The sociology of the slowdown



MARGINAL UTILITY

TCA SRINIVASA RAGHAVAN

ere's a hypothesis about the two parts that better minds than mine should test: First, the current economic slowdown has its roots more in sociology than in applies only to urban India and, even there, to that subset which can consume things other than food and wage goods in quanti-

ties large enough to make a difference. The number is very tiny: Around 50-70 million people, of whom the selfemployed are around 75 per cent.

Meanwhile, urbanisation has resulted in what I call the pre-nuclear family problem, where a full joint family has been replaced by a truncated one. So, collective consumption costs instead of being distributed, have become concentrated.

This is a transition problem that happens in all rapidly urbanising societies. In a fully nuclear family, the income earner is responsible for only the spouse and children. And, more often than not, there are two income earners. In contrast, in the pre-nuclear family model that we have

in India now, there is usually only one income earner who has to pay the bills for more people than just the spouse and children. Therefore — and here's my theorem: "Unless income

grows fast enough to outpace price inflation in services, which are in demand because of urbanisation, the consumption of industrially produced things will begin to slow down."

This is what we are witnessing now. It is in this sense that I think it is structural, and not just in the plain vanilla economic one that economists like to worry about. Those economic models, howsoever valid in themselves, are incompletely specified because they do not account for sociological phenomena.

The last economics guy to take sociology into account was Milton Friedman with his permanent income hypothesis in the early 1950s.

He needs a closer look for applicability in India. He had said people consume according to what they think they will earn over a lifetime and that it is changes in permanent expected lifetime income that drive current consumption. This is a crucial insight.

Services inflation

Something like this may have begun to happen in India. But we are clueless about it partly because we don't measure services inflation properly. Not only are the weights in its consumer price index inappropriate, demand elasticities don't seem to be worked in at all, perhaps because it can't

So the price line the urban middle-to-upper income consumer faces is much higher than believed. Thus, annual inflation in services, all taken together, is very high.

Thus, according to the latest CPI, since August 2014 health care costs have grown 30 per cent, "recreation" costs 24 per cent, communication, which includes phones, internet etc, 30 per cent, education 30 per cent, and personal care 23 per cent. Health care and personal care may be an occasional expenses but the rest are continually consumed

So while inflation in the prices of goods may not have been much, for services it has been brutal. Just think of a family of six with four-six mobile phone bills, TV channel subscriptions, bus, metro and taxi fares, school fees, etc. Then there is the domestic help as well.

Had incomes been rising apace, this may not have mattered much. But they are not. In fact, since 2014, average increases in income — for those who still have jobs — have been around 3-5 per cent. And these very people are now paying between 50-55 per cent as some sort of tax.

There are the self-employed, of course, about whom, like the informal sector, official statistics say very little. I think it is they, if anyone at all, who are holding

up consumption. That, in fact, is the good news because the slowdown is almost entirely due to the salaried persons. As to the socalled informal sector, it doesn't really matter because per

capita incomes there are tiny.

What can be done?

We are in a consumption doldrum. Such doldrums happen from time to time. There's nothing "cyclical" or "structural" about them. They are, if anything, the opposite of an artificially induced credit boom of the sort we saw from

The effects of a credit book take a long time to wind down - 2011 to date. When they do they leave the economy gasping. Irving Fisher had analysed this phenomenon back in

No one can say how long it will take for the winds to start. Until then the government — which is like a captain on a ship in the doldrums — should be patient and not rush about ridiculously trying to blow wind in the sails.

Notanice mantoknow?

D K Shivakumar's multifarious talents can be put to use by any party



PLAIN POLITICS

ADITI PHADNIS

ongressman Doddalahalli Kempegowda Shivakumar has managed, in a state run by the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP), to incite protests in several parts of Karnataka after he was arrested by the Enforcement Directorate for alleged money laundering earlier this week.

Ramanagara, Channapatna and the adjoining areas all fall under Shivakumar's assembly constituency, Kanakapura. A bandh was called and all schools have been closed. Stones were thrown on government buses by (presumably) party workers.

So Shivakumar must be both incredibly popular and highly resourceful to be able to evoke such a response from constituents.

The Congress's master strategist is all that and more - so much so that even the Karnataka Chief Minister B S Yediyurappa regretted the fact that he had been arrested. Who is DK Shivakumar?

When he filed his affidavit for the 2018 Karnataka Assembly elections, he and his wife declared assets amounting to ₹730 crore. He listed his profession as "social worker". He could have written anything: But in south Karnataka (as elsewhere in India), the currency of power is land and caste. Shivakumar is a Vokkaliga, born into an agricultural family from the same area as H D Deve Gowda, the biggest leader of the Vokkaligas in Karnataka. It was only natural that Deve Gowda should view Shivakumar as a cheeky upstart and for a long time, he did.

Shivakumar has always been in the Congress - since he joined the Youth Congress when he was in college. He was general secretary of the Youth Congress in the state between 1983 and 1985. His first electoral victory was to become a member of the Zilla Panchayat in 1987.

At 25, Shivakumar contested against HD Deve Gowda for the first time in Sathanur in 1985. Not unexpectedly, he lost, albeit by a narrow margin. That, in itself, was not a small feat because Deve Gowda was then a senior minister in the Ramakrishna Hegde government. But Gowda, who had contested from two constituencies, elected to quit Sathanur which Shivakumar contested and won in the by-election and then began a battle with the Deve Gowda family which has changed its look and shape but remained, in essence, exactly what it was: a battle.

Shivakumar contested the 1989 Lok Sabha election from Kanakapura against Deve Gowda and not unexpectedly, lost. Those were the years when Gowda was at the height of his power. But despite his defeats he began building his influence in the rural areas adjoining Bengaluru. At around this time, land prices began rising. Shivakumar also invested in mining and allied business. He contested the 1989 assembly elections as an independent candidate and won. He became the youngest minister in the state just two years later, at the age of 31, where he served as a minister of state under Chief Minister S Bangarappa from 1991

Then came the government led by S M Krishna. He forged a good relationship with Krishna — and is alleged to be involved in some of the Café Coffee Day business with Krishna's late son-in-law, V G Siddhartha. So far, he has been MLA seven times. Along with his business interests, his political hard work (a bit of coercion and oppression also works) has paid off spectacularly.

Shivakumar has used personal wealth to

earn political capital. These stories are well known. The 2002 episode when Maharashtra chief minister and Congress leader, the late Vilasrao Deshmukh had all but lost the government in a no-confidence motion, it was DK Shivakumar, urban development minister in Karnataka at the time, who corralled MLAs and lodged them at the Eagleton Resort (whose walls, if they could speak, would yield many secrets) and led them to Mumbai on the day of the vote. Ahmad Patel won his Rajya Sabha seat from Gujarat on the strength of the efforts put in by Shivakumar to keep 44 MLAs from Guiarat "safe". Later still, he used his business relationships in Hyderabad to ferry MLAs from Bengaluru to a Hyderabad resort, asking chief minister K Chandrasekhar Rao for nothing more than that they be kept safe and secure. That's how Yediyurappa, despite having 104 MLAs out of 224 and being the single largest party in the assembly, was forced to yield space to H D Kumaraswamy and the Congress. In this operation, Shivakumar beat Amit Shah at the game.

The Deve Gowda clan and Shivakumar have never really been friends, only tactical partners. Unlike many others in the Congress, Shivakumar was someone Kumaraswamy thought he could do business with. Hence the loud laments from the Janata Dal (Secular) about the misuse of investigative agencies when Shivakumar was arrested.

What happens now? It is tempting to conclude that Shivakumar's career in politics is over. But he's too useful to too many people. That's where his talent lies.

LUNCH WITH BS ► HARSH MARIWALA | CHAIRMAN, MARICO

Fit and proper

Mariwala talks to Viveat Susan Pinto and Niraj Bhatt about relinquishing day-to-day management to professionals, mentoring entrepreneurs and the activities of Marico Innovation Foundation

he eighth floor office of Harsh Mariwala in the suburb of Santacruz, Mumbai, has little indication of his role as founder of Marico. A small "M" at the rear of the entrance and a nameplate of Marico Innovation Foundation among many other signages are the only giveaways that you are on the right floor. Not the typical Indian promoter, he relinquished his position of managing director when he was 63, handing over the reins of the company to a professional management team, and became non-executive chairman. Five years since, Mariwala says, "It is important to keep reinventing yourself every decade." This need for reinvention has pushed Mariwala to explore new avenues.

Mariwala comes out of his office at the end of a long corridor, and takes us to the dining hall, a few steps from the entrance. He suggests we sit facing the window, which has a clear view of the Mumbai skyline. Coming back to his idea of reinvention, Mariwala says he was conscious that he didn't want to be like "some other promoters" who are not able to let go of control even after giving up running the show. "I didn't want that to happen; it's a recipe for disaster," he adds.

Mariwala and Saugata Gupta, a Marico veteran who was appointed MD and CEO in 2014. drew up a list of what each of them would do and not do in their new roles. Mariwala has abided by the rules that govern the promoterprofessional CEO relationship "I have understanding with Saugata that I will not get involved in the daily running of the business," he says. This wall demarcates media interviews as well. Mariwala shares his views "always" on the macro environment or industry issues, while Gupta speaks about Marico. "I am hands off, but my mind remains on," he says

Carrot, orange and ginger soup comes first. Mariwala, 69, admits he loves keeping his meals simple, thanks to his passion for health and fitness. The fitness enthusiast tells us he loves hitting the gym every evening after work. Weekends are more relaxed with an hour-anda-half of stretching exercises in the morning. reading, playing golf, and spending time with his grandchildren.

In the early 1970s, after graduating from Mumbai's Sydenham College, Mariwala joined the family business, which was into trading in oil and spices. Bombay Oil Industries was amongst the largest players in its space and the young Mariwala was quick to pick up the ropes. But he knew the company would have to go beyond its trading roots into branded products. The future was there.

Under him, both coconut oil Parachute and edible oil Saffola, part of the consumer products division he started at Bombay Oil, were given an aggressive distribution push. This went on through the 1970s and 1980s, when Mariwala introduced a number of innovations, such as packaging "loose" products and brand building. By the 1990s, Mariwala decided to carve out Marico from Bombay Oil. A new office, an initial public offering (in 1996) and a team of top managers were all there to nurture the founder's dream of becoming a leading home-grown consumer goods company.

In the last three decades, Marico has evolved from a two-product company into a diversified consumer goods player, touching the lives of one in three Indians. The ₹7,334crore company today has a presence in Asia and Africa and operates in categories such as hair care, skin care, edible oils, healthy foods, male grooming and fabric care.

In 2002, he founded Kaya, a chain of skin clinics that has made dermatological services accessible to a large base of middle-class consumers, under Marico. It is amongst the most popular in its space, with a loyal customer base, having clinics in India and West Asia. Kaya was demerged from Marico in 2013 and listed a year later. Mariwala remains on the

Relinquishing day-to-day responsibility has allowed Mariwala to devote time to some of his other interests — mentoring entrepreneurs through his not-for-profit foundation Ascent, speaking at industry for a and championing the cause of innovation under the Marico Innovation Foundation. He is also an investor in start-ups through his family office Sharrp Ventures, managed by his son Rishabh, who is also on the board of Marico. His daughter Rajvi runs the Mariwala Health Initiative, a funding agency for mental health initiatives and works with the Marico Innovation Foundation.

The Foundation's flagship biennial event -Marico Innovation Awards — is a show tightly knit and curated, Mariwala explains. "Winners are not only selected after a rigorous exercise, but trained to present their



innovations in an engaging style, almost like

TED events. 'Work on the awards begins months in advance. A lot of effort goes to put up a good show, so there is some takeaway for the audi-

ence at the end it," he says as the table is

cleared for vegetable salad with feta dressing. Brendan, the butler, is on cue. The vegetable club sandwiches follow even as we dig into our salads. Mariwala is a quick eater

The "hands-off, mind on" approach at

Marico does see Mariwala cover a lot of ground

though. As company chairman, he undertakes monthly performance reviews, provides inputs on strategic direction to the top management, interacts with new managers during induction programmes and guides the team during mergers, acquisitions and key investment decisions.

"The whole objective here is to add value and not control," he says. "Not only have the chairman's and MD's roles been bifurcated clearly at Marico, there is a drop-dead successor to me as well. In the event I cannot execute my role as chairman, I have nominated a member of the board to take over my position. The objective is to ensure that the organisation continues to function no matter what," he says. A stickler for good corporate governance, Mariwala says Marico has an "evolved" board.

At a time when India Inc is littered with examples of promoter conflicts and boardroom battles, Mariwala's effort to keep things simple stands out. "Too often when there is a conflict I find the warring sides go public with details. Conflicts happen when there are two or more personalities involved. But there has to be a mechanism for conflict resolution. Going public helps no one," he says.

Abiding by the promoter-professional CEO rule book has meant the number of family members involved in the business are limited. Apart from Mariwala and son Rishabh, cousin Rajen are part of Marico's board. "It is meaningless if you have too many family members crowding out the board. That is not how a professionally-managed company should be run. Central to my role at Marico is ensuring that the board is effective and this is possible when you have great minds who can add value," he says.

Brendan is on his toes again. His boss has nished his meal. Mariwala asks us if we wish to have ice-cream. Still eating our sandwiches, we politely decline. He quips: "I won't have ice-cream, if you don't." He then offers us tea and coffee, with options of regular and green, to which we say yes. In comes a range of green teas and coffees, launched under the Saffola Fittify umbrella. The marketer in Mariwala goes for it. "We have just rolled these out. The flavours are interesting. Why tea? Even coffee is now green," he says. We listen as we try out and appreciate our Moroccan mint green tea and the classic strong green coffee.

Innovation is something that Mariwala takes seriously. The research and development team at Marico, for instance, is constantly working on prototypes of new products. prompting Mariwala to undertake reviews three times in a year. "I love it," he says. "The work they do gives me hope that we are on the

Shakuntala Devi's pumpkin saga



PEOPLE LIKE THEM

GEETANJALI KRISHNA

very time anyone talks about grey water recycling, I remember ✓ Shakuntala Devi and her pumpkins. I met her this summer when I went to her village Beni ka Purwa in Banda. She asked if I minded chatting with her while she plucked some vegetables for lunch. Her kitchen garden was lush and not at all what I expected to see in a region that experiences an annual summer drought, during which almost all the wells, ponds and tube wells dry up. Perhaps a shallow underground aquifer lay beneath her house and garden, I mused. But I was wrong.

A couple of years ago, Shakuntala Devi and her husband had dug a deep channel between their tube well and veg-

etable patch. "We were wasting so much water while bathing, doing laundry of washing dishes," she told me. "We decided to see if we could use it to water our vegetables." The channel they dug ended up doing more than simply carrying waste water to their vegetable garden. It kept the soil on either side extremely moist. "So we started planting vegetables and flowers along the channel," she explained. "Now, even in the dry summer heat, the soil remains so moist that we hardly ever needed to water it."

Consequently, this year, they had a bumper crop of pumpkins. "Every day we'd find a pumpkin ready to be plucked," she recounted. "We ended up gifting them to all our family and neighbours." Additionally, her jasmine and hibiscus plants are thriving. "I'm one of the lucky few here who can pluck flowers every day to place at the altar of our temple," she said proudly. It's a far cry from earlier, when the couple could only grow vegetables in winter which didn't require much watering. Summer vegetables bottle gourd, bitter gourd and pumpkins of course — had to be bought. Now, Shakuntala Devi's kitchen expenditure has reduced thanks to the plentiful sup-

ply of fresh vegetables from her patch. However, these aren't the only rewards that the couple is reaping from their grey water-irrigated vegetable patch. "Every year, we go through a summer of intense drought when animals, trees and sometimes even people die because of the severe lack of water," she said. "It is in sharp contrast to a time till about 15 years ago when our wells and ponds remained full even in summer." I asked her if she knew why groundwater reserves in the area had dried up. "Everyone has tube wells now," she said. "It seems to me that the more tube wells we construct, the less water there is in them."

She was spot on. Beni ka Purva, like other villages in Banda district, has seen rampant ground water extraction through tube wells. But in the absence of a technologically sound system of recharge, ground water levels have dipped precipitously.

The neighbours and family who received the gift of pumpkins from Shakuntala Devi's garden now have edible proof that grey water can be recycled or reused at home to great effect. It makes me think that we don't necessarily need only large scale, expensive measures to address our water woes. Perhaps Shakuntala Devi's effort — low tech, low cost and, most importantly, eminently replicable — could be a potent weapon against water distress, especially in drought-prone areas like Bundelkhand.

PEOPLE LIKE US

KISHORE SINGH

have several friends with homes in Goa — villa, cottage, apartment or land — that they barely have time for, but it's a competitive thing: If Bittoo has a place there then it's logical that Sweetoo must too. (Pardon the aliases but you don't want to rub your friends, who give you the run of their homes by the seaside, the wrong way.) Everyone knows that the mountains are closer to Delhi than the sea, so, of course, they have a home in the Himalayas — villa cottage, apartment or land - that remains, for most part, neglected. If Dilliwallahs want to own a piece of realestate in Goa, it's because the Mumbaikars got there first. And which true-blue Dilliwallah would allow that

to go unchallenged, which is why there are more Dilli-types in Goa than *Mumbaiwallahs* — or, I suspect, Goans.

Of Goans, Dilliwallahs and Gobos

While I hasten to assure you that my friends and I aren't the sort, your average Dilliwallah-in-Goa is a pain in the neck. They think of all of Goa as some kind of 24x7 rave party. They strew largesse to roller-coaster away resistance, riling the neighbours, annoying the local citizenry and destroying the ambience and peace. When in Goa, I never admit to being from Delhi — though, in truth, the Dilliwallah is just a stand-in for your average north Indian who is just as uncouth in Goa.

My Goa-based friends embody different types. There are those who are residents there, which means they traipse to Mumbai, or Delhi, for occasional, soul-bruising work, but prefer to live in Goa. Mostly, they're writers, designers or consultants, those with flexi-hours and powerful personalities. Others work in the city but return to Goa like seasonal migrants to conduct workshops, or grow vegetables, or run residencies and art camps. Some are drifters who don't pursue any serious career, in Delhi or Goa, preferring to hang out where their fancy takes them. A few have homes that have rarely been opened or aired. And there are those

like us who don't own a home in Goa but have friends who do.

I know some among us who have fashioned a career as permanent guests in Goa. They trade in gossip as fare for board and lodging, traipsing from one casa to another; hostesses take them in to prevent being vilified. Or they woo Goa's outstation residents to be allowed to spend a few days in their villas that stretch to a few weeks or months. They're all right so long as they care for the place and supervise the caretaker and maintain the garden, but are a menace if they invite other friends over who trash the place before moving on to the next sucker's property.

Some are true Gobos, or Goa bohemians — sun chasers who find their pleasure in the alternative life. When they aren't writing screenplays, or blending aromatic essences, they're stretching out for massages, working with villagers, or growing organic produce. They're fickle with their interests, which is why nothing much comes of their efforts, but they're people you can talk endlessly to. I'd like to be a Gobo too but these irrepressibly idyllic people are cultic and belong to a commune. As for choosing between playing host, or being a guest, I'll opt for the latter — even though most of us are viewed as pests.

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WEEKEND RUMINATIONS T N NINAN

'It's the economy, stupid!'

o one can accuse the second Modi government of inaction. If anything, its first 100 days have seen frenetic activity — historic action in Jammu & Kashmir, lots of legislation passed through Parliament, and lots of summitry by the prime minister — Bhutan, G7, the UAE, Russia, etc. Coming up soon is China, after an address to the UN General Assembly. Also worth noting is the critical difference in tone and approach that has resulted from the replacement of the late Arun Jaitley by Amit Shah as No. 2 in the Cabinet.

For all that, one is inclined to go back to Bill Clinton's campaign slogan: "It's the economy, stupid!" Not that the economy has been ignored in these past 100 days, far from it. There is the mega-merger of government banks, the Budget and further opening up to foreign investment, while some of the new legislation is economic in content: Two new labour codes, and an amendment to the bankruptcy law. On its part, the Reserve Bank has announced two rate cuts. Yet, other than the finance minister, the rest of the government in New Delhi seems strangely disengaged with macro-economic policy issues. This is hard to understand when the economy faces an escalating employment problem, a crisis in farming, stagnation in manufacturing, and slack exports.

Mr Clinton's old slogan did nothing more than state the obvious. But sometimes, like today, the obvious needs to be stated. Especially when Mr Modi's latest economic initiatives, like his earlier ones, involve the spending of government money — on handouts for farmers, a government-funded health insurance programme, and the like. With the slow economic tempo undermining tax revenue assumptions for the second year in a row, the money required for these and other programmes may simply not be there.

There are larger ramifications to economic under-performance. In a changing world order where nation-state leviathans seek free rein, the country's external heft flows directly from its strategic projection and the future promise of its markets. If growth stalls, the country is less likely to be viewed in the region and further afield as a natural foil to China, or in economic terms as the next China. Bear in mind that these perceptions lay at the heart of the US' re-engagement with India, beginning with the nuclear initiative under the second President Bush.

If America decides now that India "has been over-sold", as some observers in Washington are beginning to say, there will be a diplomatic cost. India may no longer get carve-outs from sanctions regimes, and other countries may not automatically take India at its word, in the face of Pakistan's protests, on the Kashmir issue. Meanwhile, the defence forces lose out relatively because there isn't enough money for the acquisition of submarines and destroyers while China's navy expands at a frenetic pace and expands its presence in the Indian Ocean. That reduces India's utility as a strategic partner.

On top of this, if our businessmen, ever in search of protective tariff walls, persuade a naturally nationalist government to stay out of the mega-trade deal that is the RCEP (Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership), then India will have turned its back on the most dynamic part of the world economy. On its part, the government seems to have decided that "Make in India" will work only by aiming at import substitution — which usually translates into higher tariffs. If the history of world trade and economic performance (and India's own policy-making history) says anything at all, it is that this strategy does not work in the long run.

All of this makes it compelling that the key personages in the government, and that includes the prime minister, engage directly and actively to prevent the current downturn from morphing into 1980s-level growth rates. Mr Modi in particular needs to put aside his lack of engagement with macro-economic policy, and develop a coherent understanding of how the different elements of a revival strategy (different from a "package" of announcements) mesh together — and then to stay the course on what is required to be done, because structural issues don't change with the season.

India's most potent weapon loses power

A red-hot economy was India's greatest strategic strength. It's diminishing and damaging India's stature, as reflected in responses to Kashmir crisis

ndia is facing a rising, new strategic threat. It isn't another brigade the Pakistanis moved to the LoC, or another overly dramatised missile test. It isn't even some new incursion by the Chinese.

Three things this new threat isn't. It isn't military, it doesn't come from our traditional adversaries, and it doesn't lurk from across our borders. And here are the three things this new threat is. It is economic, it comes from within, and it threatens to ruin our greatest asset of the past two decades: Global goodwill, the rising "good guy" image in the post-9/11 world, only partly

because of our stability and democracy, but predominantly because of our rising economic strength.

For simplicity of understanding, see it this way: When your economy is growing at 8 per cent or above, it is a case of what you might call saat khoon maaf (you can get away with seven murders). At 7 per cent, it becomes paanch (5) khoon maaf. But once your growth is 5 per cent, you are in a dodgy zone.

This is when a rising global power becomes just another flailing Third World economy with a per capita income in that lowly \$2,000 ballpark (Sri Lanka is twice this).

For about 25 years since economic reforms were launched in the summer of 1991, India had risen to be the favourite of the world, in the West, the East and in the Middle-East. India's unique socio-political attributes, its ability to flourish with its diversity when large parts of the world were struggling with it, democracy, and strategic restraint had enhanced its global stature. It reflected in the support India received during Kargil, Op Parakram after the Parliament attack, and 26/11.

The bigger strength was, however, economic. India was not only the second-fastest growing major economy even in a world growing at express speed, it was grabbing global attention for its rising tech prowess, innovation, friendliness to foreign capital, stable markets, and tax regime. India also drew global admiration for the way it shepherded itself out of the 2008 global downturn.

Over these years, India rose as a moderate, predictable, and stable continent-sized growth island in a turbulent world, a magnet for global portfolio and direct investment. It gave big powers — including China — and their corporations a stake in India's stability and security.

This is how a red-hot economy became India's greatest strategic strength in a period when its military spending lagged and modernisation lost pace

rowing GDP was now more powerful than

all the megatonnage of nuclear weapons. If a big power invested in your sovereign or corporate bonds, the last thing it wanted was to be party to any action or policy that destabilised you. Even for the Chinese, the trade surplus rising up to \$60 billion depended on a booming Indian con-

sumer economy.

NATIONAL INTEREST

SHEKHAR GUPTA

Surely, they sell India a lot of machinery, powergeneration equipment, and engineered goods. But which other economy had the size and hunger to swallow tens of billions of dollars' worth of its lowquality, almost no-tech junk they produce: Toys, slippers, furniture, parasols, gaudy veneers, agarbattis, plastic bangles, trinkets and much other junk that fills the shop shelves in middle and rural India.

This Chinese dependence on India's capacity to import in volumes that no other economy could vic-

ariously became a strategic asset for India as well. Check out, therefore, China's responses when war-like crises rose between India and Pakistan: Kargil (1999), the Parliament attack (2001-02), and 26/11 (2008). Each time, these were qualitatively better and more helpful than lately. Even the 2009 tensions over the Dalai Lama's visit to Tawang, when Manmohan Singh's considerably less muscular government bravely stared down China, were calmed down uneventfully.

For much of the first term of the Modi government, the growth momentum was not only maintained, but accelerated after the 2012-14 stall, India benefited from it, as did Narendra Modi. His image and stature rose greatly in the community of global leaders. But he broke his momentum himself

moderate,

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portfolio and direct

with demonetisation. India's economic growth has been downhill since. The big decline has come in the last four quarters

and at this point, nobody is expecting any recovery soon. This is now diminishing and damaging India's global Over these years, stature. And it reflects in many of the India rose as a responses over the abrogation of Article 370. It was indeed a turning point — and provocation — much greater than any from India since the sized growth island launch of the 1971 war. But the first in a turbulent world, indication of this strategic downside of our declining growth had come even before this when US President Donald investment Trump talked casually of mediating between India and Pakistan, in Pakistan Prime Minister Imran Khan's presence.

 \P rump will be Trump, but it is unlikely that he would have taken such a chance if India's economy was vibrant as earlier, his companies were investing and making profits rather than coming to him, complaining about Indian tariffs, and loss of policy predictability. Walmart, Amazon, medical and drug manufacturers, were all crying to him as India made sudden changes to its set policies, including taxation.

Today, a broken Tory government in Britain is talking down to India almost admonishingly on Kashmir, besides acting in a hostile manner at the UN Security Council. Even Tony Blair's Labour had shown greater respect for India in the booming past.

Between 2002 and 2013 there were six prime ministerial visits to India. You did, of course, expect goodwill for India to cut across party lines when an Indian conglomerate (Tata) acquired Jaguar Land Rover (JLR) and Corus for \$14.3 billion and became Britain's largest private-sector employer.

All analysis is ultimately hypothetical, but you can't just toss it because you don't like it. Not when it is based on facts. When Mr Trump sat with Imran at that press conference, in his uncluttered mind, India wasn't a strategic ally, but a pesky trade warrior and irritant. On the pure strategic side, it wasn't willing to annoy China and its interests in Afghanistan conflicted with Mr Trump's.

Some repair work was done at Biarritz last month and a new trade deal can calm things down there. We will know later this month in the UN General Assembly (UNGA) week. The meeting to watch, more than Modi-Trump, will be between Commerce Minister Piyush Goyal and US Trade Representative Robert Lighthizer. And if it does restore some calm, as it probably will, our point about economy and trade being the new megatonnage of strategic clout would be made.

While the situation in Kashmir looks bad today, it isn't the worst ever. We tend to forget even our recent past, especially if it was pre-Google. In 1991-94, popular anger, state response, repression and violence in the Valley were the worst yet. Torture centres flourished, foreign journalists were barred, encounter killings were common. Puniab was on fire, too, with multiple killings daily.

This also coincided with an angry international response and India was friendless. The Soviet Union, our only ally, had just disappeared. America, driven by human rights and non-prolif-

eration groups close to the Bill Clinton administration, were targeting India relentlessly. There wasn't one public event in Washington where a stellar team of Indian diplomats didn't have to field attacks over allegations of mass murder and rape as a military tactic in Kashmir. P V Narasimha Rao was dealing with all this quite mercilessly at home despite being friendless in the

The BJP will give him his welldeserved Bharat Ratna in the course of time, and please do remind me then that I had said so. But maybe not for what remains his biggest achievement: Showing us how eco-

nomics is the biggest post-Cold War strategic asset He started economic reform in the summer of 1991, the markets, GDP and trade boomed, and India's friends appeared in unlikely global capitals. Note the contrast between the first Clinton

Administration (which included Assistant Secretary of State Robin Raphel, who questioned the Instrument of Accession) and the second term when Mr Clinton declared that lines on the subcontinent's map could no longer be redrawn with blood. If a fast-growing economy was a decisive strategic asset even in the early 1990s, a slowing one is bound to be a liability in 2019.

By special arrangement with ThePrint

Deep freeze in the Valley



AL FRESCO SUNIL SETHI

n the season of mists and mellow fruitfulness Kashmir has already gone into deep freeze. This is the month when the rich bounty of the Valley's orchards is ready for picking, to be crated and transported over the next few weeks. Kashmir produces about 75 per cent of apples in the country, a crop of 17.5 lakh tonnes that is a keystone of the local economy employing 3.5 million people. This autumn, with few trucks in sight, the fruit harvest—including pears, plums, apricots and cherries — is piling up in the *mandis* of Sopore and Shopian and will soon begin to rot. One example of skewed woeful shortage of cold storages, Maharashtra cabinet has even put barely enough to sustain even a fraction of the perishable produce. for this la-la land scheme.

Governor Satya Pal Malik (or he presides over a union territory?) demonstrating the unbridged grapples for answers and any wiggle room available.. The other day ground reality. Other than the friend from Srinagar on information rice for the apple crop, committing ₹5,000 crore for procuring 50 per cent of the harvest. In the same breath he said 50,000 vacant government posts would be filled in the next few months. Throwing money and jobs at Kashmiris some of it illusory — didn't do much good before August 5, and is less likely to now.

Like Mr Malik, his masters in Delhi are promising industry delegations, investors' meets and a cornucopia of benefits that will gradually transform the Valley into a thriving hub of glamorous tourism and all-round development. A piquant front page story this week reported that the gov-BJP-ruled Maharashtra and Karnataka were planning tourist resorts there, and had asked the Kashmir adminis-

development in the Valley is the tration for land allotments. The down a token payment of ₹2 crore

There are two parallel developshould it be Lt. Governor now that ing narratives on Kashmir, chasm between fantasy and he announced a minimum support political leadership, thousands of Whatsapp two nights ago. A Reporters write their stories on Kashmiris are behind bars, not just in Srinagar but in Agra and Bareilly iails. Some estimates say as many as 4,000 — and they aren't all your stone-pelting, antagonised youth that the security establishment portrays as would-be Burhan Wanis. They include key figures of business and law associations. bankers, entrepreneurs, teachers and civil society leaders. Despite the civil and security administrations' claims that restrictions on communication and mobility are easing in a return to normalcy, it depends on how the new normal is defined. Land lines in some parts of Srinagar (the Civil Lines area) are functioning but dead in the inner city and the districts; attendance in schools is virtually nil and there is panic as Class X and XII board exams approach in October.

and supplies are handed through back doors. Shutters are down in in the basement is packed. At least the main markets. An additional 30,000-strong paramilitary force for hours, to get their turn to has been added in recent weeks to access email via one of the four the nearly 375,000 combined computers tucked in one corner of troops stationed in the Valley.

only have internet for a few min-sible, since at least one is always utes" messaged a photographer occupied by an official of the state returning colleague describes—their laptops, copy them onto a the mood as one of sullen, stiff thumb drive, and then try to civic resistance: "Defiance is not measured by body count alone, if that is the administration's definition of "normalcy" he says. A family friend and long-time resident of Rai Bagh in Srinagar has shut her house to bring her elderly, widowed mother to Delhi. "She was in complete depression. It was unbearable."

One of the most authentic first-hand reports on the "dueling narratives" is published in Nieman Reports this week, the Harvard-based media foundation. by Toufig Rashid, bureau chief for nine years of a leading daily in the state. "Every day," she writes, "journalists gather in the basement of Sarovar Portico, a local hotel designated by the govern-

Shops open for a couple of hours ment as the "media center," to file their reports. The conference hall a 100 journalists wait, sometimes the hall. Most of the time, only "Ask your questions quickly, I two or three computers are accesquickly send them by email to their offices, via agonisingly slow

> internet connections. How can the Kashmir story be accurately pieced together with such an information blockade? "In previous crises," Ms. Rashid notes, reporting was still possible. What's different now is how thorough the crackdown has been."

> What's also different now is no one — neither the political, civil or military establishments can predict how long the lockdown will last or what the fallout might be if some of the punitive curbs are lifted. Given the conflicting narratives of "normalcy" and an untested game plan Kashmir is in deep freeze for an indefinite time.

made any purchase but were refusing to leave. CEO Kevin Johnson apologized for the racial profiling all Starbucks stores were closed

Back to Hindustan Unilever. The colours of Holi being called daags was seen as offensive in the Surf Excel ad. The Hindu girl taking all the hits of the Holi colours to make sure her Muslim friend got to his *namaz* in unspoilt whites was seen to be an attempt to portray that white purity in the Muslim prayer is sacrosanct. Also that namaz is more important than Holi. The biggest objection of course was that the entire "sacrifice" was being made by the Hindu girl. Why could the narrative not have been reversed? The brand's higher "purpose" is quite nicely stated — Agar kuch achha karne mein daag lag jaaye toh daag achhe hain - the moot question is why is Unilever mixing "purpose" with religion and communal sensitivities? Methinks this is a path best avoided, lest "purpose" boomerang like in Gillette

the store manager called the police The writer is an advertising and media veteran

The central 'enemy'

EYE CULTURE

AMOL AGRAWAL

n the recently-held Jackson Hole symposium, the participating central bankers were concerned with proceedings elsewhere. Eggertson of Brown University narrat-Bloomberg article. He noted that when Jerome Powell, chairman of the US Federal Reserve (Fed), was delivering his speech, other central bankers, instead of listening to him, were busy refreshing Twitter to see whether there was a new tweet from President Donald Trump, attacking Mr Powell or the Fed.

Mr Trump did not disappoint. Soon after Mr Powell's speech, he tweeted that the Fed was not doing anything for the economy. He did not stop there and said: "...My only question is, who is our bigger enemy, Jay Powell or Chairman Xi?"

Yes, we are living in unusual times, but how does one reconcile with the idea of a US president openly calling the head of the Fed an enemy of the country? These things may happen in smaller economies with poor governance, but not in the world's largest economy which boasts high governance and well-developed institutions.

This so-called tweetstorm has become a new way for governments to express disappointment with central banks. It has happened in India as well. How can central banks address this matter?

In May this year, the central banks of Ukraine and Poland co-organised a conference. One of the panel discussions was on the following topic: "Central banks vs populists: ignore or fight". It was moderated by Olga Stankova of the International Monetary Fund and the panel included Emma Murphy (Bank of England), Yuriy Gorodnichenko (University of California, Berkeley), Dmytro Sologub (National Bank of Ukraine), and Miroslav Singer (former governor, Czech National Bank).

Ms Stankova started with a fundamental question: What do we mean by populism? The dictionary defines it as "a type of politics that claims to represent the opinions and wishes of ordinary people", which is quite similar to how we understand democracy too. Then the question is: Why should populism be worrisome, because both central banks and the government are supposed to be serving the people? One way to think about this is that people felt betrayed after the 2008 financial crisis. This made them vote for politicians who were offering an alternative set of policies. However, these alternative or populist policies create their own set of problems, such as high and volatile inflation. This is hardly new as Prof. Gorodnichenko said that the fight between guardians of monev (central banks) and governments had been there from time immemorial and

Apart from macroeconomic troubles,

populist leaders undermine institutions, such as the central bank, which undermines their autonomy. This is what we are seeing in the US. Mr Trump is seeking re-election and is blaming the central bank for keeping interest rates high. On the one hand, he says the US economy is ed his experiences in a recent doing very well (and takes credit) and, on the other hand, he seeks support from the Fed. Under such circumstances, how should central bankers respond? Mi Singer opined that central banks should build buffers in good times for crisis and have constant communication with politicians at all levels. He added that in tough times, central banks might be doing things that are not liked by people but have to be done. Ms Murphy and Mr Sologub, both serving their central banks, said in the case of such attacks, one should have a dialogue with the government and, hopefully, there are

forums for addressing such issues.

Prof. Gorodnichenko cited an example of the German central bank. Deutsche Bundesbank, which had a tremendous reputation. To this, the moderator responded saying Bundesbank and its senior team fought hard with the government before gaining this reputation. This becomes like the chicken-egg question, what comes first, fight or reputation? Prof. Gorodnichenko later added that central banks had to create value for voters and earn their reputations. They could learn communications from politicians themselves, who speak in really simple language to people while explaining policies. The central banks also need to learn from the private sector, which advertises differently for different regions and people. Mr Singer had the final word, hinting that one had to be careful in communications because everyone had money and, thus, an opinion on the topic.

In all, dealing with the Trump tweetstorm poses a serious dilemma for Mr Powell. If he resigns, the president would nominate a more pliable chief who can ruin the US economy and people will blame him for not doing enough. If he sticks, he will have to face these constant tweetstorms. If the above panel is to be believed, the Fed has to invest seriously in communicating with the people. It has to constantly remind people about its goals and actions. In a way, the Fed has opened up seriously under its new programme "Fed Listens", where the idea is not to just speak but listen to the people. These things take time, but Mr Trump does not have any, leading to another low in the history of the relations between the government and the central bank. Hopefully, Twitter officials are paying attention to how the medium is being used, of all people, by the US president

The author teaches at Ahmedabad University

How 'purpose' can be a double-sword

YES, BUT... SANDEEP GOYAL

ocial media does behave in many strange, and unpredictable, ways. But calls for #BoycottRedLabel last week by Twitterati, that too with unprecevehemence vengeance, for an ad that ran in

2018, exactly a year ago, left many industry watchers utterly puzzled. During Ganesh Chaturthi 2018, tea brand Brooke Bond had released an ad that was supposed to promote inter-religious bonding. In last year's commercial, an old Muslim *murti*-maker was shown helping a young Hindu executive choose the right Ganesha idol for his home. The buyer almost pulls out of the purchase when he realises that the man selling him

the idol is a Muslim. It all changes ly trolled. Last year, the CloseUp ing raw materials in a sustainable after the murti-maker serves him a cup of Red Label Tea. Well, a year later, Twitterati have suddenly remembered the commercial and gone ballistic over it, criticising it for showing the majority Hindu community in a negative light.

For India's bellwether advertiser, Hindustan Unilever, calls

#BoycottHindustanUnilever and #BoycottSurfExcel seem nothing new ever since it changed gears in its creative orientation across its brand portfolio in the past couple of years and started putting out advertising that is supposedly "progressive", "positive", "inclusive" and "secular" ... communication that gives its brands a "purpose" beyond functional and aspirational product promises.

Unilever's father-son Kumbh Mela ad earlier this year also for Brooke Bond Red Label kicked up a veritable storm in a tea-cup; its Surf Excel ad where a young Hindu girl, dressed in a white tshirt, chooses to get stained in Holi colours in order to protect her young Muslim friend who gets to go to the nearby mosque to pray in impeccable whites also got bad-

#FreeToLove campaign on a Hindu-Muslim live-in couple and another on same-sex lovers also ignited a massive mess. So in pushing "purpose" Hindustan Unilever does not seem to be unduly worried about courting controversy. In fact, some would say it seems to be deliberately inviting trouble to make the advertising "famous" and push the envelope on being seen to be 'purpose-driven".

While the Indian subsidiary of Unilever may be defining "purpose" in its own unique and somewhat acrimonious way, if we were to go back in history, in the 1890s. Unilever founder William Lever set the company's "purpose" as "making cleanliness commonplace". In 2010, the consumer goods giant further honed this 'purpose" to better respond to a world that is "starting to exceed its capacity". Under this revised "purpose" of "making sustainable living commonplace", Unilever has three targets to measure its progress against: improving the health and wellbeing of one billion people, reducing negative

environmental impact and sourc-

way while enhancing livelihood. None of the Indian brand advertising seems to resonate with the global parent's "purpose". Or maybe, we don't understand.

Not very long ago, Gillette ran its famous "We Believe" campaign asking "Is this the best a man can get?". The campaign created not just ripples, but a storm globally, earning the shaving products brand many kudos for propagating a higher "purpose" for itself. But now, just months later, it seems a large part of Gillette's all-male audience got put off by the "attack on men" and distanced itself from the brand. Many in fact seem to be attributing a US\$ 8 billion noncash write-down for Gillette by parent P&G to the after-effects of the higher-purpose ad campaign which in retrospect was perhaps not as smart as it first seemed.

purpose, "To inspire and nurture the human spirit — one person, one cup and one neighborhood at a time" was blown to smithereens when two black men were arrested at a Starbucks in Philadelphia after claiming that the men had not Email: sandeep@goyalmail.com

Starbucks' global statement of

that had occurred at Starbucks and down for a four-hour, in-person training against racial bias. But the damage was already done.



SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 7, 2019



MOONRAKER

Prime Minister of India, Narendra Modi

I have been regularly and enthusiastically tracking all updates relating to Chandrayaan - 2 since it was launched on 22nd July 2019. This Mission manifests the best of Indian talent and spirit of tenacity

Good governance at the grassroots

Many district administrations are working on transformation through innovation

ORE OFTEN THAN not, the Indian bureaucracy is perceived as unresponsive to the needs of the ordinary citizen, more so at the grass-roots. But, as the win $ners \, of \, The \, Indian \, Express \, Excellence \, in \, Governance \, (EIG) \, Awards \, 2019 \, have$ shown, district administrations can bring in transformative change if they were to get innovative on governance delivery and address gaps in the existing mechanism. This, in the long run, can mean the difference between penury and prosperity of the communities they serve. All 16 district magistrates who spearheaded the interventions that won them the EIG honour—chosen from 249 entries from 84 districts in 24 states—surmounted legacy problems; some used technology, some human capital, but all had an outof-the-box solution.

Kartikeya Misra took on joblessness and lack of connectivity in East Godavari in Andhra Pradesh when he was posted there as the district magistrate. Both problems had fed extremism in the Maoist-affected district for long. Recognising the lack of skilling in these parts and the fact that there were many jobs paying ₹10,000-20,000 for which employers were unable to find talent, the district administration under Misra arranged for job-specific, short-term training. Under this, 25,000 people have been trained—some with industry participation—and 18,000 placed in a range of jobs, from priesthood to network analysis and from TV repair to fruit/vegetable carving. There has been a domino effect on empowerment; young women from very poor families in Chinturu, a remote tribal area, trained under the Kaushal Godavari initiative, now work at the assembly line at Foxconn's unit in Nellore. Had it not been for the training they received and the resulting income for their families, they say, they would have never been allowed out of home and would have been married off early. Misra's second initiative digitally connected largely inaccessible tribal hamlets, roping in Google X's Free Space Optical Communications technology powered by the state's public sector fibre grid network. With mobile and internet connectivity, villagers who had to walk 8-10 kilometres to contact the nearest government official now consult government doctors or register a grievance with a government official over video-calls. Tirunelveli (Tamil Nadu) district collector Sandeep Nanduri got the district to use its MGNREGS money for sustainability, in a manner that challenges the conventional, rather deadened thinking on the use of the funds. The Tirunelveli administration, under Nanduri, has created 106 community soak pits where wastewater collected from households is processed through filtration systems and used to recharge the groundwater in the raindeprived district.CR Kharsan, the district collector of Valsad, Gujarat, implemented e-Megh, a sonar-based early flood warning system, for Auranga river that experiences annual flooding.e-Megh,an IoT system, integrates the sonar river gauge with hooters at four most vulnerable locations—any alarming rise in water levels activates the hooters within 10 seconds and gives the administration, with real-time SMS, two hours to act before the flood hits. In 2016, over 26 people lost their lives from the Auranga flooding swathes of Valsad town; in 2017, 14 people died. But, in 2018, because of the early warning system, there were no deaths, and the district administration was able to evacuate a 1,000 people this year, too.

While these are a few examples of the immense good that can be delivered to citizens when district administrations get creative, there are likely many such innovative approaches afoot. The government, both the Centre and the states, needs to recognise these and offer maximum support. Wherever possible, these game-changing "pilots and experiments" need to be scaled up/replicated. Change at the grass-roots will need change-makers like those whom the EIG awards celebrate.

Tripping up teacher training

Govt funding shrinking even as NEP calls for increase

■ **HE COUNTRY FACES** a shortage, most acute in rural areas, of over 10 lakh teachers. Many *jugaad* solutions have been adopted to address the gap, but the problem lingers. One would assume, in such a situation, that the government would focus on getting the teachers pipeline flowing, with teacher education being key. But, a look at past Budget numbers stirs concern. To be sure, education is a state subject and that means the states should be doing more; but, the Centre, too, has a role to play, one that it shouldn't try to pawn off to the states. Growth in overall allocation to education has slipped while overall allocation to teacher education has crashed—an IndiaSpend analysis shows budget funding for teacher training has fallen 87% between 2014-15 and 2019-20, from ₹1,158 crore to ₹150 crore. The draft National Education Policy (NEP) points out that the country's teacher edu-

cation space is beset with "mediocrity" due to commercialisation, and "a general lack of commitment to the need for rigour and quality" for teacher preparation. As per AISHE data for 2015-16, of the 17,000-plus single-programme colleges in India, nearly 90% were teacher training institutes, over 10,000 of which, as per the 2012 Justice JS Verma committee report, are essentially selling degrees for a price. The NEP calls for shutting these down, and pushing teacher training courses in all multi-disciplinary universities, and all Model Multidisciplinary Colleges. It also calls for gradually shifting to a four-year integrated B.Ed where the prospective teacher is trained in education and a core subject (history, mathematics, sociology, etc). By 2030, it suggests, existing genuine teacher education institutes must become multidisciplinary educational institution, most of which are public universities, and till the time existing graduates aim for a teaching career, all institutions offering the four-year teacher education may offer a two-year B.Ed. as is done now. Further, it emphasises that teacher education needs to become multi-modal, offered through part-time, evening or blended courses, and even online, with the freedom for teachers/prospective teachers to choose the mode that best suits them. It talks of a continuous professional development approach that lets teachers acquire cutting-edge skills. The draft NEP also speaks about strengthening academic support institutions—the State Councils of Educational Research and Training, District Institutes of Education & Training, Block Institutes of Teacher Education, etc.

To revamp the existing teacher education ecosystem in this manner, massive government funds are crucial—indeed, the draft NEP acknowledges this, saying, "substantial public investment will be required", and that an estimate must be made "every year for the next 10 years and provided on priority". It does talk of philanthropic efforts too, but, largely, the funding must come from the government. The Centre needs to seriously relook its spending on teacher training. Else, the country educational development will remain stunted.

InsuringIVF

Private insurers' decision to cover IVF treatment is a good idea, public insurance cos must take a cue

ITH PRIVATE INSURANCE providers now looking to include in vitro fertility (IVF) treatments within their health insurance plans, millions in the country looking at IVF as an option for parenthood are likely to receive the news well. In the pilot stage, companies will offer IVF cover, linked to maternity cover, as part of high-sum-insured premium policies to pre-existing clients; it will be part of health plans that support outpatient care, emergency services, and maternity and neonatal care. To avoid frauds, the plan will include a sub-limit, and specify the number of embryo-transfer attempts, with the possibility of covering additional cycles, in the event that the first is unsuccessful.

At present, 27.5 million couples in India suffer from infertility—in percentage terms, this is about 10-15% of couples who are actively seeking a child. By 2020, this number is expected to rise a further 10%. Yet, owing to the high costs of IVF—a single IVF cycle in India can cost anywhere between ₹1.25 lakh and ₹2.5 lakh—not many are able to afford it. Often, this can lead to a couples seeking alternate fertility treatments from quacks, the efficacy of which is questionable, at best, and which can have tremendous health costs for women. The traditional reluctance to cover IVF under health insurance plans comes, apart from the high cost to the provider, from the fact that IVF is a planned event. However, the World Health Organisation defines infertility as a disease of the reproductive system, and is, therefore, a significant aspect of maternal health, which is covered under health plans. Globally, too, IVF is increasingly being covered under health insurance plans. The public insurance companies must take a cue from their private counterparts to make IVF insurance competitive.

BANK UNION

FROM AN ECONOMIC POINT OF VIEW, THE MOVE SERVES NO IMMEDIATE PURPOSE, AND COULD HAVE BEEN IMPLEMENTED IN PHASES TO AVOID DISRUPTIONS

Will bank mergers make a difference?

HE DECISION TO merge disparate PSBs into a set of 12 banks is quite a big step, and adds a new chapter and outlook to the concept of public sector banking. We had the Indradhanush Scheme in the earlier episode of banking reforms, in 2015, and after the successful merger of SBI with its associates, and that of Bank of Baroda with Dena Bank and Vijaya Bank, the government is more certain about the future path. From an economist's point of view, what does this mean? Merger of PSBs is often seen as a com-

promise as it does not change the way in which banking is conducted, and is analogous to merging various state departments. Ideologically, it is clear that ownership remains with the government; there would be no let-go on this aspect of banking. The staff count does not go down, which is a positive compared with mergers of private banks, where several jobs, especially at the senior level, are dispensed with. There are savings, in case branches are closed, and staff transferred, which is painful, but preserves tenure of staff. Besides, when it comes to PSBs, officers are used to transfers. But, the latest presentation is silent on how various senior positions have been reallocated in the last two episodes of mergers as there cannot be multiple risk, credit, treasury, operations, IT, etc, heads. Clearly, several staff may have lost their seniority. But, this can be rationalised as being necessary for the larger good. What is the larger good?

It is interesting that PSBs are still talked of as instruments used for meeting larger political goals. For instance, for MUDRAloans to SMEs targets have been set for PSB, but not for private banks. The one time settlement (OTS) scheme for SMEs spoke of holds for PSBs only; it is not obligatory for private banks. Also, when there is an assurance that some PSBs have agreed to link their lending rates to the repo rate, it is implicit that there are orders from above. Therefore, even today, PSBs are not as free as their private counterparts when it comes to



taking credit decisions at the macro level. Even the Jan Dhan exercise was driven by PSBs, as are loan waivers.

As the owner of these banks, the government has a right to decide these policies, but, it also means that the high command approach still holds, and will continue to do so for the merged banks. Hence, while the concept of the socalled 'phone banking', which can be catastrophic, has been abolished; banks still have to adhere to these guiding orders, and will not be independent like their private counterparts.

A lot of changes will be seen in the governance structures, such as appointments to the Board, remuneration to Board members, review by the Board of all designations above general manager, etc. But, given that Board members would still be driven by the overriding instructions from above, it may not mean much, if the basic pillars of business guidance are fixed.

Also, it has been reiterated that the chief risk officer position would be mandatory, and there would be outside recruitment at market pay. Does this mean that PSBs with a total officer staff of over 400,000 do not have the talent to fix 12 posts in these banks? There is already quite a bit of ill-feeling on lateral recruitment of some tenure-driven posts in PSBs; this announcement can be more demoralising. Ideally, bringing in a performance-linked bonus for high performers would have the sent right signals in the market, and raised morale. This is definitely required to enthuse the staff of the merged banks, especially since there will be substantial disruption on account of the mergers.

Curiously, the new mosaic talks of

willingness to pay non-official directors a higher sitting fee, but not the existing staff, who have built these banks over the years. This is something which should be addressed in course of time, and would also appeal to the Unions.

Now, coming to the idea of a merger, it must be realised that the overall balance sheet size cannot

It must be realised

that the overall

balance sheet size

cannot change

as there is still a

fixed set of assets

and liabilities

change with these mergers as there is still a fixed set of assets and liabilities. Statistically, ratios look better for the merged entity as it adds profits of strong banks to losses of weak banks. But, there is no new profit being generated anywhere. In fact, statistically, the ratios of NPA and capital adequacy of merged banks tend to be higher or lower than individual components of the entity.

Based on the dictum of one of the large business consultants in 1999-2000, we are following a model where the banking system has global, national, and more niche specific banks. The approach can be questioned in this modern age, where the focus is more on inclusive banking, with more sophistication in financial markets. Are we really saying that large banks created will be able to be in the USA what, say, Citi Bank is in India? There are regulatory barriers everywhere, and the approach, so far, has been to close down unprofitable foreign branches. In that case, what exactly are we talking of?

It has been argued that large banks with bigger capital can take larger exposures. But, is that what we want? RBI's

large exposure norms clearly want banks to lower their exposures to large borrowers in order to reduce concentration, and are being prodded to borrow from the bond market. In that case, this cannot be a goal for PSBs. Merging for the sake of merging banks, without changing the operational structures, may not necessarily lead to an optimal solution. True, any rationalisation in costs, like closing of branches or ATMs, can help the profit-and-loss account. But, the same could have been worked out between PSBs without such mergers, too, with, say, PNB not retaining a branch where OBC has one.

The fear, probably, with such large PSBs is that crises tend to get magni-

fied. This has been witnessed in some banks at different points of time, but, being a relatively rare occurrence, is less of an issue. Alternatively, there should ideally be no pushing of programmes by the with these mergers government on lending or even schemes like Jan Dhan, so that banks take independent decisions, based on commercial logic. At the extreme limit, the push for SME

lending, or affordable housing can germinate the seeds of a crisis (which may look unlikely today).

The timing of these mergers is also curious; almost all PSBs are struggling to come to terms with the existing NPA crisis. While NPA ratios have declined, at close to 10%, they are still very high. A large number of cases are pending with the IBC, which, in turn, quite expectedly, appears to have lost steam, with the realisation rates now coming down, after the initial success. Now, all would be working hard on these mergers, which take time to put together. The contrarian may just argue, quite

rightly, too, that there was really no immediate need of such big bang mergers—they could have been planned over a period of time to eschew disruption.

Fine-tuning solar policy instruments

India's rising solar ambitions necessitate creation of an indigenous, globallycompetitive manufacturing industry for solar panels



India has around six

lakh villages.

Getting up to 1MW

capacity installed

through a feed-in

tariff in a village

should not

be difficult



FOLLOWING ITS SUCCESS, the targets of India's solar energy programme have been rising. To fulfil these, it is essential that policy instruments evolve suitably. Getting solar power capacity to cross 25,000 MW in less than ten years through private investment, and to get tariffs to come down, from over ₹10 to less than ₹3 per unit, has been the result of the initial program design of inviting repeated tariff-based bids for supply of solar power through the grid to the distribution companies. By awarding contracts to multiple private developers over the years, a competitive industry structure has been created.

India has taken full advantage of the global decline in the price of solar panels, as the Chinese reduced their costs of manufacturing dramatically. However, as the rupee depreciates, or the Chinese raise prices, the tariff, discovered through bidding, would also rise. Accepting higher tariffs is not easy, in the Indian context, in public procurement. But, not accepting them in a transparent competitive bidding process, would only slow down, or even stall, the solar energy programme.

The time has also come to target manufacturing of solar panels, with full value addition in India. Getting investment into solar panel manufacturing needs confidence regarding sales and profits. It would take about two years to set up a plant and begin manufacturing, after land with infrastructure is in possession. One viable approach could be to invite bids for the supply of 1,500 MW of solar panels, made fully in India, every year, for four to five years, starting from 2021. Land, with environmental clearance, at a reasonable price, along with commitment of direct, cheap power supplyin a dedicated manufacturing Special Economic Zone (SEZ) should be on offer, as part of the invitation of bids. Cheap

electricity is essential, as energy constitutes the major cost of production of solar panels. The SEZ should have the special dispensation of having sales to the Indian market being considered as fulfilling its export obligation. The bidders, other than the lowest, could be given the offer of matching the price of L1, and get orders for the supply of 1,000 MW per year. It may still be the case that the market-discovered price is higher than that of Chinese panels; bids should still be accepted, and the bidding process continued in the following years, to bring prices further down. These solar panels may be used by government and its agencies, such as the Railways, defence and police establishments, and educa-

tional institutions. The issue of imposition of safeguard duties can be examined after there is manufacturing in India, with a competitive industry structure. Safeguard duties, at present, would be of little help. Such a comprehensive holistic approach would create a globally competitive manufacturing industry, without needing subsidies

from the budget. Otherwise, the present import-dependence would be perpetuated.

Rooftop solar and decentralised solar power generation in rural areas in the KW range is yet to gather momentum. Having no transmission costs, this is far more economical. The ideal way for achieving a breakthrough would be to go in for an attractive feed-in tariff regime, with the approval of the State Regulatory Commissions. Trying to invite thousands of bids at the lessthan-1MW range would end up being a non-starter. The distribution company

should indicate the points at which it would be willing to buy solar power on a first-come, first-served basis, as well as the maximum it can take at the receiving point, along with the power purchase agreement. The receiving points could be the consumer connection point, with a reversible meter, the distribution transformer, or the sub-station. This should cover urban as well as rural areas. A farmer could buy solar panels, investing on his own. Alternatively, an aggregator could put up the solar panels on the land or rooftops provided by the farmer, and take the major share of the feed-in tariff till such time as he has recovered his cost. With solar power, supply of electricity for irriga-

tion in the day, rather than in the night, as is the case now, could be assured.

A feed-in tariff of, say, ₹4.5 would be cost-advantageous to the distribution company as its actual cost of supply at the consumer end is well over ₹6 per unit. This would also be a major improvement from the net metering arrangement, where large consumer gets an effective feed-in tariff of around ₹8 per unit, and a

windfall gain, whereas the small consumer would get a lower rate of only around ₹5. Providing reliable 24x7 power supply would become easier.

India has around six lakh villages. Getting up to 1MW capacity installed through a feed-in tariff in a village should not be difficult. Thus, creation of 6 lakh MW capacity of solar power through private investment in the next five to seven years appears feasible. India could take global leadership in solar energy, as well as in moving towards carbon-free electricity.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

On Hong Kong's protest outcomes Kudos to the Hong Kongese that

the Hong Kong's Chief Executive had to finally bow down to the wishes of the protesters and agree to withdraw the draconian extradition bill brought in by her indicates that there is no more space for dictatorship and if people join together they can make all such dictatorshipminded leaders come to senses and follow the path of democratic values. Kudos to the people of Hong Kong who stood united for a reasonable cause and have won the battle against the tyrannical dictatorship of the Chinese government — Tharcius S Fernando, Chennai

Steve Smith blasts

Former Aussie captain, Steve Smith brought up his third Ashes doublecentury (211) Thus, in this Ashes series he has 589 runs (averages 147.25 and parallels with Don Bradman) despite sitting out three innings with a concussion. Though as world's best test batsman, Smith has been forever mesmerising. especially during his increasingly eccentric post-delivery antics, beside his dedication. Like other greats, in this innings, Smith also survived a drop by Jofra Archer on 65 and Jack Leach claiming his wicket on 118, but was a no-ball. The day was not for England and its cricketers seemed to have forgotten that 'catches win matches'. If Archer would've taken that difficult return catch in the second over Aussie would have put a low score. England had their chances, but couldn't quite take them. But one has not to be forgotten Even after this if Australia fails to retain the Ashes, then Smith will be as mystified to be on the losing side, just as Shane Warne was, with his 40 wickets in 2005. — Bidyut K Chatterjee, Faridabad

Write to us at feletters@expressindia.com

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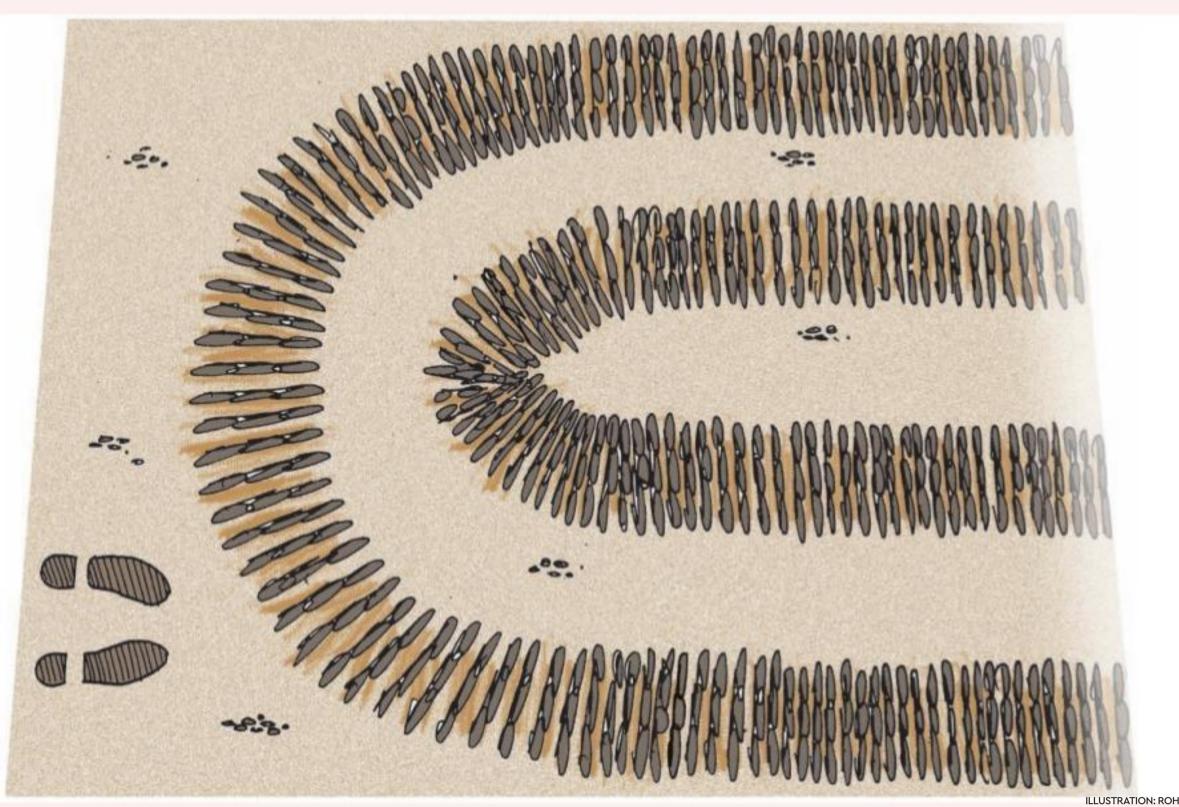
SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 7, 2019

China does a volte-face in Hong Kong

China's step down is a mystery. Is it because China cannot attempt a Tiananmen 2019 fearing global backlash? Has China been cornered because of the Reuters leaks? Is truce in Hong Kong tied to the impeding trade talks with the US? Does the withdrawal come as an acknowledgement of failure in Hong Kong? Or is it a genuine peace-dove to help defuse the situation?

T LAST, THE extradition Bill $whereby \, Hongkongers \, could \, be \,$ extradited to China for trial has been withdrawn. Chief Executive Carrie Lam announced the formal withdrawal of the Bill on September 4. The extradition Bill had triggered massive protests. While the withdrawal was the main demand, other demands came up in the course of the protests because of the manner in which the protests were handled by China. While the withdrawal is a good sign, it has neither come easy nor straightforward, with Hong Kong into 13 weeks of protests, and thousands of protesters teargassed, water-cannoned, beaten up and arrested. Nor has it come untainted, with strong evidence suggesting links between Beijing-Hong Kong police-Hong Kong triads (secret societies). The triads, it is said, infiltrated the protests and beat up the protesters for cash. Further, in a damaging report and a leak obtained by Reuters (news agency), it has emerged that China, not Hong Kong, calls the shots under the 'one country, two systems'principle. In effect, China's aboutturn has come too late, at the cost of China's considerable'loss of face'and credibility severely dented. China expects the protests to stop—but will they?

The withdrawal was announced after Reuters reported that China had declined the proposals made by Ms Lam earlier in July-August to withdraw the Bill and launch an inquiry into police action. Reuters said that Ms Lam's proposals had been submitted to a high-level body in Beijing, the Central Coordination Group



for Hong Kong and Macau Affairs led by Politburo Standing Committee member To add fuel to the fire, Reuters obtained

and released an audio recording of a closed-door meeting that Ms Lam addressed. In the 24-minute recording, Ms Lam appeared to suggest that she would quit if she had a choice and that her powers were, in fact, restricted. "The room," said Ms Lam, "the political room for the Chief Executive who, unfortunately, has to serve two masters by constitution, that is the central people's government and the people of Hong Kong, that political room for manoeuvring is very, very limited." Ms Lam indicated that Beijing is aware that the issue will 'ripple on' and that special arrangements were being made for October 1 (National Day, China) with "they (Beijing) and ourselves (Hong Kong) have (having) no expectations that we could clear up this thing before October 1."

So far, China had refused to step down.

ANURAG VISWANATH The author is a Singapore-based Sinologist, and adjunct fellow at the Institute of Chinese Studies, Delhi. Views are personal

In fact, the dominant narrative has been 'black hands' (literally, foreign powers, or the US) as behind the protests. China's 'black hands' claim is based on a meeting that took place in August 2019 between a US official and Hong Kong activists, including Joshua Wong. The US official, Julie Eadeh, is a political counsellor in the US Consulate. The pro-Beijing newspaper, Ta Kung Pao, released the diplomat's private information, including names of her children. The State Department stepped in to say that such meetings were routine, saying that US diplomats "meet regularly with a wide cross-section of people across Hong Kong and Macau."

Ironically, it is China that has been accused of not playing it fair. In July, critics alleged China's 'hand' in an attack on the protesters at Yuen Long in Northern Hong Kong. A mob dressed in white attacked the protesters dressed in black. Seasoned Hong Kong observers such as Yi-Zheng Lian (chief editor of the *Hong* Kong Economic Journal) suggested that the attacks were orchestrated by Beijing and carried out by Hong Kong's triads: 14K, Wo Shing Wo and Shui Fong.

It is entirely plausible that China misread the situation and failed to gauge that the protests were underpinned by genuine concerns regarding Hong Kong's future in

2047. That year, the arrangement of 'one country, two systems' under whose rubric Hong Kong reverted to China in 1997

expires. Hong Kong will lose its status as a

Special Administrative Region.

For China, Hong Kong was a grand experiment to prove to the world (and Taiwan) that China's authoritarianism was, in fact, benign. Hong Kong was to serve as the model easing Taiwan-China reunification. Today, Hong Kong's protests have upended the rulebook. They are massbased, not elitist, non-violent, not violent; and leaderless, rather than led by one leader. Hong Kong appears a Generation X version of a revolution where social media platforms such as Telegram (messaging app) and LIHKG (Hong Kong's Reddit) have been at play. Ultimately, it is the common man, the proletariat, out at the forefront in Hong Kong—nothing short

celebrate and democrats condone. While China has highlighted the

of a revolution, the kind that communists

withdrawal of the Bill, with China Daily saying "protesters now have no excuse to continue violence," China has acquiesced to only one of the five demands made by the protesters—who have, time and again, reiterated the holy grail of five demands: 'no compromise, no negotiation', as they say. The demands that Beijing has not met include independent enquiry into brutal police action, amnesty for those arrested, rescind on categorising the protesters as 'rioters' and universal suffrage. Ms Lam insists that enquiry into police action be handled by the Independent Police Complaints Council (IPCC), which the protesters disagree with. The protesters have responded to Beijing's withdrawal with 'five key demands, not one less'.

In response to the withdrawal of the Bill, the Speaker of the US House of Representatives Nancy Pelosi has thrown her support behind Hongkongers, saying: "The pro-Beijing leadership in Hong Kong must ensure a political system accountable to the people, including granting universal suffrage and investigating police violence."

But by any stretch of imagination, there are several unanswered questions. Who was responsible for the leaks—Ms Lam's report to Beijing, followed by the audio tape? Were the leaks an inside job? Hongkongers feel that Ms Lam has let Hong Kong down, and has little at stake with her family's British citizenship (husband and two sons). Hongkongers gossip that her older son works for Xiaomi, a Chinese company. A few months ago, Ms Lam was expected to grace the 150th anniversary of St Francis' Canossian (Ms Lam is an alumni). But how the mighty have fallen. Today, several alumni would rather not have her presence.

China's step down is a mystery given that a few weeks ago they were not above calling the protests 'near terrorism' and the protesters as 'terrorists'. Is it because China cannot attempt a Tiananmen 2019 fearing a global backlash? Has China been cornered to step down because of the Reuters leaks? Is truce in Hong Kong tied to the impeding trade talks with the US? Does the withdrawal come as an acknowledgement of failure in Hong Kong? Or is it a genuine peace-dove to help defuse the situation?

Hong Kong protesters continue to be suspicious of their government with little faith in the promises and of China's withdrawal of the extradition Bill which has conceded one out of five demands. For China, this is a big step down. But in the protesters math, it may be a case of asking for too much, for too little given.

Q1

FY19

FY18

FY20

DATA DRIVE

Q1FY20 GDP growth at a 25-quarter low (At 2011-12 prices; % chg, y-o-y)



Growth slows, recovery may take long

grew at 5%, the slowest in 25 quarters, the economic slowdown has deepened, and a broad-based and sustained recovery may take several more quarters. While GDP growth decelerated for five successive quarters, private consumption and manufacturing decelerations are particularly noticeable. Investment growth, too, continues to be low, and even services failed to maintain buoyancy. Private consumption, the bulwark of the

S REAL GDP in the three months to June

country's growth story in recent years, grew 3.1% in Q1FY20, a four-year low. In fact, this is not the first time that quarterly GDP and private consumption growth fell below 5%. In FY13, GDP growth was below 5% for two quarters—Q1 and Q4—and private consumption collapsed to (-)0.9% in Q1FY13.

Nominal GDP, too, slowed down to 8%, the slowest since Q3FY03, after considering the previous two series of national accounts. As nominal GDP growth is a proxy for growth in incomes, the slowdown will impact the tax revenue growth rate.

Much of the cyclical slowdown has affected sectors that are large employment generators, indicating that incomes and employment growth in these have suffered. Moreover, households have been dipping into their savings in the past, while leveraging themselves.

12

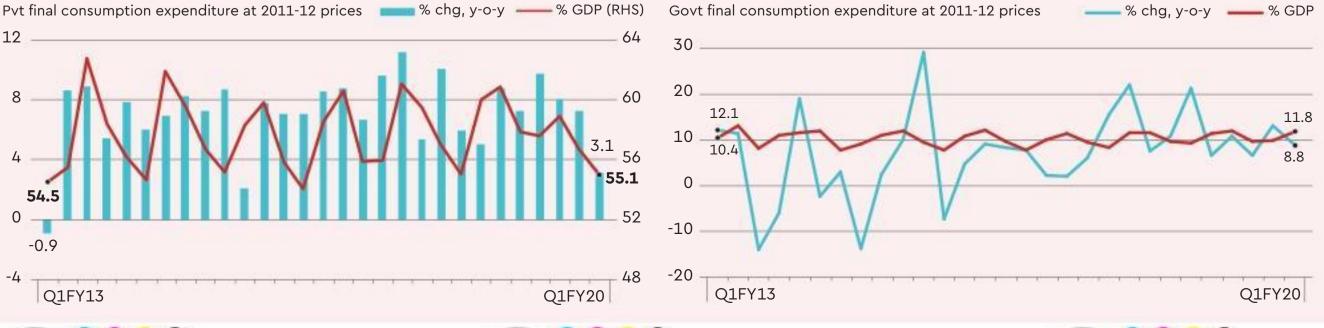
Q1FY13

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Private consumption growth slowest since Q3FY15



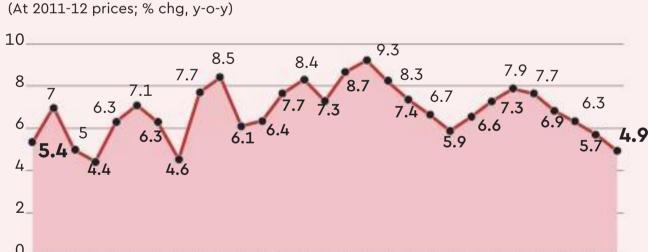
Growth in government consumption, too, slows down



GVA growth falls below 5% for the first time since Q4FY14

FY16

FY17

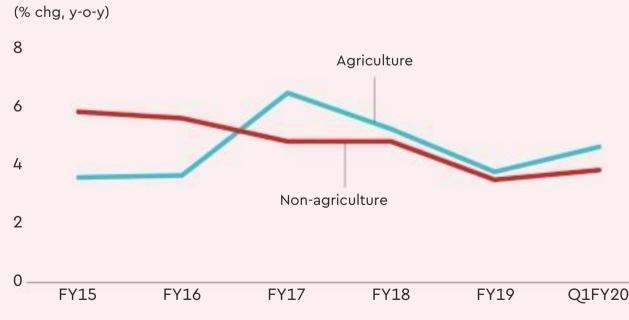


Rural income growth remains sluggish

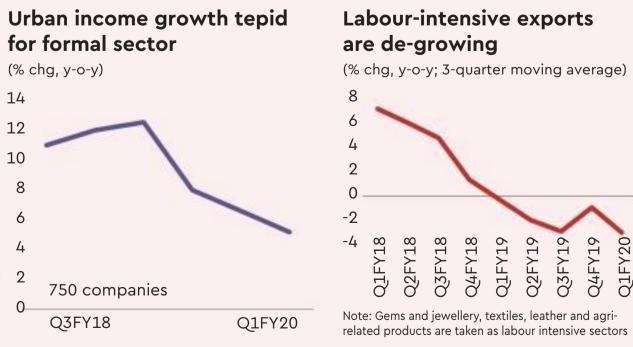
FY15

FY13

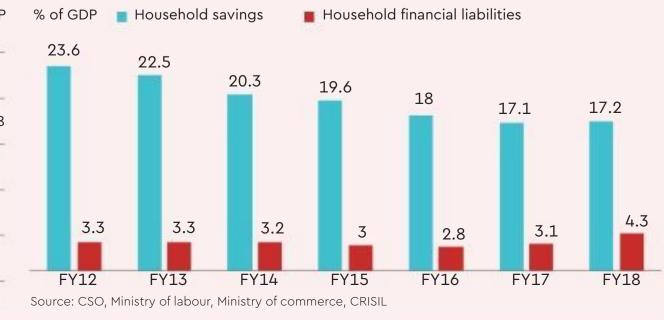
FY14



are de-growing



Savings are dipping, liabilities are on the rise



THE EDITORIAL PAGE

WORDLY WISE

Only God, who appointed me, will remove me — NOT THE MDC, NOT THE BRITISH. ONLY GOD

WILL REMOVE ME! — ROBERT MUGABE

The Indian EXPRESS

∽ FOUNDED BY ∽ RAMNATH GOENKA

BECAUSE THE TRUTH INVOLVES US ALL

RATES AND RISKS

Linking floating rate loans to external benchmarks might improve transmission. But there are challenges

'N AN ATTEMPT to improve the transmission of monetary policy, the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) has mandated banks to link all new floating rate loans extended to both retail consumers as well as micro and small enterprises to an external benchmark next month onwards. Banks have the option of choosing the external benchmark which could be either the reporate or the yield on the three-or six-month treasury bill or any other benchmark interest rate published by the Financial Benchmarks India Private Limited (FBIL). This move comes after repeated attempts by the RBI, such as the shift to the marginal cost of funds based lending rate regime, have failed to improve the transmission of monetary policy in India. As was pointed out by the monetary policy committee in its last meeting, even as the policy rate was slashed by 75 basis points between February and June 2019, lending rates (weighted average) declined by only 29 basis points during the same period. While the shift to this new framework might lead to faster transmission, it poses significant challenges.

For banks, mandating external benchmarking of lending rates could lead to interest rate risks. As external benchmarking will sever the link between bank deposit and lending rates, banks interest margins will come under pressure in a scenario where interest rates are falling, as lending rates will fall faster than deposit rates. Banks may thus want to price in this risk by increasing the spread they have been allowed to charge over the benchmark rate. This may lower the expected benefit from shifting to external benchmarking. The new framework may also lead to banks wanting to link their deposit rates to an external benchmark. This will not please depositors as they may prefer the option of having fixed rates. There is also the issue of small savings instruments to contend with. As rates on these instruments tend to be more sticky in nature compared to bank deposit rates, banks will face greater competition when interest rates are on a downward trajectory, which could lead to a flight of deposits. Then there is also the issue of which benchmark to adopt. There may be a preference for the reporate as yields on T-bills tend to be more volatile in nature. Sudden shocks to the system could push up short-term yields sharply, which will then have to be transmitted to borrowers.

Instead of mandating external benchmarking, a preferable option would have been to allow banks to gradually move towards this framework. The State Bank of India has already linked its savings deposit and short-term loans to the repo rate. Proposals for linking bulk deposits have also been mooted. Such voluntary moves could have, over time, forced others to follow suit.

IMPERFECT ICON

Robert Mugabe leaves behind a contested legacy which offer insights into building of post-colonial states in Africa

OBERT GABRIEL MUGABE, who ruled Zimbabwe for nearly four decades before he was ousted by the military in 2017, was a representative figure among Africa's anti-colonial nationalists. Like Gamal Abdel Nasser in Egypt, Patrice Lumumba in Congo, Kenneth Kaunda of Zambia, Julius Nyerere, Jomo Kenyatta in Kenya, Leopold Senghor in Senegal, Ben Bella in Algeria, Kwame Nkrumah in Ghana, Mugabe too had led his country to freedom, promising to remove poverty and usher in prosperity. But, like some of his illustrious contemporaries and predecessors, he too overstayed in office and turned into an authoritarian ruler. As the promise of liberation faded and the country began to fall apart, Mugabe, almost as if following a pattern, centralised power, banned all opposition and ruled with an iron-fist, until his luck ran out and he had to leave office.

Announcing Mugabe's demise, Zimbabwe President Emmerson Mnangagwa called him "an icon of liberation, a pan-Africanist who dedicated his life to the emancipation and empowerment of his people. His contribution to the history of our nation and continent will never be forgotten." Every word is true, but so is the sharp criticism in many quarters that Mugabe rule left Zimbabwe in ruins. Soon after he negotiated independence from Britain in 1980, Mugabe spoke about reconciliation with the white minority that had oppressed the native communities, and of building a multi-racial society. This was in sharp contrast to many African nationalist governments which had sought to rebuild their society and economy by expelling minority communities that controlled the resources. However, Mugabe's reconciliation project was stymied by the reality on the ground, where almost all arable land was owned by the white minority while its former colonial ruler, Britain, refused reparations to facilitate distribution of resources. Zimbabwe's largely agrarian economy collapsed in the wake of land seizures in the last decade, leading to hyper inflation, corruption and collapse of the state itself.

Mugabe's record mirrors similar failures elswehere in the African continent, where a host of nationalists had failed to translate the imagination of the anti-colonial struggles they led to building successful democracies. Ideas like Pan Africanism, African socialism, Pan Arabism and Negritude could not transcend the logic of capitalism and the nationstate. The transition from colony to republic was also complicated by Cold War politics and the reluctance of the former colonial powers to let go of their influence. The projects of nationalisation and socialisation of resources of these leaders could not meet the needs and aspirations of their people. The contradictions that emerged out of the clash between ideals and reality turned many of these leaders into authoritarian rulers, if not outright despots, tainting their legacies in enduring ways.

THE TRUE ORIGINAL

The game has thrown up someone like Steve Smith after years, and the cricketing fraternity doesn't know how to respond

OW TO GET Steve Smith out" is the cricketing question of our times. Should the bowlers give up trying to get him out lbw? Should they abort the bouncer tactic? Should they give up bowling around off stump? That most experts reckon the best way to bowl to him is at the fifth or sixth stump, way outside off stump, with monotonous regularity, hour after hour, is ridiculous to say the least. But that's the effect he has had. In just his third game after the comeback, he has already become the highest run-getter this year in world cricket.

Cricket has thrown up a true original after years, and it seems the cricketing fraternity doesn't know how to respond. If the conclusion is now to abandon the game's age-old wisdom, gained over 130 years, of either attacking the stumps or teasing the edge by bowling in the off-stump corridor, then there can be no greater compliment to Smith. The soul of his art seems to be distraction. It's an effect that bowlers with unusual actions usually have on batsmen. The lack of rhythm in a strange action puts off batsmen. Smith seems to have

that effect on the bowlers, who can't find a rhythm to his batting that they can prey on. He can drive off the back foot. He can pull off the front foot. He can hit the ball on the legs inside-out to the off if the mood seizes him. The English, in particular, seem to have given up and are waiting for boredom to get him out. The best ball, probably, is still the leg cutter from the off-stump line that paid them rich dividends last time he was in England. But caught in his whirlpool of distraction, they have abandoned that weapon and are bleeding runs. The English crowd came to boo him. They leave the arena in a daze.

Drawing a vital line

Only way of protecting Assam's indigenous population is through a legal regime reserving land, resources

Upamanyu Hazarika

THE NATIONAL REGISTER of Citizens in the national debate and discussion has been seen only through the prism of the foreigners who have been excluded from the list. The "human rights" of those excluded has been the primary cause for concern. What has been forgotten and overlooked is that there is virtually no discussion on why the NRC was necessitated, and for whom.

Large scale and continuous migration through a porous border, primarily in quest of land and government-sponsored benefits, is the primary cause. It has seen an exponential increase since the 1980s, Assam being the easiest place to get proof of citizenship. The estimates of the number of infiltrators have shown a consistent increase over time (1992, 32 lakh, state government; 2004, 50 lakh, UPA government; 2016, 80 lakh, NDA government) and they comprise over 25 per cent of the population of the state (3.11 crore, population of Assam, 2011 census). These are only the post March 25, 1971

migrants, as infiltrators in Assam after Independence and upto this date are granted citizenship (unlike the rest of India), which would be an additional 10 per cent of the population. Three independent studies have estimated that by 2040 to 2051, the indigenous people in Assam will become a minority under the weight of the Bangladeshi influx. The Northeast and Assam are a treasure trove of ethnic diversity — out of 525 ethnic communities in India, 240 are in the Northeast and Assam has 115. The size of such communities varies from 5,000 (Tai Phake, Tai Khamyang etc) to 60 lakh for Koch Rajbongshis (the largest ethnic group). But all of these communities, individually and collectively, face the threat of extinction at the hands of Bangladeshi immigrants.

A significant section of self-described liberals shows sympathy for infiltrators who are economic migrants, and not for the small indigenous groups who face extinction. Only a few days ago, two senior advocates, Raju Ramachandran and C Uday Singh, in these columns, made a strong case for retaining all

Three independent studies have estimated that by 2040 to 2051, the indigenous people in Assam will become a minority under the weight of the Bangladeshi influx. The Northeast and Assam are a treasure trove of ethnic diversity — out of 525 ethnic communities in India, 240 are in the Northeast and Assam has 115. The size of such communities varies from 5,000 (Tai Phake, Tai Khamyang etc) to 60 lakh for Koch Rajbongshis (the largest ethnic group). But all

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convenient.

migrants. Charity at others' expense is

The NRC, from all indications, will exclude less than 20 per cent of all the foreigners staying in Assam, which will legitimise Bangladeshi infiltrators becoming permanent citizens and subsequently turning into a majority. Thousands of instances, reported in the local press on a daily basis, have shown large-scale subversion of the NRC process by the immigrant population, but self-serving political leaders', their gaze locked on their vote banks, have turned a blind eye.

Given an earlier reluctant Congress government, it is the prodding of the Supreme Court, laying down timelines and monitoring the process, that has seen completion of the NRC process. The inorganic intervention of the Supreme Court making one person the single point of responsibility, in the face of reluctance of the political executive (with the BJP also dragging its feet), has resulted in huge discrepancies in the NRC, with a large number of foreigners enabled to enter their names. The NRC procedure looks perfect on paper, but is riddled with huge flaws evident from two glaring facts — exclusion from the NRC draft in border districts (which have seen the highest population growth) is far lower at an average of 7.5 per cent against a state average of 12.15 per cent. Those declared foreigners through an adjudication process by the Foreigner Tribunals have, however, passed the citizenship test in the administrative process under the NRC. In fact, foreigners housed in detention camps have been verified to be citizens and said to be residing in their homes by the ground personnel of the NRC. In the border districts and migrantdominated areas, many of Bangladeshi origin were involved in the NRC and quite a few of them, including school teachers, were found to have been adjudicated to be foreigners by the tribunals and superior courts.

The NRC inclusion process had rigorous standards of furnishing a prescribed set of documents, followed up by a parallel verification process of co-relating data of those descended from a common ancestor (family tree verification). But the entire process fell flat as field verification — which was resorted to when documentation was incomplete, not found and/or appeared to be forged — did not verify documents. Rather, field personnel would record the statements of witnesses, neighbours of the applicant, vouching for the citizenship of the applicant. Surprisingly, while all the records of the applicants were digitised, the field verification reports, crucial for large-scale inclusion of doubtful applicants, were not digitised and consequently not verified or verifiable by the superiors.

The Supreme Court on August 28, 2018, being cognisant of these discrepancies, directed a 10 per cent sample re-verification of those included in the list. However, the government and the state NRC coordinator did not show any enthusiasm. And the court was proved right in as much as nearly 10 months after the final draft, the NRC authorities, after gathering the list of declared foreigners, their descendants, etc from the government, proceeded to exclude them on June 26, 2019 by an additional list of 1.2 lakh, clearly demonstrating the failure of the NRC identification process. The court, however, chose to proceed without re-verification.

The only means to protect indigenous people, to the extent possible, is to take a leaf out of other Northeastern states, which are protected from such infiltration by virtue of legal regimes reserving land, trade opportunities, jobs and other resources for the local indigenous population acting as a disincentive to economic migration from Bangladesh. As a commissioner appointed by the Supreme Court in 2015 on the State of Border and Infiltration from Bangladesh, I had strongly proposed and recommended that the only means of protecting the indigenous population in Assam is through a legal regime reserving land and resources for them.

The writer is Senior Advocate and Commissioner appointed by the Supreme Court on the Indo-Bangla border

THE ABBOTTABAD MYSTERY

How did the Americans find Osama bin Laden — is the question

KHALED AHMED

PRIME MINISTER IMRAN Khan said in Washington in August that Pakistan had informed the US about Osama bin Laden's presence in Abbottabad and thought that it was therefore unfair on the part of the US to covertly attack Abbottabad and take out the al Qaeda leader without informing Pakistan.

But an ex-head of Inter-Services Intelligence (ISI) General (retd) Asad Durrani, talking to AS Dulat, India's former special director of the Intelligence Bureau and former chief of the Research and Analysis Wing (R&AW) from 1999 to 2000, in the book *Spy* Chronicles (2017), came out with more detail about how the Americans found that bin Laden was living in Abbottabad.

"I have no doubt that a retired Pakistani officer who was in intelligence walked in and told the Americans. I won't take his name because I can't prove it and also I don't want to give him any publicity. How much of the 50 million dollars he got, who knows. But he is missing from Pakistan. I should know."

After this, Major General Asif Ghafoor, director of Inter-Services Public Relation (ISPR) of the media wing of the Pakistan Army, stated: "Lt Gen Asad Durrani, retired, is being called to the GHQ on 28 May 2018. He will be asked to explain his position".

Who was the officer who took "50 million dollars" to sneak on bin Laden? Will his name be forever hidden from the public? Journalist Amir Mir, author of Talibanisation of Pakistan: From 9/11 to 26/11 and Beyond (2010) and The True Face of Jihadis (2006), in his blog, dug out the name too; but even then the discussion will not stop about who informed the US

Who was the officer who took '50 million dollars' to sneak on bin Laden? Will his name be forever hidden from the public? Journalist Amir Mir. author of

'Talibanisation of Pakistan: From 9/11 to 26/11' and 'The True Face of Jihadis', in his blog, dug out the name too; but even then the discussion will not stop about who informed the US about bin Laden's house near Pakistan's prestigious Pakistan Military Academy.

about bin Laden's house near the prestigious Pakistan Military Academy.

Mir relied on US Pulitzer Prize-winning journalist Seymour Hersh "who had claimed on May 10, 2015 that a former Pakistani intelligence official had informed the Americans about the Abbottabad hideout of the Al Qaeda chief". The Hersh story was published in the London Review of Books and claimed that the May 2, 2011 raid by the US Navy SEALs was planned by the Americans "with full knowledge and cooperation of the Pakistan Army and the Inter-Services Intelligence (ISI), which at that time were headed by General Ashfaq Kayani and Lt Gen

Hersh had stated: "In August 2010, a former senior Pakistani intelligence officer approached Jonathan Bank, then the CIA station chief at the US Embassy in Islamabad. He offered to tell the CIA where to find Osama bin Laden in return for the [head money] reward that the United States had offered in 2001. The CIA did not believe him, and the intelligence agency's headquarters sent out a polygraph team which believed the Pakistani intelligence official only after he had passed the test."

Ahmed Shuja Pasha".

Amir Mir adds: "The former intelligence official and his family were subsequently smuggled out of Pakistan and relocated in Washington [before the Osama hideout was raided]. He [the former Pakistani intelligence

official] is now a consultant for the CIA". Apart from General Durrani, there was another officer who got into the habit of expressing views that were not liked. Former ISI chief Lt Gen Ziauddin Butt, cashiered abruptly from his job by Army Chief General Musharraf, had got into the habit of making "revealing" statements. American journalist and novelist David Ignatius revealed in 2012 that Butt had stated to him that "the Abbottabad compound was used by Intelligence Bureau" and that a report in the Pakistani press had quoted Butt as saying that bin Laden's stay at Abbottabad was "arranged by Brigadier (retd) Ijaz Shah, during 2004-2008, on General Pervez

Musharraf's instructions".

Amir Mir asserts: "Well-informed intelligence circles in...Rawalpindi concede that the vital information about the bin Laden compound was actually provided to the Americans by none other than an ISI official — Brigadier Usman Khalid. The retired brigadier, who has already been granted American citizenship along with his family members, had also persuaded Shakeel Afridi, a Pakistani physician, to conduct a fake polio campaign in the Bilal Town area, Abbottabad to help the CIA hunt down Osama".

Wikipedia adds: "The Abbottabad Commission Report is a judicial inquiry paper authored and submitted by the Abbottabad Commission, as led by Justice Javaid Iqbal, to the Prime Minister of Pakistan on 4 January 2013. The report investigates the circumstances surrounding the death of Osama bin Laden in Abbottabad. Upon submission, the report was immediately classified by the Prime Minister as secret and its findings were not made public."

> The writer is consulting editor, Newsweek Pakistan

SEPTEMBER 7, 1979, FORTY YEARS AGO



JANATA GOVT OUITS THE 17-MONTH-OLD JANATA government in the Union Territory of Arunachal Pradesh, headed by P K Thungon, quit office following mass desertions from the party, reducing the government support in the 30-member Assembly to a minority of four. Thungon tendered the resignation of his ministry to the Lt Governor, R N Haldipur at Itanagar, capital of Arunachal, shortly after mid-day. While accepting the resignation, the Lt Governor asked him to continue in office till alternative arrangements were made.

Kashmir In Havana PRESIDENT ZIAUL HAQ OF Pakistan brought

up the question of Kashmir in his address to the non-aligned conference in Havana. He said, "Pakistan is determined to seek the resolution of the dispute regarding the future of Jammu and Kashmir in accordance with the relevant United Nations resolutions and the spirit of the Simla agreement. A just and peaceful solution of this problem will usher in a new era of cooperation and amity in South Asia".

PRICES SHOOT UP

THE PRICES OF essential food items have shot up by 10 to 20 per cent in just the last 10 days or so. A survey of retail shops at Karol Bagh, Chandni Chowk, Daryaganj, Bhogal and INA Market reveals that the price of atta, maida, sugar, ghee, cooking oil, lentils and detergents have shot up.

STREAK ACT

SOME STUDENTS OF Delhi University's St Stephens College were caught with their pants down by the police last night. A group of 50 to 60 boys from the college danced sang and stripped in front of the Miranda House girls hostel around midnight. A bright moon and the streetlight made the boys' revelry very visible to girls who came rushing on to the balcony to see what it was all about Some boys stripped completely while others shouted naughty limericks.

—THE GUARDIAN

THE INDIAN EXPRESS, SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 7, 2019

THE IDEAS PAGE

The problem of skilling India

India's employment crisis calls for more government expenditure in education, adequate training



AND VIHANG JUMLE

PRIME MINISTER NARENDRA Modi, in his recent Independence Day speech, said, "We need to worry about population explosion". These words stand in stark contrast to his previous references to India's demographic dividend where the country's population was seen as an asset. This shift reflects a new awareness, according to which demography brings a dividend only if the youth is trained properly. Without proper training, instead of benefits, the country gets massive joblessness — at least, this is what common sense suggests. Reality is more complicated.

A minimum of eight million new job seekers enter the jobs market every year. In 2017, only 5.5 million had been created, and the situation is worsening: Unemployment rate is the highest in 45 years today. The Indian youth has become the first casualty, with the unemployment rate reaching 34 per cent among the 20-24-year-olds in the first quarter of 2019 – it was 37.9 per cent among the urban lot, according to the CMIE. Official sources from the government of India do not give very different data: According to the last 2018 Periodic Labour Force Survey (PLFS), the unemployment rate among the urban 15-29year-olds (a very large bracket) was 23.7 per cent. One may hypothesise that this pervasive joblessness was due to the poor training of the youth as only seven per cent of the people surveyed in the framework of the PLFS declared any formal or informal training.

But there is a paradox here: According to a recent survey, 48 per cent of Indian employers reported difficulties filling job vacancies due to talent shortage. The worst affected sector — which is also one of the strong points of India's economy — has been Information Technology (IT), where 1,40,000 skilled techies could not be recruited in 2018 despite the employers' efforts (a high proportion of the 5,00,000 job offers that had been made that year). Indeed, the CMIE reports show that the more educated Indians are, the more likely they are to remain unemployed too. The last PLFS for 2018 revealed that 33 per cent of the formally trained 15-29-year-olds were jobless.

The Modi government assumed that this problem crystallised because the trained youth were not well-trained enough. Hence, the "Skill India" programme, whose objective was "to train a minimum of 300 million skilled people by the year 2022". In 2014, Modi created a Ministry of Skill Development and Entrepreneurship to harmonise training processes, assessments, certification and outcomes and, crucially, to develop Industrial Training Institutions (ITIs) — the building blocks of this endeavour. The Executive Committee monitoring the mission gathered representatives of nine ministries, as vocational training was seen at the intersection of different domains, including agriculture, information technology, human resources development.

Modi, who chaired the governing council and announced the setting up of 1,500 new ITIs and 50,000 Skill Development Centres, committed himself to "Skill India" in eloquent terms: "Today, the world and India need a skilled workforce. I also want to

create a pool of young people who are able

STAGNATED AND OFTEN LIE UNUSED Budgetary allocations for PMKVY (in Rs crore) 3,000

FUNDS FOR PMKVY HAVE

Actual/Revised Estimates Budget estimates *The figures for 2016-17 and 2017-18 are actuals and those for 2018-19 are revised estimates *Source: PLFS 2017-18*

CR Sasikumar

But the real problem lies elsewhere: Those who have been trained don't find jobs. The number of those who have benefited from the Skill India scheme has increased, from 3,50,000 in 2016-17 to 1.6 million in 2017-18, but the percentage of those who could find a job upon completion of their training has dropped from more than 50 per cent to 30 per cent. If one focuses only on the PMKVY, the results are even more disappointing. Responding to a question in the Rajya Sabha in March 2018, the then minister for skill development, Dharmendra Pradhan, told the House that in the framework of this programme 4.13 million people had been trained, but only 6,15,000 (15 per cent) of them got a job.

These limitations may be explained from three points of view.

First, the training was not good enough and this is why the employability rate remains very low. Second, while the government expected that some of the PMKVYtrainees would create their own enterprise, only 24 per cent of the 6,15,000 mentioned above started their business. And out of them, only 10,000 applied for MUDRA loans —a drop in the ocean. Third, and more importantly, India's joblessness issue is not only a skills problem, it is representative of the lack of appetite of industrialists and SMEs for recruiting. The decline of the investment rate is a clear indication that the demand is weak —hence huge idle capacities — and investing is not an easy thing to do anyway because of the limited access to credit that the accumulation of Non-Performing Assets has generated.

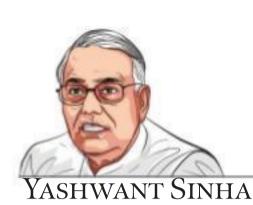
Skill India will not be enough to create jobs if the slowdown continues. But in the long run, Skill India will also not be enough if government expenditures in education remain low and if, therefore, the ground isn't prepared for proper training. In fact, under the Modi government, allocation for school education has declined from 2.81 per cent of the budget in 2013-14 to 2.05 per cent in 2018-19. It was above 3 per cent during UPA II.

Jaffrelot is senior research fellow at CERI-Sciences Po/CNRS, Paris, professor of Indian Politics and Sociology at King's India Institute, London; Jumle is an associate at Ikigai Law, New Delhi

Misunderstanding Nehru-Patel

"The prime minister (Boris Johnson) sees a route to a hard Brexit by resigning and forcing opponents to answer the question they have yet to find an answer

They often disagreed with each other. Yet they worked closely, presented a united front



WHAT THE OTHERS SAY

for: who leads the rebel alliance?"

THE "HIGHLY educated" and "learned" people who rule the country today are teaching us a new history of India. I am not merely referring to the assertions that in ancient India, we had all the scientific and technological inventions of today like airplanes, rockets, TVs, spacecrafts and artificial intelligence but to their fulminations about the more recent events surrounding our Independence, the integration of the princely states and the roles played by Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru and the Deputy Prime Minister and Home Minister Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel. Their version is that whatever the Sardar handled was a great success and whatever was handled by Nehru turned out to be a great blunder. Thus, while they are trying to co-opt the

Nehru is being projected as a villain. I recall the angry reaction of the home minister in the Lok Sabha during the debate on J&K when Manish Tewari of the Congress tried to assert that it was Nehru who was responsible for the accession to India of the princely states of Junagadh, J&K and Hyderabad. The moment Tewari mentioned Hyderabad, the home minster sprang to his feet to assert angrily that it was Patel who was responsible for the accession of Hyderabad, not Nehru. Tewari did not respond. I wish he had and said that the home minister was absolutely right because by the same logic the "credit" for doing what was being done in J&K must go to him rather than the prime minister.

Sardar as one of their own (what an irony),

Sardar Patel was 14 years older than Nehru and was a leader of the masses in his own right. Though Nehru had become the prime minister, the Sardar, as deputy prime minister and home minister was almost, if not truly, his equal. The recent comparison which comes to mind is that of Atal Bihari Vajpayee and L K Advani during the 1998-2004 period when they were both in government. Like Vajpayee and Advani, Nehru and Patel had their differences, sometimes very sharp ones. But the beauty of their relationship was, like in the relationship between Vajpayee and Advani, these differences were always resolved through discussions, or, in the case of Nehru and Patel, through the Mahatma's intervention. At times the differences became so sharp that they led to Patel offering his resignation from the government, to be followed by Nehru making a similar offer. They also played politics with each other, especially when it came to party affairs or, for instance, the choice of the first president of India. Patel, who had a better grip over the party, invariably won these contests. Do you recall the Loh Purush and Vikas Purush episode when the then BJP President Venkaiah Naidu made a comparison between Advani and Vajpayee and described Advani as Loh Purush and Vajpayee as Vikas Purush? Vajpayee told Naidu that the party could march forward under the leadership of the Loh Purush and left the meeting.

Yet, despite their differences, Patel continued in government until his death and even accepted Nehru as his leader after the death of Gandhi. The Constitution of India was still being

drafted and the country had decided to adopt the Westminster type of democracy with a prime minister and his cabinet which was supposed to be collectively responsible to Parliament. The Constitution was still a work in progress and so was the system of collective responsibility and the authority of the PM in the cabinet. Nehru was obviously keen to establish his position as primus interpares in the cabinet and wanted his view to prevail. This often led to differences between Nehru and Patel as indeed between them and the other ministers. But is this not natural? In every cabinet there are differences among the ministers and between them and the prime minister on issues which are finally resolved and a joint front presented in Parliament and outside.

There is enough material on record to support those who are interested in only highlighting the differences between these two great men just as there is enough material to support that they got along very well. But both these views represent the two extremes. The truth lies in the middle: Nehru and Patel jointly played a decisive role in the making of Independent India Those who contend otherwise do not understand the working of the cabinet system. So whether it was the accession of J&K to India or that of Hyderabad after the "police action", there were many rounds of negotiations, ups and downs, harrowing moments and differences of opinion among the decision-makers. Both Nehru and Patel played a vital role in the decision-making process. Governor General Lord Mountbatten also played a key role.

Patel was also party to the idea of plebiscite wherever there was dispute – Junagadh, J&K and Hyderabad. This was the clear position of the government of India then. It was Pakistan which was constantly running away from it. Patel did not resign from the cabinet when it was decided to refer the J&K issue to the UN or when ceasefire was accepted by India. He might have had his reservations, but went along with the decisions.

It is equally clear from contemporary accounts that Patel would not have objected if J&K had acceded to Pakistan but he was absolutely clear that Hyderabad should accede to India.

All the decisions in those tumultuous days were taken either in the defence committee of the cabinet headed by Mountbatten or in the cabinet. Patel was a member of both. He expressed his views freely, frankly and at times, even bluntly But always went along with the final decision taken, as did Nehru and the others.

It is easy for us to sit in judgement today after 73 years over the great men who fought for India's independence and then ruled the country. Judgement based on hindsight is a dangerous game played by especially those who are in a hurry to use history selectively to prove their prejudiced

view of it. Let us leave history to the historians.

The writer is a former Union external affairs and finance minister

taken a resolve to enhance the skill development at a highly rapid pace, I want to accomplish this". Clearly, Modi saw "Skill India" as a plan

to create jobs. My brothers and sisters, having

complementary to another flagship scheme he launched in 2014 — "Make in India", a policy inviting foreign investors, and, as a way to train entrepreneurs (as evident from the name of the ministry in charge of "Skill

Besides the creation of more courses and institutes of vocational training, the main innovation of "Skill India" consisted in integrating "vocational training classes linked to the local economy" with formal education from class nine onwards in at least 25 per cent of the schools and higher education bodies. A very important aspect of Skill India was its PPP character: Companies were requested to "earmark 2 per cent of their payroll bill (including for contract labour) for skill development initiatives". In parallel, the ITIs were supposed to "tie up with industry in the relevant trades to improve placement opportunities for candidates". One of the most innovative dimensions

of Skill India was the Pradhan Mantri Kaushal Vikas Yojana under which the training fees was paid by the government. The PMKVY's budget was approximately Rs 12,000 crore for four years (2016-2020). Its main tool was the "short-term training", which could last between 150 and 300 hours, and which included some placement assistance by Training Partners upon successful completion of their assessment by the candidates.

While the intentions of Skill India are commendable, the scheme falls short of the initial objectives. The target of this scheme was to reach out to 300 million young people by 2022, but only a mere 25 million had been trained under this scheme by the end of 2018. Partly due to mismanagement and partly due to the fact that funds available for "Skill India" were either not spent sufficiently quickly because of a lack of candidates — or too little was spent. The money problem is evident from the graph and from the PLF Survey mentioned above which showed that, in 2018, only 16 per cent of the youth who had received "formal training were funded by the government".

While the intentions of Skill India are commendable, the scheme falls short of the initial objectives. The target of this scheme was to reach out to 300 million young people by 2022, but only a mere 25 million have been trained under this scheme by the end of 2018. Partly due to mismanagement and partly due to the fact that funds available for "Skill India" were either not spent sufficiently quickly because of a lack of candidates, or because of a paucity of funds.

Writer who was a listener

Kiran Nagarkar's oeuvre owes much to his interest in people and their stories

KUNAL RAY

I ALWAYS thought of Kiran Nagarkar as a mythical being. Growing up, I saw little of Nagarkar on television or in print. Many writers were featured on a regular basis and there were long commentaries about their work. Some publications would dedicate weekend issues to celebrating the genius of a writer. But there was no Nagarkar. Or, did I miss

I read Ravan & Eddie during my school days. I understood the novel much later while pursuing my undergraduate education in Pune. It demands a political consciousness or the appreciation of a context, which a school-goer might not always have. My proximity to Mumbai and later familiarity with the city's history aided my reading of this remarkable novel.

Having said that, Nagarkar's bawdy and iconoclastic humour is never easy. His selfmockery is evident, Ravan is Hindu, Eddie is Catholic. Nagarkar's novel also takes you inside the congested *chawls* of Mumbai where the private and the public constantly intersect. It is one of the best Mumbai novels that captures the city's zeitgeist, while also addressing the ascent of conservative religious forces that were undermining the cosmopolitan, multi-ethnic character of the city. Nagarkar was threatened with consequences. His play *Bedtime Story*, written soon after the Emergency and based on episodes from the Mahabharata, was banned for years and released not too long ago, in 2015. In God's Little Soldier, Nagarkar holds forth on his pet peeve, religious fanaticism.

For anyone interested in English writing in India, *Cuckold* is unmissable. It is Nagarkar's magnum opus and a work of great artistic imagination. Cuckold weaves together history, mythology and poetry into a compelling narrative about Meerabai's (Green Eyes in the novel) love story told through a fictional character, Maharaj Kumar, who is quite anachronistic to the feudal setting of the novel. There have been very few attempts in Indian writing in English that would parallel the scope of Cuckold. It is a watershed for historical fiction written in English in India.

Cuckold was sadly eclipsed by the phenomenal success of Arundhati Roy's The God of Small Things, which appeared in the same year and also went on to win the Booker Prize. Would Cuckold be treated differently if the two novels had appeared at different intervals? Good writing is never time bound. It is engaged in constant self-renewal as we have seen with Cuckold. The question, however, remains — who else could have written a Cuckold? This perhaps applies to a lot

of Nagarkar's other writing, including his rendering of Indian mystic and poet Kabir's life in a contemporary setting in his last novel, *The Arsonist*. To me, his works evidence a strong bilingual sensibility, which is paramount to understand and discern the complexities of our nation. This makes Nagarkar unique amongst his peers writing in English in India. The critic George Lukacs draws parallels between the epic and the novel. I would like to think of *Cuckold* in that respect.

I first met Nagarkar at a literary festival in Pune, which I had helped organise. In our first meeting, Nagarkar became Kiran and the facade of the serious and taciturn writer disappeared. He asked my opinion about his books. I wondered why was he asking. Why should it matter to a celebrated author what a young graduate thought about his work?

UR Ananthamurthy did something similar when he asked me about Samskara. I am not prone to generalisations but Kiran, like Ananthamurthy, was a great listener. He wasn't keen to only let the world know what he thought but had a great capacity and interest to listen — listening with empathy is increasingly a rare quality in the times we live in, when shrill debate gets prioritised over discussion.

He was generous in his praise and affec-

tion for Mahatma Gandhi and Jawaharlal Nehru and spoke freely against any kind of autocratic or fascist regime. At a lit fest, I remember his excitement on spotting someone with a pile of his books. He invited the reader and inscribed each copy with a personal message. His immense reserves of warmth often perplexed me. Perhaps the genesis of his writing was his vast interest in people and their stories.

His later work, which includes novels like The Extras, Jasoda and Rest in Peace didn't resonate with a large section of his readers as deeply as his earlier pieces of writing. Kiran never understood the lack of enthusiasm towards his later writing and often complained in private about it.

Kiran was always at work though he never shared details about what he was writing. I disassociated myself after his name featured in the Me Too allegations. I thought why should Kiran do this? Some months ago I was in Mumbai and wondered if I should meet him. I didn't. He wrote me an email soon after asking,"Will you come this side anytime soon?"

I will now look for him in his books.

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

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

FRIENDS IN NEED

the bond'(IE, September 6). Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Russian President Vladimir Putin have taken initiatives to improve the relationship between the two countries. India is looking forward to Russia's support in its war against terrorism as well as on the economic front. Russia's support is crucial in the current geopolitcal context: The abrogation of Article 370 has strained India's relations with Pakistan and China. The country also needs to be prepared for the ramifications of the US-China trade war.

THIS REFERS TO the editorial,' Restoring

Vihaan Gupta, Ujjain

LESS MONEY

THIS REFERS TO the article, 'The revival path' (IE, September 6). There seems to be a consensus amongst economists that lack of demand is the main reason behind the economic slowdown. There are toll taxes on roads, bills for water, public transport fares have gone up, many trains run on flexi fare, education and health are privatised to a large extent and the Motor Vehicle Act imposes stringent penalties. So people have less money to spend.

Suchak D Patel, Ahmedabad

HUMAN ERRORS THIS REFERS TO the editorial, 'The heal-

LETTER OF THE WEEK

NAVY MATTERS

THIS REFERS TO the article, 'The world's most happening place, (IE, September 4). Indian Ocean is the theatre of changed geopolitical situation. But is India ready to take advantage of the situation? A powerful navy is must to defend our borders and marine trade routes. Unfortunately the navy's budget this year was slashed by about 5 per cent.

Vasant Nalawade, Satara

ing touch' (IE, September 5). The doctor who was beaten to death in Assam was reportedly a septuagenarian who was working amongst tea garden labourers and his past record was exemplary. He possibly made a mistake by not being present when the patient in concern developed complications. The question, however, is why was the fate of these patients left to a physician working past his retirement years? Much of the tension between doctors and patients is exacerbated by the shortage of doctors. This needs to be addressed urgently.

Prachee Deshpande, Pune

ess.com

बिज़नेस स्टैंडर्ड वर्ष 12 अंक 173

अर्थव्यवस्था का प्रश्न

सरकार पर कोई यह आरोप नहीं लगा सकता कि वह निष्क्रिय है। उसके शुरुआती 100 दिन तो सक्रियता से भरे रहे हैं। जम्मू कश्मीर में ऐतिहासिक कदम उठाया गया, संसद के जरिये कई कानून पारित किए गए और स्वयं प्रधानमंत्री भूटान, जी-7, संयुक्त अरब अमीरात, रूस आदि की यात्रा पर गए। संयुक्त राष्ट्र महासभा को संबोधित करने के बाद वह चीन जाएंगे। यह बात भी ध्यान देने वाली है कि स्वर्गीय अरुण जेटली के बाद अमित शाह

प्रधानमंत्री नरेंद्र मोदी के नेतृत्व वाली दूसरी के सरकार में नंबर दो की हैसियत में आते ही सरकार के सुर और रुख में भी उल्लेखनीय बदलाव आया है।

> इन सब के बीच अमेरिका के पूर्व राष्ट्रपति बिल क्लिंटन के प्रचार अभियान का एक नारा याद आना स्वाभाविक है। नारा था. 'इटस दी इकॉनमी, स्टिपड!' ऐसा नहीं है कि बीते 100 दिनों में अर्थव्यवस्था की अनदेखी की गई है। सरकारी बैंकों का विलय किया गया, बजट में तमाम बातें कही गईं, विदेशी निवेश के लिए माहौल और सहज बनाया गया। कुछ नए कानून

अपनी प्रकृति में आर्थिक हैं: दो नए श्रम कानून, दिवालिया कानून में संशोधन। भारतीय रिजर्व बैंक ने भी दो बार दरों में कटौती की घोषणा की। इसके बावजूद वित्त मंत्री के अलावा सरकार में शामिल तमाम अन्य लोग वृहद आर्थिक नीति के मुद्दों से अलग-थलग नजर आ रहे हैं। यह समझना मुश्किल है कि कब अर्थव्यवस्था के समक्ष बढती बेरोजगारी की चुनौती, कृषि संकट, विनिर्माण में ठहराव और निर्यात में गिरावट की समस्या आती है।

बिल क्लिंटन के पुराने नारे ने हकीकत बयानी के अलावा कुछ नहीं किया। लेकिन वर्तमान की तरह कई बार सच को कहे जाने की जरूरत होती है। खासतौर पर जब मोदी की पिछली आर्थिक पहलों की तरह उनकी नई आर्थिक पहल में भी सरकारी धन को खर्च करने संबंधी कदम शामिल हैं। वह किसानों को धनराशि देने और सरकारी फंड की मदद से स्वास्थ्य बीमा योजना शुरू करने जैसे कदम

उठा चुके हैं। अर्थव्यवस्था में धीमापन आने के साथ-साथ लगातार दूसरी बार कर राजस्व के अनुमान से कम रहने की आशंका जताई जा रही है। इन तथा अन्य योजनाओं के लिए आवश्यक धनराशि सरकार के पास नहीं है।

आर्थिक मोर्चे पर कमजोर प्रदर्शन से कई बडी जटिलताएं जुडी हुई हैं। बदलती विश्व व्यवस्था में जहां राष्ट्र-राज्य खुली छूट चाहते हैं, वैसे में देश का अधिकांश

बाहरी प्रवाह प्रत्यक्ष तौर पर उसकी सामरिक स्थिति और इसके बाजारों के भविष्य पर निर्भर करता है। अगर वृद्धि रुक जाती है, तो देश को चीन के स्वाभाविक प्रतिद्वंद्वी के रूप में देखे जाने की संभावना कम हो जाती है। आर्थिक शब्दावली में इसे अगला चीन नहीं माना जाता। यह बात ध्यान रहे कि ये अवधारणाएं ही अमेरिका के भारत के साथ दोबारा रिश्तों को कायम करने के लिए जिम्मेदार रहीं। इसकी

शुरुआत राष्ट्रपति बुश के दूसरे कार्यकाल में नाभिकीय पहल के आरंभ के साथ हुई थी।

अगर अमेरिका अब यह तय कर लेता है कि भारत का भरपूर इस्तेमाल हो चुका है (अमेरिका में कई पर्यवेक्षक ऐसा कहने भी लगे हैं) तो इसकी एक कूटनयिक कीमत

चुकानी होगी। संभव है कि साप्ताहिक मंथन कश्मीर मामले

पाकिस्तान के विरोध के टी. एन. नाइनन चलते अन्य देश भारत की

बातों पर एकबारगी यकीन नहीं करेंगे। रक्षा बलों को भी कुछ कीमत चुकानी होगी क्योंकि नई पनडब्बियों और विध्वंसक पोतों के लिए धन नहीं है जबिक चीन की नौसेना हिंद महासागर में बहुत तेजी से अपनी पहुंच बढ़ा रही है। ऐसे में सामरिक साझेदार की भारत की उपयोगिता सीमित हो रही है।

अगर हमारे कारोबारी संरक्षणवादी दरों की तलाश में स्वाभाविक रूप से राष्ट्रवादी सरकार पर एक बडे कारोबारी समझौते, क्षेत्रीय आर्थिक सहयोग साझेदारी (आरसीईपी) से बाहर रहने का दबाव बनाते हैं तो भारत विश्व अर्थव्यवस्था के सबसे जीवंत हिस्से की ओर अपनी पीठ मोड लेगा। सरकार की बात करें तो ऐसा लगता है कि उसने यह तय कर लिया है कि मेक इन इंडिया केवल आयात प्रतिस्थापन से ही सफल होगा। यह कदम उच्च शुल्क दर की वजह बनता है। अगर विश्व व्यापार और आर्थिक प्रदर्शन का इतिहास देखा जाए तो यह नीति लंबी अवधि में कारगर नहीं साबित होती।

प्रधानमंत्री समेत सरकार के तमाम प्रमुख लोगों को प्रत्यक्ष सक्रियता दिखाते हुए मौजूदा मंदी को रोकने का प्रयास करना होगा। मोदी को वृहद आर्थिक नीतियों से अपनी दुरी कम कर सधार की नीति के विभिन्न तत्त्वों की सही समझ विकसित करनी होगी। सरकार को यह देखना होगा कि क्या किया जाना है क्योंकि ढांचागत मुद्दे मौसम के साथ नहीं बदलते।



वेब के प्रतिगामी दोर में किताब की वापसी

वर्ल्ड वाइड वेब के प्रसार ने कभी ई-बुक को रफ्तार दी थी लेकिन इसकी जटिलताओं ने अब उलटी चाल चलने को मजबूर कर दिया है। इस नए रुझान पर रोशनी डाल रहे हैं अजित बालकृष्णन

ब मुझे यह अहसास हुआ कि मैं इलेक्ट्रॉनिक किताबों की तुलना में हाल-फिलहाल छपी हुई किताबें पढ़ना काफी पसंद करने लगा हूं तो मैं आदत में आए इस बदलाव पर गौर करने से खद को नहीं रोक पाया। पिछले दो दशकों से किंडल जैसे इलेक्टॉनिक स्वरूप में उपलब्ध किताबें ही खरीदकर पढता आया था। एक और अहम बात यह है कि हाल में खरीदी गई किताबों में 'डूइंग डेटा साइंस' और 'न्यराल नेटवर्क्स विद आर' जैसी तकनीकी विषयों वाली किताबें शामिल हैं।

पहले तो मैंने इस बदलाव को यह कहते हुए सही साबित करने की कोशिश की कि मैं तो बस व्यावहारिक होने की कोशिश कर रहा था। कंप्यूटर कोड इतने सघन होते हैं कि किंडल पर उन्हें पढ पाना आसान नहीं होता है। आखिरकार, अगर कोई एक कारोबार इंटरनेट के प्रसार को दर्शाता है तो वह जेफ बेजोस का एमेजॉन है जो वर्ष 1995 में इंटरनेट पर किताबें बेचने वाले स्टोर के तौर पर ही शुरू हुआ था।

दुनिया का पहला ऑनलाइन स्टोर किताबों की बिक्री के साथ क्यों शुरू हुआ था? एमेजॉन के बारे में विकीपीडिया का पेज इस बात को नहीं बताता है लेकिन उस दौर में मौजूद रहने के नाते मुझे ऐसा लगता है कि उन दिनों अमेरिका में किताब उद्योग को बकस्टोर में 40 फीसदी से भी अधिक मार्जिन मिलता था। इस वजह से एमेजॉन के लिए संभावित खरीदारों को बड़ी छट की पेशकश कर ऑनलाइन किताबें खरीदने के लिए लुभा पाना आसान लगा। हमें वर्ष 2004 में वायर्ड के संपादक क्रिस एंडरसन की किताब 'द लॉन्ग टेल: व्हाई द फ्यूचर ऑफ बिज़नेस इज सेलिंग लेस ऑफ मोर' आने पर ही इसके पीछे की एक और वजह पता चल पाई। एंडरसन ने हमें बताया था कि किताब उद्योग जैसे उद्योगों में किताबों की बड़ी संख्या को पढ़ने वाले कम लोग ही होते हैं। ये समर्पित पाठक एक 'लॉन्ग टेल' बनाते हैं और वे बेस्ट सेलर किताबें पढने में रुचि रखने वाले पाठकों की तुलना में किसी किताब की बढ़िया कीमत भी चुकाने को तैयार होते हैं। वहीं बेस्ट सेलर किताबों के शौकीनों को आकर्षित करने के लिए उन्हें भारी छुट की पेशकश करनी पडती है। इस 'लॉन्ग टेल' मॉडल को उसके बाद कई दूसरे उद्योगों ने भी अपनाया है और इस बात को कहा जा सकता है कि ऑनलाइन खरीदारी में इस मॉडल की

केंद्रीय भूमिका होती है। इसकी शुरुआत छपी हुई किताबों के उद्योग से ही हुई थी।

वर्ष 1989 में इंटरनेट के आधार वर्ल्ड वाइड वेब की सोच लेकर आने वाले टिम बर्न्स-ली चाहते थे कि ज्ञान का आदान-प्रदान सरल हो जाए। और उनकी संकल्पना शुरुआती 15 वर्षों तक इस लक्ष्य पर खरा उतरने में सफल रही। हम सभी वेब पर मौजूद बेशुमार जानकारियों को मुफ्त में पढ़कर खुश होते रहे। इसके अलावा मुफ्त में संगीत सुनने और वीडियो एवं फिल्में भी देखने की सुविधा थी।

सवाल उठता है कि इतना सब होते हुए भी आखिर किस वजह से मैं दोबारा छपी हुई तकनीकी किताबें पढ़ने लगा? इसकी पहली वजह यह है कि वेब पर किसी मुद्दे पर जानकारी के लिए सर्च करने के बाद जब मैं किसी वेबसाइट पर उपलब्ध सामग्री पढना शुरू करता था तो कुछ पंक्तियों के बाद ही 'अधिक जानकारी के लिए ग्राहक बनें 'वाला बैनर नजर आने लगता था।

मैं ग्राहकी लेने में हिचकता था क्योंकि कई बार भुगतान करने के बाद जब मैं उस पेज को विस्तार से पढ़ना शुरू करता था तो कुछ समय बाद 'हमारी ई-बुक डाउनलोड करें 'वाला एक और बैनर

नमुंदार हो जाता था। यहां पर मैं फिर से हिचकता था क्योंकि मेरे साथ कई बार ऐसा हुआ था कि डाउनलोड किए गए संस्करण में भी वे सारी जानकारियां नहीं होती थीं जो मुझे उस किताब के प्रकाशित संस्करण में मिलती थीं।

मेरे दिमाग में यही सवाल उपजता था कि क्या पिछले दो दशकों में वर्ल्ड वाइड वेब महज प्रचार का जरिया बनकर रह गया है ? यह एक ऐसा उपकरण हो गया है जिसका इस्तेमाल आपको लुभाने और एक छपी पुस्तक खरीदने के लिए प्रेरित करने में होता है।

विद्वान एवं प्रबंधन सिद्धांतकार कहते हैं कि वर्ल्ड वाइड वेब ने तीन बुनियादी तरीके से हमारी जिंदगियों पर असर डाला है। पहला तरीका, यह मध्यवर्तियों की भूमिका खत्म कर देता है। इसका मतलब है कि चीन के शेन्जेन में स्थित एक मोबाइल फोन निर्माता कंपनी वेब के जरिये मुंबई में स्थित मेरे जैसे उपभोक्ता तक सीधे अपना उत्पाद बेच सकती है जिससे वह वितरकों को कमीशन देने से बच जाती है। इस तरह यह संकल्पना रखी गई कि वेब के आगमन ने 'मध्यवर्ती-उन्मूलन' कर अर्थव्यवस्था को उसी तरह कारगर बनाया है जिस तरह औद्योगिक क्रांति के समय व्यापक उत्पादन ने किया था। दूसरा तरीका है 'अभौतिकीकरण' जिसका सबसे अच्छा उदाहरण उस तरह का संगीत है जो अब भौतिक रूप में उपलब्ध नहीं रह गया है, मसलन ग्रामोफोन रिकॉर्ड और कैसेट टेप। लेकिन अभौतिक रूप में स्ट्रीमिंग के तौर पर ऐसे संगीत अब भी मौजूद हैं।

हमारी जिंदगी पर असर डालने का तीसरा तरीका 'विसम्हन' का है। मसलन, हम जिसे बैंक के रूप में जानते रहे हैं अब वह वेब प्रसार के दौर में भुगतान कंपनी और कर्जदाता कंपनी के रूप में विखंडित हो चुका है।

वेब के काम करने के इन तरीकों का इस्तेमाल कर लाभ कमाने के लिए बडी मात्रा में निजी निवेश एवं वेंचर गतिविधियां संचालित हो रही हैं। समकालीन दौर में उद्यमशीलता का आशय ऐसा कारोबार शुरू करने से रह गया है जो इन तीनों में किसी एक तरीके पर निर्भर हो।

इस परिदृश्य में मुझे ई-बुक के बजाय छपी किताबों की तरफ लौटने की घटना को किस तरह लेना चाहिए? क्या ऐसा कोई भी मामला सामने आया है कि औद्योगिक क्रांति के पलटने की स्थिति पैदा हो रही हो ? मेरे दिमाग में तात्कालिक तौर पर यही बात आती है कि रासायनिक औद्योगिक क्रांति के उप-उत्पादों के बारे में विश्वव्यापी धारणा अब पलटने लगी है। नील के संश्लेषण से रासायनिक औद्योगिक क्रांति की शुरुआत हुई थी और किफायती सिंथेटिक दवाएं, सिंथेटिक कपडों एवं पेट्रोरसायन जैसे उत्पादों के बल पर यह सिलसिला आगे बढ़ता गया। लेकिन आज के दौर में प्लास्टिक, पेट्रोल एवं सिंथेटिक रसायनों के खिलाफ आवाज बुलंद होने के साथ ही यह क्रांति भी अब प्रतिगामी हो चली है। क्या छपी हुई किताबों के प्रति भी इसी तरह का रुझान दस्तक दे रहा है ?

शिवकुमार की बहुमुखी प्रतिभा सबके लिए फायदे का सौदा

कांग्रेस नेता डोङ्गलहल्ली केंपेगौडा (डीके) शिवकुमार को इस सप्ताह के आरंभ में कथित धनशोधन के मामले में प्रवर्तन निदेशालय ने गिरफ्तार कर लिया। कर्नाटक के भारतीय जनता पार्टी द्वारा शासित राज्य होने के बावजूद शिवकुमार प्रांत के कई हिस्सों में विरोध प्रदर्शन करवाने में कामयाब रहे। रामनगर, चेन्नपट्टना और

उसके आसपास के इलाके शिवकुमार के विधानसभा क्षेत्र कनकपुरा में आते हैं। इन इलाकों में बंद का आह्वान किया गया और तमाम स्कूल बंद हो गए। सरकारी बसों पर पार्टी कार्यकर्ताओं द्वारा पत्थर फेंके गए। जाहिर सी बात है शिवकुमार न केवल बहुत लोकप्रिय हैं, बल्कि वह इतने संसाधन संपन्न भी हैं कि अपने क्षेत्र के लोगों से ऐसा विरोध प्रदर्शन करा सकते हैं। कांग्रेस के इस रणनीतिकार में कई और गुण हैं। यहां तक कि कर्नाटक के मुख्यमंत्री बीएस येदियुरप्पा तक ने उनकी गिरफ्तारी पर अफसोस जाहिर किया।

आखिर कौन हैं डी के शिवकुमार ?

वर्ष 2018 के कर्नाटक विधानसभा चुनाव के लिए दिए शपथपत्र में उन्होंने और उनकी पत्नी ने 730 करोड़ रुपये की संपत्ति घोषित की थी। उन्होंने खुद को सामाजिक कार्यकर्ता बताया। वह कुछ भी लिख सकते थे लेकिन दक्षिण कर्नाटक में सत्ता की चाबी जमीन और जाति ही है। शिवकमार वोक्कालिंगा समुदाय के हैं। वह उसी इलाके के एक कृषक परिवार में पैदा हुए है जहां एचडी देवेगौड़ा पैदा हुए। देवेगौड़ा को कर्नाटक में वोक्कालिंगा समुदाय का सबसे बड़ा नेता माना जाता है। स्वाभाविक था कि देवेगौडा उन्हें लंबे समय तक नौसिखुआ के तौर

पर देखते रहे। शिवकुमार कॉलेज के दिनों से ही कांग्रेस में हैं। सबसे पहले उन्होंने युवा कांग्रेस की सदस्यता ली। सन 1983 से 1985 तक वह प्रदेश युवा कांग्रेस के महासचिव रहे। उनकी पहली चुनावी जीत सन 1987 में हुई जब उन्होंने जिला पंचायत सदस्य का चुनाव जीता। सन 1985 में 25 वर्ष की उम्र में उन्होंने एचडी देवेगौड़ा के खिलाफ साथनूर से चुनाव लड़ा। वह मामूली अंतर से चुनाव हार गए। यह भी उनके लिए एक उपलब्धि की तरह थी क्योंकि



सियासी हलचल आदिति फडणीस

शिवकुमार कॉलेज के दिनों से ही कांग्रेस में हैं। सबसे पहले उन्होंने युवा कांग्रेस की सदस्यता ली। सन 1983 से 1985 तक वह प्रदेश युवा कांग्रेस के महासचिव रहे। उनकी पहली चुनावी जीत सन 1987 में हुई जब उन्होंने जिला पंचायत सदस्य का

देवेगौड़ा तत्कालीन रामकृष्ण हेगडे सरकार में वरिष्ठ मंत्री थे। देवेगौडा ने दो विधानसभा क्षेत्रों से चनाव लडा था। उन्होंने साथनर सीट छोड़ दी। शिवकुमार वहां से दोबारा लड़े और चुनाव जीतने में कामयाब रहे। इसके बाद देवेगौड़ा परिवार के साथ उनका विवाद आरंभ हुआ जो अपना रूप बदलता रहता है लेकिन अब तक

चुनाव जीता।

शिवकुमार ने सन 1989 में कनकपुरा लोकसभा क्षेत्र से देवेगौड़ा के खिलाफ चुना लड़ा, जहां उन्हें हार का सामना करना पड़ा। उस समय देवेगौड़ा शिखर पर थे। परंतु इस हार के बावजुद शिवकुमार ने बेंगलूरु के आसपास के ग्रामीण इलाकों में पकड़ मजबूत करनी शुरू कर दी। यही वह दौर था जब जमीन की कीमतें बढ रही थीं। शिवकुमार ने भी खनन और उससे जुड़े कारोबार में निवेश किया। उन्होंने सन 1989 का विधानसभा चुनाव निर्दलीय लडा और जीत गए। दो वर्ष बाद 30 की उम्र में वह प्रदेश के सबसे युवा मंत्री बन गए। सन 1991 से 1992 तक वह एस बंगारप्पा की सरकार में राज्य मंत्री रहे। इसके बाद एसएम कृष्णा की सरकार

आई। शिवकुमार ने कृष्णा के साथ अच्छे रिश्ते कायम किए। कहा जाता है कि कृष्णा के दामाद स्वर्गीय वीजी सिद्धार्थ के कैफे कॉफी डे के कारोबार में भी उनका पैसा लगा हुआ है। वह अब तक सात बार विधायक रह चुके हैं। उनकी कारोबारी गतिविधियां और उनकी राजनीतिक मेहनत ने भी उनका खुब साथ दिया है। शिवकुमार ने व्यक्तिगत संपदा

के बल पर राजनीतिक पूंजी तैयार की। ये किस्से सभी जानते हैं। सन 2002 में जब महाराष्ट्र के मुख्यमंत्री और कांग्रेस नेता स्वर्गीय विलासराव देशमुख की सरकार अविश्वास प्रस्ताव के कारण लगभग गिरने को थी, तब कर्नाटक के शहरी विकास मंत्री डी के शिवकुमार ने विधायकों को ईगलटन रिजॉर्ट में एकत्रित किया और मतदान के दिन उन्हें मुंबई ले गए। अगर वहां की दीवारें बोल सकतीं तो जाने कितने रहस्य सामने आते। अहमद पटेल गुजरात में राज्यसभा सीट इसलिए जीत सके क्योंकि शिवकुमार ने 44 विधायकों को सुरक्षित रखा। बाद में उन्होंने हैदराबाद में अपने कारोबारी रिश्तों का इस्तेमाल किया और वह विधायकों को बेंगलुरु से हैदराबाद स्थित एक रिजॉर्ट में ले गए। उन्होंने तेलंगाना के मुख्यमंत्री के चंद्रशेखर राव से केवल इतनी गुजारिश की कि वह विधायकों को सुरक्षित रखें। यही वजह थी कि 224 में से 104 विधायक होने के बावजूद येदियुरप्पा मुंह ताकते रह गए और राज्य में एच डी कुमारस्वामी व कांग्रेस की सरकार बनी। इस अभियान में शिवकुमार ने अमित शाह तक को पछाड़ दिया था।

देवेगौड़ा का परिवार और शिवकुमार कभी मित्र नहीं रहे। वे केवल रणनीतिक सहयोगी हैं। कांग्रेस में तमाम अन्य नेताओं की तरह शिवकुमार के बारे में भी कुमारस्वामी ने यही सोचा कि वह उनके साथ कारोबार कर सकते हैं। यही कारण है कि जनता दल सेक्युलर ने भी उनकी गिरफ्तारी के बाद जांच एजेंसियों के दुरुपयोग को लेकर खब शोर मचाया।

सवाल यह है कि अब क्या होगा? लोग कह सकते हैं कि शिवकुमार का राजनीतिक करियर समाप्त हो गया। परंतु वह कई लोगों के लिए बहुत अधिक उपयोगी हैं। वही उनकी मल प्रतिभा है।

🗄 न कहीं अर्थव्यवस्था को गति देने

का कार्य अवश्य करेगी। इस

विषय में सर्वाधिक महत्त्वपूर्ण केंद्र

कानाफूसी

गठबधन पर अटकल

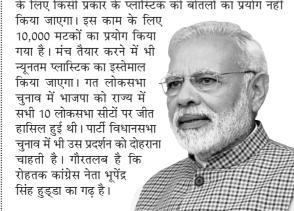
बिहार में विधानसभा चनाव होने में

अभी एक वर्ष की देरी है। पटना और दिल्ली में अटकलें हैं कि पता नहीं जदयू और भाजपा के बीच गठबंधन चुनावों तक बरकरार रहेगा भी या नहीं । जदयू के उपाध्यक्ष और चुनावी रणनीतिकार प्रशांत किशोर ने हाल ही में राष्ट्रीय नागरिक पंजी को लेकर जो टिप्पणियां की हैं. उनसे माहौल एक बार फिर गर्म है। भाजपा नेता नित्यानंद राय फिलहाल केंद्र में मंत्री हैं और अगर गठबंधन ट्रटता है तो भाजपा उन्हें अपना चेहरा बनाएगी। सूत्रों के मुताबिक हालांकि कमार के गठबंधन तोड़ने की

संभावना नहीं है। वहीं विपक्षी दलों में भी मुख्यमंत्री पद के दावेदार चेहरों की कमी नहीं है। तेजस्वी यादव, उपेंद्र कुशवाहा और जीतनराम मांझी जैसे कई नेता मुख्यमंत्री पद के दावेदार हैं। फिलहाल कांग्रेस देखो और इंतजार करो की रणनीति अपना रही है।

पर्यावरण के अनुकूल अभियान

हरियाणा विधानसभा चुनाव का प्रचार अभियान आगामी ८ सितंबर को रोहतक में प्रधानमंत्री नरेंद्र मोदी की रैली के साथ शुरू हो रहा है। इस रैली को पर्यावरण के अनुकूल रैली के रूप में प्रचारित किया जा रहा है। इस रैली में एकल इस्तेमाल वाले प्लास्टिक का प्रयोग न्यूनतम रखने की कोशिश की जाएगी। रैली में भारतीय जनता पार्टी का झंडा भी कपडे से बनाया जाएगा। इस दौरान पानी के लिए किसी प्रकार के प्लास्टिक की बोतलों का प्रयोग नहीं



आपका पक्ष

ट्रैफिक चालान और लोगों की मानसिकता

यातायात नियम तोड्ने पर लगने

वाले जुर्माने में भारी बढ़ोतरी की गई है। इस बढ़ोतरी के बाद लोगों के बीच कई धारणाएं सामने आ रही हैं। एक ओर जुर्माने में बढ़ोतरी का कारण यातायात नियमों का उल्लंघन रोकना है तो दूसरी ओर लोग भारी जुर्माना लगाए जाने का विरोध कर रहे हैं। आमतौर पर देखा जाए तो देश में यातायात नियमों का उल्लंघन इतना होता है जितना शायद ही किसी अन्य कानून का होता हो। कुछ लोग अपना रौब दिखाने के लिए नियमों का उल्लंघन करते हैं तो कुछ लोग जानकारी के अभाव में नियम का पालन नहीं कर पाते हैं। अगर देश में दुर्घटनाओं से मरने वालों की संख्या देखी जाए तो यह बीमारी से मरने वालों की संख्या से कहीं अधिक है। हमें यातायात नियमों का कड़ाई से



पालन करना चाहिए क्योंकि किसी दुर्घटना में उस व्यक्ति की मौत होती है जिसे कोई वाहन टक्कर मारता है। दुर्घटना में बेकसूर लोग दूसरे की लापरवाही के कारण मारे जाते हैं। अत: यातायात नियमों को तोडने

अल्बर्ट एक्का चौक के पास जांच

होगा। इससे हम किसी की जान वाली मानसिकता बदलनी होगी बचा सकते हैं। इसके अलावा और इसका कड़ाई से पालन करना यातायात पुलिस को भी अपना

पाठक अपनी राय हमें इस पते पर भेज सकते हैं : संपादक, बिजनेस स्टैंडर्ड लिमिटेड,

4, बहादूर शाह जफर मार्ग, नई दिल्ली - 110002. आप हमें ईमेल भी कर सकते हैं :

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

झारखंड की राजधानी रांची में करती ट्रैफिक पुलिस *-पीटीआई* कि यातायात पुलिस ट्रैफिक लाइट के पास खड़े होने के बदले किसी कोने में छुपे रहते हैं तथा जब कोई सिग्नल तोंड़ता है तो लपक कर उसे पकड़ते हैं और चालान काटते हैं। यातायात पुलिस को ऐसी मानसिकता भी बदलनी होगी तथा उन्हें पूरी ईमानदारी से अपना कर्तव्य निभाना चाहिए।

कर्तव्य पूरी ईमानदारी से निभाने की

जरूरत हैं। अक्सर देखा जाता है

अनुष्का कुमारी, नोएडा

विदेशों के बजाय देश में पर्यटन को बढावा

अर्थव्यवस्था में जारी मंदी के दौर से बाहर आने के लिए वित्त मंत्री द्वारा उद्योगों को दी गई राहत कहीं

सरकार द्वारा देश के बाहर से आ रहे उत्पाद व देश में बन रहे उत्पाद की लागत की तुलना किया जाना आवश्यक है। सरकार को चाहिए कि देश को उद्योगों की दशा व दिशा सुधारने के लिए वह उनका संरक्षण अवश्य करे और बाहर से आ रहे उत्पाद की तुलना में प्रतिस्पर्धा करने के लिए बेहतर तकनीक व कम कर की व्यवस्था बना कर रखे। इससे बाहर से आ रहे उत्पाद यहां के उत्पाद के मुकाबले में कमजोर नहीं पड़े। इसी प्रकार प्रधानमंत्री नरेंद्र मोदी की यह अपील कि दो वर्ष में परिवार के साथ कम से कम पांच स्थान देश में भ्रमण करें जिससे खर्च का पूरा लाभ देश को ही मिल सकेगा तथा पर्यटन उद्योग को संबल मिल सके।

कपिल करवा माहेश्वरी, हनुमानगढ़



शिक्षा की जड़ें कड़वी हैं, लेकिन फल मीटे हैं

मुफ्तखोरी की राजनीति

दिल्ली मेट्रो के चौथे चरण की परियोजना से जुड़े विभिन्न मुद्दों पर विचार करते हुए सुप्रीम कोर्ट ने देश की राजधानी में महिलाओं को मेट्रो यात्रा की मुफ्त सुविधा देने की केजरीवाल सरकार की प्रस्तावित योजना पर जो सवाल खड़े किए वे जरूरी थे। उम्मीद की जाती है कि दिल्ली सरकार सुप्रीम कोर्ट के इन सवालों पर न केवल गौर करेगी, बल्कि चुनावी लाभ को ध्यान में रखकर तैयार की गई अपनी प्रस्तावित योजना को ठंडे बस्ते में भी डालेगी। इसका कोई मतलब नहीं कि अपेक्षाकृत समर्थ और संपन्न मानी जाने वाली देश की राजधानी की सभी महिलाओं को गरीब मानकर उन्हें मेट्रो और सरकारी बसों में मुफ्त यात्रा की सुविधा प्रदान की जाए। यह सुविधा उपलब्ध कराने के पीछे दी जा रही यह दलील खोखली ही अधिक है कि इससे कारों एवं दोपहिया वाहनों के इस्तेमाल में कमी आएगी और उसके चलते प्रदूषण से निपटने में मदद मिलेगी। शायद यही कारण रहा कि सुप्रीम कोर्ट ने महिलाओं को मेट्रो की मुफ्त यात्रा की प्रस्तावित योजना पर बिना किसी लाग लपेट यह कहा कि सरकार इस तरह जनता के धन की बर्बादी नहीं कर सकती। उसकी समझ से ऐसी कोई योजना दिल्ली मेट्रो को बर्बाद करने वाली साबित हो सकती है।

यह अच्छा हुआ कि सुप्रीम कोर्ट ने मुफ्तखोरी की राजनीति की ओर बढ़ रही दिल्ली सरकार को समय रहते आगाह करने का काम किया, लेकिन उसे यह ध्यान रखना चाहिए कि राजनीतिक लाभ हासिल करने के लिए सार्वजनिक कोष के धन की अनदेखी करने का यह इकलौता मामला नहीं है। निर्धनता निवारण या लोक कल्याण के नाम पर रह-रह कर ऐसी योजनाएं सामने आती ही रहती हैं जिनका असली मकसद गरीबों को आत्मनिर्भर बनाना कम और चुनावी लाभ हासिल करना अधिक होता है। इस मामले में सभी दल एक जैसे नजर आते हैं। बीते कुछ समय से यह कुछ ज्यादा ही देखने को मिल रहा है कि चुनाव आते ही विभिन्न दल रेवड़ियां बांटने की होड़ में शामिल हो जाते हैं। उनकी ओर से मुफ्तखोरी की संस्कृति को बढावा देने वाली योजनाओं की घोषणा का सिलसिला कायम हो जाता है। कुछ दल तो लोक-लुभावन वादों को अपने घोषणा पत्रों का हिस्सा भी बना देते हैं। यदि कभी ऐसे दल सत्ता में आ जाते हैं तो इस आधार पर अपने लोक-लुभावन वादों पर आनन-फानन अमल शुरू कर देते हैं कि वे इसी वादे के साथ सत्ता में आए हैं। आम तौर पर ऐसा करते हुए वे आर्थिक नियमों की जानबूझकर उपेक्षा करते हैं। चूंकि राजनीतिक दल लोक-लुभावन राजनीति करते समय आर्थिक नियम-कानूनों की परवाह नहीं कर रहे इसलिए सुप्रीम कोर्ट को कहीं अधिक सजग रहने की जरूरत है।

सुधारने के लिए जुमीना

केंद्र सरकार ने ट्रैफिक नियमों को लेकर जुर्माने की राशि कई गुना बढ़ाकर लोगों को सुधारने का एक अनोखा प्रयास किया है। भारी जुर्माना अदा करने की खबरों से ही झारखंड में लोगों में नियमों के प्रति जागरूकता बढ़ी है और प्रदूषण प्रमाणपत्र एवं बीमा जैसे आवश्यक कागजात दुरुस्त होने लगे हैं। बगैर ड्राइविंग लाइसेंस के लोग सड़कों पर चलने से पहले घबरा रहे हैं और हेलमेट पहनने अथवा सीट बेल्ट लगाने जैसे सुरक्षा उपायों का पूरा पालन कर रहे हैं। ऐसा भले ही जुर्माना के डर से हो रहा हो, लेकिन नियमों का अनुपालन कहीं न कहीं आवश्यक भी था। सो, एक बार इस प्रयास की सराहना तो होनी ही चाहिए। कुछ लोग जुर्माने की बड़ी राशि पर सवाल उठा रहे हैं। जिन लोगों को भारी जुर्माना अदा करना पड़ा उनका दुख जायज भी माना जा सकता है, लेकिन सवाल

यह भी है कि जुर्माना वसूला कैसे लोगों से जा रहा है। उन्हीं लोगों से जिन्होंने कहीं न कहीं नियमों की अनदेखी की है। नियमों को रौंदा है। सो, फिलहाल जुर्माना से अधिक महत्वपूर्ण इसका प्रतिफल है। लोग अगर जुर्माने के डर से हेलमेट पहनकर निकल रहे हैं अथवा ड्राइविंग लाइसेंस बनवा रहे हैं तो

डर से लोग हेलमेट पहनकर निकल रहे हैं तो फिर इसे सही निर्णय ही मानेंगे फिर इसे सही निर्णय ही मानेंगे। गरीब लोगों

अगर जुर्माने के

से अधिक राशि वसुली पर भी मानवीय संवेदनाएं जग रही हैं, लेकिन किसी की गरीबी उसे नियमों को तोड़ने-मरोड़ने की छूट तो नहीं देती। गरीबी पर कहीं भी किसी कानून में डिस्काउंट तो नहीं है। ऐसे में नियम तोड़ने के दोषी को सजा मिलना कतई गलत नहीं है। अभी तक जितने बड़े मामले आ रहे हैं उनमें फंसनेवाले लोग गरीब तबके के और ग्रामीण परिवेश के अधिक हैं। पुलिस को इसके लिए थोड़ी सतर्कता बरतनी होगी ताकि चालाक लोग बच न सकें। शहरों में रहनेवाले यवा दूर से ही पुलिस की मौजूदगी को भांप जाते हैं और रास्ता बदल भी लेते हैं, लेकिन ग्रामीण परिवेश के युवा फंस जाते हैं। रांची में महिलाओं को भी जुर्माना किया गया है। छह हजार रुपये तक का जुर्माना। यह इस बात का उदाहरण है कि कोई बच नहीं रहा है और पुलिस के लिए यही एक शुभ संकेत है। एक बड़ा समूह अभी पुलिस पर नजर रख रहा है और पुलिस को भी ऐसे में सावधानी बरतने की जरूरत है।

साहसिक फैसलों की जरूरत



जीएन वाजपेयी

सुस्ती के भंवर में फंसी अर्थव्यवस्था को उबारने के लिए तत्काल कुछ बड़े फैसले लेने होंगे ताकि जीडीपी की ऊंची वृद्धि के दौर में दाखिल हुआ जा सके

र्ष 2014 के आम चुनाव में भाजपा 'सबका साथ, सबका विकास' के जिस नारे के साथ चुनाव में उतरी थी वह कारगर रहा। इस नारे ने मतदाताओं के मानस को ऐसे प्रभावित किया कि भाजपा लोकसभा की 282 सीटें जीत गई। 2019 के आम चुनाव में मोदी है तो मुमिकन है नारे ने असर दिखाया और प्रधानमंत्री नरेंद्र मोदी पिछली बार से भी बड़ी सफलता के साथ 303 सीटों के साथ सत्ता में वापस लौटे। 2019 के चुनाव में जीत के बाद भाजपा मुख्यालय में पार्टी कार्यकर्ताओं को संबोधित करते हुए प्रधानमंत्री मोदी ने 'सबका साथ, सबका विकास' नारे में 'सबका विश्वास' और जोड़ दिया। इस नए जुड़ाव के साथ उन्होंने राजनीतिक विमर्श को जो नई दिशा दी उस पर बहुत ज्यादा टीकाकारों ने गौर नहीं किया। यदि इसकी गहराई से पड़ताल की जाए तो मालूम पड़ेगा कि मोदी एक आम नेता से राजनेता यानी स्टेट्समैन बनने की ओर बढ़ रहे हैं। एक नेता वही होता है जो अपने राजनीतिक फायदे के लिए किसी एक तबके के हितों से खिलवाड़ कर सकता है। जबकि राजनेता आदर्शवादी दृष्टिकोण को अपनाते हुए अपने मूल्यों पर अडिग रहता है। जब पीवी नरसिंह राव प्रधानमंत्री थे तो उन्होंने कश्मीर पर भारत का पक्ष रखने के लिए तब विपक्ष में नेता रहे अटल बिहारी वाजपेयी को संयुक्त राष्ट्र के मंच पर भेजने का फैसला किया। दलगत भावना से

परे लिए गए राव के इस फैसले को अक्सर स्टेटसमैनशिप की मिसाल बताया जाता है।

2019 में भाजपा को 37.4 प्रतिशत मत मिले। इसका अर्थ है कि 62.6 फीसद मतदाताओं ने मोदी के नेतृत्व पर भरोसा नहीं जताया। ऐसे में वह महज समर्थन और वृद्धि से बढ़कर अपने दर्शन को बदलते हुए सबका विश्वास जीतने में जुटे हैं। यह एक विचारणीय बदलाव है। वह सभी का विश्वास अर्जित कर देश के सर्वमान्य नेता बनना चाहते हैं जिसका अर्थ यही है कि वह दलगत राजनीति से परे जाकर नया मुकाम हासिल करने के इच्छुक हैं। अपने पहले कार्यकाल में उन पर आरोप लगे कि कथित गोरक्षकों की शरारती गतिविधियों पर उन्होंने या तो प्रतिक्रिया ही नहीं दी या फिर बहुत देर से ऐसा किया। 2019 के जनादेश के बाद उन्होंने ऐसे किसी भी वाकये पर त्वरित प्रतिक्रिया व्यक्त की है और यहां तक कि संसद में बयान भी दिया। कहने का अर्थ यह नहीं कि ऐसी अप्रिय घटनाओं पर उन्हें पहले जरा भी दर्द महसूस नहीं हुआ, लेकिन अब यह और स्पष्ट है कि वह भारत का भरोसा हासिल करने के लिए अतिरिक्त प्रयास कर रहे हैं। इसी सिलसिले में 30 अगस्त को कार्यकर्ताओं को संबोधित करते हुए उन्होंने हिदायत दी कि वे संवाद और आलोचना के दौरान मर्यादा और शालीनता का परिचय दें। भारत एक जीवंत एवं गतिशील लोकतंत्र है। फिर भी मोदी सरकार के कट्टर आलोचक अलग ही राग अलाप



अवधेश राजपूत

रहे हैं। उनमें से कुछ यहां तक कह रहे हैं कि लोकतंत्र की मूल भावना के साथ खिलवाड़ किया जा रहा है। उनके ऐसे दावों की पड़ताल के लिए कोई भी भारतीय प्रेस की स्वतंत्रता, न्यायपालिका की स्वायत्तता और स्वतंत्र एवं निष्पक्ष चुनाव जैसे पैमानों पर दुनिया के सबसे परिपक्व लोकतंत्रों के साथ इसकी तुलना कर सकता है। अनुच्छेद 370 और 35ए हटाए जाने के खिलाफ दायर याचिकाओं को सुप्रीम कोर्ट द्वारा सुनवाई के लिए स्वीकार करना स्वतंत्र न्यायपालिका की ताजा मिसाल है।

स्वतंत्र न्यायपालिका अपने विवेक से कार्यपालिका की गतिविधियों की भी समीक्षा कर रही है, जो परंपरा से इतर है। कुछ मामलों में तो उसने कानन बनाने के निर्देश तक दिए हैं। ऐसा ही एक फैसला मुस्लिम महिलाओं के साथ पक्षपात से जुड़ा था। पिछली सरकारें वोट बैंक छिटकने के डर से ऐसे अदालती निर्देशों पर अमल करने से कतराती थीं। ऐसे में समाज का पीड़ित वर्ग पक्षपात सहने के लिए अभिशप्त रहता था। अपने पहले कार्यकाल में प्रधानमंत्री मोदी ने सुप्रीम कोर्ट के निर्देश को मूर्त रूप देने

की कोशिश की, लेकिन वे प्रयास फलीभूत नहीं हो पाए। मगर 2019 में वह समानता एवं निष्पक्षता के सिद्धांतों को संसद के पटल पर ले आए और उनके साथियों ने सदन में संख्याबल का बखुबी प्रबंध किया। अमेरिकी राष्ट्रपति के रूप में अब्राहम लिंकन ने जब दासता को समाप्त कराने वाला कानून सीनेट से पारित करा लिया था तब उनके कुछ आलोचकों ने उन पर स्तरहीन सिद्धांतों को अपनाने का आरोप लगाया था। हर एक फैसले के कई पहलू होते हैं। इस मामले में भी कुछ ऐसा हो सकता है, लेकिन अगर मुस्लिम महिलाओं की बेहतरी की बात हो रही है तो यह जरूर कहा जा सकता है कि

आर्थिक उत्थान के लिए भारतीयों का एक बड़ा तबका बीते 72 वर्षों से टकटकी लगाए हुए है। इसे केवल आर्थिक वृद्धि से ही संभव बनाया जा सकता है। प्रधानमंत्री मोदी ने अगले पांच वर्षों में देश की अर्थव्यवस्था को पांच ट्रिलियन डॉलर तक पहुंचाने का लक्ष्य रखा है। राजनीतिक गलियारों और मीडिया की दुनिया में आलोचक इसका उपहास उड़ा रहे हैं। कुछ

भारत में लोकतंत्र फल-फल रहा है।

अर्थशास्त्री इसे असंभव बता रहे हैं तो कुछ इसे लेकर आशंकाएं जाहिर कर रहे हैं। मौजूदा आर्थिक सुस्ती को वे अपनी धारणा की पुष्टि के रूप में पेश कर रहे हैं। जो भी हो, आने वाले समय में मोदी सरकार की क्षमताओं की कड़ी परीक्षा होनी है। पांच ट्रिलियन डॉलर की अर्थव्यवस्था देश से गरीबी का समूल नाश भले न कर पाए, लेकिन इससे गरीबों की तादाद घटने की भरी-पूरी संभावनाएं हैं।

जन-धन, आधार और मोबाइल यानी जैम मुफ्त गैस एवं बिजली कनेक्शन, सभी को आवास, किसान सम्मान, मुद्रा और आयुष्मान भारत जैसी योजनाओं का बिना किसी भेदभाव के सफल क्रियान्वयन देश की आबादी के एक बड़े और विपन्न तबके के जीवन स्तर में व्यापक स्तर पर सुधार ला रहा है। हालांकि सुस्ती के भंवर में फंसी अर्थव्यवस्था को उबारने के लिए तत्काल कुछ साहसिक फैसले लेने होंगे ताकि जीडीपी की ऊंची वृद्धि के दौर में दाखिल हुआ जा सके। मोदी सरकार ने पहले कार्यकाल में जीएसटी, दिवालिया संहिता और रेरा जैसे कुछ प्रमुख संरचनागत सुधार किए कुछ सुधार अपनी बारी का इंतजार कर रहे हैं। ऐसे सुधार और उनका प्रभावी क्रियान्वयन आने वाले कई दशकों के लिए ऊंची वृद्धि का आधार उपलब्ध करा सकता है। वे भारतीयों की आंखों से गरीबी के आंसु पोंछ सकता है।

भारत लोकतंत्र और जनसांख्यिकी के सुखद संयोग का लाभ उठाने की और अधिक प्रतीक्षा नहीं कर सकता। अपने दूसरे कार्यकाल में मोदी सरकार आम आदमी के भरोसे को नहीं तोड़ेगी उम्मीदों से लबरेज भारत मोदी की तत्परता और उनकी क्षमताओं में पूरा भरोसा रखता है। भारत उनके फैसलों का समर्थन करेगा, भले ही वे निर्णय कितने ही कड़े क्यों न हों।

> (लेखक सेबी और एलआइसी के पूर्व चेयरमैन हैं) response@jagran.com

एथनॉल के समृद्ध स्रोत की अनदेखी

बीते दिनों आर्थिक मामलों की मंत्रिमंडलीय समिति की बैठक में एथनॉल से संबंधित जो कई फैसले लिए गए उनमें एक यह भी था कि सरकारी तेल कंपनियां अब चीनी से बनाए गए एथनॉल की खरीद कर सकेंगी। सरकार को उम्मीद है कि एथनॉल की खरीद बढ़ाकर वह इस वर्ष तेल आयात बिल में एक फीसद की कमी कर सकेगी। भारत सरकार ने 1980 में राष्ट्रीय जैव ईंधन नीति घोषित की थी। इसके तहत डीजल में जैव ईंधन और पेट्रोल में एथनॉल के मिश्रण को प्रोत्साहित किया जाना था। यह वर्तमान में अनिवार्य 10 प्रतिशत से काफी कम है। उल्लेखनीय है कि ब्राजील में 40-50 प्रतिशत एथनॉल का मिश्रण हो रहा है। अपने देश में सकल घरेलू उत्पाद में सड़क परिवहन का हिस्सा 67 प्रतिशत है। अकेले परिवहन क्षेत्र में ही 72 प्रतिशत डीजल और 23 प्रतिशत पेट्रोल का उपयोग सीएनजी-एलपीजी आदि के अलावा किया जा रहा है। आगे यह खपत कई गुना बढ़ेगी। पेट्रोल में एथनॉल मिश्रण एक ज्यादा व्यावहारिक हल माना जाता है। एथनॉल में ऑक्सीजन की मात्रा अधिक होती है जिससे यह कम प्रदुषण उत्पन्न करता है। 10 प्रतिशत अनिवार्य मिश्रण के लिए वर्तमान में लगभग 400-500 करोड़ लीटर एथनॉल की आवश्यकता है, जबकि उत्पादन तीन सौ करोड लीटर ही हो रहा है। इसमें से रासायनिक उद्योगों के अलावा 170 करोड़ लीटर एथनॉल आबकारी-शराब बनाने में चला जाता है। लक्षित आवश्यकता और एथनॉल की उपलब्धता के बीच अभी भी भारी अंतर है।

वर्तमान में एथनॉल मुख्यतयाः गन्ना से हासिल किया जाता है, लेकिन देश में महुआ भी उसका एक समृद्ध



महत्वपूर्ण भूमिका निभा सकता है डॉ. ब्रजेश शर्मा

स्रोत है। महुआ के वृक्ष मध्य प्रदेश, छत्तीसगढ़, झारखंड, ओडिशा, महाराष्ट्र, उत्तर प्रदेश, आंध्र प्रदेश तेलंगाना, कर्नाटक, पश्चिम बंगाल राज्यों में ठीक-ठाक संख्या में हैं। इसके एक पेड़ की आयु 50-60 वर्ष तक होती है। 500 किलो महए से लगभग 350 लीटर एथनॉल प्राप्त किया जा सकता है। देश भर में महुआ की अनुमानित उपज 5 मिलियन मीट्रिक टन है जिसमें से केवल 0.85 मिलियन टन ही एकत्र किया जाता है जो संपूर्ण उपज का लगभग 17 प्रतिशत है। शेष महुआ जो एकत्र नहीं होता, जानवरों या पिक्षयों द्वारा खा लिया जाता है अथवा अवैध रूप से देसी शराब बनाने के काम में लाया जाता है। यदि महआ का समुचित उपयोग किया जाए तो देश में भारी मात्रा में एथनॉल का उत्पादन किया जा सकता है। दुर्भाग्यवश एथनॉल के इस महत्वपूर्ण स्नोत पर भारत सरकार का ध्यान नहीं जा सका है।

महुआ से उत्पादित एथनॉल गन्ना से उत्पादित एथनॉल की तुलना में आर्थिक, सामाजिक एवं पर्यावरण दृष्टि से

अधिक लाभकारी है। महुए का वृक्ष गन्ने की तरह भारी सिंचाई, आयातित रासायनिक खाद एवं कीटनाशक जैसी अतिरिक्त लागत के बिना प्राकृतिक रूप से विकसित होता है। महुआ से सीधे एथनॉल बनाया जा सकता है, जबिक गन्ने से एथनॉल की प्राप्ति के लिए कई प्रक्रियाओं से गुजरना पड़ता है जिससे उत्पादन लागत बढ़ जाती है। इससे अवैध शराब निर्माण को रोकने में भी मदद मिलेगी। इसके अलावा गरीब और हाशिये पर रहने वाले लोगों, आदिवासियों, महिलाओं के लिए यह अतिरिक्त आय का साधन भी बनेगा। महुआ के पेड़ गन्ने की तुलना में वायु से अधिक कार्बन डाई ऑक्साइड अवशोषित कर अधिक

हाल में नीति आयोग ने देश में उभरते जल संकट को लेकर चेतावनी दी है, क्योंकि गन्ना उत्पादक क्षेत्र में भूमिगत जल स्तर का गंभीर रूप से क्षरण हो गया है। वर्तमान में भारत में कुल बोये गए क्षेत्र का लगभग तीन प्रतिशत गन्ना होता है। एथनॉल के 10 प्रतिशत मिश्रण को प्राप्त करने के लिए भारत को गन्ना उत्पादन के लिए अपने सकल बोये गए क्षेत्र का अतिरिक्त चार प्रतिशत समर्पित करना होगा। जाहिर है कि ऐसे में अन्य जीवन उपयोगी फसलों का उत्पादन प्रभावित होगा। परिणामतः इससे भूजल का भारी ह्वास होगा और खाद्यान्न के मूल्यों में भी वृद्धि हो सकती है। समय आ गया है कि भारत सरकार महुआ से एथनॉल उत्पादन पर गंभीरता से ध्यान दे। ईंधन आवश्यकता को पूरा करने में महुआ से हासिल एथनॉल महत्वपूर्ण भूमिका निभा सकता है।

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99.1 तथ्य-कथ्य | रहने के लिहाज से सबसे बेहतर शहर स्रोत : द इकोनॉमिस्ट इंटेलिजेंस यूनिट 98.4 (रेटिंग 100= आदर्श स्थिति) 98.1 ⊞ ш ш 96.8 H 96.6 \blacksquare 毌 ш 56.3 56.2 3 2 9 सिडनी मुंबई दिल्ली एडिलेड कोपेनहेगन टोरंटो टोक्यो वैंकुवर कैलगरी ओसाका मेलवर्न वियना (भारत) (भारत) (ऑस्ट्रेलिया) (डेनमार्क) (कनाडा) (जापान) (कनाडा) (कनाडा) (जापान) (ऑस्ट्रेलिया) (ऑस्ट्रेलिया) (ऑस्ट्रिया)



जीवन की सार्थकता

जिसका जन्म हुआ है, उसकी मृत्यु निश्चित है। यही परम सत्य है। मनुष्य खुशनसीब है कि उसे परमात्मा का दिया हुआ जीवन उपहार स्वरूप मिला है, परंतु अफसोस की बात है कि दुनियादारी में रहकर वह कंकड़-पत्थर बटोरने में इतना तल्लीन हो जाता है कि उसे अपने जन्म की सार्थकता और श्रेयस पथ का कभी स्मरण तक नहीं होता है। युवावस्था सपने संजोने में बिताता है और जब वृद्धावस्था आती है तब सिवाय पश्चाताप और सामने खड़ी मौत के कुछ नजर नहीं आता है। धीरे-धीरे सारे साथी छूटने लगते हैं और उसके बनाए हुए ताने-बाने मे वह स्वयं फंसने लगता है। अवसान पर जाने से पहले उसे अवसाद घेरने लगता है। कोई राह नहीं दिखती, जो उसके लिए रोशनी का सबब बन सके और मौत के दर्व को सुकून के अहसास में बदल सके। ऐसे में विरले लोग ही होते हैं, जिनके अंदर जागृति आती है।

हममें से ज्यादातर लोग तो जीवन के अंतिम बेला तक भी नहीं जगते हैं। वे भूल जाते हैं कि जब मौत की शहजादी चलकर आएगी, तब न सोना काम आएगा न चांदी काम आएगी। इसलिए मृत्यु के पार जाने से पहले मैं एक निवेदन करना चाहूंगा कि हम भी मानवीयता के लिए कुछ ऐसा करें, जिससे जाने के बाद लोग हमें याद करें। अभी तक अपनों के लिए बहुत जिए, अब कुछ परहित के लिए भी जिएं। उनके लिए जो समाज की मुख्यधारा से वंचित हैं, निराश्रित हैं, असहाय हैं बेसहारा हैं। आप यदि उनके चेहरे पर हंसी ला सकते हैं तो समझिए आपका जीवन जीना सार्थक है, क्योंकि जब जीवन में अंतिम समय आएगा तो आपसे यह नहीं पूछा जाएगा कि आपने कितना पढ़ा है, बल्कि यह पूछा जाएगा कि आपने क्या किया है।

झूठी अकड़, झूठे दिखावे में कुछ नहीं रखा है आपसी प्रेम और भाईचारे के सहारे मनुष्य अप्रतिम संगठन तैयार कर सकता है, दूसरों को सम्मान देकर अपने और पराए का भेद मिटा सकता है। इसलिए आज ही कुछ अच्छा करने के लिए उठिए, जगिए और चल पड़िए, क्योंकि सब कुछ यहीं धरा रह जाएगा।

शंभू नाथ पांडेय

शिक्षा, शिक्षक और समाज

सुधीर कुमार

भारतीय संस्कृति एवं समाज में शिक्षकों को अत्यंत सम्मानजनक स्थान प्राप्त है। प्राचीन काल की गुरुकुल परंपरा से लेकर वर्तमान की विद्यालयी शिक्षा के दौर तक हर युग में शिक्षक पुजनीय रहे हैं। समाज को संवारने, उचित दिशा दिखाने तथा छात्रों को नैतिक रूप से धनवान बनाने में शिक्षकों की भूमिका महत्वपूर्ण रही है। अच्छे शिक्षकों का समाज में सदा ऊंचा स्थान रहा है और आगे भी रहेगा। जिस देश में शिक्षकों को सम्मान नहीं है, वह राष्ट्र किसी भी मोर्चे पर तरक्की की नई इबारतें नहीं लिख सकता! किसी व्यक्ति के जीवन में माता-पिता के बाद शिक्षक ही सबसे बड़ा मार्गदर्शक होता है। एक शिक्षक छात्र को नया जीवन देता है। उसे अंधकार से प्रकाश की ओर चलना सिखाता है। शिक्षक विद्यार्थियों को सफलता दिलाने में भूमिका निभाने के साथ-साथ उन्हें दुनिया को मुट्ठी में करने की भी प्रेरणा देता है। यही वजह है कि छात्रों के मन में अपने शिक्षकों के प्रति श्रद्धा का अटूट भाव समाहित रहता है। शिक्षक अगर मेहनती और जुझारू हों तो इसका प्रभाव उनके शिष्यों पर भी परिलक्षित होता है।

शिक्षण पेशे में योग्य लोगों के आने से ही शिक्षा के क्षेत्र में नई प्रतिभाएं आएंगी तथा इसकी गुणवत्ता बढेगी

शिक्षक देश को प्रगति के पथ पर अग्रसर रखने में अहम भूमिका निभाते हैं। शिक्षक देश की मजबूती के आधार स्तंभ होते हैं।

किसी शिक्षक की पहचान अध्यापन के प्रति उनकी दिलचस्पी से ही होती है। हालांकि अध्यापन के प्रति समर्पण का जो भाव कुछ दशक पहले तक शिक्षकों के भीतर था, वह भाव शिक्षा के बाजारीकरण के बाद कम होता दिखाई दिया है! कई शिक्षक अपना पूरा ध्यान विद्यालय में अध्यापन पर केंद्रित करने के बजाय कोचिंग क्लासेस में अधिक रुचि लेते दिखते हैं। दरअसल मौजूदा समय में कोचिंग को सफलता का पर्याय समझा जाने लगा है, जिसकी वजह से कोचिंग एक व्यवसाय के रूप में बड़ी तेजी से उभरा है। पहले कोचिंग वे छात्र लेते थे, जो किसी खास विषय की पढ़ाई में कमजोर होते थे, लेकिन आज सभी मुख्य

विषयों की कोचिंग लेने का फैशन चल पड़ा है। कोचिंग पर अत्यधिक निर्भरता की वजह से विद्यार्थियों में स्व अध्याय की प्रवृत्ति भी कम होती जा रही है, जबिक स्व अध्याय कोचिंग का सर्वोत्तम विकल्प है! लेकिन छात्र इससे बचते नजर आते हैं, जिसका असर उनके कक्षा-प्रदर्शन पर पड़ता है!

विडंबना यह भी है कि आज शिक्षक बनना अधिकांश युवाओं का प्राथमिक लक्ष्य नहीं रह गया है। इंजीनियरिंग, मेडिकल तथा लोक सेवा आयोग की परीक्षाओं में सफलता हाथ न लग पाने के बाद युवक शिक्षक बनने की ओर कदम बढ़ाता है। एक शिक्षक अपने श्रम और जुनून से दर्जनों आइएएस अफसर, डॉक्टर और इंजीनियर तैयार कर सकता है। बावजूद इसके आज के युवा अध्यापन के प्रति रुचि नहीं दिखा रहे हैं, जो चिंता की बात है। शिक्षक बनना युवाओं का अंतिम नहीं पहला लक्ष्य होना चाहिए। शिक्षण पेशे को सम्मानित नजर से देखने तथा योग्य लोगों के इस पेशे में आने से ही शिक्षा के क्षेत्र में नई प्रतिभाएं आएंगी तथा इसकी गुणवत्ता बढ़ेगी। इससे शिक्षा के क्षेत्र को पुराना गौरव भी प्राप्त होगा।

(लेखक बीएचयू में अध्येता हैं)

शिक्षा स्वायत्तशासी होनी चाहिए

अपेक्षाओं के दबाव से जूझते शिक्षक शीर्षक से लिखे अपने आलेख में गिरीश्वर मिश्र ने अपने शिक्षकीय भावबोध से प्रेरित होकर आज की शिक्षा और उसकी धुरी माने जाने वाले शिक्षक की वर्तमान दिशा और दशा का जो आकलन किया है, उसे समझने की जरूरत है। स्वतंत्र भारत में राजनीति के चश्मे से देखी जाने वाली शिक्षा का शनैः शनैः क्षरण होना स्वाभाविक था, क्योंकि देश के शासनतंत्र ने शिक्षा के सुधार के लिए अनेक शिक्षा आयोग और समितियां गठित करने में जैसी तत्परता प्रदर्शित की, यदि उतनी ही सतर्कता से सर्वपल्ली राधाकृष्णन, लक्ष्मण स्वामी मुदलियार, डीएस कोठारी, कृष्णामूर्ति जैसे अनेक विद्वान शिक्षाविदों की संस्तुतियों को अपने राजनीतिक हानि-लाभ से परे होकर भारतीय शिक्षा के सुधार के लिए लागू कर दिया होता तो आज तस्वीर दूसरी होती। अब 'बीती ताहि बिसार दे' के शाश्वत सत्य को स्वीकार करते हुए 2019 में मोदी सरकार द्वारा लागू की जाने वाली राष्ट्रीय शिक्षा नीति में कुछ ऐसा होना चाहिए जिससे देश की समूची शिक्षा व्यवस्था को राजनीति के चंगुल से बाहर निकालकर उसे स्वायत्तशासी बनाया जा सके। शिक्षा की स्वायत्तता से आशय उस अधिकार संपन्नता से है जिसमें देश के शिक्षाविद केवल सुझाव देने तक ही सीमित न रहें अपितु अपनी संस्तुतियों को देश की शिक्षा के हित में लागू करने में भी सक्षम हों। यह तभी संभव होगा जब भारत की शिक्षा न्यायपालिका और चुनाव आयोग की तरह स्वायत्तशासी होगी। देश के शासनतंत्र का उस पर प्रत्यक्ष रूप से नहीं अपितु संविधान सम्मत अप्रत्यक्ष नियंत्रण होगा। अब इस तथ्य को भी स्वीकार करने की जरूरत है कि राष्ट्र की शिक्षा उसकी प्रगति की सूचक होती है तथा उससे जुड़े शिक्षक की

मेलबाक्स

राष्ट्र के निर्माण में महत्वपूर्ण भूमिका है। इसके लिए देश की शिक्षा और शिक्षक की दशा एवं दिशा सुधारने के लिए शिक्षा को स्वायत्तशासी बनाने की जरूरत है। क्योंकि शिक्षा राष्ट्र के नव-निर्माण में नींव के पत्थर की भूमिका निभाती है। डॉ. वीपी पाण्डेय, एसोसिएट प्रोफेसर, अलीगढ़

कानून का पालन जरूरी

जब से नया मोटर व्हीकल एक्ट लागू हुआ है, अफरा-तफरी का माहौल है। पिछले 72 सालों से कानून और नियमों की अनदेखी करना लोगों की आदत सी बन गई है। महानगरों में तो कानून तोड़ना उनकी शान हो गई है। दिल्ली में तो कई बार वाहन चालक यातायात पुलिस को भी घुड़की देते देखे जाते हैं। तेज रफ्तार से आए दिन लोगों की जान जाने, शराब पीकर वाहन चलाते समय कहीं भी टक्कर मार देने और हेलमेट न पहनने के कारण मौत हो जाने की खबरें आती रहती हैं। ये वाकई शर्मनाक है कि दुनिया में सबसे ज्यादा सड़क दुर्घटनाएं भारत में ही होती हैं। आखिर लाइसेंस न रखना, प्रदूषण कंट्रोल सर्टिफिकेट तथा अन्य कागजात साथ रखने में क्या दिक्कत होती है? लोग नियमों का पालन करेंगे तो अन्य समस्याएं नहीं होंगी।

चंद्र प्रकाश शर्मा, दिल्ली हरियाणा में विपक्ष

हरियाणा में विधानसभा चुनाव का शंखनाद होने वाला है। चुनावी मैदान में उतरने वाले महारथी अपनी रणनीति को धार देने में जुटे हैं। सत्तारूढ़ भाजपा तो पहले से ही जन आशीर्वाद यात्रा के माध्यम से जन संपर्क अभियान में जुटी

है, लेकिन बिखरा विपक्ष अभी भी असमंजस में उलझा है। हरियाणा की राजनीति आज भी चौधरी देवीलाल, चौधरी बंसी लाल, चौधरी भजनलाल, चौधरी रणबीर सिंह एवं राव बीरेंद्र सिंह के सियासी परिवारों के इर्दगिर्द घूम रही है। प्रदेश में भाजपा ही ऐसी पार्टी है जो किसी परिवार से नहीं जुड़ी है। आगामी चुनाव के लिए भाजपा पहले ही मैदान में उतर कर ताल ठोक चुकी है, लेकिन विपक्षी पार्टियां आंतरिक कलह से जूझ रही हैं। विपक्ष को अपना अस्तित्व बचाने के लिए पूरे दमखम के साथ चुनाव के मैदान में उतरना होगा।

रुकेंगे हादसे

आखिर सरकार को यातायात नियमों के उल्लंघन पर भारी जुर्माने की जरूरत क्यों पड़ी? यह सोचने की जरूरत है लोगों ने कम जुर्माने को कभी गंभीरता से लिया ही नहीं अगर पुलिस की सख्ती इसी तरह बरकरार रही तो वह दिन दूर नही जब लोग खुद यातायात के नियमों का पालन करने लगेंगे। इससे सड़क हादसों में भी कमी आएगी।

रणजीत वर्मा, फरीदाबाद

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

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

इन्स्

घुसपैठ की साजिश

किस्तान ने पाक अधिकृत कश्मीर में नियंत्रण रेखा के पास जिस तरह से फौज तैनात करना शुरू कर दिया है, उससे इस आशंका की पुष्टि होती है कि वह किसी उकसावे वाली कार्रवाई के इंतजार में है। दो हजार सैनिक नियंत्रण रेखा के नजदीक करीबबाग और कोटली सेक्टर में पहुंच चुके हैं। अगर आने वाले दिनों में पाकिस्तान इस इलाके में किसी उकसावे वाली कार्रवाई को अंजाम देता है तो इसमें कोई हैरानी इसलिए नहीं होनी चाहिए कि वह कई बार भारत को युद्ध जैसी धमकियां दे चुका है। जम्मू-कश्मीर से धारा 370 के प्रावधानों को हटाए जाने के बाद पाकिस्तान जिस तरह की आक्रामक मुद्रा में है, उसमें वह भारत को सबक सिखाने के नाम पर कुछ भी कर सकता है। अब वह ऐसे कदम उठा रहा है जो शांति के लिए बड़ा खतरा साबित हो सकते हैं। आए दिन युद्ध की बातें हो रही हैं। पाकिस्तान के प्रधानमंत्री परमाणु युद्ध की धमकी दे रहे हैं तो उनकी सरकार के रेल मंत्री जगह-जगह भाषणों में बता रहे हैं कि उनके मुल्क के पास भी एक पाव वजन वाले परमाणु हथियार हैं और जरूरत पड़ी तो इनका इस्तेमाल करने से पाकिस्तान चूकेगा नहीं। कुल मिला कर पाकिस्तान ऐसा माहौल बना रहा है कि युद्ध छिड़ने वाला है।

आमतौर पर फौज को शांतिकाल में संवेदनशील ठिकानों पर तैनात नहीं किया जाता है। लेकिन पाकिस्तान ने अपने इन दो हजार सैनिकों को नियंत्रण रेखा से मात्र तीस किलोमीटर पहले तैनात कर दिया है। इसका मतलब है कि उसने ऐसा किसी पूर्व-नियोजित योजना के तहत ही कदम उठाया है। खुफिया संकेत पहले से हैं कि पाकिस्तान अब कश्मीर में आतंकियों की घुसपैठ कराने की कोशिश में है। भारत की सीमा में आतंकियों को घुसाने का काम पाकिस्तान की सेना ही करती है। इसके लिए बाकायदा प्रशिक्षित कमांडो मदद करते हैं और यही आतंकियों को हथियारों और गोला-बारूद से लैस करके भारतीय सीमा में भेजते हैं। हाल में नियंत्रण रेखा के पास सौ से ज्यादा कमांडो तैनात करने की भी खबरें आई थीं। और यह मामला सिर्फ कश्मीर में नियंत्रण रेखा तक ही सीमित नहीं है। गुजरात के सरक्रीक क्षेत्र में भी पाकिस्तान सेना ने विशेष बलों को तैनात किया है, ताकि उस रास्ते भी भारत में आतंकियों की घुसपैठ कराई जा सके। हालांकि नियंत्रण रेखा के आसपास फौज की तैनाती के पीछे पाकिस्तान अपनी सुरक्षा मजबूत करने का तर्क देगा लेकिन हकीकत किसी से छिपी नहीं है।

यह तो अब स्पष्ट है कि जम्मू-कश्मीर से धारा 370 के प्रावधानों को खत्म करना पाकिस्तान को नागवार गुजरा है। इसलिए वह इस मामले को अंतरराष्ट्रीय स्तर पर उठा रहा है, अमेरिका से लेकर संयुक्त राष्ट्र के दरवाजे खटखटा चुका है लेकिन उसे हासिल कुछ नहीं हुआ। सबने एक ही बात कह कर मामले को खारिज कर दिया कि यह भारत का अंदरूनी मामला है और इस मामले में कुछ नहीं किया जा सकता। इस अभियान में पिटने के बाद ही उसने नियंत्रण रेखा के पास बड़ी संख्या में सैनिक तैनात करके भारत को धमकाने की कोशिश की है। इस महीने भारत और पाकिस्तान के प्रधानमंत्री संयुक्त राष्ट्र महासभा को संबोधित करने वाले हैं। ऐसे में पाकिस्तान आने वाले दिनों में नियंत्रण रेखा और सीमाई इलाकों में गोलीबारी और हिंसा भड़काने की कोशिश में है ताकि संयुक्त राष्ट्र में भारत के खिलाफ माहौल बनाने में मदद मिल सके।

जुमोना और अनुशासन

जबसे मोटर वाहन संबंधी संशोधित अधिनियम लागू हुआ है, एक अजीब तरह की अफरा-तफरी का माहौल बन गया है। पिछले करीब एक हफ्ते से रोज भारी जुर्माने की खबरें आ रही हैं। किसी पर चौरानबे हजार रुपए तक का जुर्माना लगाया जा चुका है। इससे आहत होकर एकाध लोगों के पुलिस कर्मियों से उलझने और अपने दुपहिया वाहन को आग लगा देने की खबरें भी आईं। दरअसल, नए नियमों के तहत यातायात नियमों का उल्लंघन करने पर जुर्माने और दंड की मात्रा पहले से काफी बढ़ा दी गई है। इसलिए जिन चालकों के पास वैध कागजात नहीं हैं, वे शराब पीकर गाड़ी चला रहे थे, लाल बत्ती पार की थी आदि, तो सबको मिला कर जुर्माने की रकम हजारों में हो गई। इसे लेकर कई लोगों में रोष है। विपक्षी दल इसे रकम उगाही का नया हथकंडा करार दे रहे हैं। ऐसे में केंद्रीय परिवहन मंत्री नितिन गडकरी को सफाई देनी पड़ी है कि भारी जुर्माने का मकसद लोगों को कानून तोड़ने से रोकना है, न कि धन उगाही। सड़क हादसे देश की बड़ी समस्या हैं, उन पर काबू पाना सरकार के लिए बड़ी चुनौती है। ऐसे में भारी जुर्माने के भय से लोग यातायात नियमों को तोड़ने से बचेंगे, उनमें सुरक्षित वाहन चलाने की आदत विकसित होगी।

मगर यह अनुभव नया नहीं है कि जब भी इस तरह किसी समस्या से पार पाने के लिए भारी जुर्माने का प्रावधान किया जाता है, इंस्पेक्टर राज को बढ़ावा मिलता है। यातायात महकमे में यह प्रवृत्ति कुछ अधिक देखी जाती है। यह सही है कि भारतीय सड़कों पर वाहनों की संख्या चिंताजनक स्थिति तक पहुंच चुकी है। इस पर काबू पाने के लिए उपायों पर विचार किए जाते रहे हैं। यह भी तथ्य है कि युवाओं में अनियंत्रित ढंग से वाहन चलाने और जानबूझ कर यातायात नियमों की अनदेखी करने की प्रवृत्ति लगातार बढ़ती गई है। इस वजह से हादसे भी आए दिन की बात हो गए हैं। आंकड़े के मुातबिक जितने लोग गंभीर बीमारियों की वजह से जान नहीं गंवाते उससे अधिक सड़क हादसों के शिकार हो जाते हैं। भारत इस मामले में सबसे चिंताजनक स्थिति में है। इसलिए सरकार की अपने नागरिकों की सुरक्षा को लेकर चिंता स्वाभाविक है। पर यह दावा करना मुश्किल है कि भारी जुर्माने से लोगों की मानमानियों पर रोक लगेगी और वाहन चलाने संबंधी आदतों में बदलाव आ सकता है।

पहले भी यातायात नियमों के उल्लंघन पर भारी जुर्माने और दंड का प्रावधान किया जा चुका है, पर उसका कोई उल्लेखनीय नतीजा सामने नहीं आया। न तो लोगों में सुरक्षित चलने की प्रवृत्ति विकसित हो पाई और न यातायात उल्लंघन की दर घटी, बल्कि सड़क हादसों में निरंतर बढ़ोतरी दर्ज हुई है। सभी जानते हैं कि बिना हेलमेट पहने, सीटबेल्ट बांधे, मोबाइल पर बात करते गाड़ी चलाना गंभीर मुसीबत की वजह बन सकता है। मगर लोगों में सतर्क न रहने की आदत बनती गई है, तो इसकी कुछ वजह यातायात पुलिस की लापरवाही भी है। अक्सर वह ऐसे दोषियों को किसी प्रभाव में आकर या कुछ रिश्वत लेकर छोड़ देती है। इस तरह लोगों में यह धारणा बैठ गई है कि अगर वे कोई गलती करेंगे, तो आसानी से बच निकलेंगे। इसलिए केवल दंड और जुर्माने के भय से लोगों में कानून तोड़ने की प्रवृत्ति को खत्म करने का दावा नहीं किया जा सकता। इसके लिए संबंधित महकमे को भी जवाबदेह बनाना जरूरी है।

कल्पमधा

कभी अपने को बहुत बड़ा मत समझो। कानून तुमसे भी ऊपर है। – थॉमस फुलर

परमाणु युद्ध का खतरा

विजन कुमार पांडेय

दुनिया के मुल्कों को परमाणु युद्ध का खतरा एक दूसरे से तो है ही, इससे भी ज्यादा बड़ा खतरा अलकायदा और इसलामिक स्टेट जैसे वैश्विक आतंकी संगठनों से भी है। ये आतंकी संगठन लंबे समय से परमाण् हथियार हासिल करने की फिराक में हैं। दुनिया के परमाणु शक्ति संपन्न राष्ट्रों के सामने यह भी बड़ी चुनौती है कि परमाणु हथियार कैसे सुरक्षित रखे जाएं ताकि आतंकियों की इन तक पहुंच न बन सके। दुनिया ने परमाणु बम से होने वाली तबाही हिरोशिमा और नागासाकी में देखी है।

31मेरिका के पास दशकों से ऐसे परमाणु हथियार हैं जो इतनी भयानक तबाही कर सकते हैं कि धरती का कोई हिस्सा इंसान के रहने लायक भी न रह जाए। अमेरिका के हथियारों का जखीरा ब्रिटेन के मुकाबले इकत्तीस गुना और चीन के मुकाबले छब्बीस गुना बड़ा है। वाशिंगटन स्थित संस्था- आर्म्स कंटोल एसोसिएशन की हाल की एक रिपोर्ट के अनुसार केवल रूस ही है जो परमाणु शक्ति के मामले में फिलहाल अमेरिका से आगे हैं। अमेरिका के पास कुल छह हजार आठ सौ परमाणु हथियार हैं जबिक रूस के पास सात हजार ऐसे हथियार हैं। अमेरिका और रूस दो ऐसे देश हैं जिनके पास परमाणु हमले के लिए जरूरत से ज्यादा हथियार हैं। दोनों के पास दुनिया में मौजूद कुल परमाणु हथियारों का नब्बे फीसदी हिस्सा है। इस सूची में तीन सौ परमाणु हथियारों के साथ फ्रांस तीसरे नंबर पर है।

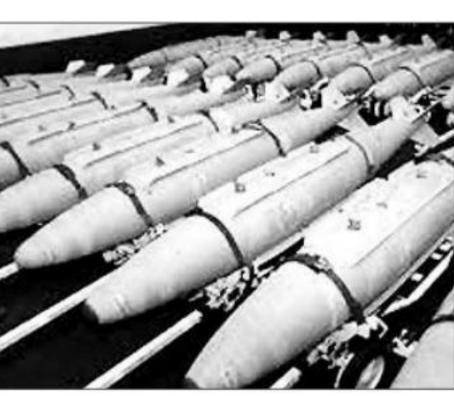
पूर्व में ऐसे हथियार केवल प्रतिरोधक उपायों के तौर पर देखे जाते थे। लेकिन सबसे खतरनाक बात ऐसे हथियारों की सामग्री की बढ़ती खोज है, जिससे परमाणु युद्ध का नया खतरा सामने आ गया है। इस कारण परमाणु हथियारों की संख्या में तेजी से बढ़ोतरी हो रही है। पाकिस्तान हमेशा भारत को परमाणु युद्ध के लिए उकसाता रहा है। इसके लिए दोनों देश कम से कम पांच बार परमाणु युद्ध के कगार पर पहुंच चुके थे। परमाणु हथियारों युग में भारत की शुरुआत 1974 में हुई थी। इसके बाद 1998 में भारत ने दूसरी बार परमाणु परीक्षण किया था। इस समय भारत-पाक के बीच तनाव चरम पर है। पाकिस्तान परमाणु युद्ध की धमकी तक दे चुका है। रक्षा विशेषज्ञ भी आशंका जताते रहे हैं कि यदि भारत पाकिस्तान पर कोई कठोर सैनिक कार्रवाई करता है तो यह स्थिति पूर्णकालिक युद्ध का रूप ले सकती है। इसका अंत एक भयानक परमाणु युद्ध में हो सकता है।

आज के जमाने में परमाणु युद्ध की क्या कीमत चुकानी पड़ सकती है, इसका अंदाज लगाना बहुत मुश्किल है। इस समय दोनों देशों के बीच काफी तनाव है। लेकिन ऐसा भी नहीं है कि युद्ध होगा ही। अगर गलती से भी ऐसा होता है तो इसका परिणाम बहुत भयानक होगा। परमाणु युद्ध से होने वाली तबाही का मंजर कितना भयानक होगा, इसकी कल्पना भी नहीं की जा सकती। फिर भी माना जाता है कि परमाणु हमला हफ्ते भर में दो करोड़ से ज्यादा लोगों को मार देगा। इनमें से पचास लाख से ज्यादा लोग बम की तिपश से ही झुलस जाएंगे। आधी दुनिया के दो अरब से ज्यादा लोग सिर्फ भूख से मर जाएंगे। जो बचेंगे वे विकिरणों की मार से मर जाएंगे। यह आंकड़ा यह दूसरे विश्व युद्ध में

ही नहीं, मौत का ये आंकड़ा हिंदुस्तान में पिछले दस सालों में आतंकवादी हमलों में मारे गए लोगों, पुलिस, जवान और सुरक्षा बलों की कुल तादाद से दो हजार दो सौ इक्कीस गुना ज्यादा होगी। ओजोन की आधी परत खत्म हो जाएगी। दुनिया से सर्दी-गर्मी का मौसम खत्म हो जाएगा। इतना ही नहीं, धरती के बड़े हिस्से से बनस्पति और जीव-जंतुओं भी साफ हो जाएंगे। इससे दुनिया में भुखमरी फैलेगी सो अलग। भुखमरी ही अरबों लोगों की मौत का कारण बनेगी। ये आंकड़े 2013 में भौतिक वैज्ञानिकों के अंतरराष्ट्रीय संगठन ने परमाणु युद्ध रोकने के लिए किए गए एक अध्ययन के बाद जारी किए गए थे।

बात सिर्फ हिंदुस्तान और पाकिस्तान की नहीं, दांव पर आधी दुनिया होगी। भारत और पाकिस्तान के पास जो परमाणु बम हैं वे हिरोशिमा पर गिराए गए बम के बराबर हैं। ये बम जैसे ही गिरेंगे सबसे पहले इनकी गर्मी, तपिश और विकिरण लोगों की जान ले लेंगे। इसके बाद जो बच जाएंगे उनके लिए भी जीना आसान नहीं होगा। भोपाल गैस के कांड के तीस साल बाद तीसरी पीढ़ी के लोग बीमार पैदा हो रहे हैं। वह तो मिक (मिथाइल आइसो साइनेट) गैस थी, जबिक ये तो परमाणु बम हैं। इसी से अंदाजा लगाया जा सकता है कि अगर परमाणु हमला हुआ तो इसका असर कितना लंबा और खतरनाक होगा। बमों से निकले विकिरण लोगों को तिल-तिल कर मारेंगे।

पिछले कुछ दिनों से पाकिस्तान की ओर से लगातार भड़काऊ बयानबाजी की जा रही है। पाकिस्तान परमाणु बम हमले की धमकी दे रहा है।



मारे गए लोगों की तादाद के मुकाबले आधी है। इतना पािकस्तान परमाणु सपंन्न राष्ट्र है। ऐसे में भारत को यह ध्यान रखना होगा कि उकसावे की कार्रवाई में अपना नुकसान न हो जाए, क्योंकि पाकिस्तान की छिव पूरी दुनिया में आतंकियों को पालने वाले देश के रूप में होती है और पाकिस्तान से निकला आतंक पूरी दुनिया को कई बार दहला चुका है। इसमें भारत ही नहीं अमेरिका जैसे देश तक झुलस चुके हैं।

> भारत की ओर से चलाए जा रहे मिसाइल परीक्षण कार्यक्रमों से पाकिस्तान बौखलाता रहा है। इस बात को अंतरराष्ट्रीय मंचों तक ले गया है। पाकिस्तान का कहना है कि इससे संपूर्ण दक्षिण एशिया में तनाव बढ़ेगा। ऐसे में अगर युद्ध हुआ तो यह किसी के लिए बेहतर नहीं होगा। इससे तनाव

दक्षिण एशिया खासकर भारत-पाकिस्तान के बीच तो और बढ़ेगा ही, साथ ही इस तनाव से पूरी दुनिया प्रभावित होगी। जबिक ऐसा नहीं कि केवल भारत ही मिसाइल परीक्षण कर रहा है। पाकिस्तान भी लगातार अपने मिसाइल परीक्षण को धार दे रहा है। भारत ने अगर परमाणु हथियार ले जाने में सक्षम अग्नि, त्रिशूल, नाग, पृथ्वी जैसी मिसाइलों के परीक्षण किए हैं तो पाकिस्तान ने भी गौरी, शाहीन जैसी मिसाइलों के परीक्षण कर भारत की बराबरी का दावा किया है। अगर वर्तमान स्थिति को देखें तो इन मामलों में भारत पाकिस्तान से काफी आगे है और भारत ने काफी कुछ अपने दम पर विकसित कर लिया है, जबिक पाकिस्तान को अभी भी दूसरे देशों की तकनीकी पर निर्भर रहना पड रहा है। बस यही अहम अंतर है, जो भारत को पाकिस्तान से आगे रख रहा है। दुनिया के मुल्कों को परमाणु युद्ध का खतरा एक

> दूसरे से तो है ही, इससे भी ज्यादा बड़ा खतरा अलकायदा और इसलामिक स्टेट जैसे वैश्विक आतंकी संगठनों से भी है। ये आतंकी संगठन लंबे समय से परमाणु हथियार हासिल करने की फिराक में हैं। दुनिया के परमाणु शक्ति संपन्न राष्ट्रों के सामने यह भी बड़ी चुनौती है कि परमाणु हथियार कैसे सुरक्षित रखे जाएं ताकि आतंकियों की इन तक पहुंच न बन सके। दुनिया ने परमाणु बम से होने वाली तबाही हिरोशिमा और नागासाकी में देखी है। साथ ही चेरनोबिल जैसे हादसे भी इसका खतरे को बताने के लिए काफी हैं। गुजरे वक्त के साथ, इस हादसे की यादें इतिहास के पन्नों में दबती जा रही हैं। लेकिन इन हमलों और हादसों के जख्म आज भी रिस रहे हैं। हिरोशिमा और नागासाकी के लोग आज भी पूरी तरह सेहतमंद नहीं हैं। आने पीढ़ियां किसी

न किसी रूप में इनकी मार झेल रही हैं। इसीलिए जरूरी है कि हम ये देखें कि दुनिया परमाणु हमला झेलने के लिए कितनी तैयार है।

ब्रिटेन में पिंडार नाम से एक सुरक्षित बंकर बना हुआ है जहां किसी परमाणु हमले की सूरत में सेना और सरकार के अधिकारी अपनी जान बचा सकेंगे। परमाणु जंग के बाद मची तबाही के वक्त भी यहां से तमाम सरकारी काम चलते रहेंगे। यहां का सरकारी वर्ग और सैनिक सुरक्षित रहेंगे। लेकिन अगर भारत-पाकिस्तान के बीच परमाणु हथियारों से जंग हो गई तो आम जनता को सुरक्षित कैसे रखा जाएगा, इसकी भी तैयारी होनी चाहिए। इसके लिए सरकार की क्या तैयारी है ? इस पर विचार करने की जरूरत है।

चंदा मामा के घर

मृदुला सिन्हा

🔁 स युग के वैज्ञानिकों ने कमाल के साथ धमाल भी कर रखा है। अचंभित करने वाले आविष्कार के साथ ग्रह-नक्षत्रों पर भी जाने के यंत्र और यान विकसित किए जा रहे हैं। सेना के लिए उपयोग में आने वाले हथियार हों या खेती की ऊपज बढाने वाले उपकरण, जीवन के हर क्षेत्र में सुविधाएं लाने में वैज्ञानिकों की वाहवाही हो रही है। जल, थल और नम में इनके द्वारा आविष्कृत न जाने कितने उपकरण घूम रहे हैं। मानव जीवन को सुख-सुविधाओं से संपन्न बनाने के लिए वैज्ञानिक अनवरत कड़ी मेहनत करते हैं।

चंद्रयान-2 भी इसी उद्देश्य से बनाया है। इस साल 22 जून को रवाना हुआ चंद्रयान ऐसी-वैसी जगह पर नहीं, बल्कि चंद्रमा के दक्षिण ध्रुव पर उतरने गया है। इसका मकसद चांद के दक्षिणी ध्रुव को टटोलना है। लैंडर विक्रम पता लगाएगा कि चांद पर भूकम्प आता है या नहीं। सबसे बड़ी बात तो यह कि अब चांद के दक्षिण ध्रुव पर भारत का तिरंगा लहराएगा।

भारत की लोक संस्कृति में चांद को मामा कहा

जाता है। हम सब जानते हैं कि बचपन में मामा के घर जाने के लिए हम कितने लालायित रहते थे। मन में यह भी विश्वास रहता था कि मामा के घर जाएंगे तो नाना-नानी और मामा-मामी से ढेर सारे उपहार मिलेंगे। ऐसा ही आज होता भी है। आगे भी होता रहेगा। इस चंद्रयान-2 के आकाश में चांद की ओर उड़ान भरने के पूर्व वैज्ञानिकों ने ऐसे यंत्रों को उसमें भरा है जिससे चांद पर उतरकर वहां की प्राकृतिक स्थितियों के चित्र लिए जाएंगे।

वहां क्या-क्या पाया जाता है, इसकी जानकारी हमारे लिए उपयोगी होगी। पृथ्वी पर के प्राकृतिक संसाधनों का हम भरपूर उपयोग कर रहे हैं। इसके बावजूद जल, थल और नभ पर इतने संसाधन हैं जिनकी खोज अभी बाकी है। ऐसे संसाधनों का उपयोग मानवता के कल्याण के लिए होगा।

भारतीय समाज की यह विशेषता है कि ग्रह-नक्षत्रों को भी रिश्ते-नाते में बांध लिया जाता है। इनका मानवीकरण हो जाता है। इसलिए वे भी हमारे रनेह भाजक ही रहते हैं। मेरे मन में यह प्रश्न उठता था कि समाज में लोग चंद्रमा को 'मामा' क्यों कहते हैं ? अनुभव यह भी कि हर पीढ़ी के वे मामा ही हैं। जैसे दादा, पिता और बेटा सभी के मामा। भारतीय

समाज में सब सनातन ही है। चंदा मामा भी सनातन।

भाद्र मास की शुक्ल चतुर्थी को दिन भर उपवास रख कर सायंकाल चांद को आंगन में खीर-पूड़ी और फल-फूल से अर्घ देने का व्रत होता है। उस शाम फल हाथ में लेकर ही चांद देखा जाता है। चतुर्थी का चांद कलंकी कहलाता है। हाथ में फल लिए बिना चांद देख लेने पर उस व्यक्ति को किसी का कुछ चुराना पड़ता है। या फिर पत्थर का टुकड़ा छत पर फेंका जाता

और एडविन एल्डिन चांद पर उतरे थे तो बिहार में चतुर्थी व्रत करने से लोग कतराने लगे थे। क्योंकि वे लोग चांद को भगवान मानते थे। उस चांद पर अमेरिकी लोगों ने अपने पांव रख दिए, तो भला वे कैसे अर्घ्य देते। लेकिन सबने पुजा की और श्रद्धापूर्वक करते आए हैं।

हैं। जब 1961 में अमेरिकी

अंतरिक्ष यात्री नील आर्मस्ट्रांग

मनुष्य और चांद को लेकर और भी ढेर सारे कहानी-किस्से हैं। इतना स्पष्ट है कि चांद विभिन्न रूपों में हमारे बीच मामा बन कर ही रहता आया है। लोक जीवन में स्त्री का इतना प्यारा हो गया चांद कि उसने उसे भाई ही बना लिया। प्रेमी द्वारा प्रेमिका के मुख को चांद का

टुकड़ा समझ लेना क्षणिक एहसास हो सकता है। लेकिन किसी महिला का भाई तो बहन के दिल में हमेशा एक ही भाव और रस में पगता रहता है। निश्चय ही अपने रोते हुए लाल को आंगन में खड़े होकर आकाश में उगे चांद को दिखा कर किसी मां ने कहा होगा-'देखो-देखो चंदा मामा'! मुन्ना चमकते चांद का गोला देख कर चुप हो गया होगा। अपने लाड़ले को दुध-भात खिलाते हुए भी चांद को दिखाया होगा। और इस तरह चांद सनातन मामा बन गया। वैज्ञानिकों की दृष्टि में चांद का यह रूप नहीं आया होगा। लेकिन चंद्रयान को चांद पर भेजने का उद्देश्य यही रहा है, मामा के घर से कुछ ले आना।

कुछ लोग तो चांद पर घर बनाने और वहीं जाकर विवाह करने की भी योजना बनाने लगे हैं। लोक संस्कृति में भांजे-भांजी के विवाह पर मामा को बहन के घर ही आने का रिवाज है। बहुत सारी रस्में मामा के हाथों ही संपन्न परी कराई जाती हैं। चंदा मामा पृथ्वी पर आएं या नहीं, पृथ्वी के लोग तो वहां जाने के लिए उतावले अवश्य हो रहे हैं। भारतीय वैज्ञानिकों की यह बड़ी उपलब्धि ही नहीं, स्तुत्य है जिससे भारत मां का भाल ऊंचा हुआ है।

(लेखिका गोवा की राज्यपाल हैं)

जरूरी है सख्ती

से नया मोटर यान कानून लागू हुआ है, इसकी आलोचना सुनने को मिल रही है। कुछ लोगों का चालान उनकी गाड़ी की कीमत से भी अधिक का कट गया है और मीडिया में इस तरह की खबरों को जगह भी खूब मिल रही है। लेकिन इन सबके बीच यह विचार करना आवश्यक होगा कि नया कानून लागू करके सरकार ने क्या वाकई गलत कदम उठाया है? क्या हम लोग अनुशासित होकर सड़क पर नहीं चल सकते ? क्या बिना हेलमेट के वाहन चलाना, बाइक पर तीन या चार लोगों की सवारी करना और वाहन चलाते समय मोबाइल पर बात करना गलत नहीं है ? क्या ऐसा करके कहीं न कहीं हम अपनी जान के साथ दूसरो की जान जोखिम में नहीं डाल रहे? जब हम बड़े परिप्रेक्ष्य में पूरे मुद्दे को देखेंगे तो हमें सरकार का ये कदम न्यायसंगत लगेगा। ये लोक लुभावन निर्णय तो नहीं है लेकिन जनहित में लिया गया बड़ा फैसला है।

• मुकेश गुप्ता, ग्रेटर नोएडा वेस्ट

जागरूक बनाना जरूरी

सरकार की कामयाबियों के फायदे तभी मिल पाएंगे जब लोग भी परी तरह से समझदारी से काम लें। यातायात के नए नियम और भारी भरकम जुर्माना यह बताने के लिए काफी है कि सड़कों पर चलते समय हम कितने बेखौफ और लापरवाह हो जाते हैं। अच्छी और चौड़ी सड़कें हमें तभी आगे ले जाएंगी जब हम इनके नियम-कायदों के साथ चलें, वरना नतीजे डरावने हो सकतें हैं। फिर भी यातायात में सख्ती के अच्छे नतीजों की उम्मीद भर से सरकार की कमजोरियों को नजरअंदाज नहीं किया जा सकता है। महज कुछ कागजों का होना या न होना हादसों के खिलाफ गारंटी नहीं हो सकती। बेशक नियम तोड़ना जुर्म है, मगर सनद रहे कि चोर-सिपाही का खेल बड़े हादसे की वजह भी तो बन सकती है। टूटे हुए ट्रैफिक साइन बोर्ड, अधरे रोड सिग्नल और खराब ट्रैफिक लाइटों में भी सुधार को पूरी गुजाईश है। जुमें और जुमीन की आड़ में ट्रैफिक विभाग ताकत दिखाने के बजाय लोगों को जागरूक बनाए तो शायद नतीजे बेहतर होंगे।

 एमके मिश्रा, मां आनंदमयी नगर, रातू समस्याओं में घिरा देश

आज देश के सामने गरीबी, कृपोषण,

बेरोजगारी और पर्यावरण संरक्षण जैसी बड़ी

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

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

समस्याएं विद्यमान हैं। नए भारत में आज भी बच्चों से लेकर बड़े तक कुपोषण के शिकार है। ग्रामीण क्षेत्रों में संतुलित आहार सहित प्राथमिक उपचार तक नहीं मिल पाता है। भारत की अड़सठ फीसद फीसद आबादी आज भी गरीबी रेखा के नीचे है। वैश्विक खाद्य सुरक्षा सूचकांक की रिपोर्ट के अनुसार देश के बाईस करोड़ से ज्यादा लोग कुपोषण के शिकार हैं जिसमें छोटे बच्चों की संख्या दस लाख है, यानी देश का हर पांचवा बच्चा कुपोषण का शिकार है। जहां तक बात है बेरोजगारी की तो इसका बड़ा कारण सरकार की आर्थिक नीतियां हैं जो रोजगार के मौके पैदा नहीं कर पा रही हैं। आज जिस तरह के मंदी के हालात बने हुए हैं उससे तो रोजगार का परिदृय और

बिगड़ा है। लोगों की नौकरियां जा रही हैं। लेकिन हालात देख कर लग रहा है कि सरकार इस दिशा में कोई कदम नहीं उठा रही है। मनकश्वर भट्ट, मधपुरा प्रशसनीय पहल है।

बेहतर पहल

हाल में खबर आई कि परमाणु, रासायनिक और जैविक हमले से निपटने के लिए भोपाल के

अखिल भारतीय आयुर्विज्ञान संस्थान (एम्स) में डॉक्टरों को

तैयार किया जाएगा। यह पहल प्रसंशनीय तो है ही, साथ ही आपात स्थिति से निपटने हेतु कारगर कदम भी है। आज दुनिया में युद्ध के प्रमुख हथियारों के रूप में परमाणु, जैविक और रासायनिक हथियार ही हैं। जैव प्रयोग द्वारा विषाणु या जीवाणु दुश्मन खेमे में छोड़ कर महामारी फैलाई जा सकती है। परमाणु हथियारों के निरस्त्रीकरण की दिशा को छोड़ कर जैविक हथियारों को एकत्रित करने की होड़ में कई देशों ने तो विषाणुओं को पूर्व से ही प्रयोगशालाओं में इकट्ठा करके रख लिया है। जबिक सन 1972 में अंतरराष्ट्रीय समझौते के तहत इनके प्रयोग पर प्रतिबंध लग चुका है। आज दुनिया में जिस तरह के आपसी विवाद और संघर्ष चलरहे हैं उससे तो

युद्ध का खतरा और बढ़ जाता है। ऐसे में अगर भारत के वैज्ञानिक इस तरह के संकट से बचने के उपायों की दिशा में बढ़ रहे हैं तो यह

• संजय वर्मा, मनावर (धार) मजबूत होते रिश्ते

भारत रूस के सुदूर पूर्व के विकास के लिए एक अरब डॉलर का कर्ज देगा। रूस के व्लादिवोस्तक शहर में ईस्टर्न इकोनॉमिक फोरम (ईईएफ) की बैठक में भारत के प्रधानमंत्री ने कहा कि भारत पहला देश था जिसने इस शहर में अपना वाणिज्य दूतावास खोला था। भारत ने सुदूर पूर्व में ऊर्जा क्षेत्र में भारी निवेश किया है। रूस भारत का पुराना मित्र रहा है और वैश्विक पटल पर हमेशा भारत का समर्थन किया है, चाहे संयुक्त राष्ट्र सुरक्षा परिषद हो या अन्य अंतरराष्ट्रीय संगठन हों। भारत और रूस दोनों ही देश अब अपने रिश्तों को इक्कीसवीं सदी के हिसाब से तैयार करना चाहते हैं। अमेरिका और रूस दोनों ही बड़े देश हैं और उनके अपने-अपने हित हैं। ऐसे में भारत को दोनों महाशक्तियों से अपने हित साधने जरूरी हैं। भारत-रूस की सबसे बड़ी समस्या यह है कि ये शीत युद्ध के दौरान बने संबंधों के पुराने ढर्रे पर ही चल रहे हैं। आज के जमाने में दो देशों के बीच आर्थिक रिश्ते ज्यादा प्रगाढ़ होने चाहिए, उसके बाद ही उनके बीच अन्य संबंध मजबूत होते हैं। ऐसे में भारत-रूस के संबंध बहुत कमजोर रहे हैं। वर्तमान में दोनों देशों के बीच व्यापार महज नौ करोड़ अमेरिकी डॉलर का ही है। भारत के पास मौका है कि वह भारतीय कंपनियों को वहां निवेश करने के लिए प्रोत्साहित करे।

प्रो. मोनू सिंह, बागपत

नई दिल्ली