स्तर पर देखें तो कम कीमत पर माल बेचने के मामले में चीन को बहुरेक हिसाब है। इससे पहले जापान एक ऐसा देश था जो विकसित देशों के बाजार में अच्छी प्रतिस्पर्धी करता था। वैश्विक प्रबंधन परिदृश्य में भारत का योगदान केवल 'जुगाडू' का है। शायद इसका संबंध भारत के पारिवारिक प्रभुत्व वाले कारोबारी माहौल से हो। उदारीकरण के तीन दशक बाद भी देश के कारोबारियों को अभी नीतिगत तरीके से सोचने की जरूरत है।

कानाफूसी

निजी विचार

कांग्रेस के प्रवक्ता अजय माकन बुधवार को केंद्र सरकार के एक कदम की सराहना करते नजर आए, हालांकि इसमें भी उन्होंने किंतु-परंतु लगा दिया। माकन ने सरकार द्वारा ई-सिगरेट पर प्रतिबंध लगाने के निर्णय की सराहना की लेकिन उन्होंने इसके साथ ही यह जिज्ञासा भी प्रकट कर दी कि आखिर सरकार ने सिगरेट और गुटखे पर प्रतिबंध क्यों नहीं लगाया? इतना ही नहीं उन्होंने यह भी कहा कि अगर भारत सरकार ने अमेरिका से पहले ई-सिगरेट पर प्रतिबंध लगा दिया होता तो ज्यादा बेहतर होता। जब माकन से पूछा गया कि सिगरेट और गुटखे पर प्रतिबंध संबंधी विचार उनके निजी हैं या ये पार्टी के विचार हैं? माकन ने तत्काल स्पष्ट किया कि ये विचार पूरी तरह निजी हैं और इनका सरकार से कोई लेनादेना नहीं है।



आपका पक्ष

अत्यधिक दोहन संकट का कारण

प्रत्येक देश अर्थव्यवस्था को गति प्रदान करने के लिए प्राकृतिक और आर्थिक संसाधनों पर काफी हद तक निर्भर करता है। इन संसाधनों का अनुकूल माहौल में अधिकाधिक दोहन करके ही अर्थव्यवस्था को तेज गति दी जा सकती है। अगर कोई देश अर्थव्यवस्था से जुड़े संसाधनों का अल्पदोहन करता है तो उस देश के आर्थिक विकास की रफ्तार तुलनात्मक रूप से कम होती है। इसलिए यह आवश्यक हो जाता है कि विकास की गति को तेज करने के लिए मौजूदा संसाधनों का उपयोग अधिक से अधिक करे जो अनुकूल प्रभाव छोड़ते हों। लेकिन आर्थिक संसाधनों के अत्यधिक दोहन से आर्थिक संकट की स्थिति भी उत्पन्न हो सकती है। अगर ऊर्जा के पारंपरिक स्रोतों का अत्यधिक दोहन किया जाए तो कुछ ही समय में इसका भंडार समाप्त हो जाएगा। इसके खत्म होने से उद्योगों पर प्रतिकूल प्रभाव पड़ेगा। भूजल के अत्यधिक दोहन से भूजल स्तर में



गिरावट आई है। अगर जल्द ही जलसंचय और संरक्षण के प्रयास नहीं किए गए तो दुनिया भीषण जल संकट की चपेट में आ जाएगा। प्रधानमंत्री नरेंद्र मोदी भी जलसंचय और संरक्षण को लेकर काफी गंभीर हैं और इस मुद्दे की शुरुआत भी कर चुके हैं। जल शक्ति मंत्रालय का गठन होना इस बात का सबूत है। इलेक्ट्रॉनिक उपकरणों के

वित्त मंत्री निर्मला सीतारमण ने अर्थव्यवस्था को पटरी पर लाने के लिए कई घोषणाएं कीं

अत्यधिक दोहन से उनके जहरीले कचरे में शामिल केडमियम व पारा आदि मनुष्य और जीव जंतु के स्वास्थ्य पर प्रतिकूल प्रभाव डालते हैं। उर्वरकों का अत्यधिक प्रयोग

तंबाकू-शराब पर पूर्ण प्रतिबंध लगे

सरकार ने बुधवार को ई-सिगरेट पर प्रतिबंध लगा दिया है। इस पर प्रतिबंध लगने से इसका उत्पादन, बिक्री, भंडारण और आयात-निर्यात पर रोक लग जाएगी। इसका उल्लंघन करने पर सजा का प्रावधान भी किया गया है। ई-सिगरेट में तंबाकू के बजाय निकोटिन का घोल दिया है। सवाल उठता है जो बैटरी से गर्म होकर धुआं छोड़ता है। ई-सिगरेट के चयन में आने के कुछ ही दिन हुए हैं लेकिन इसके बहुरेकालित होने से पहले ही सरकार ने इस पर प्रतिबंध लगा दिया है। ई-सिगरेट से अभी तक कोई बीमारी या किसी के बीमार होने की कोई खबर नहीं आई है। सरकार अगर लोगों के स्वास्थ्य का इतना ही ध्यान रखना चाहती है तो तंबाकू उत्पाद तथा शराब के उत्पादन पर पूर्णतः प्रतिबंध लगाए। सिर्फ ई-सिगरेट से लोगों की सेहत का ख्याल रखना सरकार का अपने स्वार्थ पर ध्यान देना प्रतीत होता है।

