## A penny in time

Use the money saved post Air India's sale to set up two credible safety organisations in India



**OUT OF THE BLUE** 

ANJULI BHARGAVA

f the judge, jury and executioner in a case are one and the same, how likely is it that justice will be delivered? That, in a nutshell, is where the

Directorate General of Civil Aviation (DGCA) in India finds itself with regard to air safety.

Let me explain. In almost every country, the body that investigates aircraft accidents is a highly specialised one with trained investigators. As and when an accident occurs, investigators arrive at a hypothesis on the possible reasons based on clues gathered at the site or from recovered parts. All possible hypotheses are

examined in detail and rejected till the most likely one that ties in with all other evidence remains. The most probable cause is established and recommendations are made based on this to reduce recurrence. The

implemented by the regulator and it is held responsible for the failure to do so. In the US, for instance, the regulator is the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) and the body that investigates accidents is the National Transportation Safety Board (NTSB). In the UK, the Civil Aviation Authority is the regulator and investigations are conducted by the Air Accidents Investigation Branch. In most developed countries, recommendations made post an accident are taken with utmost seriousness and are usually binding on the regulator.

recommendations have to be

India however has been doing its own thing in this

regard. Till 2010, safety rules and regulations were prescribed by the DGCA — both for airlines and industry personnel. It was the DGCA that tried to ensure without probably having the wherewithal to do so — regulations were complied with. As and when, such regulations were not followed and a mishap occurred, the DGCA would ask a panel of experts to investigate. Recommendations submitted would be examined and those accepted would be implemented and the rest ignored. As a former director general of civil aviation told me once recommendations that could be implemented with relative ease would be implemented and the rest overlooked.

In 2011 — in the aftermath of Air India plane crash in Mangalore in May 2010 — the government realised it needed a dedicated set-up to investigate accidents and set up an Aircraft Accident Investigation Bureau but this effort has remained

largely on paper.

on safety for this newspaper, I discovered to my horror that India's annual budget for the DGCA is a mere ₹200 crore. Contrast this with the \$17.5 billion allotted to the FAA for the year 2019 by the US government. This despite the fact that air traffic growth in India has been among the highest and is crossing double digits almost every vear. India is expected to cross the UK and be the third largest in the volume of traffic by 2024. This single statistic to my mind highlights why the DGCA is unable to perform as it ought to. India does not have many

While working on an article

trained investigators but it is not as if some of the required technical expertise doesn't exist. India's aviation sector has over the years nurtured highly competent aircraft engineers but the DGCA doesn't always have the money to hire such talent. As such, circulars and civil aviation

requirements (CARs) issued by it are often not heeded by the airlines and the industry in their entirety. Many investigation reports have been gathering dust for years together.

So here's my suggestion: Let the money saved from selling India's national carrier (annually around ₹4,500 crore) go into setting up and financing two credible safety organisations in India - a new DGCA and an accident investigation body with trained investigators — that work in tandem. This is the single biggest favour the government can do to the sector in general and the air passengers in particular.

Last, while we are at it, let's rename the DGCA. The moniker has been used and abused so much that we could do with a new epithet altogether (as far as names go America's Federal Aviation Authority is no slicker!). How about calling India's new DGCA Safety First? If you have a better idea, do write in.

### **CHINESE WHISPERS**

### Pak invitation for Manmohan



Congress leaders on Monday said they were intrigued by Pakistan Foreign Minister Shah Mahmood Oureshi's

former prime minister Manmohan Singh (pictured) for the inaugural ceremony of the Kartarpur Corridor in November. Pakistan is scheduled to open the corridor for Indian Sikh pilgrims on November 9. "The Kartarpur corridor inauguration is a big programme and Pakistan is preparing for it in a big way. We have decided to invite India's former prime minister Manmohan Singh to grace the event... We will send a formal letter to him soon," Qureshi told Capital TV. He said Singh represented the Sikh community. Singh was born in a village in Punjab province in undivided India but did not visit Pakistan during his 10 years as prime minister. Sources in the Congress said it was strange that the Pakistan foreign minister made a statement on this when such an invite should be routed through the ministry of external affairs.

### **Going paperless**

To make the functioning of the central government paperless, the Cabinet Secretariat has directed all ministries and departments to discontinue the "practice of sending offline progress reports or updates" and "action taken reports (ATRs)" for the eSamikSha portal. Last year, the Cabinet Secretariat had asked all ministries and departments to send regular updates of ATRs to implement the decisions of the cabinet and cabinet committee on economic affairs (CCEA). It has now said that some of the ministries and departments either do not upload ATRs regularly, or send these in offline/paper form. "Since the implementation of Cabinet/CCEA decisions is now tracked on eSamikSha, this is hampering effective monitoring, an office memorandum stated. "In particular, the status of several Bills approved by the cabinet has not been updated on eSamikSha, even though they already stand enacted as law, after being passed by Parliament," the Cabinet Secretariat said.

### **Attention Parliamentarians**

A new solution developed during the Singapore-India Hackathon 2019 in IIT Madras may end up keeping an eye on our Members of Parliament if Prime Minister Narendra Modi sticks to his words. The solution in question is a device that detects who is paying attention during an event/meeting and who isn't. "I specially like the solution about the cameras that detect who is paying attention. I will talk to my Speaker in the Parliament as I am sure it will be very useful for our Parliamentarians," said Modi after the event.

## Why Indian dairy farmers oppose RCEP

Providing market access to New Zealand in particular could wipe out their livelihoods

**ANALYSIS BEHIND** 

THE HEADLINES

SANJEEB MUKHERJEE

s India moves closer towards finalising its negotiating position under the Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership (RCEP), the Indian dairy industry has upped its opposition to the pact on grounds that any lowering of tariff would severely harm its interests.

RCEP is India's most ambitious trade pact to date. Based on India's existing free-trade agreements (FTA) with the 10-nation Asean bloc, the RCEP will include all the nations with which Asean has trade deals - China, India, Japan, South Korea, Australia and — most importantly from the point of view of the Indian dairy industry - New Zealand.

The negotiations on this issue centre on granting New Zealand access to the fast-growing dairy products market in India —together with wine, apples and kiwis — in return for easier norms for cross-border migration of Indian professionals (nurses, chartered accountants and IT experts).

But this quid pro quo is a little more complicated because of the asymmetry in the two countries' dairy sectors. New Zealand is the world's largest global milk and dairy product exporter, accounting for nearly 20 per cent, or \$5.4 billion, of all global exports in 2018, according to the International Trade Centre, India. by contrast, is a negligible exporter. Currently, most milk and dairy products imports to India attract a peak customs duty of 64 per cent (60 per cent basic customs duty and 4 per cent countervailing duties).

The Indian dairy industry's argument against lowering these duties hinges on the fact that, given the fragmented nature of the sector, cheap imports would impact the livelihood of almost 100 million rural households that are directly or indirectly dependent on dairying. An overwhelming 77 per cent of these households comprise small and marginal farmers.

Moreover, in India, more than 70 per cent of the price that customers pay for milk is passed on to dairy farmers mainly on account of the unique cooperative structure that was put in place under Operation Flood I

and II, programmes that transformed a dairy-poor country into the world's largest milk producer. In New Zealand, the farmers' share in consumer price is 30 per cent, and there are just about 20,000 farmers involved in the dairy sector, most of them with landholdings that are several orders or magnitude larger than Indian farmers' (see chart).

New Zealand exports almost 93 per cent of its annual milk production estimated at 20.5 million tonnes — in various forms. Indian dairy players say that if New Zealand were to ship just 5 per cent of its annual milk and milk product exports to India, the sheer volume would be enough to depress Indian product prices.

Rough estimates show that just 5 per cent of New Zealand's annual exports of high-value milk products

### **COWED DOWN** New Zealand and India's dairy

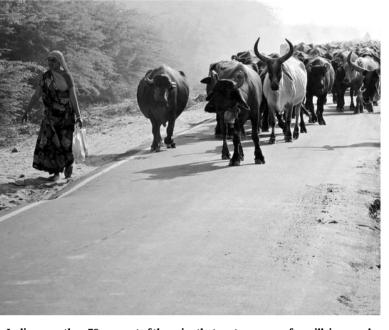
industries in numbers

New Zealand		India	
Milk production (million tonnes)	22	180	
No. of dairy farmers	10,000	100 million	
Average farm size (hectares)	NA	1.08	
Number of milch animals (million)	5	131	
Milk yield (Its per da	y) 13	3.5	
Share of dairy produexported (in %)	ıcts 93	Negligible	
Farmers' share in milk consumer price	30 e(in%)	71	
Source: Dairy industry and government data			

would be enough to capture 28 per cent of the Indian market for all milk and milk-based products — and that include skimmed milk powder (SMP), cheese and butter.

Clearly, the odds are stacked heavily against lowering tariffs. Local dairy companies may have to slash their milk procurement prices if cheap imports are allowed because global SMP prices are far lower than Indian rates - ₹160-170 a kg against ₹280-290 respectively. Assuming that 10 litres of liquid milk goes into producing one kg of SMP, procurement prices in India have to drop ₹10-11 per litre to make purchases competitive vis-àvis imports. This would be disastrous for small Indian dairy farmers, who were beginning to see a slight increase in procurement rates in the past few weeks after years of low prices.

Back-of-the-envelope calculations show that Indian farmers could collectively lose almost ₹3.5 trillion



In India, more than 70 per cent of the price that customers pay for milk is passed on to dairy farmers mainly on account of the unique cooperative structure that was put in place under Operation Flood I and II

if procurement prices are slashed. The impact on the rural sector as a result of lower procurement prices could be huge, given that latest NSSO data showed that between 2003 and 2013 the income from livestock recorded the fastest compound annual growth rate (CAGR) at 14.3 per cent.

Dairy accounts for 25 per cent (₹7 trillion) of the country's total farm produce and has been a global success story. Since 1997, world milk production grew at a CAGR of 2 per cent, half India's CAGR of 4.5 per cent.

Commerce ministry officials who are spearheading the RCEP negotiations appear to think the dairy sector's fears are unfounded. "India is the largest producer of milk globally. Imports of high-value foreign produce may rise in certain categories, but there's nothing to suggest the entire sector will be affected," a trade negotiator at RCEP said.

A senior dairy sector official finds this reasoning specious. "If the argument is that import of high-value milk products, which is consumed by a select class of people, might rise, what is the need for lowering tariff on them?" he points out.

As it stands, the trade-off — Indian professionals versus small and marginal farmers — is a tricky one. Much depends on which lobby is heard the loudest in the corridors of

## ON THE JOB

## Welcome but inadequate increase in jobs



**MAHESH VYAS** 

uring the eleventh comprehensive household survey of labour markets conducted by CMIE during May-August 2019, an estimated 405 million were found to be employed in India.

The total sample size was 174.405 households. Of this, 110,975 households were from 7,920 enumeration blocks in 322 towns. The rural sample consisting of 63,430 households were spread over 3,965 villages.

The sample households yielded 567,070 members who were of 15 years of age or more. Estimates presented here are based on the appropriately weighted averages of the employment/unemployment status of these individuals. There were 358,194 members from the 322 towns and 208,876 were from the 3,965 villages surveyed.

Of the 405 million employed during the May-August 2019 months, 129 million were residents of urban India. The remaining 276 million were rural folks.

This was the eleventh such survey and we therefore have a time-series of the trends in employment in India since 2016.

The time-series suggests a recovery in employment. The 405 million estimated to be employed during May-August 2019 were 0.6 million higher than the employed during January-April 2019 which in turn were 3.9 million higher than the preceding survey conducted during September-December 2018.

Cumulatively, the count of the employed has risen by over 4 million over the past three surveys. This marks an apparent turnaround in employment from a steep falling trend to a gradually rising trend. It may be recalled that 10 million jobs

were lost in 2018. The September-December 2017 survey had estimated the total employed to be 411 million. This fell in each of the three subsequent surveys to 401 million in September-December 2018. This decline in employment has stopped. It makes sense to compare the May-

August 2019 survey to earlier surveys conducted in similar months. Doing so removes the effects of seasonality in employment, if any. Such a comparison shows that employment in May-August 2019 was 2.5 million higher than it was a vear ago.

This is a big relief given the sharp fall in employment recorded in 2018 and also the lack of growth in employment even earlier in 2017. Employment had fallen by 5.5 million between May-August 2017 and May-August 2018. Earlier, it had fallen by 0.6 million between May-August 2016 and May-August 2017.

Given this past record of declines, the surge of 2.5 million jobs in the past one year is a welcome reversal.

But this expansion is far from sufficient. The 2.5 million accretion of iobs could absorb only 22 per cent of the increase in people looking for one during this period. While the labour force expanded by 11.3 million, jobs grew by only 2.5 million. The remaining 8.8 million merely inflated the stock of unemployed.

The count of unemployed has risen to 32.6 million. Besides, there is another 12 million that is also willing to work if a job becomes available although they were not actively looking for a job.

Counter-intuitive as it may sound, there is reason to celebrate the increase in the unemployed. Their increase is an indication of an increase in the hopes for finding jobs. Earlier, post demonetisation, this hope had dried up. As a result, in 2017, while the working age population increased by nearly 23 million, employment declined by half a million; the count of the unemployed declined by 9 million and those willing to work but not actively looking for jobs decreased by 13 million. Effectively, the increase in the working-age population made no contribution to labour supplies in 2017.

In 2018, labour did return to look for jobs. As a result, the count of the unemployed rose by 8 million. But the jobs market was bad as 10 million jobs were lost during the year.

The results for 2019 so far show that the count of the unemployed continues to grow, but employment has also start-

A recovery from the deep disruptions of demonetisation (effects seen in 2017) and the introduction of the goods and services tax (effect seen in 2018) seems to be underway. But this recovery, particularly in jobs, is extremely fragile and tentative.

Note that the estimated count of the employed increased from 402.4 million in May-August 2018 to 404.9 million in May-August 2019. But employment during May-August 2017 and May-August 2016 was of the order of 408 million. The Indian economy is unable to provide employment at the same scale again. In the meanwhile, the working-age population has been rising and the numbers of the unemployed are rising correspondingly.

The working-age population seems to be growing at the rate of a little less than 2 million per month. Of these, less than a million join the labour force looking for jobs. For two years, in 2017 and 2018, the labour force did not increase. But now. it is increasing. It is important that this surge in the labour force finds adequate good jobs. Else, the unemployment rate will keep rising or labour will shift back to agriculture to undertake extremely low quality jobs, largely in distress.

The author is the MD & CEO of CMIE

## **LETTERS**

## Gaming the system



The fiasco involving Punjab and Maharashtra Co-operative Bank (PMC) has stirred up a hornet's nest. One bad account, Housing Development & Infrastructure Ltd (HDIL), is said to be the cause of the downfall of the bank. According to reports, the HDIL exposure was not reported for six to seven years. HDIL did not service the loans for three years and yet, it was not reported as non-performing. One-third of the loan portfolio of the bank was being enjoyed by one group. The rule book has laid down norms for maximum exposure to a single entity or group. The bank successfully evaded these checks and balances. How the auditors could be hoodwinked for such a long time is a case ripe for investigation.

Compared to other banks, the loan book of PMC was not too large. The auditors and RBI inspectors should have been looking at the large loan accounts with a fine-tooth comb. If this was done, at some point in time, the gaming of the system could have been detected. A point to note here is that the exposure was not caught by inspecting authorities but came to light because the bank divulged it. Had the bank not come clean, how long this duplicity would have continued is anybody's guess.

PMC was said to be amongst the better managed co-operative banks. One shudders to think how many such surprises are hidden in other

co-operative banks. This will shake the confidence of the general public. It is the small depositors who are getting badly impacted. They do not have too many choices. New generation private sector banks, with their high threshold of minimum balance, are out of reach. The customer service levels of public sector banks is not very inspiring. Co-operative banks are patronised as they have the local flavour, have good customers service. After the PMC bust, this banking avenue will also be looked at with apprehension.

Will any accountability be fixed on the officials of the regulatory authorities? Over the last so many years, there would have been multiple inspections by different personnel. How could they not notice this sleight of hand by bank officials? This is something that needs to be investigated to make the inspection team work more diligently in the future.

KV Premraj Mumbai

## Need some answers

This refers to your editorial "Failures of supervision" (September 30) regarding the deficient role of the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) in the criplaguing the Punjab and Maharashtra Co-Operative Bank (PMC). The co-operative movement in India was started with an act of Parliament in 1914, primarily for dealing with the problem of rural credit and to encourage "thrift, self-help and cooperation among agriculturists, artisans and persons of limited means". Being so, how PMC could

have had an exposure of ₹6,500 crore (which is 73 per cent of the bank's total assets) vis-a-vis the bankrupt Housing Development & Infrastructure Ltd (HDIL) and continue to report the same as "standard asset" for long, without so much as causing an eyebrow to be raised in the RBI, are all questions that baffle the common man.

If, as is being alleged, the RBI has taken strong action against PMC only after the bank, on its own, reported its misclassification of bad loans, it is, indeed, a poor reflection of the former's supervisory role. Dual control over co-operative banks by the RBI and the Registrar of Cooperatives (RoC) is only a lame excuse.

"People don't make mistakes, processes do," swear quality gurus. It is high time the RBI tightened its audit and information gathering processes to ensure that its officers do a thorough job of supervising banks. NBFCs and housing finance companies that it is entrusted with. Else, we would continue to witness the sad spectacle of innocent depositors and other bank customers being put to hardship due to such late regulatory interventions that are akin to closing the stable doors after the horses have bolted.

V Jayaraman Chennai

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### MUMBAI | TUESDAY, 1 OCTOBER 2019

## The monetary conundrum

Decisions from here on will need to be more considered

reaking from convention, the monetary policy committee (MPC) of the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) decided to reduce the policy repo rate by 35 basis points (bps) in its August meeting. It was then reasoned that a 25 bps cut would have been insufficient and a 50 bps reduction excessive. The macroeconomic outlook has changed significantly since then and policy making has become more challenging. Growth in the Indian economy collapsed to a six-year low of 5 per cent in the first quarter of the current fiscal year. Had the MPC anticipated the extent of the slowdown, a cut of 50 bps would not have looked excessive in August. The central bank lowered its growth forecast for the fiscal year by 10 bps in August. However, as things stand today, economic growth is unlikely to recover in a hurry and the RBI will need to revise its growth projection significantly. Despite the recent volatility in food and fuel prices, in the near term, inflation is likely to remain below the midpoint of the target range. Therefore, lower growth and inflation would warrant more monetary accommodation. The decision will obviously not be as straightforward.

The government has announced several measures to boost economic activity - most notably, a sharp cut in corporate tax rates. The revenue forgone on this account, according to the official estimate, would be ₹1.45 trillion. Since the government has not revised its fiscal targets, it would be interesting to see how the MPC accounts for the impact. While some analysts believe the tax cuts will push the fiscal deficit to about 4 per cent of gross domestic product, others are of the view that the impact will be muted. Further, despite the RBI's excess capital transfer, lower growth in tax collection would put significant pressure on government finances. If the central bank believes that the deficit would be significantly higher than expected, it will be a risk to the inflation outlook and become an important factor influencing the MPC's decision.

Therefore, in the given economic backdrop, the MPC would do well to deliberate on the following issues. First, fiscal expansion will affect transmission and a policy rate cut may not have the desired effect. Bond yields have gone up after the corporate tax cut. Excessive intervention through open market operations — to keep bond yields low — can become incompatible with the central bank's inflation-targeting mandate. Further, the MPC will have to see how inflation would behave over the next one year and beyond. Possible fiscal slippage and volatility in food and fuel prices can make things tricky. Second, the committee should review the utility of its decision of breaking from convention to lower rates by 35 bps in the last meeting. Evidently, it was an unnecessary change and should have been avoided. The market saw it as a consequence of limited policy space and pushed up the bond yields. Third, the global economic environment is becoming increasingly uncertain on account of trade tensions and geopolitical risks. Thus, the central bank would need to preserve policy firepower to deal with the consequences of emerging global risks.

To sum up, there is space for monetary easing, but decisions from here on will need to be carefully thought through and supported by clear communication. A decline in growth should not be used for any kind of policy adventurism.

## A visit for optics

PM's visit to US was expected to achieve more

rom the point of view of optics, and of underlining India's status as a geopolitical swing state, Prime Minister Narendra Modi's visit to the US must be seen as a success. The importance of India, and of Indian-Americans, to the political establishment in the US cannot be disputed following Mr Modi's joint appearances with President Donald Trump at a rally in Houston, attended by more than 50,000 enthusiastic participants — and broadcast to 3 million more Indian Americans. The PM's pitch to investors and business leaders in the US was also aided by the announcement of cuts in the corporation tax rate just before his trip.

However, measured by the yardstick of the expectations raised in New Delhi prior to the visit, the results were somewhat underwhelming in their scope. Most importantly, there was no visible progress on the ongoing trade tension between India and the US — a wholly avoidable series of disputes, given the far larger threat that China poses to the trading system, affecting both India  $\,$ and the US similarly. There were some hopes that a "mini trade deal" might be agreed on by the US president and the Indian prime minister, putting an end to a period of sniping between the two countries' trading establishments. Recent causes of this tension include the US' decision to end Indian exporters' eligibility for a zero-tariff programme, and Indian moves towards protectionism in sectors like electronics and medical devices. There is certainly scope for compromise, which would benefit both countries. However, it is unfortunate that there appears to have been no movement forward. Even the landmark deal that was supposed to set the tone for Mr Modi's visit, between LNG major Petronet and US-based Tellurian, has suffered from second-day jitters, with the Indian stock market asking hard questions about the deal — which, it turns out, was less a deal and more another memorandum of understanding. As a mechanism for reviving bonhomie in US-India trade, this cooperation on energy may not seem to be as effective as hoped.

It is unfortunate that, instead of resetting economic relations, much of the oxygen was consumed by the fallout internationally of the changed political status of the erstwhile Jammu and Kashmir state. In spite of domestic interests in the matter, it is futile to expect the US under Mr Trump to either ignore the issue altogether or to openly isolate Pakistan — in spite of the aggressive rhetoric of the latter. Mr Trump's presence at the Houston rally was followed by press availabilities on the following days when he repeatedly deflected questions about Pakistan being the epicentre of regional terrorism. This can only be seen as problematic or deflating for India if it was seen as the centrepiece of Mr Modi's visit. It is clear from his speech to the United Nations General Assembly, however, that he had larger concerns, including India's ongoing commitment to the fight against the climate crisis. From the point of view of optics, therefore, the visit cannot be faulted — and it will no doubt have further burnished the prime minister's image domestically as a global statesman. But the plain fact is that he has won few concrete advantages for India over the course of the visit.



## Projecting a pipeline

**POLICY RULES** 

MIHIR SHARMA

One way of helping project finance revive in India is by demystifying risk — and the government has just taken a useful step in that direction

his newspaper has reported that the government will create a "National Infrastructure Pipeline" that will "include greenfield and brownfield projects costing above ₹100 crore each", in order to "tell investors at what stage of execution each of these projects is in and offer a realistic assessment of whether to put money into them or not".

We don't know enough about this pipeline, but the principle should be unequivocally welcomed.

It shows the government is serious about the prime minister's ₹100 trillion target for infrastructure investment - and, further, that it understands what the private sector needs for this target to be made

It is important to judge this move in context, in order to understand why something apparently small might be more momentous than is immediately visible. There is a reason why "a project pipeline" comes up frequently in conversations with foreign investors, partic-

ularly those who represent patient pools of capital like insurance and pension funds. India is still seen, for various reasons, as a "black box" in terms of risk. Investors do not just fear sub-par returns or currency depreciation. They fear outright capital loss through investing in projects that fail to take off, are belatedly subject to regulatory or legal intervention, or in which their Indian partners do not uphold their side of the deal. We have to face the fact that Indian dispute settlement mechanisms and the administrative and regulatory structure do not inspire confidence in the face of such fears.

This is why global private capital would like to

turn to the Indian state — as a partner or a guarantor — in its forays into project finance. The assumption that many make is that the best way to avoid catastrophic capital loss is to ensure the state in some way shares your exposure. This is, in its way, not a bad assumption. The problem, however, is that it puts intolerable demands upon the Indian exchequer.

The need, therefore, is to figure out ways in which the Indian state can serve as a partner, de-

> mystify political and regulatory uncertainty about India, and get inside the "black box" of risk without straining the exchequer excessively. What a project pipeline that is monitored by the government can do is effectively serve as a staterun rating agency at the project level. Finance then can get on with its job of matching pools of capital with the appropriate risk-return

level of the projects in the pipeline. It is important to note that such a pipeline will not by itself reduce risk. But it will clarify risk, and

thereby reduce uncertainty. If properly designed, it will help the market develop by increasing the amount of information available.

The point to be noted here is that it is not necessary to argue that new information is itself being discovered by the state in order to construct this pipeline. One does not have to imagine flocks of government auditors descending on each project that is a candidate for such a list. Such an effort while in many ways helpful - would face constraints in the medium term because of state capacity and monitoring weaknesses. Instead of such a vision, what is required as a first step is simply the collation

in an easily digestible format of information that is already with various state organs about projects, private and public, and sharing this information with possible investors.

Of course, one could ask whether there is an implicit mismatch of expectations here. Many investors might look at a project pipeline and assume the government is indirectly guaranteeing these projects, even the private ones. The government is unlikely to make any such claims. In fact, the truth is that the government probably isn't even able to guarantee, in the short term, accuracy of the raw information that it will collate in order to populate the project pipeline. This may lead to problems in the future unless expectations are properly

In addition, as with any actions by the state which could benefit private players - in this case, by making certain private sector projects more attractive to investors by demystifying their risk profile - collusion or corruption is always a threat. The government will have to structure construction of the pipeline carefully in order to avoid actual or apparent improprieties.

Nevertheless, this idea has extraordinary potential. One major additional facet would improve it even further: An examination of the impact of any such project on India's transition to a more climate-sensitive economy. Infrastructure projects that increase rural resilience or factor in adaptation and mitigation targets, therefore, should be highlighted as such. In the end, finance will of course make decisions on the basis of risks and returns; but the risk of stranded assets, thanks to climate change, is one major possible risk, going forward, and the impact of warming (or of regulatory changes as part of India's nationally determined contributions under the Paris Agreement) should also be part of the information set being made available to investors.

Finally, no idea has ever existed that is so good that the Indian bureaucracy could not ruin it. And the most likely source of such spoiling is the inherent unwillingness to work with and for the private sector. It should be made clear to those designing and administering the pipeline that this is a marketing and analysis tool not for the government, or project implementers, or voters, but strictly for investors. It should be set up in a manner that helps that group and that group alone, or it will fail. There is an implicit acceptance through this measure that India is not itself so attractive that foreign investors are enthused. In other words, the state cannot approach such investors with its customary arrogance. Nor need it think of them simply as looking for handouts or concessions. What it needs is to listen with humility to their requirements, and put its vast reserves of information at their disposal. The Indian state is many things, but humble is not one of them. But a project pipeline is, at its root, an advertisement. Not the bragging sort that one might see at investor roadshows, but a genuine one that creates trust between government and capital. Such trust is surely lacking, and the government has identified one pathway to creating it. It must not lose this opportunity.

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## Creating jobs with infrastructure investment

nion Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman's recent announcement of a ₹100 trillion to infrastructure development heads down a well-worn path. Like past attempts to address India's infrastructure deficit and provide a fiscal push to a slowing economy, it will have to reckon with a crucial question: where and how is the money best spent?

At the height of India's central planning excesses in the 1960s, Milton Friedman, as the apocryphal story goes, visited a canal construction site. On being told that the workers were using shovels instead of modern machinery because the canal was a jobs programme, Friedman pointed out that in that case, the government should have given the workers

spoons instead of shovels. Much has changed since then.

A convincing body of work has challenged the Chicago School's stern views on government invest-Economist David Aschauer's work highlights the role of infrastructure investment in a country's economic growth and development, for instance. And over the past two decades or so, the Centre and state governments have directed their infrastructure investment more effectively. A recent report by IDFC Institute

Infrastructure Priorities for Job Creation in India provides the tools to further refine investment strategy.

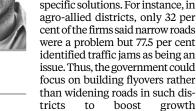
PRAKHAR MISRA

Factoring in economic geographies is key to capturing the far-reaching effects of infrastructure spending. Infrastructure needs differ depending on the dominant economic base in a region - industry, services or agro-allied. Additionally, focusing on areas that are poised for economic growth will give the greatest bang for the buck when it comes to helping firms scale up via infrastructure investment.

Using night lights data, we narrowed down our investigation for infrastructure priorities to 18 periurban districts across the country, that is, those that border a rural and an urban district. There was a specific reason for this: Such areas benefit from their proximity to the agglomeration economies of a large urban centre but are far away enough to not be affected by the urban core's congestion effects.

The report surveyed 2,500 firms in these districts to understand how the government should prioritise infrastructure. Firms with varied types of economic activity were asked to rank major infrastructure bottlenecks they face in their operations. Unsurprisingly, in all three regions, a number of issues related to roads were the biggest impediments. Starting with Atal Bihari Vaipavee's Golden Ouadrilateral to Pradhan Mantri Gram Sadak Yojana projects, successive governments have recognised the economic importance of connectivity. However, connectivity by itself is not enough. We identified specific problems with roads.

In services districts, 66 per cent of firms reported traffic jams as a major hindrance. Poor quality of roads stood out in industrial districts, with 70 per cent of firms rating it highest. Such findings are instrumental in having problemspecific solutions. For instance, in agro-allied districts, only 32 per cent of the firms said narrow roads were a problem but 77.5 per cent identified traffic jams as being an issue. Thus, the government could focus on building flyovers rather



and hence jobs.

But we have identified more granular, regionspecific constraints too: For industrial clusters, wastewater and effluent treatment facilities; for services, a lack of electricity; and for agro-allied, inadequate water supply. Electricity is particularly important as an infrastructure impediment — the most important overall after roads, in fact, And just like roads, the specific issues to do with electricity vary across regions. Contrary to popular perception, power cuts are secondary constraints for agro-allied and services firms. They suffer more due to high prices. This insight is crucial for directing electricity infrastructure provisioning and price reforms.

The direct effects of providing such infrastructure would be quite visible — better connectivity, more efficient firms and increased direct employment for people building it, among others. The indirect and induced effects on the economy - such as increased productivity, changes in gross value added and induced employment creation - are more difficult to quantify as the causal effects are difficult to isolate from each other.

That said, we have devised a model for the data collected from the survey and found a substantial change in induced employment when the same infrastructure is built in different economic regions. Firms were asked to estimate the cost savings that arose from solving the infrastructure constraints. These figures were then compared to the current labour investment of the firms (captured in the survey) to determine the increased investments in employment. For every 10 per cent increase in savings due to improvement of roads, there is a varied impact on employment in different regions — 1.9 per cent increase in agro-allied regions, 3.7 per cent in industrial and 5.6 per cent — in services regions.

Within the regions, too, infrastructure has a varied impact. In industrial clusters, for instance, a 10 per cent increase in the costs saved by firms due to better roads would lead to a 3.7 per cent increase in employment. However, the same 10 per cent increase in costs saved due to upgraded wastewater treatment infrastructure would lead to a 2.9 per cent change in employment. Thus, it is important to estimate the diverse impact of infrastructure before provisioning for it.

India's jobs scenario seems to perpetually teeter on the edge of a crisis, with one million people entering the job market every month and not enough employment opportunities to absorb them. At such a time, a directed approach for prioritising infrastructure investments that will induce wide-ranging employment growth is essential. And on the growth front, the current slowdown makes it all the more important that the planned fiscal push is well directed.

The right infrastructure, after all, can drastically change the way businesses function and labour moves for the better. In the coming months and years, the Centre and states would do well to keep this need for strategic infrastructure provisioning in mind.

Writers are associates at IDFC Institute, Mumbai.

## Sticks, stones and seditious words



JAYANT TRIPATHI

he children's adage, "Sticks and stones may break my bones, but words will never harm me" was perhaps not a part of the lexicon in the nursery where Sir James Fitzjames Stephen grew up. A cousin of the famous jurist Dicey, and a legal scholar himself, Sir James was appointed the legal member of the Imperial Legislative Council in 1869. The creator of the Indian Evidence Act of 1872, he was also responsible for introduction of the crime of sedition by inserting Section 124A into the Indian Penal Code in 1870.

The reasons for this insertion are not hard to understand. The sticks and stones of the events of 1857 were still of recent memory. A new threat to the empire was emerging in the form of the "words" of an educated Indian middle class imbued with radical ideas from Europe such as the right to self-determination, setting up newspapers and magazines. This threat, more insidious than open revolt, needed strict and specific measures.

Chitranshul Sinha's eminently readable book traces, with deftness and well-crafted prose, the history of the law of sedition in India. Starting with the historical origins of the crime of sedition and then tracing its application through the freedom struggle to post independent India and on to recent times, the book is well researched and useful for both the layman and lawyer alike.

The recent conviction of Vaiko on the charge of sedition, after the book was written, will no doubt re-open the debate on whether sedition should remain on the statute book or not. However, as the author shows us, this is not a new debate, and was a problem with which the Constituent Assembly members had grappled. Of course, many members of that body were victims of this law themselves and their antipathy to this restriction on free speech was quite understandable. The author shows how the original text of Article 19, dealing with freedom of speech contained sedition as a restriction on this fundamental right. After a debate that lasted over several days, seditious speech was dropped as a restriction on the freedom of speech. As the author notes, at this stage Section 124A should have been declared void by Parliament, which, however, never hap-

While almost half the book deals with the origins of the law of sedition, and the famous trials under that law in the preindependence period such as the *Jugantar* case, and the trials of Lokmanya Tilak, it is the second half of the book that is of greater interest. After all, how could a repressive colonial law, designed to restrict free speech and the demands for equality and selfdetermination, be justified in independent India, where the right of freedom of speech was guaranteed under the Constitution? And that too when the founding fathers of the Constitution had specifically deleted seditious speech as a restriction on that freedom?

In exploring this aspect of the law, the author takes us through the judgments of various high courts and the Supreme Court and the constitutional amendment that led to the insertion of the words "reasonable" in conjunction with the restrictions placed on the freedom of speech, thus giving the crime of sedition a second life.

The problem with laws in India is more in implementation, than the law itself.

Section 124A is no different. Although the law is very clear that prior sanction of the Central or the State government is a must when charging a person with sedition, the author shows how the section is used arbitrarily, without any reference to the law or even the parameters laid down by the Supreme Court. In the chapter titled "Stories of Sedition",

the author tells us how the law has been used to arrest Kashmiri students in Meerut for cheering Pakistan's victory over India in the Asia Cup in 2014; how Aseem Trivedi, a cartoonist was arrested for publishing cartoons on a website titled "India against Corruption"; the case of the JNU students; the case of a young lad from Kerala who did not stand up when the national anthem was played, and similar stories of excessive and mindless use of the section. It is hard to imagine how some silly students cheering for Pakistan are a threat to the unity and integrity of India in the manner that Lokmanya Tilak, Veer Savarkar, Pandit Nehru and Mahatma Gandhi were to British rule in India. In a bizarre application of the law, Arun Jaitley, while he was the Union Finance Minister was suo moto charged with sedition for having written an article criticising the National Judicial Appointments Commission judgment of the Supreme Court. Mr Bumble, in Oliver Twist, was perhaps quite justified in saying that "If the law supposes that then the law is an ass".

As the author points out, with the abolition of sedition and seditious speech as a crime in 2009 in UK, on the reasoning that it had a chilling effect on free speech, it is high time that the same course was adopted in India as well.

The front page of the book carries a quote of Justice DY Chandrachud - "The Constitution fails when a cartoonist is jailed for sedition." Apt words indeed

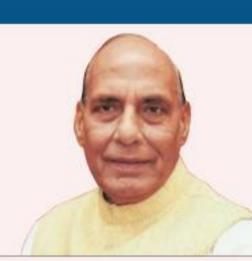
The reviewer is a lawyer practising in Delhi

THE GREAT REPRESSION: The Story of Sedition in India

Chitranshul Sinha 280 pages; ₹499

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SHIP TO SHORE
Union Defence Minister, Rajnath Singh

I am most impressed to see the professionalism, commitment and spirited approach shown by the

brave sailors of the Indian Navy. I am reassured that the security of our nation is in safe hands

## Earth sinks with climate lethargy

New IPCC report shows warming will play havoc with oceans and ice, and by extension, on humans

**NEW REPORT** from the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC), on the effect of global heating on the oceans and the cryosphere, is the latest in the growing line of warnings that underscore the need for urgent climate action. Given oceans are key carbon-sinks, if governments worldwide—other than a handful, including India—choose to walk their current emission paths, the foreseeable future looks quite bleak. Over a billion lives in the high mountains, low-lying coastal zones, island-nations, and the Arctic hang in balance. Global heating at 1°C above pre-industrial levels—by 2100, it is predicted to reach 2.9°C with the "ambitious" plans of the Paris deal signatories, 3.3°C with the current emission reduction action, and 4.5°C without any action—has already had a drastic impact on ocean ecosystems. If countries don't double down on reducing greenhouse gas emissions by radically reimagining consumption, farming and land-use, energy generation, etc, the effect on oceans and the cryosphere will worsen the climate crisis. So far, these have been part of the buffer against much worse impact.

The IPCC report, which references over 7,000 scientific publications, states that small glaciers could lose more than 80% of the current ice mass by 2100 under high emission scenarios—the kind that can be imagined for a world where the largest historical polluter, the US, and a large developing economy, Brazil, are both headed by stubborn climate-deniers. With the retreat of mountain glaciers, water availability, and quality downstream is also likely to be severely affected, with large negatives for food security, once agriculture gets impacted. While the 20th century saw sea levels rise globally by around 15 cm, it is currently rising by 3.6 mm per year—more than twice as fast. A significant rise in the sea level seems unavoidable given how the report predicts it to reach 30-60 cm by 2100, even when emissions are cut drastically to keep warming to < 2°C. In a high emission scenario, the rise may be as high as 110 cm. Any additional warming over current levels, the report estimates, will cause events that occurred once per century in the past to occur every year by 2050.

By 2100, the report says, oceans will be absorbing 2-4 times more heat than they did between 1970 and now, if global heating is limited to 2°C, and 5-7 times more at higher emission levels. Given the retarding effect it will have on the mixing of water layers, and, consequently, on oxygen and nutrient availability, marine life will be severely impacted. Emissions led to marine heatwaves doubling in frequency since 1982—their frequency will be 20 times higher at 2°C warming, and 50 times higher at higher emission levels. The report also warns of unprecedented rise in ocean acidification—the oceans absorbed 20-30% of anthropogenic CO2 emissions since the 1980s. The report also states that if global heating is stabilised at 1.5°C above preindustrial levels, the Arctic Ocean will be ice-free only in September—the month with least ice—once every 100 years. At 2°C, there could be a year of ice-free Arctic Ocean every three years. The thawing of the permafrost is also a concern—even in a 2°C warming scenario, around 25% of the permafrost at 3-4 metre depth could thaw by 2100; nearly 70% could be lost at higher emission scenarios. Given that the Arctic and boreal permafrosts have large amounts of organic carbon trapped in them almost twice that in the atmosphere—any thawing is bad news, even if large-scale initiatives are taken to create carbon-sinks to offset the release. In the run up to the 25th Conference of Parties of the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change, countries need to take serious climate action. Else, the world sinks as it fries.

## In the dark on solar

Steep import tariffs won't push domestic solar manufacture

NDIA'S EFFORTS ON solar capacity addition may position it as a leader in solar adoption, but its record on solar manufacturing shows it is barely scratching the surface on reducing solar imports. While the country added 60GW of solar generation capacity—the goal is 175GW renewable by 2022—it has added just 3GW of solar cell manufacturing, and 9GW of module manufacturing. Given how cheap Chinese imports are, in 2018, the government introduced a safeguard duty to prevent dumping. Now, as per a *Business Standard* report, the Ministry of New and Renewable Energy has proposed imposing a basic customs duty (BCD) of 10% on solar imports in 2021—when the safeguard duty expires. The proposal also calls for increasing the BCD to 20% in 2022, and to 30% in 2023.

Though it is true that cheaper Chinese imports, along with WTO restrictions, have hurt Indian solar manufacturers' interest, import duties will achieve little. Rather, import duties have only hurt Indian interests. The government had imposed a safeguard duty on solar imports from China, Malaysia, and other 'developed countries' in July 2018 for two years. Although directorate general of foreign trade had suggested a 70% duty on imports, the government settled on a 25% duty for the first year, with a reduction to 20% for the six months after, and another cut, to 15%, for the final six months. While this was supposed to shift the focus to domestic manufacturing, a year on, all it has achieved is delaying generation targets. Imports from China still account for 78% of India's solar trade, and other countries, like Vietnam, Thailand, and Singapore, have become preferred destinations. Vietnam, and Thailand have witnessed an over 500% increase in exports of solar components to India in FY19 as compared to last year; the share of Singaporean solar imports has jumped from 0.73% to 5.85%. Without any significant increase in domestic capacity, the Indian solar market has slumped. Some may blame the low duty, and short time-frame for this, but higher tariffs may not aid manufacturers and only put India out of the value chain. This is evident from the fact that for the period of the safeguard duty exports have slumped 14%.

With far larger investments in infrastructure and technology upgradation happening in China, Indian solar manufacturers catching up with their Chinese counterparts seems extremely difficult. While duties may help India achieve a 9GW capacity, with each Chinese company producing 5-15GW, it still won't be able to compete in the long run. More important, given the paltry investment in R&D, it won't be able to innovate. The government needs to realise that the sector needs local support in terms of infrastructure, and the MNRE is right in asking for duty exemption for products that go in solar manufacturing till 2023. If India is to achieve its 175GW target, it cannot come on the back of higher import duties, which will ultimately end up translating

into higher costs.

## **DoubleWHAMMY**

India's fight against TB must also face off another enemy, HIV

**CCORDING TO THE** *India TB Report 2019*, 21.5 lakh tuberculosis (TB) cases in India were registered with the Revised National Tuberculosis Control Programme (RNTCP) in 2018—a 16% increase from 2017. The rise is quite worrying—India already has the world's largest TB burden—but, the data is a double whammy. The private sector, too, registered a 40% increase in cases reported from last year. One reason for this rise is the increase in number of HIVinfected individuals who developed TB. Persons living with HIV/AIDS (PLHA) are 21 times more likely to develop TB than others. Around 25% of deaths of PLHA have been attributed to TB. Given the co-infection, morbidity, and mortality of PLHA-TB, there is a need to tailor healthcare programmes for PLHA, and ensure better delivery.

India has the third highest HIV burden in the world (0.22% adult prevalence), and ranks second for HIV-associated TB (9% of cases worldwide). TB is the leading cause of deaths for PLHA; in India, nearly 50,000 of the 21.5 lakh PLHA—43,253 in 2017—had TB-HIV co-infection. The Union health ministry, taking heed of this co-infection, has launched the 'TB Harega, Desh Jeetega' campaign, the National TB Prevalence Survey, and an oral drug regimen for TB patients. Also, under the Nikshay Poshan Yojana, it provides direct benefit transfers to TB patients for nutritional support. However, many TB patients—around eight lakh—going unregistered is a big hurdle; the problem worsens when a patient is also HIV-infected. The government must, therefore, step up efforts to get all TB cases registered with the RNTCP.

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## CORPORATION TAX CUT

SINCE CESSES AND SURCHARGES HAVE NOT BEEN TOUCHED AND MUCH OF THE LOSS IS DUE TO LOWER COLLECTION FROM BASIC RATES, STATES WILL HAVE TO BEAR 42% OF THE REVENUE COST

## Who bears the budget of revival?

**HE REDUCTION IN** the corporate tax rates announced in September was hailed by the industry, and brought much-needed cheer to the stock markets. The increase in Sensex by more than 3,000 points in two trading sessions cast aside the bear hug that had gripped the markets since the disappointing first quarter GDP estimate was released. Although the bond markets reacted with lower yield due to the fear of higher fiscal deficits, the overwhelming sentiment was buoyant. The government had been in denial mode all along about the economic slowdown, and the markets did not take the finance minister's earlier Friday announcements of bank mergers seriously. However, the corporate tax rate reduction was taken as the government's acknowledgement that the economy urgently needed stimulus to bring back animal spirits. The best approach to tax reform is to

broaden the base, and reduce the rate. Ideally, it would have been better to make a systematic reform by doing away with various tax concessions, and reduce the tax rate. Unfortunately, grandfathering the tax concessions will take time, and there will be pressures to continue them in one form or another. The approach adopted now is to make reduction conditional on not availing tax preferences. Perhaps, this is politically easier.

In implementing the rate reduction, the FM has fulfilled the promise, made five years ago by her predecessor, of bringing down the tax rate to 25%. Capital being highly mobile, ceteris paribus, the differences in tax rates can be an important determinant of investment flows. In most of the competing countries, the corporate tax rates were lower, and that is an important motivation for reducing it. In fact, having declared five years ago that the tax rates will be brought down to 25%, and having



implemented this for companies with turnover up to ₹400 crore, there were expectations of reduction in the budget presented in July. Perhaps, the lowest growth of GDP recorded in the first quarter over the last six years forced the decision to reduce the rate barely two and half months after presenting the annual budget, and with four months to go for the next one. To what extent this will reverse the trend, and cause a 'V' shaped revival, remains to be seen.

No serious tax economist advocates

loading the tax policy with multiple objectives and proliferating tax concessions. The costs of tax concessions in terms of revenue foregone and distortions are high, and their efficacy in achieving the professed objectives is doubtful. They mainly serve the political purpose of appeasing special interest groups. In fact, the revenue forgone statement in the budget records 28 items, under which the tax concessions from corporate tax are availed, and these include items like accelerated depreciation, export profits of units located in SEZs, transmission and distribution of power, development of infrastructure, mineral oil exploration, donations to charitable trusts and institutions, units established in north-eastern and Himalayan states, and processing and preservation of food items. Of these, deductions/concessions for export profits located in SEZs, accelerated depreciation infrastructure, and transmission and distribution of power account for 82.6% of the total. The share of accelerated depreciation alone is 48.6%. With the reduction in the tax rate to

22% if tax concessions are not availed, lowering of the rate for new companies to 15%, and reducing the minimum alternative tax (MAT) from 18% to 15%, the new effective rate is estimated at 25.17%. The new companies may not come to the production

The revenue

forecast, which

assumes over 25%

growth over the

the Controller

**General of** 

Accounts, is clearly

an overestimate

scheme for the next five years. In fact, it does not make sense to reduce the MAT when the objective is to stop companies from availing concessions.

The market reaction, perhaps, is due to the mistaken belief that the gains from the tax cut are massive, from 35% to 25.17%. Prior to the tax cut, while the nominal tax rate, including the cess and surcharge, was 35%, the effective rate was much

lower—just about 29.49% in 2017-18, the last year for which data are available. If the effective rate before the reduction is assumed to be the same as in 2017-18, and with the corporate tax collection estimated at ₹766,000 crore, the revenue cost works out to ₹1.12 lakh crore. The government has pegged the revenue cost of the new measure at ₹1.45 lakh crore, which appears to be a bit exaggerated because the new companies will not be able to avail the lower rate until 2024, and many companies may not be eligible for lower tax rate if they avail tax concessions. Even by taking the official estimate

of the loss at ₹1.45 lakh crore due to cut in tax rates, the loss to the Centre will be much less. Much of the loss is due to lower collection from the basic rates, and the cesses and surcharges have not been touched. Therefore, the states will have to bear 42% of the revenue cost, which is about ₹60,000 crore. Besides, with lower tax rate, many public sector companies, particularly oil marketing companies, are likely to have much higher profits and will pay higher dividends, and going by the 2018-19 estimates of profits, the Centre should be able to receive at least ₹15,000 crore. The overwhelming impact of the tax cut

Even though the presumed loss of revenue for the Centre is exaggerated this is going to put additional pressure on the fiscal deficit situation. First, the revenue forecast actuals reported by which assumes over 25% growth over the actuals reported by the Controller General of Accounts, is clearly an overestimate, and even after taking account of the higher RBI transfer, it would be diffi-

cult to achieve the target. Sec-

will be on the states.

ond, with the FM directing the spending departments to clear the pending bills and loosen their purses to revive demand, the expenditure is likely to increase. The FM has stated that, at present, she is not thinking about the fiscal deficit target, which is, in a way, prepar ing the ground for relaxing the target later. There are already cries for abandoning the targets to revive growth from various quarters, and it will not be surprising if the FM takes the bite. In the process, will we throw the baby and retain only the bath water?

## Monetary easing: Room to cut 25bps

The efficacy of incremental rate cuts in rapidly instigating a turnaround in economic growth remains uncertain, given continuing structural constraints



IN AN UNEXPECTED move, the Monetary Policy Committee (MPC) had reduced the reporate by 35 basis points (bps) to 5.4% in the August 2019 policy review, while retaining the accommodative stance. The slowdown in economic growth was clearly the MPC's primary concern, with the CPI inflation forecast to remain under its mediumterm target of 4% up to Q1FY21. With the GDP growth in Q1FY20 printing sharply below expectations, we now expect a fifth consecutive rate cut in the MPC review in October 2019.

The year-on-year (y-o-y) CPI inflation inched up to 3.21% in August 2019 from 3.15% in July 2019, only marginally higher than the MPC's forecast of 3.1% for Q2FY20. Flooding in various states has resulted in a spike in vegetable prices, and a y-o-y decline in the estimated kharif output of rice, pulses, and sugarcane pose modest risks to the inflation trajectory. Moreover, crude oil prices have remained volatile, subject to geopolitical, and trade tensions. A relatively subdued global growth outlook is likely to restrain commodity prices in the near term, which would contain the inflation in manufactured products. However, the demand for various services is likely to remain sticky even during a period of muted domestic economic growth. In our view, the CPI inflation would continue to inch up in the next few prints, led by food items, but average a modest 3.5% in FY20.

The MPC had mildly revised its GDP growth outlook for FY20 downwards to 6.9%, with risks somewhat tilted to the downside, from 7% in the June 2019 review. Subsequently, the GDP data for Q1FY20 was released, which revealed an unexpectedly sharp slowdown in growth to a 25-quarter low 5% from 8% in Q1 FY19.

While the IIP growth improved in July 2019, the early indicators for August

2019 have revealed a widespread deterioration in the industrial sector. The instances of flooding in Q2FY20 are also likely to subdue agricultural growth in this quarter. However, central government spending may pick up post the July 2019 Union Budget, supporting economic growth in Q2FY20.

The government has responded to the weakness in the growth momentum with various measures, including the lowering of the corporate tax rate. This is expected to provide a substantial and broad-based boost to business sentiment in the immediate term, and is a long-term structural positive, although it would increase fiscal stress in the short-term.

Domestic corporates may choose to use the tax savings to retire high cost debt, increase dividends, lower prices or make fresh investments. Given the moderate capacity utilisation in various sectors, we don't expect a broad-based pick-up in capacity expansion by the private sector until there is greater visibility of a sustained uptick in domestic consumption demand. In our view, land and labour reforms, and regulatory clarity and consistency are areas where additional measures are required to complement the impact of the tax cut. Such measures would make India a more attractive investment destination and help attract fresh FDI over the medium-term.

The Government of India (GoI) has pegged the gross revenue loss related to the tax cut at ₹1.45 trillion, approximately 42% of which would be borne by the state governments through lower tax devolution to them. Therefore, the net impact of this tax cut is likely to be around ₹0.8-0.9 trillion, which, by itself, would translate to a fiscal slippage of around 0.4% of GDP in FY20. Expenditure cuts may still have to be undertaken to prevent the GoI's fiscal deficit from rising too sharply in FY20. Based on the shortfalls in central tax

collections in FY19 and the estimated gap in FY20, the aggregate central tax devolution to the states may be a sharp ₹1.5-2.0 trillion lower than what was budgeted by the GoI. Sizeable expenditure reduction or deferral would be required to avoid substantial fiscal slippage at the state government level, given that the borrowing limit set by the GoI acts as a soft constraint to the size of the states' fiscal deficits. In our view, likely cuts to productive and/or capital expenditure at the state level pose a key risk to the economic growth outlook.

Based on our assessment that private sector investment activity would pick up over the medium-term whereas government expenditure restraint would be required in the remainder of this fiscal, particularly at the state level, we are not revising our FY20 GDP growth forecast upward from 6.2%. Moreover, a sizeable reduction in the MPC's baseline growth forecast for FY20 may be in the offing.

Given that at least a portion of the tax cuts would have to be absorbed through lower state government expenditure, the impact on inflation may be modest. Additionally, some firms may choose to pass through a portion of their tax savings through lower prices of goods and services.

Based on our forecasts of the inflation and growth trajectory, the space for additional monetary easing appears to be 25 bps, which we anticipate would be undertaken in the October 2019 MPC review.

Nevertheless, the efficacy of incremental rate cuts in rapidly instigating a turnaround in economic growth remains uncertain, given continuing structural constraints, such as the cost of land acquisition, moderate capacity utilisation levels, relatively high debt levels of some corporate groups, and reluctance of banks to lend for project finance.

## THE EDITOR Restore normalcy

**LETTERS TO** 

## in Kashmir While India had successfully made

the world's most influential powers barring a few, treat its decision to revoke Article 370 as its internal matter and gained support for its commitment in combating crossborder terrorism, it had its task cut out to restore normalcy in Jammu and Kashmir. Nearly two months have passed since restrictions on mobility of people were implemented, and communications were shut down, but no signs are visible yet to demonstrate the government's willingness to lift these. Our pragmatic diplomacy at international forums has given us enough political breathing space for us on the issue of Kashmir. We must take time-bound concrete steps to restore normalcy in Kashmir lest the existing support of international community for us on this issue wanes sooner than later. — M Jeyaram, Sholavandan

## Justice for Bilkis Bano Glad to read that the SC thrashed

the Gujarat government to pay a compensation of ₹50 lakh to Gujarat riots survivor Bilkis Bano within two weeks, and provide her a job and accommodation immediately. The CJI rightly said that the order was in view of specific facts and circumstances in the particular case. Bano's legal battle of over 15 years began after the state police dismissed her complaint of gangrape during the 2002 riots citing lack of evidence. Bano, then 21, was five months pregnant when she was assaulted by a mob of Hindu rioters in Randhikpur village near Ahmadabad. Bano lost 14 members of her family, including her threeyear-old daughter. The Gujarat government must implement the SC order immediately, failing which would be contempt of court, and punishable under the law. — Bhagwan Thadani, Pune

Write to us at feletters@expressindia.com

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ILLUSTRATION: SHYAM KUMAR PRASAD



## DRAFT LMF

# Getting a grip on the new liquidity framework

The framework now has given a realistic twist to managing liquidity. If RBI feels at any time that liquidity is getting tighter, it can go in for longer tenure repos of maybe even up to one year, which is more durable than the regular 14-day term repos but less permanent than an OMO

HE DRAFT PROPOSED liquidity management framework (LMF) of the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) is timely, and even though the basic approach has not really changed, it is significant for the market. It also does bring into focus the process of transmission of policy rates quite well and, in a way, defines better the missing link.

In fact, the LMF is quite independent from the monetary policy, which decides on what the policy rate should be. However, the LMF is critical in making the reporate change effective without regulatory or government intervention, which is refreshing.

The focus, so far, has been to nudge or force banks to bring about transmission. This has been done by both RBI and the government by speaking to them on the necessity of lowering their lending rates, with the latest tool being fixing the lending rate on certain loans to a market benchmark that also includes the reporate. Theoretically, the reporate affects 1% of NDTL (net demand and time liabilities) and hence does not really add or subtract much in terms of cost for banks and, therefore, does not

really get reflected significantly in either the base rate or MCLR (Marginal Cost of Funds-based Lending Rate) formula. But the liquidity framework works better through the market to ensure that the transmission takes place and the call market is the starting point. Let us see how this works out.

The call money market is an interbank market where banks lend and borrow funds on an overnight basis depending on their liquidity conditions and requirements. This rate is based purely on demand and supply conditions, and is not driven directly by RBI. Ideally, the call rate will move in a regulatory constructed corridor and be just above the repo rate as banks go to this market when the repo window is closed to them because the 1% liquidity support is exhausted. Therefore, the change in repo will affect the call rate almost immediately. The reverse repo rate acts as the other end of the corridor when there is surplus liquidity. Hence, the reverse repo and reporates become the limits for the call money market.

RBI can influence the liquidity in the market directly to guide the call rate. Ideally, RBI would be happy to let the market decide the rates, and not deal with banks on a daily basis. However, if it is left to the market, the possibility of the call rate soaring to higher levels (it was above 20% in the 1990s) or crashing close to nil cannot be ruled out. This is more so when the market knows there is no benchmark

against which the prevalent rate can be assessed. Therefore, there is a need for supports in the market like the reporate so that there is reduction in volatility in the market.

There is now the issue of how much money can be transacted in the liquidity adjustment facility (LAF) market. The 1% norm today comprises 25 basis points in overnight repo and the balance in the term repo market. The Committee feels there should no such limit that will give more flexibility to RBI to keep liquidity stable. It is suggested that, ideally, the system should be in a deficit of 25-50bps, which will be non-distortionary. As a corollary, the market can take over beyond this level. However, assuming that such thresholds are breached on either side, RBI can bring in durable liquidity through OMOs (open market operations), which is what is done to ensure that volatility is eliminated. By not having a limit on how much can be transacted through LAF, there is more flexibility given to RBI in maintaining rates in the market.

The proposed framework now has given a realistic twist to managing liquidity. If RBI feels at any time that liquidity is getting tighter, it can go in for longer tenure repos of maybe even up to 1 year, which is more durable than the regular 14 days term repos but less permanent than an OMO. The advantage here is that by using longer-term repos to manage liquidity, the yields on securities do not get affected. Today, when there are OMOs being conducted, there are shifts in the demand and supply of securities of various tenures, which affect their prices and hence yields. This can be eschewed by using only the repos as liquidity management tools where the overnight repo without a limit is used to manage temporary mismatches while the term repos of longer duration come into the frame when it comes to durable liquidity. OMOs would then be interpreted as a way to induce permanent liquidity as the securities are not pledged to get money but bought by RBI.

The same story gets replicated for the reverse repowhen there is surplus liquidity. Forex deals/swaps are supplements to OMOs in this scenario.

Intuitively, the operations in the call market have a better linkage with other interest rates and hence would tend to guide the transmission process of interest rates. Once the liquidity framework is in place and known to all, banks will be able to adjust their interest rates to the call rate as

all other tenures get repriced. Hence, while the liquidity operations are distinct from monetary policy with the purpose being very different, closer alignment becomes almost immediate as the targeted rate, which is the call money rate, is linked to the reporate through the LAF framework and the overall state of liquidity which then drives the interest rate determination process.

rate determination process.

Besides being a market-oriented solution for rate transmission, the market requires to know this framework so as not to be caught unawares. The step-up process from overnight repos to term repos to OMOs is predictable, which will make it easier to manage funds for all the players. There will hence be better pricing of products in the market as the call rates feed into other prices of instruments that will reduce the element of noise, which will be beneficial. This approach is, therefore, definitely pragmatic.

## From small to larger screens

BIT BY BIT

## NANDAGOPAL RAJAN nandagopal.rajan@indianexpress.com

As smartphone makers enter TV space, it could be the start of something big

bit radical, but I do think smart televisions are nothing but smartphones with extra large displays. Maybe some smartphone companies too think the same. This could explain why a lot of these are now queuing up to launch a smart television. The latest in this space is OnePlus, a bit late if you consider Xiaomi launched a smart TV over a year ago, and Motorola has just announced its intentions to. There is a distinction between a smart TV brand using its branding on a television—Micromax did a few years ago—

**HAT I AM GOING** to say might sound a

There is a distinction between a smart TV brand using its branding on a television—Micromax did a few years ago—to a smartphone company launching its take of a smart TV. Xiaomi and now OnePlus are doing essentially this, because they are thinking of everything from OS to content. This is an interesting development because a big smartphone brand also has everything you need to launch a smart TV, from connections with display and processor makers to a functional OS. But what really gives these companies a bit of an edge over traditional TV brands is their understanding of the newage user and her content consumption patterns.

During a recent meeting, Pete Lau, the clear-headed founder of OnePlus, told me he thinks in 10-20 years "a lot of traditional TV manufacturers will probably disappear." He knows it is a bold statement, but he has his reasons for this aggressive take. "We have a vision for the future and a good picture of what is going to happen in the next 10 years in terms of the home internet. It is with this vision in mind that we have decided to make a television." He has also rethought how a smartphone user—the OnePlus smartphone user to

be precise—consumes the television and there are some synergies for users who have both the devices from his brand.

The growing popularity of streaming services in India is a huge opportunity for smart TV makers, including the traditional ones. As internet speeds improve with access to fibre, streaming services are able to offers streaming in very high quality, with 4K, Dolby Vision, Dolby Atmos. This is happening

This could be the start of a revolution of sorts in TV space, where hardware and content try to chase each other across screen sizes

when streaming services are becoming more affordable for Indian users; for instance, Apple TV+ will launch in India at just ₹99 a month. This means a lot of users who are on relatively newer TVs might hasten the upgrade cycles so that they can enjoy the best quality experience. This is important for the TV industry, which has been flat at best for a few years.

Pankaj Kedia, MD for emerging markets at Dolby, says users want to get the "cinematic experience" right inside their living room and hence need all the best television features. The larger screen, he believes, changes the experience from "an ordinary experience to pretty extraordinary."

As 4KTVs become more affordable across brands, you will also see a lot of play in the premium segment. Sunil Nayyar, MD of Sony India, recently told me he is clear the Japanese brand will play on premium in India. Explaining why Sony products will be at least 20% above benchmark competition price point, he said: "But we are doing well... we tell the customer we deliver quality for it. So we deliver better picture, better sound, better durability, better after-sales service."

Even content creators and streaming platforms acknowledge that premium users want the best experience inside their living room—this is the equivalent to the Blu-ray users in the time everyone was playing DVD. To cater to them, Netflix and Amazon Prime both offer titles with 4K, Dolby Vision, HDR10 and Dolby Atmos. This is the best of audio and video experience possible in the living room now. Some services like Sun NXT even have playlists that are available with Dolby Audio, and even YouTube touts its 4K content.

The spike in consumption on smart devices means platforms and content creators now have so much insight into what people are watching, for how long and where they are dropping off. Kedia agrees a lot of this insight is taken into consideration when a new show is approved. It's a no-brainer why HBO has started working on a *Game of Thrones* prequel.

This could well be the start of a revolution of sorts in the television space, one where hardware and content try to chase each other, across screen sizes and user demographics. It should be a win-win for consumers.

## MONETARY POLICY COMMITTEE

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INCE FEBRUARY 2019, the Reserve Bank of India's (RBI) monetary policy has been doing most of the heavy lifting, cutting the repo rate by 110 basis points (bps), in an environment where inflation has remained well within RBI's medium-term target of 4%. However, when the RBI Governor-led Monetary Policy Committee (MPC) meets to release its fourth bi-monthly policy statement for FY20 on October 4, two issues that will be discussed at length are:

Drude oil prices: The recent volatility due to geopolitical tensions and its likely impact on India's fiscal deficit and corporate tax reduction and thus the fiscal bazooka unleashed by finance minister Nirmala Sitharaman. Given the growth slowdown, it was absolutely the need of the hour, but this fiscal booster shot will likely put a strain on the fiscal deficit, which, in turn, could have a say in the monetary policy. Economists at Kotak have revised the fiscal deficit estimate for FY20 to 3.7% after accounting for fiscal measures. And we expect CPI inflation to trend towards 3.9% by March 2020.

▶ The key question: Can this fiscal bazooka trigger investment, consumption demand and, thus, growth? It was widely expected that fiscal measures would focus on driving demand and consumption. The

## A jugalbandi of monetary and fiscal policies

RBI might go for a 20-25bps cut in the October policy and then wait to see how oil prices and fiscal deficit move

SHANTI EKAMBARAM

The author is president, Consumer Banking, Kotak Mahindra Bank. Views are personal

much-awaited September 20 tax reform by way of a sharp reduction in corporate tax rates is actually aimed at boosting investment. The ₹1.45 lakh crore fiscal boost to corporate India will hopefully trigger investment, facilitate price cuts to boost demand, and will also attract foreign and domestic investment into the manufacturing sector, giving a shot in the arm to the Make in India initiative given the very attractive tax rates. This, at a time when foreign manufacturing bases in China are looking for alternatives in the Asia Pacific region.

With inflation within the targeted range, it was the right time to administer this fiscal boost as it gives the government the much-needed cushion to be able to



stretch the fiscal deficit in the quest for growth. Even as both the financial markets and the corporate India cheered the fiscal stimulus, the worries about slowdown in growth, whether this stimulus can stoke investments and consumption demand

and the time lag for the same are real.

I do believe that we will see a slow, trickle-down effect of the fiscal booster to

consumers through lowering of prices and increase in wages. This will gradually restore consumer confidence and lead to revival in demand over the long-term. The fiscal stimulus has also come at just the right time with the festive season round the corner, and will give a significant boost to consumer spending.

At Kotak, our FY20 GDP estimate

stands at 5.8%, while any pick-up could be seen in the latter part of FY20.

Monetary and fiscal policy must work together: Even as the central bank cuts the key policy rate, there is a limitation to what the monetary policy can achieve on its own. While rates have been on a downward trajectory since February 2019, consumption and investments have continued to slow down. This is why fiscal and monetary policies must work together and go hand in hand. The government and RBI are working in tandem to pack a powerful punch for the economy.

Hopefully, we will see a return of the much talked about animal spirits in terms of investments, FDI, revival in manufacturing, creation of jobs and demand. As always, there will be a lead and lag effect between the announcement of the measures and its impact, which, in this case, could be 6-9 months. We will perhaps see the full impact of these measures in FY21.

In the near term, expect the MPC to take a more calibrated stance. There is headroom for the MPC to cut rates as inflation is low. My own expectation is that the central bank will go for a 20-25 bps cut in the October policy and then wait to see how oil prices and fiscal deficit move. Like everyone else, they will also wait to see the impact of monetary and fiscal measures that have been injected into the economy.

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## WORDLY WISE

CLIMATE CHANGE IS ABOUT PROTECTING OUR EARTH FOR FUTURE GENERATIONS.

— MIKE QUIGLEY

## The Indian EXPRESS

S FOUNDED BY S RAMNATH GOENKA

BECAUSE THE TRUTH INVOLVES US ALL

## ELECTION, RESTRICTION

Holding local body elections in J&K amid lockdown and detentions could only deepen the distrust

HERE IS SOMETHING of the surreal about Sunday's announcement by the Jammu and Kashmir State Election Commission: Block Development Council elections will be held on "party lines" on October 24. According to this plan, the BDC polls will take place — for the first time in the state — at a juncture when restrictions imposed on citizens by the Centre since August 5 remain largely in place and political leaders continue to be detained, bringing to a standstill all political activity that calls for, and depends upon, the freedom of expression, movement and association. The panchs and sarpanchs, who form the electorate for the BDC polls, are also inhibited by these curbs. In fact, they have been especially affected, for longer. As this paper has reported, almost a year after the last round of J&K panchayat polls, many of these representatives of the people at the bottom-most tier of electoral democracy from different parts of the Valley continue to seek refuge in a hotel in uptown Srinagar as they are fearful of visiting their villages. Even before the current lockdown and communication blockade, this persistence of fear has served to underline the many questions of legitimacy that afflicted the electoral exercise at the end of which many seats of panch and sapanch in the Valley lie vacant, and most of those elected were elected unopposed.

Given that there has been little progress since then in empowering and enabling panchayati raj institutions, and in view of the heavy pall of anxieties and insecurities that has descended over the people and politicians in Kashmir now, the move to push ahead with the BDC polls raises serious questions about what that exercise could possibly achieve. But these questions are being stonewalled by the top echelons of government and the bottommost. The J&K Chief Electoral Officer, Shailendra Kumar, has sought to sweep the political questions under the administrative carpet. The state election commission, he said, is ready and willing to "facilitate" a level playing field, "whenever any candidate or political party approaches us". The BDC polls cannot be preceded by bypolls to fill the vacant panch and sarpanch seats, he said, because that would require electoral roles to be prepared afresh. It is important to go ahead with the BDC polls because "at block level many development works have stopped and are not moving ahead". And Union Home Minister Amit Shah has countered the questions about continuing restrictions in Kashmir by targeting the Opposition for the decades-old militancy in the state and the long imprisonment of Sheikh Abdullah, by invoking the deaths of jawans, and of course, by blaming the "Himalayan" blunders of Jawaharlal Nehru.

In just over a month, the map of J&K is about to change. It is still not known to what extent the move has sparked opposition among the people most affected by it — that assessment can be made only after the restrictions on them are completely lifted. Undoubtedly, what is needed in J&K is a genuine political process with politicians on the ground, not in detention. The push to hold elections when the basic conditions of democracy are not met could only deepen public distrust.

## AT HOT SEA

IPCC report on oceans underlines urgency of upscaling GHG reduction targets, building resilience to climate change

Y 2100, OCEANS all over the world will absorb five to seven times more heat than they have done in the past 50 years, if we do not reduce our emissions trajectory," notes a report of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) released last week. This, the report warns, will lead to global sea- levels rising by at least a metre, submerging several coastal cities, including Mumbai, Kolkata, Chennai and Surat. Marine heatwaves are projected to be more intense, they would last longer and occur 50 times more often. Sea-level rise could also lead to an increase in the frequency of extreme weather events, which occur, for example, during high tides and intense storms.

Oceans cover more than 70 per cent of the earth's surface and provide critical ecosystem

services such as soaking up heat and distributing it evenly. So, as the planet warms, it's the oceans that get most of the extra energy. But hotter oceans also mean stronger cyclones and storms. This could mean unprecedented volatility in several coastal regions. For instance, in 2014, Cyclone Nilofar was the first extremely severe cyclone to be recorded in the Arabian Sea in the post-monsoon season. Earlier cyclones impacting the country generally originated in the Bay of Bengal and made their landfall on India's eastern coast. Cyclone Nilofar did not make a landfall but it led to heavy rains in the country's west coast. And in October last year, a higher than normal surge in sea-level due to the dual impact of Cyclone Luban and high tide swamped several beaches in Goa. Some of them, in fact, went completely under water for a few hours. Warming seas have changed cyclone behaviour in other ways as well. In 2017, Cyclone Ockhi, which originated in the Bay of Bengal, travelled more than 2,000 km to wreak havoc on India's western coast — the first cyclone to do so in 30 years.

The IPCC report warns of more "frequent El Nino and La Nina events". These events in the Pacific Ocean are critically linked to the southwest monsoons in India. In fact, a El Nino caused a severe drought in the country in 2015. This means that countries will not only have to upscale efforts to check GHG emissions, they will also need to ramp up investments in infrastructure and knowledge systems that help build up peoples' resilience against extreme weather events. However, after the Paris Climate Treaty, progress on both counts has been patchy at best. The latest IPCC report should serve as a wake-up call.

## THRESHOLD IN ORBIT

Elon Musk ups the ante in the space race, and this time it is a target worth shooting for

PACE ENTREPRENEUR ELON Musk, long criticised for setting unrealistic deadlines, and then criticised some more for trying to meet them with an inhuman work schedule, has done it again. He threatens to put a prototype of his heavy and reusable rocket Starship into orbit in six months. It's a deadline that even the engineers of the Apollo 11 mission, who won the race to space, would have balked at, and they had a government budget and a huge space industry at their command. But a reusable rocket system — rather than single-use rockets for every flight — is the Holy Grail of space exploration.

A rocket system that can ferry people back and forth between earth and orbit is the threshold for the leap to the planets and the stars. It is speculated that craft with other propulsion modes unsuitable for use near planets, like ion drives, could take over from there, propelling crews at tremendous speeds to distances now unimaginable. The existing transport system on earth works efficiently because people can easily change modes — bus to train or plane, then bus or taxi to the final destination. Space mass transport would probably be similarly variegated and interconnected.

Would probably be similarly variegated and interconnected.

But why is Musk in such a hurry to "extend consciousness beyond earth", in his words?

Perhaps it's because he believes that consciousness is up to no good down here. Musk has repeatedly sounded warnings about artificial intelligence, currently the Holy Grail of communications technology, running wild. Even if the AIs don't get us, climate change will. It appears certain that extreme events at shorelines will be experienced by people alive today. Against this grim backdrop, the sands of Mars as depicted by Edgar Rice Burroughs may seem inviting, and reaching earth orbit would be the first leg of the journey to safety.

## Free together, or not at all

South Asia needs a culture of commitment to human rights, not human rights as communal props

PRATAP BHANU MEHTA

THERE IS, NO doubt, a stunning irony in Pakistan positioning itself as a champion of the rights of Kashmiris and human rights more generally. India's biggest asset diplomatically is that it is dealing with a state whose commitment to self-serving violence and the persecution of its minorities is so evident that it will taint any human rights cause it touches. But the superficial satisfaction that a diplomatic victory might yield for India should not blind us to one practical danger, and one deep moral truth. The practical danger is this: We can dismiss the current rhetoric as mere words. But two things stand out: India and Pakistan are now not just accusing each other of specific actions that are evil. They are impugning the core character of each other. Pakistan's charge against India is now not that India is a state that illegally occupies and oppresses Kashmir; it is that the nature of the Indian regime has changed to a majoritarian racial ideology. For India, Pakistan is not a state that uses terror; the core of the state is terror incarnate. These mutual accusations have been implicit in India-Pakistan relations. But now they are explicit positions, an attack on each other's core identity.

Combine this with another fact. The heightened rhetoric has raised expectations of action in both countries. Imran Khan incoherently oscillates between expressing helplessness and warning of nuclear apocalypse. But it is difficult to see the current political establishment in Pakistan not losing face, if it is not seen to do something. India, for its part, has clearly announced an intention to now "solve" the Kashmir problem and make sure Pakistan is taught enough lessons that it cannot get away with its characteristic perfidy. After the misinformation in India on what Balakot achieved and the constant need to drum up nationalist frenzy, there is also heightened domestic expectation in India's capacity to now take this fight to the finish. Whether this signal gets Pakistan to back down or increases the risk of conflict is an open question. There is also a leadership vacuum in the international system. The conflict has become a lot more existential on both sides. The room for clawing back is less, the prospect of a violent dénouement high. It would be complacent to deny this im-

India is being complacent if it thinks that the decimation of law, the suspension of habeas corpus, and the near permanent state of emergency we have practised in Kashmir is not coming to imperil the liberties of all of us. In some ways it already has. Whichever we look at it, there is no way out for South Asia unless there is a culture of commitment to human rights, not human rights as communal props. The challenges of both India and Pakistan can be solved only if we re-imagine ourselves, internally, as a zone of freedom, not warring identities.

pending danger. But here is another moral issue. It is touching to see Pakistan express a love for India's minorities. India, quite legitimately, in turn used Pakistan's treatment of Ahmadiyas, Shias, and Balochis, as props in its own ideological defence while minorities in both countries say, "Don't use us. You will delegitimise us. We will deal with our own oppressors, thank you very much." But implicit in these rhetorical invocations is a clue to what went wrong in ideological thinking in South Asia. Rather than a general commitment to human rights, or the dignity and inviolability of the individual, rights were always invoked in the context of one community or the other. The problem of human rights was framed as the problem of distribution of power in particular communities: Muslim against Hindu, Hindu against Muslim, Shia against Sunni, Kashmir against India, Balochistan against Pakistan. The list could go on. In part, this was understandable since groups were often targeted in virtue of particular identities. But this framing had two unfortunate consequences.

We invoke the rights of our favourite group as and when we want; often those of our co-ethnics at the expense of others. So, rights are tied to communal sympathies. They set up a competitive dynamic over whose human rights matter. Human rights are, paradoxically, used to divide, not unite. In the South Asia context, we also have the challenge of endless minorities within minorities. If one group gets self-determination, for instance, chances are you will land up with another minority to protect within that group. In short, group-based rights don't work if there is no commitment to human rights and freedom within those groups. But if there is a general commitment to freedom and human rights, the claims of group-based rights become less necessary.

This paradox can be seen in the relation between nationalism and subnationalism. It is a truism that in the modern world a nation state is the political form under which rights can be claimed. But the process of consolidation of nation states can also become exclusionary, and often spawn counter resistance in the form of subnationalism. But if nationalism is, by virtue of its exclusions, illegitimate, so should subnationalism be (un-

less purely defensive), which often produces the same logic in miniature. It should be subject to the same suspicion. In a way, both need to be held to a human rights standard.

If South Asia wants to get out of the morass of deadly identity politics, it will have to make a commitment to human rights in general, not align them to a communal imagination. If individuals have freedom and dignity, identities will flourish and proliferate anyway. But these will be freely chosen, not scripted by exclusionary nationalisms. No matter how presumptuously a community might feel it can get away by denying other communities their rights by virtue of its power or numbers, eventually the culture of impugning rights comes and bites back.

India is right: Pakistan's persecution of its minorities has deeply distorted its nature and character. But India is being complacent if it thinks that the decimation of law, the suspension of habeas corpus, and the near permanent state of emergency we have practised in Kashmir is not coming to imperil the liberties of all of us. In some ways, it already has. Whichever way we look at it, there is no way out for South Asia unless there is a culture of commitment to human rights, not human rights as communal props. The challenges of both India and Pakistan can be solved only if we re-imagine ourselves, internally, as a zone of freedom, not warring identities.

It is easy to hear the utter derision human rights evokes. They can be conceptually complicated. But we have a good start. It looks like we understand the rights of individuals in particular groups. All we need to do is extend the same courtesy to everyone else. But in a week when we will be drowned in Gandhian piety, it is worth going back to first principles and asking: Even with these bombastic diplomatic victories, and full arsenal of force and repression at our disposal, can we imagine an enduring peace in South Asia, without reorienting its culture to individual dignity and freedom?

As Gandhi knew: We can either be free together or not at all.

The writer is contributing editor, The Indian Express



## BAD AIR, BUT HOW BAD

Smog does affect health but there is no data on the problem's magnitude

Soumi Roy Chowdhury and Sanjib Pohit

INTHE PAST three years, several studies have linked air pollution with health effects. For instance, the State of Global Air 2019, published by the Health Effects Institute (HEI), claimed exposure to outdoor and indoor air pollution contributed to over 1.2 million deaths in India in 2017. Another study conducted by researchers at the International Food Policy Research Institute (IFPRI) and partner institutes peg the economic cost of exposure to air pollution from crop residue burning at \$35 billion, or nearly Rs. 2.35 lakh crore annually, for the three north Indian states of Punjab, Haryana and Delhi.

While we do not question the basic premise that air pollution has adverse health impact, we are sceptical about the figures quoted and the methodology adopted in estimating the cost.

First piece of the jigsaw of such studies relates to the availability of data on measurement of air pollution levels, notably mean concentrate on particulate matter (PM)10 (particles smaller than 10 microns) and PM2.5 (particles smaller than 2.5 microns, about 25 to 100 times thinner than a human hair). The availability of data has no doubt improved significantly in recent years, with an increase in number of nodes where such data is now being collected 24x7. However, while the discourse on air pollu-

The magnitude of air pollution's health effects can only be judged when, apart from scientists measuring air pollution and social scientists assessing economic values, medical practitioners are also involved in collecting clinical and biometric information. It appears that the last part is missing in most studies.

tion in the Indian context centres around PM10 and PM2.5, there are other pollutants in the atmosphere which are more harmful — nanoparticles, for example. Soil erosion, dust storms, burning of unprocessed fuel and industrial and mechanical processes also cause air pollution. The lack of data on these implies that research excludes an important aspect of the health implications of pollution. This may mean that the total economic cost of exposure can, in fact, be higher than what is reported. But is it really so?

This brings to us the second piece of the puzzle: Estimating the impact of pollution on health. There can be two ways to understand it. For instance, IFPRI has used India's fourth District Level Health Survey data to correlate pollution with health impact. However, it is a general health survey and does not cover all diseases linked to air pollution. Moreover, the information is collated from households. Resource constraints preclude any attempt to collect clinical and biometric information of individuals exposed to air pollution. Health assessment based on respondents' perceptions may not provide a real picture unless a medical examination on the subjects captures the residues of such pollutants in the blood. Only then can the extent and severity of pollution impacts be ascertained.

In India, the general approach is to get the cost estimates from developed countries and then deflate the numbers using the purchasing power parity (PPP)conversion approach to arrive at economic costs of pollution. However, there could be a major flaw in this approach. For example, it overlooks how human immunity develops in polluted and non polluted areas. To completely overlook this fact may lead to an overestimation of pollution of pollutions and the properties and the properties are at the cost of the

tion's adverse impacts. While the severity of the air pollution problem is a fact, its magnitude can only be judged when, apart from scientists measuring air pollution and social scientists assessing economic values, medical practitioners are also involved in collecting clinical and biometric information. It appears that the last part is missing in most studies. Of course, given the shortage of doctors in India, it would always be costly to involve the medical profession in such studies. But then, researchers should acknowledge that they may be off the mark. As of now, the true picture remains shrouded in the smog that prevails over our cities.

Roy Chowdhury is associate fellow and Pohit is professor at National Council of Applied Economic Research New Delhi. Views expressed here are personal

## INDIAN EXPRESS New jure in critics as Language and morest principles of Language and morest principles of Language and in principles of Language and in principles of Language and Languag

## OCTOBER 1, 1979, FORTY YEARS AGO

RSS-STATE EQUATION
BALASAHEB DEORAS SAID in Nagpur that the RSS considered politics to be only a part of the total national life and "our relationship with politics is to the same extent and of the same nature as we have with other aspects of life". He added that the "Sangh does not believe that the state is the chief or the sole instrument for achieving social good". Addressing an RSS rally on the occasion of the 54th anniversary of the founding of the organisation, The RSS sarsanghachalak explained at length the character and objectives of the organisation which, he said, believed in the secular character of the

state and was dedicated to the rejuvenation

of Hindu national life.

## Media Critique

RAJ NARAIN, LOK Dal leader, has alleged that mass media was being systematically exploited by capitalist forces. "I will take the department of mass media in my own hands if this situation continues," Narain told newsmen in Varanasi. Narain said that the peasants and common people of the drought-affected region of eastern UP had strongly demanded postponement of the mid-term poll till the middle of February 1980. "I will convey this message of the people to the Prime Minister and to the Chief Election Commissioner," he said.

JANATA MANIFESTO A DRAFT OF the first part of the Janata Party election manifesto circulated among national executive members contains a strong denunciation of President Sanjiva Reddy, defectors led by Charan Singh, the CPI and CPM It is a review of the developments that led to the fall of the Janata government, the dissolution of the Lok Sabha and the announcement of the mid-term poll. The second part a review of the Janata government's achievements, would be circulated among the national executive next week. The third part, listing the policies, if the party returned to power, would be drafted after a discussion on the suggestions by the national executive.

## THE IDEAS PAGE

## An illusion of parity

India must reflect frankly upon China's extraordinary transformation as it celebrates the 70th anniversary of the founding of PRC



C RAJA MOHAN

AS CHINA CELEBRATES the 70th anniversary of the founding of the People's Republic with much military pomp and nationalist pride today, India must reflect upon the extraordinary transformation on its northern frontiers. China's internal and external trajectory has enthused, puzzled and troubled India since the early 20th century. The PRC's fascinating evolution presents four broad themes for any Indian contemplation.

The first is China's awe-inspiring economic miracle. This demands a deep Indian admiration for China's success in improving the lives of the largest number of people in the shortest period ever. While Mao's economic experimentation turned out to be disastrous, the era of reform and opening up launched by Deng Xiaoping at the end of the 1970s transformed China into the world's second largest economy. It's a matter of time that China will overtake the United States in terms of the aggregate size of the economy. China is not the first country to move from underdeveloped to developed status. It is the first country to compress that journey into just four decades.

Many in India tend to minimise the significance of this growth by pointing to the nature of the political system under the Chinese Communist Party. They invoke the excuse that India has had to pay a democracy tax that slows its development while China had an authoritarian dividend. The denial of China's economic miracle, however, is also often accompanied by an envy of China's rise. A more balanced Indian judgement would underline the possibilities for rapid and productive change that China has demonstrated to other developing countries.

In the middle of the 20th century, the dominant sentiment about Asia's economic future was of pessimism. Many were convinced that it was impossible for late entrants into the world economy, dominated by Western imperial powers, to develop rapidly or successfully. China, in spectacular manner, proved that assumption wrong. India's own reforms at the turn of the 1990s generated similar optimism that it too could rise within a short period. One difference, though, is in the comprehensive and sustained nature of China's reforms — from education to diplomacy and from military to municipal governance. India's reform strategy in comparison has been tentative, episodic and limited.

One exception to China's story of sweeping reform, though, has been in the arena of political modernisation. That takes us to the second theme. The CCP deserves much praise for stitching a diverse set of people and territories into a single nation-state. But the CCP's continuing challenges are evident in the problems it confronts today in regions with ethnic as well as religious minorities such as

Xinjiang and Tibet. China is also having difficulty in bringing Hong Kong under full sovereign control. Protests have continued for weeks against Beijing's efforts to turn Hong Kong — that has enjoyed the benefits of the principle "one country, two systems"—into just another city

in China. The developments are a reminder of



C R Sasikumar

the unending and uphill task of generating national coherence in a large state. The Hong Kong protests might also make it even harder for the CCP to complete Taiwan's unification with the PRC.

Meanwhile, hopes that China's economic growth will eventually lead to the emergence of a middle class and the democratisation of its polity have been dampened. The Xi Jinping era has seen a vigorous crackdown on dissent and the emergence of a surveillance state that has deployed emerging digital technologies in asserting unprecedented control over its population.

India has rightly avoided telling China how to govern itself. For, India has many problems of its own in building national unity and consolidating territorial sovereignty. But India can certainly learn from the ancient Chinese wisdom that governing a large nation is like cooking a small fish. They are easilv overdone.

Deng Xiaoping's emphasis on "one country, two systems" and letting some of China's regions grow first and then pulling others forward brought great sophistication and subtlety to administering China. But Xi's harder line could turn China into a strong but brittle state. India's strength, in contrast, lies in its soft but supple structure that can absorb the inevitable tensions of nation-building. It is easy to forget this.

Third is China's huge commitment to building national capabilities in science and technology. Exactly a century ago, the May Fourth Movement in China defined the goals of the nation's modernisation as replacing "Mr Confucius" with "Mr Democracy and Mr Science". Nationalists and communists alike recognised that breaking free from the chains of inherited religious and social custom was critical for China's modernisation. While Mr Democracy has been elusive, Mr Science has found a thriving home in China. Unlike China's economic rise, its emerging impressive credentials on science and technology have been less recognised in India.

China has begun to take the pole position in a number of emerging areas like artificial intelligence, robotics, data analytics, synthetic biology, new materials and space sciences. The size of investments in research and development, modernisation of the higher education system, opening China up for foreign faculty and talent, and making the People's Liberation Army a major stakeholder have all propelled China to the highest ranks of scientific power. But, without a successful battle

progress would not have been so dramatic. To be sure, the fight against Confucianism

against feudalism, China's technological

took extreme forms under Mao, including the vandalisation of China's rich cultural heritage. Under Mao's successors though, China has found a better balance between preserving the rich past and embracing the spirit of science and technology. Meanwhile, India's battle against feudal legacy is incomplete and might be losing steam. Delhi has also much ground to cover in catching up with China on science and technology.

Finally, there is the question of power in China's world view. Nationalists and communists were one in their determination to restore China's "wealth and power" (fuqiang in Chinese) that eroded so quickly in the encounter with the West during the colonial era. The CCP can rightly claim the redemption of that ambition in good measure. While many in the West admired and promoted the economic rise of China, they seem utterly surprised by Beijing's current assertion as a great power.

The expectation that China will play by the rules devised by West and accept a status designated for them has turned out to be a delusion. China is now a great power in its own right and wants to deal with the world on its own terms. But the CCP, too, has been surprised by the pushback from the West and the rapid escalation of conflict with the United States. The nature of the increasingly unpredictable relationship between China and the West will shape international rela-

tions in the decades ahead. Like the West, India, too, underestimated China's entirely legitimate aspirations to be a great power and the speed with which it has got there. This has been compounded by a persistent Indian temptation to romanticise the relationship with China and hope that declarations of solidarity will overcome contradictory interests. To make matters worse, the illusion of parity with China has prevented Delhi from coming to terms with the rapidly widening power gap with Beijing and its impact on India's world. Overcoming the consequences of that gap, which is likely to persist for long, will be India's greatest national challenge in the coming decades.

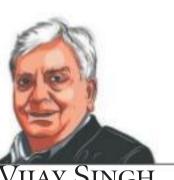
The writer is Director, Institute of South Asian Studies, National University of Singapore and contributing editor on *international affairs for* The Indian Express

## WHAT THE OTHERS SAY

"It is a tragedy that he (Boris Johnson) can get away with his fabrications and exaggerations whatever the cost to the country." —THE GUARDIAN

## Her way of seeing

To target Romila Thapar is to target a new way of asking questions and writing history



Vijay Singh

visit Romila Thapar who had been in the news for the insidious interrogation of her status as professor emerita at JNU. She referred then, with a certain distraughtness so rare to spot in her, to an ancient formula that sets out the pattern of debate — Purvapaksh-Pratipaksh Siddhanta. According to it, one first spells out the opponent's position as truthfully as one can, and then refutes it point by point before setting out one's own position. This principle was put forward in an ancient Indian text as a methodical way of reaching an intellectual resolution and ensuring further progress. The immediate context for referring to this principle was our conversation about the spate of ill-informed and foul comments she has been receiving, and how far their writers could be from the debating siddhanta of ancient India. I was outraged to hear about such language, insulting as they were to one of our most eminent intellectuals in the world.

BEFORE HEADING BACK to Paris, I decided to

When I reached Paris, I reached out to Charles Malamoud, an honorary professor of history at L'Ecole of Hautes Etudes en Sciences Sociales and a very respected historian of ancient India. It was Malamoud who first translated DD Kosambi's work into French. "I was outraged to hear about Romila being asked for her CV," he fumed. "It's an act of hostility against independent science, against Romila and all that she represents..."

The conversation with Malamoud led me to speak to Gérard Fussman, the renowned Sanskrit scholar and professor emeritus at the Collège de France, the most prestigious research school here which boasts of 21 Nobel Prizes (Romila Thapar has been a guest lecturer at the Collège). Visibly upset with the JNU administration, Fussman remarked: "Questioning her status is an act of pettiness and jealousy."

Fussman, who has worked closely with Indian scholars on historical and archaeological projects, wondered if people seeking Thapar's credentials realised what her contribution to Indian history, and to India, has been. "She is an excellent historian — and much more. She is a towering intellectual in India and abroad. And her greatest contribution is to have Indianised Indian history."

Fussman, who has devoted a lifetime to a study of the Indian civilisation, reminisced insightfully about an archaeological project undertaken in Chanderi (Madhya Pradesh). "At the end of the day, when we would sit down to discuss our research with the Indian colleagues," he recollected, "I found there were questions that the Indians were raising, but which had escaped me. Similarly, there were things that had intrigued me, but the Indians hadn't even thought of them... But in the case of Dr Thapar, this was not the case because she was at home with both the perspectives — Indian and foreign. This is an

extremely rare inter-cultural quality in an intellectual, and it is such qualities that have permitted Romila and her colleagues to take a university like JNU from scratch and build it into a great institution."

In fact, I myself was witness to the nascent years of this university. I wonder whether it was the intellectual stature of our teachers (Thapar, Bipan Chandra, S Gopal, Sabyasachi Bhattacharya) or their manner of inspiring a handful of young minds that turned JNU into a vast, turbulent sea of intellectual passion. Libraries overflowed with students. There was no place to sit in them, they looked like railway platforms. It wasn't uncommon to see students taking a nap between book racks in the library, while they waited for their next book. People skipped meals as dhabas ran virtually round the clock to cater to their insomniac clientèle. There were passionate discussions everywhere on buses, at dhabas, in rooms and dining halls.

When I look back at those times with envy or nostalgia, three "teachings" from that era seem to have left an imprint on the mind. The first is a spirit of inquiry — a deathless devotion to the truth and an inner necessity to dig down to the root of the problem. Second, that period of learning infused in us a certain intellectual confidence to stand up to the world. Finally, perhaps the most important, we learnt a new way of perceiving history, a new way of reading our colonial and human experience, a new way of asking questions and writing history. This is "history from below", written from the perspective of those who live or suffer it.

The truth is that, regardless of the governments in power, universities need academic freedom to flourish, they need fresh air. Intellectual and creative milieux anywhere in the world will always pose awkward questions to the state. They will say and do things that will please or displease the powers that be. But freedom of expression, and of learning, constitutes a sacred space that needs to be guarded as, in the long term, it teaches us — as individuals and as a society — to swim through the enigmas of life and history.

To cite an example that illustrates the sad predicament facing intellectual professions, I once made a film called "India by Song" on the post-1947 Indian history. thought Doordarshan would be a good platform for its airing, so I proposed it to them. A senior official, who viewed it, liked it and wanted to air it on Republic Day. The film was sent to the in-house review committee which, incidentally, re-censors films which already have a censor certification! One of the committee members called me and said: "It's such a beautiful film. But why did you have to include Romila Thapar's interview where she speaks of the Emergency being like a dictatorship? Sorry, we can't air it." At that time, the Congress was in power One year later, the government changed and I spoke to Doordarshan for an airing This time around, it was someone else who said: "It's such a nice film but why did you have to speak of the Babri Masjid demolition and the riots.'

> Singh is a writer and filmmaker living in Paris

## LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

## HINDI AND OTHERS

THIS REFERS TO the article, 'Much ado about language' (IE, September 30). Article 351 of the Constitution be $stowed\,the\,responsibility\,on\,the\,Centre$ to encourage the growth of Hindi and develop it as a medium of expression in the country. The Article calls for enriching the language by assimilating elements from other languages mentioned in the eighth schedule and drawing vocabulary from these languages. The idea perhaps was to make Hindi an inclusive language, encompassing the linguistic diversity of the country. But over the years standardisation of Hindi has Sanskritised it further making it unintelligible even to the na-

## tive speakers. Sudip Kumar Dey, Kolkata

THIS REFERS TO the article, 'Much ado about language' (IE, September 30). The writer has rightly highlighted the crux of the issue related to the controversy over Hindi. It is merely a mode of communication between the people of north India. The beauty of this country lies in its diversity and plurality. An annual furore over the Hindi Divas is often a red herring used by the government to distract people's attention from many other serious issues.

**Chinmay Jain,** Delhi

THIS REFERS TO the editorial, 'A win for diplomacy' (IE, September 30). It's true that normalcy has to be restored in the Kashmir Valley as early as the circumstances permit. A ray of hope lies in the recently announced local body polls. India being the world's largest democracy doesn't need lessons in human

RAY OF HOPE

## LETTER OF THE WEEK AWARD

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

or sent to The Indian Express, B-1/B, Sector 10, Noida-UP 201301. Letter writers should mention their postal address and phone number.

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rights from Imran Khan. He should focus more on setting things right in his country where the condition of minorities is deplorable.

Vinay Saroha, Delhi

## ONUS ON RBI

THIS REFERS TO the editorial, 'Who pays' (IE, September 27). The rising NPAs in the public sector banking units is a threat to the sector. This was the main reason for merger of public sector banks. The RBI should examine the long-term feasibility of the business model of public sector banks and monitor their activities more frequently.

**Aayush Sapra,** *Ujjain* 

## Man in the arena

'Howdy, Modi' showcased that India, US have shed Cold War baggage

Many in India tend to

minimise the significance of

this growth by pointing to

the nature of the political

system under the Chinese

invoke the excuse that India

has had to pay a democracy

development while China

China's economic miracle,

accompanied by an envy of

balanced Indian judgment

possibilities for rapid and

China has demonstrated to

other developing countries.

productive change that

Communist Party. They

tax that slows its

had an authoritarian

dividend. The denial of

however, is also often

China's rise. A more

would underline the

Sunanda Vashisht

I WAS AMONG the 50,000 people who watched Prime Minister Narendra Modi at the Howdy, Modi event in Houston on September 22. Along with him on the stage were US congressmen and senators, Republicans and Democrats. The Mayor of Houston was on the stage. And then the President of the United States joined him. Other than when they congregate in the US Congress, I have not seen that many American lawmakers of both parties on one stage, and that too with 50,000 people cheering them in a football stadium. None of this was familiar ground for Modi, except perhaps 50,000 deliriously cheering crowd. Yet he stood there, owning every moment of that event. He played the host and the guest both, with remarkable finesse.

As I watched Modi, the immortal words of Theodore Roosevelt played in my head. "It is not the critic who counts; not the man who points out how the strong man stumbles, or where the doer of deeds could have done them better. The credit belongs to the man who is actually in the arena, whose face is marred by dust and sweat and blood; who strives valiantly." Modi that morning was the man in the arena — one who leads from the front and never shies from a good fight. The stakes at Howdy, Modi were so high that if even one little thing went wrong the entire event would be derailed. No US president has ever appeared on the stage with a foreign leader in a rally in a football stadium. Houston City had never previously handled logistics and security for such a high profile event. Khalistani and Pakistani protesters had threatened to sabotage the show. Torrential rains had flooded the city of Houston just a day before the event and 50,000 people had to be ushered inside the stadium with proper security protocol. Yet that morning in the NRG Stadium, everything neatly fell in place and history was made.

To my left sat an elderly lady who had flown all the way from Atlanta. Her feet were swollen after standing in the security line for few hours. "I can barely fit my feet in my shoes," she pointed towards her shoes. Originally from Ludhiana, she told me she would not have missed the event for anything. "What do you like about Modi," I asked. "I haven't seen a politician like this in my life. He does what he says," she said, and before I could ask her another question, she was cheering and screaming like a teenager at a pop concert. To my right sat a young IT professional originally from Telangana, who was continuously charging his two phones with his power bank and furiously whatsapping photos and videos. "I am waiting to see

370," he told me. "I doubt he will say anything much," I said, and he looked at me with disbelief. When Modi asked the audience to give Indian lawmakers who had helped pass the legislation to abrogate Article 370 a standing ovation, he stood up and cheered wildly, but not without giving me a look that said "Modi never disappoints".

There was a bunch of giggling teenagers with popcorn tubs in front of me. Most of them were born and raised in the US. Why are they here today, I asked. "To watch India's prime minister and cheer for him," they said. "Can you recall the name of any previous prime minister of India," I asked. They looked at each other and shrugged their shoulders. "Not really," they said almost in unison. "My parents talk about Modi all the time at home," one of them told me. "India and United States are friends, it makes sense for them to tell the world that," another teenager

Standing in the NRG stadium it was hard to believe that just two decades ago, then US president, Bill Clinton, had imposed economic sanctions after India announced completion of a series of underground nuclear tests. That morning, as Indian and American flags were being waved together, it was clear that the cold war baggage had finally been thrown off. What was ignited by P V what he will say about Pakistan and Article

Narasimha Rao, carried forward by Atal Bihari Vajpayee, solidified by Manmohan Singh had now been given new wings by Modi. India and the US are not allies. The two

countries will, perhaps, never be allies given how the US defines its allies and nonallies. However, the largest and oldest democracies have found a unique way to work with each other, collaborate with each other and promote shared interests. As US President Donald Trump addressed the charged audience in the NRG stadium, he saw Indian flags and American flags being waved together and chants of Modi, Modi along with USA, USA. I was wondering if the US president would be comfortable seeing so many flags of any another country besides India in his audience. That Trump appeared in an event called Howdy, Modi was a testament to the comfort level both countries have achieved with each other. There will be bumps going forward because all developing relationships face those, but bumps will never slow down the progress the two countries continue to make. The credit goes to the Man in the Arena because he "dared greatly".

> Vashisht is a columnist and author based in Houston

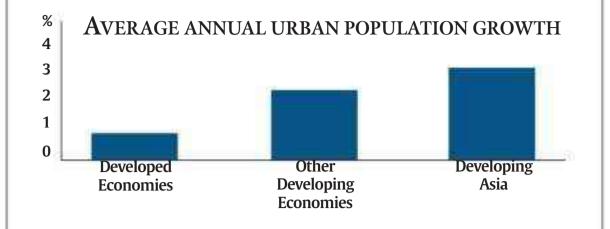
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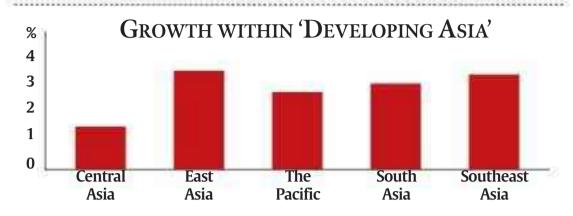
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## TELLING NUMBERS

## China and India lead global urbanisation shift





THE ECONOMIC outlook update released by the Asian Development Bank last week highlighted that, according to World Urbanization Prospects data, "the number of urban inhabitants in developing Asia has increased almost five-fold since 1970". "Developing Asia" refers to a group of 45 countries that are members of the ADB. As such, between 1970 to 2017, the urban population in this group of countries grew from 375 million to 1.84 billion. The region led the global increase in urban population in this period and accounted for 53% of it.

Two-thirds of the nearly 1.5.billion additional city dwellers in Developing Asia belong to China and India. Developing Asia urbanised faster than the rest of the world not only in terms of absolute growth, but also in terms of growth rate. The urban population in this region increased at an average 3.4% per annum from 1970 to 2017. This was much faster than the 2.6% in the rest of the developing world mainly Africa and Latin America and 1.0% in the developed world.

Within the Developing Asia region, East Asia, at 3.7%, had the highest annual growth rate. It was followed by Southeast Asia at 3.6%, and South Asia at 3.3%. The Pacific saw an annual growth rate of 2.9% in the urban population, and Central Asia witnessed a 1.6% annual growth.

## THIS WORD MEANS

## **STARSHIP**

Elon Musk has unveiled the prototype spaceship that he believes will take humans to Mars

ROCKET COMPANY SpaceX has unveiled a prototype design of the 'Starship' — the spacecraft that it is building at its facility outside Brownsville, Texas, which the company's founder Elon Musk says will take humans to Mars within the next few years.

The Starship, made of stainless steel, looks like a giant, shiny grain silo, stands 164 ft tall, and is 30 ft in diameter. It will be paired with a behemoth booster stage called Super Heavy; the full rocket will be 387 ft tall and will be able to lug more than 100 tonnes of payload weight into orbit.

Musk provided the update to the rocket on September 28, the anniversary of SpaceX's first successful launch 11 years ago. That rocket, Falcon 1, was 68 ft high, five-and-a-half feet in diameter, and could lift payloads up to 180 kg. Since then, SpaceX has developed a steady business of putting satellites in orbit and carrying cargo to the International Space Station.

An orbital test flight of a refined Starship prototype and the Super Heavy booster could be carried out in less than six months and, according to Musk, "we could potentially see people flying next year". Building a reusable rocket is critical to making space flight viable. Musk switched from his original choice of carbon fibre to stainless steel because it is cheaper, easier to work with, becomes stronger in the ultracoldness of space, and has a melting temperature that can more easily withstand the heat of reentry into Earth's atmosphere. The Starship will belly flop in the up-

per atmosphere at a 60-degree angle, Musk said. Then, as it slows and nears the ground, it will rotate to vertical and land. Musk has repeatedly revised the design over the last three years, fixing the size of the spacecraft, changing the heat shield, and adjusting the shape of the fins, etc.

THE NEW YORK TIMES

## SIMPLY PUT QUESTION & ANSWER

## How to read corporate tax cut

A cut in the corporate tax rate announced earlier this month makes India a more attractive destination for future investments, but the move may not provide a massive boost to growth in the current financial year

## **UDIT MISRA**

NEW DELHI, SEPTEMBER 30

SPEAKING AT the Bloomberg global business forum last week, Prime Minister Narendra Modi made a strong pitch before global investors to come to India. Back home, the government has initiated a slew of reforms to arrest the slowdown in economic growth. The cut in corporate tax rate has been the biggest change; inclusive of cesses and surcharges, the rate has come down from roughly 35% to 25%, and without the cesses and surcharges, to 22% from around 30%. The government has also nudged public and private banks to look at providing new loans to businesses, and has been working with RBI to bring down the cost of such loans by improving monetary policy transmission and reducing interest rates. From a policy perspective, the situation looks primed to benefit the "wealth creators", as the PM referred to business entrepreneurs in his Independence Day speech.

## Why has the government cut tax rates?

A corporate tax cut works a lot like an income tax cut for individuals. In essence, a lower corporate tax rate means businesses have more money left with them; in other words, it increases their profits. As charts 1 and 2 show, India's corporate tax rates were quite high in comparison to neighbouring countries. A lower tax rate not only improves corporate profitability but also makes India a more competitive market for investments.

### How does this affect economic activity? The cut has three broad impacts.

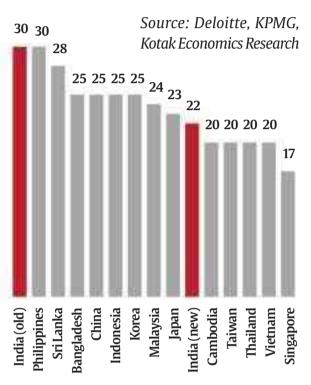
One, in the immediate term, it leaves corporates with more money, which they can use to either reinvest in existing firms or invest in new ventures if they think doing so would be profitable. But it is also possible that they may simply use this money to pay off old debts or pay higher dividends to their shareholders. Whether or not companies invest will depend on the prevailing economic conditions.

Investments crucially depend on the consumption levels in an economy. If there is high consumer demand for, say, cars, firms in that sector would happily invest — but if there is no demand for, say, chocolates, firms in that sector would not invest. However, if the consumption level is depressed because incomes are low across the board, and companies have high unsold inventories (cars and chocolates, etc.), the impact on fresh in-

## **CHART 1: EFFECTIVE TAX RATES HAVE COME DOWN SHARPLY**

t	ax rate	tax rate
TURNOVER LESS THAN Rs 4,000 cr		
Taxable income less than Rs 1 cr	26	22.9
Taxable income more than Rs 1 cr	27.8	24.5
TURNOVER MORE THAN Rs 4,000 cr		
Taxable income less than Rs 1 cr	31.2	22.9
Taxable income more than Rs 1 cr but less than 10 cr		24.5
Taxable income more than Rs 10 cr		25.6
Source: Union Budget, PIB, Kotak Institutional Equities	,	

## **CHART 2: NEW TAX RATE MORE** IN LINE WITH NEIGHBOURHOOD



## **CHART 3: BANKING, FINANCIAL** FIRMS GAIN THE MOST

Old effective New effective

Industry	Share in tax saving (in %)	
Banking,	42.5	
Finance & Insurance		
Iron & Steel	6.1	
FMCG	6	
Mining	5.7	
Auto & Ancillary	5	
Capital goods	4.3	
Crude oil	3.8	
Chemicals	3.1	
Power	2.8	
Infra	2.6	
Source: AceEquity, CARE Ratings		

vestments would be muted.

Two, in the medium to long term, that is anywhere between one or two and five years or more, a corporate tax cut is expected to boost investments and increase the productive capacity of the economy. That's because regardless of a slump in demand in the short term, investment decisions are taken after considering long term demand projections. If demand is expected to grow, investments will bear fruit and with lowers taxes, profits will be higher. These investments will also create jobs and increased earnings in due course.

However, a corporate tax cut also depresses economic activity to the extent that it reduces the money in the hands of the government in the form of tax revenues. If this

would have been spent on either paying salaries or creating new productive assets such as roads — either way, this money would have gone straight to the consumers, instead of the investors.

money had been with the government, it

So, will the tax cut boost growth this year? It is difficult to argue that it would. There are greater chances that India's GDP growth will continue to struggle in the current financial year despite the corporate tax cut. This is because of a variety of reasons.

One, official statistics show that workers in several key sectors of the economy such as agriculture and manufacturing, etc. have seen their incomes stagnate. There is also in-

creased joblessness in the country. This essentially means people's buying power is severely constrained and that is why they are buying less, resulting in companies having high unsold inventories.

Two, as an analysis of 2,377 companies by Care Ratings shows (chart 3), 42% of the tax-saving as a result of the corporate tax cut will go to firms in the banking, financial and insurance sectors. But these firms can at best lend to others — they cannot directly invest and start manufacturing units. So while the tax savings will help them become stronger financially, there may not be an immediate boost to economic activity. Other sectors in the table like Auto & Ancillary, Power, and Iron & Steel are already struggling with overcapacity, and are thus unlikely to invest.

Three, while the headline rates show a sharp fall in tax rates, it has been pointed out that since, thanks to exemptions, the effective corporate tax rate paid by companies was already 29.5%, the new tax rate of 25% is not as dramatically lower as initially thought – thus limiting the positive impact of the cut.

However, in the longer run, the tax cut will indeed, boost economic activity.

## What happens to the fiscal deficit?

While announcing the cuts, Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman had said that the corporate tax cut will cost the government Rs 1.45 lakh crore in revenues foregone That is 0.7% of GDP. If added to the budgeted fiscal deficit (which maps the government's borrowing from the market) of 3.5% of GDP, the impact would have been substantial with the fiscal deficit going to 4.2%.

But here, too, the negative impact is not as much as what was initially assessed, even though the FM has ruled out cutting expenditure to contain the fiscal deficit.

This is again because of a variety of reasons. One, as mentioned earlier, the tax foregone may not be as high. Two, a considerable portion of the tax foregone will come back to the government via the dividends that public sector firms may announce as they too pay lower taxes. Three, whatever is the tax foregone, it will be shared almost equally between the Centre and states. Moreover, the RBI has already given Rs 58,000 crore of extra dividend that was not budgeted earlier. Lastly, the spike in stock markets and the overall business sentiment would likely mean that the government will earn more from disinvestment.

The result is that the fiscal deficit is expected to go up to only 3.7% of GDP.

## FACT CHECK, GROUND REALITY

## How did minor planet 'Jasraj' get its name?

## **AMITABH SINHA**

PUNE, SEPTEMBER 30

A MINOR planet between the orbits of Mars and Jupiter has been named after the legendary vocalist Pandit Jasraj.

## What is a 'minor planet'?

Minor planets are celestial objects orbiting the Sun that are not large enough for their gravity to pull them into a spherical shape. This distinguishes a minor planet — or a "small Solar System body", which is now the preferred term – from planets or "dwarf planets", which are almost spherical. Small Solar System bodies include asteroids,

tial objects that go around the Sun.

comets, and several other celes-

## How are they named? Names of celestial bodies are

finally approved by a committee at the International Astronomical Union (IAU), a global organisation of professional astronomers, which also decides on definitions of fundamental astronomical and physical constants. In the case of small Solar

System bodies, the discoverer has the privilege to suggest the name. The discoverer holds this privilege for 10 years since the discovery. But there is a process to be fol-



A shining star, a celestial body

ceptable. Once it is determined that a

lowed, and not all names are ac-

celestial body is indeed new, a provisional name is given. This name has the year of discovery, two letters of the alphabet and, perhaps, two numbers. The minor planet that has been named after Pandit Jasraj was initially called '2006VP32'.

Once more information is available about the body, particularly its orbit, and after it has been

sighted on at least four occasions, it is entitled to have a permanent number. In this case, the number allotted was 300128. Only after this is the discoverer invited to suggest a name.

### There are rules for nomenclature, and restrictions on the names that can be suggested. The proposed name must have 16 characters or less, it must be "non-offensive" and not too similar to an existing name.

Names of political or military leaders car

What are the requirements of the name?

be suggested only 100 years after their death. The same applies for a political or military event. Names of pets, and names of a commercial nature are "discouraged". There can be restrictions depending on where the body is located — for example, new objects discovered beyond Neptune are supposed to be given names of creation deities.

## China @ 70: Why National Day military parade in Beijing today matters

## **SOWMIYA ASHOK** BEIJING. SEPTEMBER 30

TUESDAY, OCTOBER 1, marks the 70th anniversary of the People's Republic of China, which Beijing will mark with the "biggest ever" celebrations and a "joyful atmosphere".

The celebrations will be an affirmation of national pride. President Xi Jinping has repeatedly articulated a vision of national rejuvenation and China's economic transformation into a developed country.

Beijing has been transformed into a sea of red. Red flags have been lined atop buildings, and red lanterns and banners with the logo of the 70th anniversary have been fastened across streets and draped over foot overbridges. The celebrations, which will go on through the entire day and night, will include a military and civilian parade. Close to 300,000 people took part in rehearsals for the parade, which included performances and a fireworks display.

## Military might on display

The parade, on Chang'an Avenue cutting through the heart of Beijing, will display some of China's most advanced weapons systems for the first time, with a focus re-

portedly on weapons developed since Xi came to power in 2012. The parade — the 18th of its kind and the "biggest ever", according to the organisers — will continue for 80 minutes, and will involve 15,000 personnel of the People's Liberation Army, the People's Armed Forces, as well as China's militia and reserve service. Fifteen units will march down the

Avenue, and 32 units displaying 580 weapons and equipment will show China's "prowess" in land, sea combat, air and missile defence, informational operations, unmanned tasks, logistic support and strategic strikes, according to the Office of the Parade Leading Group.

Also, 160 fighter jets, bombers, early warning and control aircraft, and attack helicopters in 12 units will display the country's air power, a senior official from the Central Military Commissioner's Joint Staff Department, said at a press conference last week.

Chang'an Avenue will be locked down, and only a handpicked audience will witness the parade. Intensive rehearsals have led to early closures of subway stations in central Beijing over the past three weekends. The city's residents have spotted tanks rolling down the roads, and there has been speculation that the machines have been



At Tiananmen Square, Beijing, on **Monday.** Reuters

parked at the heavily boarded Beijing Workers' Stadium.

Some video clips on social media have shown several types of aircraft, apparently rehearsing. The South China Morning Post reported that KJ-2000 airborne early warning and control aircraft and J-10 and J-11B fighters have taken part in rehearsals over the countryside surrounding the capital.

The SCMP report also quoted an unnamed military insider as saying that China's first stealth fighter jet, the J-20, had been "rehearsing over the western suburbs

of the capital since April".

The Defense Ministry spokesperson has underlined that China has "no intentions to flex its muscles" through the parade. "Some people are fond of playing up the Chinese military's development. In their mind, there exists a weird logic: If the Chinese military displays its weapons, then it's a 'show of force', and if it doesn't, then it 'lacks transparency'," he told reporters.

But an editorial in the state-run *China* Daily said: "The parade will show people that China is no longer the 'sick man of Asia'. It has the ability to stand up for itself should the need arise. It will show the world that the Chinese nation has the means to safeguard its rejuvenation."

## President Xi's show

The 70th National Day celebrations carry an important message on the way in which Xi is perceived within China and outside. Over the last several months, state-run *People's Daily* has published the President's quotes above articles on its front pages, and there have been reports that journalists in state media will be expected to take part in pilot tests to assess their loyalty to Xi.

Former SCMP editor Wang Xiangwei wrote in an opinion piece recently: "It goes

without saying that the People's Republic has much to celebrate on its 70th anniversary... The occasion will also be Xi's show as the celebration aims at further elevating his political authority and stature. He is already described as the most powerful Chinese leader since Mao Zedong, founder of the People's Republic."

Chen Dingding, associate dean and professor at the Institute for Silk Road Studies in 21st Century told The Indian Express: "After four decades of rapid development, China is now the second largest economy but it is still a developing country with large population and myriad problems. Meanwhile, China is a responsible actor in the international community, playing a significant role in global governance. In the near future, the main issues for the government is to explore a sustainable way of maintaining economic growth and promoting people's welfare."

## Celebrations and concerns

The grandest ever National Day celebrations come at a time of multiple challenges for China. The turbo-charged growth of the past decades has slowed in recent years, and the prolonged trade war with the United States has hurt the economy. In August, China saw industrial output grow at its slowest pace

since 2002, and soon afterward, Premier Li Kegiang said it wouldn't be easy for the country to sustain growth rates above 6%.

"We are in the face of the conflict between economy growth and sustainable development, pressure from trade disputes with the US, and other societal issues such as aging population, urbanisation, etc," Prof Chen said when asked to highlight the challenges before the country.

A massive shortage of pork, the nation's staple meat, has dampened spirits for a few months now, and officials have been worried it would ruin the "happy and peaceful atmosphere" required during National Day. A sweeping epidemic of African swine fever has left 40% of China's pigs dead or culled, and pork prices have risen over 50% compared to last year. Vice Premier Hu Chunhua warned last month that rising prices would "seriously affect the lives of urban and rural residents, especially low-income people, and affect the joyful atmosphere...".

Beyond the borders of the mainland, the violent anti-government protests in Hong Kong present a formidable challenge. A possible intensification of the police crackdown has probably been held in check due to China's concerns over its international image ahead of the National Day celebrations.

## बिज़नेस स्टैंडर्ड वर्ष 12 अंक 193

## आशावादी नजरिया

यदि आशावादी दृष्टिकोण से देखें और वैश्विक भुराजनीति को प्रभावित करने वाले

प्रतिभागियों के समक्ष रैली में मोदी के साथ कर में कटौती के बाद निवेशकों और

अमेरिका के राष्ट्रपति डॉनल्ड ट्रंप की उपस्थिति के बाद अमेरिकी राजनीतिक राष्ट्र के रूप में भारत के कद की बात करें प्रतिष्ठान के समक्ष भारत और भारतीय-तो प्रधानमंत्री नरेंद्र मोदी की हालिया अमेरिकियों की महत्ता के बारे में कुछ भी अमेरिका यात्रा को सफल करार दिया जा छिपा नहीं रह गया है। इस रैली का प्रसारण 30 लाख भारतीय अमेरिकियों तक पहुंचा। ह्यूस्टन शहर में 50,000 उत्साही प्रधानमंत्री की यात्रा के ऐन पहले कॉर्पोरेशन

कारोबारियों तक प्रधानमंत्री की बात भी ज्यादा प्रभावी ढंग से पहंची होगी।

बहरहाल प्रधानमंत्री की यात्रा के पहले देश में जिस तरह की अपेक्षाएं पैदा हुई थीं, उन्हें देखते हुए कहीं न कहीं कमी रह गई। सबसे अहम बात यह है कि दोनों देशों के बीच चले आ रहे कारोबारी तनाव में कोई प्रगति देखने को नहीं मिली। चीन व्यापारिक तंत्र को जिस तरह का बड़ा नुकसान पहुंचाने की क्षमता रखता है, उसे देखते हुए कम से कम भारत और अमेरिका ऐसी लडाई को टाल सकते थे। चीन की गतिविधियां भारत और अमेरिका को एक समान नुकसान पहुंचा रही हैं। माना जा रहा था कि प्रधानमंत्री मोदी और राष्ट्रपति ट्रंप के बीच छोटी मोटी व्यापारिक संधि हो सकती है और दोनों

देशों के व्यापारिक प्रतिष्ठानों की टकराहट समाप्त हो सकती है। हाल के दिनों अमेरिका द्वारा भारतीय निर्यातकों की शन्य टैरिफ कार्यक्रम की अर्हता समाप्त करने और भारत द्वारा इलेक्ट्रॉनिक्स और चिकित्सा उपकरण क्षेत्रों में संरक्षणवादी रुख अपनाने से दोनों देशों के बीच तनाव बढा है। यकीनन ऐसा समझौता हो सकता है जिससे दोनों देशों को फायदा हो। बहरहाल, खेद की बात है कि इस दिशा में कोई प्रगति नहीं हो रही। यहां तक कि मोदी की यात्रा का रुख तय करने वाला माना जा रहा एलएनजी पेट्रोनेट और अमेरिकी कंपनी का समझौता भी दूसरे दिन आशंकाओं के घेरे में आ गया जब भारतीय शेयर बाजार इस सौदे को लेकर कुछ कड़े सवाल कर बैठे। बाद में पता चला

कि यह समझौता नहीं बल्कि केवल एक और समझौता ज्ञापन था। दोनों देशों के व्यापारिक रिश्तों में सुधार की दृष्टि से ऊर्जा क्षेत्र का यह सहयोग उतना प्रभावी नहीं रहा जितनी अपेक्षा थी।

खेद की बात यह भी है कि आर्थिक रिश्तों को नए सिरे से तय करने के बजाय ढेर सारी ऊर्जा जम्म कश्मीर (अब पूर्व) के बदले हुए राजनीतिक दर्जे के अंतरराष्ट्रीय असर पर खर्च कर दी गई। हालांकि यह हमारा आंतरिक मामला है लेकिन यह आशा करना व्यर्थ है कि ट्रंप या किसी भी अन्य नेता के नेतृत्व वाला अमेरिका इस मुद्दे की पूरी तरह अनदेखी करेगा या पाकिस्तान को पूरी तरह अलग-थलग करेगा। भले ही पाकिस्तान कितनी भी आक्रामकता दिखाए।

ह्यूस्टन की रैली में शामिल होने के बाद ट्रंप प्रेस के साथ मुलाकात में लगातार पाकिस्तान के क्षेत्रीय आतंकवाद का गढ़ होने से जुड़े सवालों से बचते रहे। यह भी भारत के लिए दिक्कत की बात है। प्रधानमंत्री ने संयुक्त राष्ट्र सुरक्षा परिषद में जो भाषण दिया उसमें उन्होंने जलवायु परिवर्तन के संकट से लडाई समेत तमाम व्यापक चिंताओं पर भारत की प्रतिबद्धता की बात की। आशावादी दुष्टिकोण से इस यात्रा को खारिज नहीं किया जा सकता और इसने घरेलू तौर पर प्रधानमंत्री की वैश्विक नेता की छवि को मजबूत ही किया है। परंतु सच तो यह है कि अपनी इस यात्रा के दौरान वह भारत के लिए गिनेचुने ठोस लाभ ही



## आर्थिक झंझावात के दौर में कारगर रणनीति

लोगों का ध्यान आकृष्ट करने वाले नारों के बजाय सरकार को आठ फीसदी की वास्तविक वृद्धि दर को अपना लक्ष्य बनाने की जरूरत है। बता रहे हैं **जैमिनी भगवती** 

त्त वर्ष 2019-20 की पहली तिमाही में सकल घरेलू उत्पाद (जीडीपी) की पांच फीसदी वृद्धि दर को देखकर केंद्र सरकार की त्योरियां चढ जानी चाहिए थीं। वर्ष 2014 में भारतीय जनता पार्टी (भाजपा) की अगुआई वाली केंद्र सरकार को गैर-निष्पादित आस्तियों (एनपीए) के बोझ से दबे सार्वजनिक बैंक विरासत में मिले थे। सकारात्मक बात यह थी कि तेल के अंतरराष्ट्रीय भाव अपेक्षाकृत निचले स्तर पर रहे हैं और घरेलू महंगाई भी पिछले कुछ वर्षों से काबू में रही है। सरकार के कट्टर समर्थक व्हाट्सऐप पर बिन मांगे संदेश भेजकर आर्थिक सुस्ती की व्याख्या में जुटे हुए हैं। उनका दावा है कि भारत की पांच फीसदी की वद्धि भी विकसित देशों की वृद्धि से अधिक है। जी-7 देशों के साथ ऐसी तुलना अप्रासंगिक है क्योंकि अधिकतर भारतीयों को अभी तक सामाजिक, स्वास्थ्य एवं रोजगार संबंधी वे लाभ नहीं मिल पाए हैं जो विकसित देशों के नागरिकों को अमुमन

कड़वा सच यह है कि भारत में ग्रामीण एवं शहरी क्षेत्र की मांग धराशायी हो चुकी है। इसके कई कारणों में से एक को मैं तिहरी बहीखाते की समस्या कहूंगा। दोहरे बहीखाते की समस्या निजी क्षेत्र के बड़े कर्जदारों और कर्जदाताओं को प्रभावित कर रही थी जिसकी वजह 2008-12 के दौरान गैरजिम्मेदाराना ढंग से बांटे गए बड़े कर्ज थे। तीसरा बहीखाता उन लोगों से संबंधित है जो अपने क्रेडिट एवं डेबिट कार्ड के जरिये मासिक किस्त पर

कार, स्कूटर, उपभोक्ता उत्पाद एवं सेवा लेते हैं। इनमें से बहुत लोग नोटबंदी के कारण आय को लगे तगड़े झटके और जीएसटी रिफंड की सुस्त दर के चलते अपने ईएमआई का भुगतान बढाना नहीं चाहते हैं।

भारतीय उत्पादों की विदेश में मांग कम होने के पीछे एक अहम कारण रुपये का खासा अधिमूल्यन होना भी है। भारतीय रिजर्व बैंक (आरबीआई) के गवर्नर ने गत 19 सितंबर को अंतरराष्ट्रीय मुद्राकोष (आईएमएफ) की जुलाई 2019 रिपोर्ट का जिक्र करते हुए कहा कि रुपये की वास्तविक प्रभावी विनिमय दर (रीअर) इसके सही मूल्य के करीब है। खुद आरबीआई ने भी जुलाई रिपोर्ट में कहा है कि रुपये की रीअर दर छह मद्राओं के समूह की तुलना में 24.6 फीसदी ज्यादा है। ऐसे में यह अजीब है कि आरबीआई गवर्नर ने रुपये की दर के बारे में आईएमएफ रिपोर्ट का जिक्र करना पसंद किया।

भारतीय बैंकों और गैर-बैंकिंग वित्त कंपनियों (एनबीएफसी) के अधिक कर्ज बांटने से घरेलू मांग बढ़ाने में मदद मिलती। लेकिन भारतीय वित्तीय संस्थान कर्ज बांटने को लेकर हिचक रहे हैं।

कर्जदाताओं के चौकन्ना होने की वजह यह है कि चुककर्ता लेनदार उधारी के समय जमानत पर दी गई संपत्ति को अपने पास बनाए रखने में सफल हो जा रहे हैं जबकि दूसरी कंपनियां उस संपत्ति के लिए पारदर्शी ढंग से बोली भी लगा रही हैं।

आरबीआई के 12 फरवरी, 2018 के

परिपत्र में यह प्रावधान था कि कर्जदाताओं को भुगतान में चूक चिह्नित होने के साथ ही उसे दिवालिया प्रक्रिया में लाना होगा और कर्जदारों को मामला राष्ट्रीय कंपनी कानून अधिकरण (एनसीएलटी) में भेजने के पहले 180 दिनों के भीतर मामला निपटाने का वक्त मिलता था। ऐसे में कर्जदारों के लिए यह जरूरी था कि वे भुगतान में चूक होने के पहले ही वित्तीय संस्थानों से संपर्क कर समय बढ़ाने या अन्य स्रोतों से अंतरिम ऋण लेने के प्रयास करें। इस परिप्रेक्ष्य में 12 फरवरी का परिपत्र उच्चतम न्यायालय द्वारा 2 अप्रैल, 2019 को निरस्त करना एक भयंकर भूल थी। आरबीआई और सरकार दोनों को ही इस परिपत्र के पक्ष में सम्मिलित रूप से दलील रखनी चाहिए थी। उद्दंड कर्जदारों के समर्थकों का कहना है कि उन्हें अपनी परिसंपत्ति बनाए रखने की इजाजत और सेहत दुरुस्त करने के लिए कर्जदाताओं से मदद भी दी जानी चाहिए। सीमित देनदारी विधान प्रवर्तकों को निजी संपत्ति अपने पास रखने की अनमति देता है और गिरवी रखी गई संपत्ति को ही जब्त किया जा सकता है।

ऐसा लगता है कि सरकार ने सार्वजनिक बैंकों से बेहद संयम बरतने की उम्मीद फिर से लगा ली है। इन बैंकों पर अक्सर बड़े कर्जदारों के साथ मिलीभगत के आरोप लगते रहे हैं। बैंक बोर्ड ब्युरो (बीबीबी) ने सार्वजनिक बैंकों के बोर्ड में अपने क्षेत्र की गहरी जानकारी रखने वाले और असंदिग्ध निष्ठा वाले लोगों को सदस्य नियक्त किए जाने की सिफारिश की थी। इसके अलावा

एनसीएलटी के पास लंबित मामलों के त्वरित निपटान की भी जरूरत है। इस स्तर पर यही लगता है कि ऋणशोधन अक्षमता एवं दिवालिया संहिता (आईबीसी) और भारतीय ऋणशोधन एवं दिवालिया बोर्ड शायद उसी तरह अप्रासंगिक हो गया है जैसे सरफेसी अधिनियम 2002 और ऋण वसूली अधिकरण हो गए थे।

सरकार एलआईसी और कोल इंडिया में अपनी हिस्सेदारी को 60 फीसदी पर लाकर बाहरी एवं घरेलू स्रोतों से संसाधन जुटा सकती है। एयर इंडिया, एमटीएनएल और बीएसएनएल में संसाधन नष्ट होते जा रहे हैं और यह समय सरकार के लिए इन कंपनियों में अपनी हिस्सेदारी घटाने और विदेशी निवेश जुटाने के लिए एकदम माकूल है। अगर केवल घरेलू स्रोतों से ही फंड जुटाए जाते हैं तो वित्तीय समर्थन दूसरे स्थानीय निवेशों से खींचा भी जा सकता है।

सरकार ने गत 20 सितंबर को कॉर्पोरेट कर में बड़ी कटौती की घोषणा की। यह कदम मांग में तेजी ला सकता है लेकिन शर्त यही है कि कंपनियां अपनी आय में वृद्धि का लाभ कर्मचारियों को देने और कीमतें कम करने में लगाएं। समय के साथ घरेलू एवं विदेशी निवेश बढ सकता है लेकिन उसके लिए कर दरों का निवेश विकल्पों की तुलना में प्रतिस्पर्द्धी रहना जरूरी है। लेकिन इस कदम का नकारात्मक पहलू यह है कि सरकार को इसी वित्त वर्ष में 1.4 लाख करोड़ रुपये की राजस्व क्षति होने और उसकी वजह से राजकोषीय घाटे को चार फीसदी तक पहुंच जाने की आशंका है। जीएसटी परिषद ने कारोबारी धारणा की बहाली के लिए कई कदम उठाएं हैं जिनमें से होटल कमरों पर जीएसटी कम करने का पर्यटन व्यवसाय पर अनुकूल असर पड़ सकता है।

वित्त वर्ष के पहले चार महीनों में ही भारतीय अर्थव्यवस्था से 5.8 अरब डॉलर रकम उदार धनप्रेषण योजना (एलआरएस) के तहत बाहर चली गई जबकि 2014-19 के दौरान इस तरह कुल 45 अरब डॉलर बाहर भेजे गए। इसकी तलना में 2009-14 की अवधि में केवल 5.5 अरब डॉलर ही भेजे गए थे। इसके उलट भारत आने वाला प्रत्यक्ष विदेशी निवेश 2018 में 42 अरब डॉलर रहा। इसके बावजूद एलआरएस के तहत बड़ी मात्रा में विदेशी मुद्रा का बाहर जाना चिंता का विषय है।

निष्कर्षत: सरकार ने वर्ष 2024 तक अर्थव्यवस्था को पांच लाख करोड डॉलर पहंचाने का जिस तरह माहौल बनाया है वह भारतीय उत्पादों एवं सेवाओं के लिए घरेलू एवं विदेशी मांग बढ़ाने की फौरी जरूरत से ध्यान बंटाने का काम करता है। कुछ महीनों पहले वित्त मंत्रालय के एक वरिष्ठ अधिकारी ने यह सुझाव देकर अपनी नासमझी दिखाई थी कि अगर भारतीय रुपये का भाव बढ़ता है तो पांच लाख करोड़ डॉलर अर्थव्यवस्था के लक्ष्य को आसानी से हासिल किया जा सकता है। लोगों का ध्यान खींचने वाले नारों से दूर रहकर सरकार को रुपये के संदर्भ में आठ फीसदी की वास्तविक वृद्धि दर हासिल करने के प्रयास करने चाहिए। इससे रोजगार बढाने और गरीबी कम करने में मदद मिलेगी।

(लेखक पूर्व राजदूत और विश्व बैंक के विशेषज्ञ सदस्य हैं)

## नियामकों द्वारा कानून का उल्लंघन और कारोबारी सुगमता का मसला

प्रतिभूति अपील पंचाट ने कहा है कि अधिग्रहण नियमों के अधीन किसी अवयस्क को खुली पेशकश नहीं करने के लिए जवाबदेह नहीं ठहराया जा सकता। प्रतिभूति बाजार में यह अवयस्क न्याय से जुडा इकलौता मामला नहीं है। पंचाट ने भारतीय प्रतिभूति एवं विनिमय बोर्ड (सेबी) को प्रतिभूति नियमन से जुड़े एक अन्य मामले में सर्वोच्च न्यायालय के निर्णय की याद दिलाई और दोहराया कि सेबी को ऐसे अवयस्कों के खिलाफ कार्रवाई नहीं करनी चाहिए जिनके नाम का उपयोग करके वयस्कों ने प्रतिभृति का लेनदेन किया हो और जवाबदेही न निभाई हो।

इस मामले में त्रासदी यह है कि सर्वोच्च न्यायालय का निर्णय सन 2008 में आया था। अदालत ने कहा था कि एक अल्पवयस्क जो कानूनन अनुबंध करने में अक्षम है, उसे प्रतिभृतियों के सार्वजनिक निर्गम से जुड़े प्रतिभूति नियमों के अधीन जवाबदेह नहीं ठहराया जा सकता है। फिर भी करीब एक दशक बाद सन 2017 में सेबी ने एक अवयस्क को अधिग्रहण नियमों के कथित उल्लंघन के मामले में कारण बताओ नोटिस जारी कर दिया। इससे न्यायिक अनुशासन की कमी की बात सामने आती है।

न्यायिक अनुशासन तोडने के

मामलों में देश की अदालतें उदार रही हैं। न्यायिक फैसलों में निचली अदालतों तथा उन नियामकीय प्राधिकारों की काफी आलोचना की जाती है जो बडी अदालतों के फैसलों को न मानते हुए न्यायिक अनुशासन भंग करते हैं। परंतु बहत कम मौकों पर ऐसा होता है जब ऐसे लोगों के खिलाफ कोई गंभीर कदम उठाया जाता हो। कुछ न्यायाधीश सरकारी एजेंसियों पर जुर्माना आदि लगाते हैं। बहरहाल, नियामकीय अधिकारियों के प्रदर्शन के आकलन के क्रम में न्यायिक नियमों के उल्लंघन को मापने का कोई पैमाना नहीं है। हकीकत में नियामकों के सबसे वरिष्ठ प्रबंधन के प्रदर्शन का आकलन ही नहीं होता।

नियामकीय प्राधिकार की बात करें तो उनमें विधायी, कार्यकारी और अर्द्ध न्यायिक अधिकार शामिल होते हैं। परंतु



बाअदब सोमशेखर सुंदरेशन

न्यायिक अनुशासन भंग करने के मामले में वे अव्वल नजर आते हैं। अदालतों द्वारा घोषित कानूनों के बावजूद ऐसे अवसर आते हैं। इसका एक साधारण सा उदाहरण है ऐसे व्यक्ति को रिकॉर्ड की जांच न करने देना जिस पर नियमन के उल्लंघन का आरोप हो। अदालतों ने बारंबार कहा है कि रिकॉर्ड पर प्रस्तुत सामग्री का संपूर्ण अवलोकन उपलब्ध कराया जाना चाहिए, बजाय कि केवल उस सामग्री के जिसका इस्तेमाल आरोप लगाने के लिए किया गया हो।

जब कोई नियामक आप पर

कानून उल्लंघन का आरोप लगाता है तो उसे न केवल आपको यह बताना चाहिए कि आपके खिलाफ उसके पास क्या है बल्कि उसे आपको भी तमाम सामग्री तक पहुंच उपलब्ध करानी चाहिए ताकि आप आरोपों को खारिज करने में उनका इस्तेमाल कर सकें। यदि कोई यह दर्शा सकता है कि नियामक के पास उपलब्ध सामग्री से उल्लंघन की बात सही तरीके से स्थापित नहीं होती है तो सच इसी तरह सामने आएगा। इसके बावजूद व्यवहार में देखा जाए तो आज के समय में भी समस्त रिकॉर्ड का स्पष्ट और निष्पक्ष अवलोकन देखने को नहीं मिलता। मामला दर मामला आधार

पर देखें तो उल्लंघन के आरोपित व्यक्ति की घबराहट या आरोप की आक्रामकता के आधार पर न्यायालय यह तय करता है कि अवलोकन प्रक्रिया में रिकॉर्ड पर मौजूद बुनियादी चीजों तक किस हद तक पहुंच सुनिश्चित की जाए। अवलोकन के अनुरोध को सिरे से खारिज करना भी एक सामान्य बात है। इस नियम का एक सटीक उदाहरण है भारतीय प्रतिस्पर्धा

आयोग। आयोग ने फाइलों की निगरानी के लिए एक मानक परिचालन प्रक्रिया संहिताबद्ध किया है। अन्य नियामक मसलन पूंजी बाजार नियामक आदि की बात करें तो वहां अलग-अलग सदस्यों या अधिकारियों का रुख अवलोकन की सुविधा देने के मामले में अलग-अलग रहता है।

जब अदालतों से संपर्क किया जाता है तो नियामक यह कह सकता है कि जांच की सामग्री में ढेर सारी ऐसी है जिसकी प्रकृति गोपनीय है इसलिए उसे साझा नहीं किया जा सकता है। ऐसी स्थिति में अदालत यह निर्देश दे सकती है कि उक्त रिपोर्ट के संवेदनशील हिस्सों के अलावा शेष हिस्सा साझा किया जा सकता है। एक घटना में तो ऐसा भी हुआ कि एक ही जांच रिपोर्ट का दो समांतर प्रक्रियाओं में अवलोकन किया गया। पता यह लगा कि एक प्रक्रिया में दी गई रिपोर्ट में जांच एजेंसी द्वारा चाही गई हर जरूरी सामग्री को गायब कर दिया गया था।

इसी प्रकार बड़ी अदालतों

द्वारा कानून के स्पष्ट उल्लेख के बावजूद नीचे स्थित प्राधिकार बार-बार यह दोहराते रहते हैं कि निर्णय के खिलाफ अपील की गई है। सर्वोच्च न्यायालय अक्सर यह कह चुका है कि ऐसा रुख सही नहीं है लेकिन फिर भी किसी पर कोई कार्रवाई न होने से ऐसे निर्णय महज दिखावटी उपदेश बन कर रह जाते हैं। जब कोई बडी अदालत कानून निर्धारित करती है और साथ ही उसकी व्याख्या भी करती है, तो समाज को यह दिशा मिलती है कि वह चीजों को ऐसी व्यवस्था में रखे जिससे नियमो का पालन सुनिश्चित हो। इसके बावजूद जब नियामक ही बड़ी अदालतों द्वारा की गई व्याख्याओं का उल्लंघन करते हैं तो समाज के मन में कानून नहीं लेकिन कानून के प्रवर्तकों को लेकर आशंका उत्पन्न होती है।

कारोबारी सुगमता की रैंकिंग कभी भी इस तरह की असहजता के लिए आदर्श नहीं हो सकती। जब शासकीय एजेंसियां कानून का मुल्य समझेंगी केवल तभी कारोबार में वास्तविक निवेश सुनिश्चित हो सकेगा। तब किसी सांख्यिकीय मॉडल द्वारा प्रस्तत रैंकिंग की जरूरत नहीं रहेगी।

## कानाफूसी

### मोदी बनाम कमलनाथ

मध्य प्रदेश में झाबुआ विधानसभा उपचुनाव भारतीय जनता पार्टी और प्रदेश में सत्ताधारी कांग्रेस के लिए प्रतिष्ठा का प्रश्न बन गया है। इन चुनावों में दोनों दलों ने अपने उम्मीदवार उतार दिए हैं लेकिन ऐसा प्रतीत हो रहा है कि यह चुनाव राष्ट्रीय मुद्दों पर लड़ा जा रहा है। इसे प्रधानमंत्री नरेंद्र मोदी और मुख्यमंत्री कमलनाथ की लडाई के रूप में प्रस्तुत किया जा रहा है। प्रचार अभियान में भाजपा जहां सर्जिकल स्ट्राइक, अनुच्छेद 370 और मोदी के अंतरराष्ट्रीय कद को मुद्दा बना रही है, वहीं कांग्रेस सरकार अपने अब तक के प्रदर्शन को केंद्र में रखकर प्रचार कर रही है। कांग्रेस प्रदेश में 114 विधायकों के साथ बहुमत से दूर है। ऐसे में अगर वह यह सीट जीतती है तो उसकी स्थिति मजबूत हो जाएगी। फिलहाल यह सीट भाजपा के पास थी लेकिन विधायक जीएस डामोर के चुनाव जीतकर सांसद बनने के बाद यह रिक्त हो गई।

## छवि की चिंता

सोशल मीडिया देश के राजनेताओं की जन संपर्क संबंधी कवायद का अहम हिस्सा बन चका है। यहां तक कि केवल राजनीतिक दलों के नेता ही नहीं बल्कि सरकारी अधिकारी भी सोशल मीडिया पर सरकार की छवि को लेकर काफी सचेत हो रहे हैं। बहरहाल, लगता है उत्तर प्रदेश प्रशासन चीजों का कुछ ज्यादा ही गंभीरता से ले रहा है। प्रदेश की मौजूदा सरकार के पिछले ढाई वर्ष के कार्यकाल में दो



## आपका पक्ष

### सार्वजनिक स्वास्थ्य काडर बनाया जाए

नीति पेश की गई और इसके बाद 2005 में राष्ट्रीय ग्रामीण स्वास्थ्य मिशन (एनआरएचएम) की घोषणा हुई। एनआरएचएम के तहत पिछले एक दशक में उठाए गए कदमों से भारत में पोलियो, टेटनस आदि बीमारियों का उन्मूलन संभव हो सका। इसके अलावा संक्रामक बीमारियों के मामले में भी कमी आई और प्राथमिक स्वास्थ्य केंद्र प्रणाली को मजबूत करने पर ध्यान दिया गया। मौजूदा दौर में बीमारियों का तिगुना बोझ भी एक बड़ी चुनौती है। इसमें पहली चुनौती मलेरिया, डेंगू, क्षय-रोग, एचआईवी-एड्स, ँहेपेटाइटिस जैसी संक्रामक बीमारियों की है। दूसरी चुनौती कैंसर, मधुमेह, हृदय रोग और कुपोषण की बढ़ती मार से जुड़ी है। तीसरे बोझ में वे बीमारियां शामिल हैं जो बढते शहरीकरण और औद्योगीकरण की वजह से अस्तित्व में आई है। स्वास्थ्य सुधार की दिशा में पिछले



साल आयुष्मान भारत योजना शुरू की गई। यह देश के 10 करोड परिवारों के 50 करोड़ लोगों को सालाना 5 लाख रुपये तक के मुफ्त इलाज की योजना है। दूसरे वर्ष का मुख्य लक्ष्य अस्पतालों में प्रदान की जाने वाली सेवाओं की गुणवत्ता में सुधार और इससे संबंधित मान्यता प्राप्ति की एक व्यापक प्रक्रिया को संस्थागत करना रहेगा। राष्ट्रीय : करेगा। इसका आगाज भारतीय

स्वास्थ्य क्षेत्र में सुधार लाने के लिए सरकार को कई कदम उठाने की जरूरत है

स्वास्थ्य प्राधिकरण यानी एनएचए अपने सूचीबद्ध अस्पतालों के लिए प्रमाणीकरण मानकों और डिजिटल गुणवत्ता प्रमाणीकरण जैसी पहल

सेवाओं की गुणवत्ता सुनिश्चित हो सके। आयुष्मान भारत एक परिवर्तनकारी पहल है जो राष्ट्रीय स्वास्थ्य नीति 2017 के लक्ष्य को पूरा करने की ओर अग्रसर है। इसमें भी विशेष रूप से प्रधानमंत्री जन आरोग्य का उद्देश्य सरकारी अस्पतालों और सूचीबद्ध निजी सेवा प्रदाताओं के माध्यम से स्वास्थ्य सेवाओं तक सभी की पहुंच सुनिश्चित करना, व्यवस्था सुधारना और लागत को कम करना हैं। स्वास्थ्य में सुधार के लिए स्वास्थ्य प्रणाली का खाका जिला स्तर से नीचे के स्तर पर तैयार किया जाए। शहरी स्वास्थ्य प्रणाली को मजबूत किया जाए। स्वास्थ्य सेवा की आपूर्ति पक्ष से निपटने के लिए व्यवहार अर्थशास्त्र का उपयोग किया जाए। सार्वजनिक स्वास्थ्य काडर बनाए जाएं।

गुणवत्ता परिषद द्वारा होगा जिससे

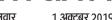
सूर्यभानु बांधे, रायपुर

पाठक अपनी राय हमें इस पते पर भेज सकते हैं : संपादक, बिजनेस स्टैंडर्ड लिमिटेड, 4, बहादुर शाह जफर मार्ग, नई दिल्ली - 110002. आप हमें ईमेल भी कर सकते हैं : lettershindi@bsmail.in उस जगह का उल्लेख अवश्य करें, जहां से आप ईमेल कर रहे हैं।

### ः पब्जी खेल पर रोक लगाने की जरूरत

आज तकनीकी खेल इतने खतरनाक हो गए हैं कि अगर कोई इन्हें एक बार खेल लेता है तो इससे बाहर निकलना मुश्किल हो जाता है। पब्जी उनमें से एक खेल है। यह भारत में इस कदर बढ़ रहा है कि अगर इस पर रोक नहीं लगाई गई तो यह भविष्य की पीढ़ी को बरबाद कर देगा। यह दिमाग को इस तरह हैक कर रहा है कि खेलने वाला इंसान क्या कर रहा है उसे भी कुछ पता नहीं चलता है। इनमें अधिकतर बच्चे शामिल हैं। बहुत सारे देश में इस खेल पर रोक लगाई गई है। लेकिन भारत में यह बहुत ही खतरनाक रूप ले रहा है। आए दिन मीडिया में इसे लेकर खबर आ रही है। यह मानसिक और शारीरिक दोनों तरह से नुकसानदेह है। दुखद बात यह है कि इसमें अधिकतर युवा शामिल हैं। इस खेल से समय बरबाद हो रहा है। यह एक हथियार की तरह है जो देश को बरबाद कर सकता है।

श्रीकांत दास, देवघर





विचार

सत्य परेशान हो सकता है लेकिन पराजित नहीं

## प्लास्टिक विरोधी मुहिम

एक बार इस्तेमाल होने वाले प्लास्टिक के खिलाफ छेड़ी जाने वाली मृहिम स्वच्छ भारत अभियान का हिस्सा बननी ही चाहिए, लेकिन इसमें संदेह है कि केवल जागरूकता फैलाकर अपेक्षित सफलता हासिल की जा सकती है। पर्यावरण मंत्रालय को इससे अनभिज्ञ नहीं होना चाहिए कि प्लास्टिक की तमाम ऐसी वस्तुएं प्रचलन में आ चुकी हैं जिनका विकल्प उपलब्ध कराकर ही उसका उपयोग कम किया जा सकता है। एक बार इस्तेमाल होने वाले प्लास्टिक का उपयोग सीमित करने के लिए उसके विकल्प उपलब्ध कराने के साथ ही आम जनता के समक्ष यह स्पष्ट करना भी आवश्यक है कि 2 अक्टूबर से किस-किस तरह के प्लास्टिक पर पाबंदी होगी? आम लोगों को इससे भी अवगत कराने की जरूरत है कि प्लास्टिक का उपयोग पर्यावरण के साथ ही सेहत के लिए भी हानिकारक है। कम से कम इसके प्रति तो लोगों को चेताया ही जाना चाहिए कि प्लास्टिक की थैलियों में खाने-पीने की सामग्री रखने के कैसे दुष्परिणाम सामने आते हैं? यह काम इसलिए प्राथमिकता के आधार पर होना चाहिए, क्योंकि प्लास्टिक की थैलियों के साथ कप-प्लेट आदि का इस्तेमाल गांवों-कस्बों में बड़े पैमाने पर होने लगा है और वहां अधिकतर लोग इससे अनजान ही हैं कि उनमें खान-पान की गर्म सामग्री रखना एक तरह से सेहत से जानबझकर खिलवाड करना है। बेहतर यह होगा कि प्लास्टिक से मुक्ति के अभियान में अन्य विभागों को भी

यह सही है कि एक बार इस्तेमाल होने वाली प्लास्टिक से बनी वस्तुओं के विकल्प रातों-रात उपलब्ध नहीं कराए जा सकते, लेकिन इस दिशा में तेजी से कदम उठाए जाना आवश्यक है। प्लास्टिक के खिलाफ शुरू किया जाने वाला अभियान केवल प्लास्टिक की थैलियों की जगह जूट या कपड़े के थैले या फिर प्लास्टिक के कप के स्थान पर कुल्हड़ के इस्तेमाल को बढ़ावा देने तक ही सीमित नहीं रहना चाहिए। आखिर इसकी अनदेखी कैसे की जा सकती है कि वर्तमान में खान-पान की लगभग प्रत्येक सामग्री की पैकिंग प्लास्टिक में हो रही है? इसके अलावा दुध भी प्लास्टिक की थैलियों में मिल रहा है। इसे देखते हुए यह भी समय की मांग है कि वे कंपनियां भी इस अभियान में योगदान देने के लिए सक्रिय हों जो अपने उत्पादों की पैकिंग प्लास्टिक में करती हैं। केंद्र और राज्य सरकारों को ऐसे उपाय भी करने होंगे जिससे प्लास्टिक की रिसाइक्लिंग बढ़ सके। इसके साथ ही प्लास्टिक कचरे के निस्तारण के भी ऐसे तौर-तरीके विकसित करने की जरूरत है जो पर्यावरण को नुकसान न पहुंचाएं या फिर कम से कम पहुंचाएं। इस जरूरत की पूर्ति करते हुए यह भी देखा जाना चाहिए इन तौर-तरीकों पर सही तरह से

## सही वक्त पर उचित कदम

पूरे बिहार में बारिश से त्रहिमाम की स्थिति है। बारिश शुरू हुई तो किसान खुश थे कि धान की फसल को पंपसेट से पानी नहीं देना पड़ेगा, लेकिन बादल घने हुए तो लगातार बरसते रहे। ऐसे में धान की फसल डूब रही है। नदियां उफना रहीं। शहरी इलाकों के लिए बारिश आफत बन गई है। पटना गंभीर खतरे के सामने खड़ा है। 1975 की बाढ़ जैसे हालात नजर आने लगे हैं। सोशल मीडिया पर तस्वीरें और वीडियो भर गए हैं। देश-दुनिया से लोग पटना के लोगों का हालचाल पूछ रहे। यह सवाल भी तैर रहा कि इस बुरी स्थिति के लिए कौन जिम्मेदार है? राजेंद्रनगर और कंकड़बाग के इलाकों में पिछले दस साल में कई बार ऐसी स्थिति हुई है। उसके बाद दावे किए गए है कि बड़ा नाला बन जाने से अब ऐसा नहीं होगा। ये सभी दावे बह गए हैं। नगर निगम और शहर की व्यवस्था संभालने वाली एजेंसियों पर गंभीर सवाल हो रहे हैं। इनकी बदहाली और लापरवाही का पोस्टमॉटर्म जारी है। पता नहीं इसके बाद इनका कितना इलाज संभव हो पाएगा। जाहिर है यह प्रश्न लंबे समय तक प्रासींगक रहेगा। जवाब शीर्ष अधिकारियों और राजनीतिकों को खोजना होगा। दोषियों को कड़ी सजा देनी होगी। सबक लेना होगा। इसी सवाल के जवाब में पटना की ख़ुशहाली है। एक शहर जो स्मार्ट सिटी बनने की कोशिश कर रहा। मेट्रो का स्वागत करने को तैयार है। नए-नए भवनों पर इतरा रहा, वह ऐसा जलजमाव आखिरकार कब तक झेलेगा? फिलहाल राहत और बचाव का समय है। जो लोग राजेंद्रनगर और आसपास के इलाकों में अपने घरों में कैद हैं और असुरक्षित महसूस कर रहे, उन्हें निकालने में देर नहीं होनी चाहिए। अच्छा यह है कि उनकी मदद के लिए वायुसेना की मदद ले ली गई है। यह इसलिए भी जरूरी था, क्योंकि रविवार को देर रात तक बारिश नहीं रुकी। सोमवार को भी रुकने के आसार कम हैं। गंगा और पुनपुन जैसी नदियों में पानी और बढ़ने की आशंका है। पानी निकालने के लिए संप हाउस अगर ठीक से काम नहीं कर रहे तो वैकल्पिक उपाय क्या हैं? नई तकनीक के जमाने में सेना या अन्य किसी एजेंसी के पास ऐसे इंतजाम हैं जो इस स्थिति में मदद कर सकें। उसकी मदद लेने का फैसला हर दृष्टि से उचित है। इस समय युद्ध स्तर पर मदद की दरकार भी है।

## गांधी का सपना पूरा करता खच्छता अभियान



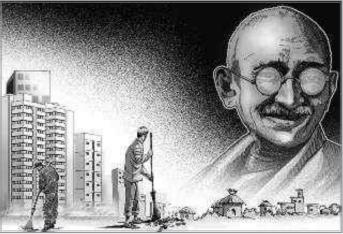
गजेंद्र सिंह शेखावत

जन सहयोग और जन सहभागिता हमारी वह पूंजी है जो स्वच्छता कार्यक्रमों के क्रियान्वयन का जरिया बनेगी

हिं मारे देश में यह त्रासदी रही कि जिस स्वच्छता को राष्ट्रपिता महात्मा गांधी स्वतंत्रता से भी ज्यादा आवश्यक मानते थे उस विषय को आजादी के बाद यथोचित प्राथमिकता नहीं दी गई। 1947 से लेकर 2014 तक हम केवल 39 प्रतिशत घरों तक ही शौचालय की सुविधा पहुंचा पाए थे। इसके अभाव में न केवल हमारी माताओं और बहनों को काफी परेशानी हो रही थी, बल्कि हमारे बच्चे भी इस अभाव के दुष्प्रभाव से पीड़ित थे। हमारी माताएं और बहनें तो आजाद देश में भी उजाले की कैदी की तरह थीं। उन्हें अंधेरे का इंतजार करना होता था ताकि वे शौच के लिए जा सकें। यह मानवीय गरिमा के खिलाफ तो था ही, महिलाओं के स्वाभिमान पर सीधा आघात भी था। इसे बदलने की नितांत

गांधी जी ने युवावस्था में ही भारतीयों में स्वच्छता के प्रति उदासीनता को महसुस कर लिया था। उन्होंने किसी भी सभ्य और विकसित मानव समाज के लिए स्वच्छता के उच्च मानदंड की आवश्यकता को समझा। गांधी जी कहते थे कि कार्यकर्ता को गांव की स्वच्छता और सफाई के बारे में जागरूक रहना चाहिए और गांव में फैलने वाली बीमारियों को रोकने के लिए सभी जरूरी कदम उठाने चाहिए। महात्मा गांधी के विचारों से प्रभावित हमारे प्रधानमंत्री जी ने देश की कमान संभालते ही वर्ष 2014 में लाल किले की प्राचीर से देशवासियों से यह आह्वान किया कि हम बापू के सपनों का स्वच्छ भारत निर्मित करें। उन्होंने यह संकल्प लिया कि अगले पांच वर्षों में लोक सहयोग से हम स्वच्छ भारत का निर्माण करेंगे और गांधी जी की 150वीं जयंती पर यह कृतज्ञ राष्ट्र उनके कदमों में एक स्वच्छ भारत समर्पित करेगा। उस वक्त किसने यह यकीन किया होगा कि पांच वर्षों में 60 करोड़ लोगों का व्यवहार परिवर्तन संभव हो जाएगा और भारत सदियों से खुले में शौच की प्रथा से मुक्त हो जाएगा? उनके संकल्प की आज सिद्धि हुई है। उन्होंने न केवल जन-मानस को स्वच्छ भारत के लिए प्रेरित किया,अपितु समाज के सभी वर्गों को अपने स्वच्छता के प्रति समर्पण से निरंतर अनुप्राणित किया। उन्होंने स्वच्छता के लिए अभूतपूर्व धनराशि भी उपलब्ध कराई ताकि स्वच्छ भारत के क्रियान्वयन में धन की कमी

तमाम अवसरों पर तो वह स्वयं स्वच्छता की गतिविधियों का नेतृत्व करते देखे गए। देखते ही देखते बीते पांच वर्षो में स्वच्छ भारत अभियान ने एक जन-आंदोलन का स्वरूप लिया और संभवतः यह दुनिया के सबसे बड़े व्यवहार परिवर्तन कार्यक्रम के रूप में स्थापित हुआ। यह इस जनांदोलन का ही परिणाम रहा कि जहां 2014 में मात्र 39 प्रतिशत घरों के पास शौचालय की सुविधा उपलब्ध थी वहीं आज वह बढ़कर 99 प्रतिशत हो गई है। स्वच्छ भारत अभियान के प्रारंभ के बाद से देश में 10



करोड़ से ज्यादा शौचालयों का निर्माण हुआ है। देश के सारे जिले और सारे गांव खुले में शौच से मुक्त हो चुके हैं। आज जो आसान प्रतीत हो रहा है वह हमारे लाखों स्वच्छाग्रहियों, सरपंचों, स्वयं सहायता समूह की महिलाओं, बच्चों, अभिभावकों और जन-सामान्य के असामान्य परिश्रम का प्रतिफल है। छह लाख से ज्यादा गांवों को स्वच्छता के लिए प्रेरित करना बहुत ही कठिन कार्य था। हमने सामुदायिक उत्प्रेरण की तकनीकों का इस्तेमाल करते हुए इन गांवों को खुले में शौच से मुक्त बनाने की तकनीकों का सफलतापूर्वक उपयोग किया और यह सुनिश्चित किया कि लोग अपनी जिम्मेदारियों को समझें और अपने गांवों को स्वच्छ बनाने में अपनी भूमिका अदा करें।

स्वच्छ भारत वस्तुतः एक बहुत बड़ा सामाजिक परिवर्तन एवं सामाजिक क्रांति का कार्यक्रम बना है। स्वच्छ भारत ने समाज को जोड़ने का महत्वपूर्ण कार्य किया है। सभी वर्गों और सभी धर्मों के लोगों ने एक साथ आकर स्वच्छ भारत अभियान को सफल बनाया है।

स्वच्छ भारत अभियान के दौरान सभी जातियों के लोगों ने आपसी भेद-भाव को भूलकर अपने ग्राम को खुले में शौच से मुक्त बनाया। इस कार्यक्रम में अनेक ऐसे पड़ाव आए जब समस्त ग्रामवासियों ने एक साथ बैठकर आपसी बैर-भाव को भूलकर अपने गांव को खुले में शौच से मुक्त बनाने हेतु उल्लेखनीय कार्य किया। इस कार्यक्रम ने महिलाओं को और अधिक मुखर बनाया। आपसी सहयोग से उन्होंने न सिर्फ खुले में शौच की अपनी समस्या का निदान किया, बल्कि अनेक कुरीतियों का भी निदान किया। स्वच्छता कार्यक्रम ने गरीब वर्गों के लिए रोजगार के अवसर भी सृजित किए और कई राज्यों में तो महिलाओं ने रानी मिस्त्री बनकर अपने लिए नए रोजगार खोजे। एक अनुमान है कि 10 करोड़ शौचालयों के निर्माण में लगभग 83 करोड़ से अधिक मानव दिवस रोजगार उत्पन्न हुए होंगे। इस स्वच्छता कार्यक्रम ने महिलाओं के स्वयं सहायता समूह को भी बढ़ावा दिया।

खुले में शौच वाले गांवों में डायरिया के

मामले ओडीएफ यानी खुले में शौच से मुक्त गांवों की तुलना में 46 प्रतिशत अधिक पाए गए। यूनिसेफ का अनुमान है कि मुख्यतः स्वच्छता की कमी के कारण भारत के पांच वर्ष से कम आयु के बच्चों में से लगभग 38 प्रतिशत बच्चे शारीरिक और संज्ञानात्मक रूप से कुपोषित हैं। हमारे भविष्य के कार्य बल का इतना बड़ा हिस्सा अपनी पूर्ण उत्पादक क्षमता तक नहीं पहुंच पा रहा था। अध्ययन से यह परिलक्षित होता है कि स्वच्छ भारत अभियान के क्रियान्वयन के बाद इस दिशा में महत्वपूर्ण

मेरा मानना है कि हमने काफी सफलता हासिल की है, परंतु अभी बहुत कार्य किया जाना बाकी भी है। हमें देश के हर घर तक पहुंचना है और यह सुनिश्चित करना है कि सभी लोग स्वच्छता की सुविधाओ से युक्त हों और स्वच्छ व्यवहारों को सदैव अपनाते रहें। आने वाले दिनों में स्वच्छता एवं स्वच्छता संबंधी व्यवहार के स्थायित्व के लिए बड़े पैमाने पर कार्य किए जाएंगे। अगले एक वर्ष में हम सभी ग्राम प्रधान स्वच्छाग्रही और हितग्राहियों की क्षमता वर्धन का कार्य करेंगे ताकि वे स्वच्छता सेवाओं के स्थायित्व को सुनिश्चित कर सकें। इसी सिलसिले में ओडीएफ प्लस के कार्यक्रम चलाए जाएंगे ताकि गांवों में कूड़े-कचरे एवं ग्रे वाटर के समुचित निपटान की व्यवस्था हो सके। इसी क्रम में प्लास्टिक कचरे के निपटान की भी व्यवस्था की जाएगी। वास्तव में हम सबको मिलकर स्वच्छता के कई नए आयाम प्राप्त करने हैं। जन सहयोग और जन सहभागिता हमारी वह पूंजी है जो इन कार्यक्रमों के क्रियान्वयन का माध्यम बनेगी। हमें भरोसा है कि देश वास्तविक रूप में गांधी जी के सपनो का स्वच्छ भारत बन कर रहेगा।

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## बैंक घोटाले पर राजनीति

हाराष्ट्र स्टेट कोऑपरेटिव बैंक (एमएससीबी) घोटाले में प्रवर्तन निदेशालय द्वारा राकांपा अध्यक्ष शरद पवार और उनके भतीजे अजीत पवार सहित बैंक के 70 पूर्व पदाधिकारियों के खिलाफ मनी लांड्रिंग और अन्य मामलों में मुकदमा दर्ज किए जाने के बाद महाराष्ट्र की राजनीति में तो हंगामा मचा ही है, देश में भी इसे बड़ा मुद्दा बनाया गया है। शरद पवार का नाम नहीं आता तो यह देशव्यापी चर्चा का विषय नहीं होता। अजीत पवार का नाम इस घोटाले में पहले से चल रहा था। इसलिए उनके नाम पर पार्टी अवश्य विरोध करती, लेकिन यह इतना बड़ा राजनीतिक मामला नहीं बनता। किसी बड़े नेता पर जब भी भ्रष्टाचार के खिलाफ मुकदमा दर्ज होता है तो उसे हमेशा राजनीतिक रंग दिया जाता है। इन दिनों महाराष्ट्र में विधानसभा चुनाव की प्रक्रिया चल रही है इसलिए यह आरोप लगाना ज्यादा आसान है कि पूरा मामला ही राजनीति से प्रेरित है। शरद पवार ने राजनीतिक तरीके से इसका जवाब देने की रणनीति भी अपनाई। वह कह रहे हैं कि हम शिवाजी के अनुयायी हैं और दिल्ली के तख्त के आगे नहीं झुकेंगे।

यह साफ तौर पर राजनीति का मराठा कार्ड खेलना है। प्रश्न है कि क्या इसे खालिस राजनीति का मामला मान लिया जाए या इसमें तार्किकता भी है? सबसे पहले यह जानना जरूरी है कि बंबई उच्च न्यायालय ने महाराष्ट स्टेट कोऑपरेटिव बैंक घोटाले में न्यायालय में पेश किए गए तथ्यों के आधार पर शरद पवार और अन्य आरोपियों पर प्राथमिकी दर्ज करने का आदेश दिया। न्यायमूर्ति एससी धर्माधिकारी और एसके शिंदे ने कहा था कि आरोपितों के खिलाफ 'विश्वसनीय साक्ष्य' हैं। यह करीब 25 हजार करोड़ रुपये का घोटाला है। क्या बिना किसी की संलिप्तता के ही इतनी राशि हवा हो गई? इस मामले में मुंबई पुलिस ने पिछले महीने एक प्राथमिकी दर्ज की थी। ईडी के अनुसार, उसने मुंबई पुलिस की प्राथमिकी के आधार पर मनी लांड्रिंग निरोधक अधिनियम के तहत प्रवर्तन मामला सूचना रिपोर्ट (ईसीआइआर) दर्ज की है। राज्य की आर्थिक अपराध शाखा की शिकायत के आधार पर इस साल अगस्त में मुंबई पुलिस ने केस दर्ज किया था।

इसी आधार पर ईडी ने मनी लांड़िंग के आरोप लगाए हैं। एजेंसी ने कर्ज देने और अन्य प्रक्रिया में कथित अनियमितता की जांच के लिए मामला दर्ज किया है। आरोप है कि यह सारा फर्जीवाड़ा संचालक मंडल द्वारा लिए गए गलत फैसलों की वजह से संभव हो पाया।



प्राथमिकी दर्ज करने का आदेश उच्च

अन्य आरोपियों पर

यह जानना जरूरी

है कि पवार और



ईडी इन आरोपों की जांच कर रही है कि एमएससीबी के शीर्ष अधिकारी, अध्यक्ष, एमडी, निदेशक, सीईओ और प्रबंधकीय कर्मचारी और सहकारी चीनी मिल के पदाधिकारियों को अनुचित तरीके से कर्ज दिए गए। राज्य सहकारी बैंक से शक्कर कारखानों और कपड़ा मिलों को बेहिसाब कर्ज बांटे गए। इसके अलावा कर्ज वसूली के लिए जिन कर्जदारों की संपत्ति बेची गई, उसमें भी

जानबूझकर बैंक को नुकसान पहुंचाया गया। पुलिस की प्राथमिकी के मुताबिक एक जनवरी 2007 से 31 मार्च 2017 के बीच हुए महाराष्ट्र राज्य सहकारी बैंक घोटाले के कारण सरकारी खजाने को करीब 25 हजार करोड़ रुपये का नुकसान हुआ। यहां यह भी याद दिलाना जरूरी है कि महाराष्ट्र स्टेट कोऑपरेटिव बैंक में अनियमितताओं के लिए शरद पवार के अलावा 75 नेताओं के खिलाफ नेशनल बैंक फॉर एग्रीकल्चर एंड रूरल डेवलपमेंट यानी नाबार्ड ने जांच की थी। नाबार्ड ने 2010 में अपनी जांच रिपोर्ट में इनको दोषी माना था। यह बात अलग है कि प्रदेश एवं केंद्र दोनों जगह सरकार होने के कारण यह मामला जहां का तहां रुक गया। ईडी की प्राथमिकी में इस रिपोर्ट का भी उल्लेख है। यही नहीं उसने महाराष्ट कोऑपरेटिव सोसायटीज कानन के तहत दाखिल आरोपपत्र और इंटरनल ऑडिटर मेसर्स जोशी एंड नाइक एसोसिएट्स की रिपोर्ट को भी आधार बनाया है। इन

सबमें घोटाले की पूरी कहानी है। साफ है ईडी इस मामले में पवार और एमएससी बैंक में 2001 से 2017 के बीच रहे निदेशकों और पदाधिकारियों सहित उन लोगों से पूछताछ कर सकता है, जिनके नाम उसके केस में दर्ज हैं।

यह सच है कि शरद पवार का जिक्र किसी भी रिपोर्ट में नहीं है, पर शिकायतकर्ता सुरिंदर अरोड़ा ने मुंबई पुलिस के सामने अपने हालिया पूरक बयान में दावा किया था कि घोटाला शरद पवार के संरक्षण के बिना नहीं हो सकता था। बयान उस प्राथमिकी का हिस्सा है जिसके आधार पर ईडी कार्रवाई कर रहा है। ऐसे में शरद पवार की भूमिका की भी जांच की जाएगी। अजीत पवार पर आरोप है कि एमएससी बैंक ने जो कर्ज आवंटित किए उनके लिए जमानत नहीं ली गई थी और कर्ज सब्सिडी वाली सस्ती दर पर दिया गया था। मुंबई पुलिस में दर्ज प्राथमिकी के मुताबिक कर्ज की पुनर्रचना इसलिए की गई थी कि उसमें कुछ निदेशकों का निजी हित था। कर्ज समिति ने बड़े राजनेताओं की उन कोऑपरेटिव चीनी मिलों को 2007-08, 2008-09 और 2010-11 में कम मार्जिन पर लोन आवंटित किया था जिनकी नेट वर्थ नकारात्मक थी और जो घाटे में चल रही थीं। इससे बैंक को 297.14 करोड़ रुपये का घाटा हुआ था। पवार पर कोऑपरेटिव शुगर फैक्टरियों को बेचने के मामले में अनियमितता के आरोप लगे हैं। आरोपों के मुताबिक इन फैक्टरियों को कथित रूप से करीबी लोगों को रिजर्व प्राइस से कम दाम पर बेचा गया।

शरद पवार और उनके समर्थकों का यह तर्क अपनी जगह है कि वे न तो कोऑपरेटिव बैंक के संस्थापक थे और न कोई पदाधिकारी, किंतु इतने से किसी का पाक साफ होना साबित नहीं होता। ईडी के पास ज्यादातर ऐसे ही मामले आते हैं जिनमें आरोपी का सीधा कोई संबंध नहीं दिखता। मनी लांड्रिंग के मामले में तार से तार जोड़ने होते हैं। इस तरह पवार एवं उनके समर्थक जो भी तर्क दें. ईडी का मानना है कि पुलिस की प्राथमिकी, उच्च न्यायालय के आदेश, नाबार्ड की रिपोर्ट और इंटरनल ऑडिटर मेसर्स जोशी एंड नाइक एसोसिएट्स की रिपोर्ट में उन पर संदेह करने के पर्याप्त आधार हैं। जांच में यदि वे निर्दोष साबित होते हैं तो कोई उनका कुछ बिगाड़ नहीं सकता। यदि उन्हें लगता है कि उनके खिलाफ मामला राजनीति से प्रेरित है तो उन्हें सीधे उच्च न्यायालय या उच्चतम न्यायालय का रुख करना चाहिए।

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लत

आदमी की आदतें एवं रुचियां भिन्न-भिन्न तरह की होती हैं। वे अच्छी भी होती हैं और बुरी भी। आदत और जरूरत में भी फर्क होता है। अच्छी आदतें इंसान का निजी वैभव और सौंदर्य बनती हैं, जबिक बुरी आदतें व्यक्ति के पतन का खुला मैदान हैं। आदमी का कहना एक बात है और उसे आचार-प्रचार-विचार में उतारना दूसरी बात है। ऐसे तमाम लोग हैं जो बड़े धर्मात्मा विद्वान और पंडित हैं, किंतु आचार-व्यवहार की दृष्टि से शून्य हैं। बुरी आदतों ने इंसानी चरित्र को धुंधला दिया है। किसी भी लत को पकडना जितना आसान होता है, उसे छोड पाना नहीं। किसी भी लत का गलाम व्यक्ति स्वयं सोचता नहीं, स्वयं देखता नहीं, स्वयं निर्णय नहीं लेता। वह स्वयं हालात के हाथों बिक जाता है, आदती एवं लतों का गुलाम बन जाता है। जिसके चलते उसका आत्मविश्वास कमजोर हो जाता है। स्वाभिमान की रोशनी बुझ जाती है। आत्मगौरव शिथिल हो जाता है पौरुष पंगु हो जाता है। संकल्प और विवेक बुद्धि को जंग लग जाता है। लत वह खूंटा है, जिससे बंधकर व्यक्ति कोल्हू के बैल की तरह बिना मुकाम पर पहुंच दिन-रात चलता है, जीवन को अर्थहीन बना देता है।

आदत, लत या व्यसन कोई भी हो हानिकारक होती है। इससे फर्क नहीं पड़ता कि आदतों की प्रकृति क्या है और आप कबसे तकलीफ के दौर से गुजर रहे हैं। उन्हें इस बात की परवाह नहीं है कि आप कौन हैं या आपने अपने जीवन में क्या किया है? आपकी शारीरिक या मानसिक क्षमता क्या है? इन सच्चाइयों का अनुभव इस बोध से शुरू होता है कि आपके शरीर की पूंजी स्वास्थ्य और अनुकूलनशीलता है, अभी और हमेशा से। आपके होने का अर्थ है-सहज स्वास्थ्य एवं अनंत अनुकूलनशीलता। जबिक मनुष्य आदतों एवं लतों के अधीन गुलाम, अकर्मण्य और आलसी हो जाता है ऐसा मनुष्य आंखों पर बौनी धारणाओं की पट्टी इतनी कसकर बांध लेता है कि उजाला दिखाने पर भी देखना उसे स्वीकार्य नहीं। इसलिए जरूरी है कि हम गलत आदतों एवं लतों से निजात पाकर स्वस्थ जीवन जिएं

## जागरूकता से बढ़ेगा रक्तदान

रक्तदान जिंदगी से जुझ रहे लोगों को नया जीवन प्रदान करता है। इसलिए रक्तदान को महादान और जीवनदान कहा गया है। भारत में प्रतिवर्ष एक अक्टूबर को राष्ट्रीय स्वैच्छिक रक्तदान दिवस मनाया जाता है। समाज में महान परिवर्तन लाने, जीवनरक्षी उपायों का अनुसरण करने और हिंसा और चोट के कारण गंभीर बीमारी, बच्चे के जन्म से संबंधित जटिलताओं, सड़क यातायात दुर्घटनाओं और कई गंभीर परिस्थितियों से निकलने में रक्तदान की महत्वपूर्ण भूमिका को दर्शाना ही इस दिवस का उद्देश्य है। समय पर रक्त नहीं मिलने के कारण भारत में प्रतिवर्ष 15 लाख लोगों की मौत हो जाती है। विश्व स्वास्थ्य संगठन के मापदंड के अनुसार किसी भी देश में किसी भी स्थिति में उसकी जनसंख्या का कम से कम एक प्रतिशत रक्त आरक्षित होना ही चाहिए। उक्त मानक के अनुसार हमारे देश में कम से कम 1 करोड़ 30 लाख यूनिट रक्त का हर समय आरक्षित भंडार होना चाहिए, लेकिन पिछले वर्षों के आंकड़ों के अनुसार हमारे पास प्रतिवर्ष रक्त की औसतन 90 लाख यूनिट ही

चिंताजनक है कि भारत में कुल जनसंख्या के अनुपात में एक प्रतिशत आबादी भी रक्तदान नहीं करती है

उपलब्ध हो पाती है। प्रतिवर्ष लगभग 25 से 30 प्रतिशत रक्त की कमी रह जाती है।

चिंताजनक है कि भारत में कुल जनसंख्या के अनुपात में एक प्रतिशत आबादी भी रक्तदान नहीं करती है। जबकि थाईलैंड में 95 फीसद, इंडोनेशिया में 77 फीसद और म्यांमार में 60 फीसद हिस्सा रक्तदान से पूरा होता है। भारत में मात्र 46 लाख लोग स्वैच्छिक रक्तदान करते हैं। इनमें महिलाएं मात्र 06 से 10 प्रतिशत हैं। इसके अलावा हमारे देश में पर्याप्त मात्रा में ब्लड बैंक नहीं होने की अलग समस्या है। भारत में रक्तदान को लेकर अभी तक पूरी तरह से जागरूकता आनी बाकी है। अधिकांश लोगों में अब भी यह भ्रांति फैली हुई है कि रक्तदान करने से शरीर में रक्त की कमी हो जाती है, जो कि बिल्कुल गलत है। रक्तदान करने से रक्त बढ़ता है और शरीर में

नए रक्त का संचार होता है। रक्तदान करने के बाद तकरीबन 21 दिनों के भीतर ही शरीर पुनः रक्त निर्माण कर लेता है। यह दिल को मजबूत कर कैंसर जैसी जानलेवा बीमारी से बचाव करता है। नियमित अंतराल पर रक्तदान करने से शरीर में आयरन की मात्रा संतुलित रहती है। यह रक्तदाता को हृदय आघात से दूर रखता है। नियमित रूप से रक्तदान करने के बाद शरीर में जो नया खून बनता है वह स्वास्थ्य के लिए बहुत फायदेमंद होता है। यह वजन को नियंत्रण करने में भी मददगार है।

इसलिए स्वस्थ व्यक्ति को रक्तदान करने से नहीं कतराना चाहिए। अतः सरकारी प्रयासों को भी गति देनी होगी। देश के सुदूर ग्रामीण क्षेत्रों में भी सर्वसुविधायुक्त ब्लड बैंक स्थापित करने होंगे। भारत जैसे भौगोलिक विभिन्नता वाले विशाल देश में जहां कई क्षेत्रों में विभिन्न प्रकार की प्राकृतिक आपदाएं अक्सर दस्तक देती हैं, उग्रवाद प्रभावित क्षेत्रों में हमारे जवान कर्तव्य निभाते हुए खून बहाते हैं तथा हमारे अस्थिर पड़ोसी देश हमेशा युद्ध जैसे हालात पैदा करते हैं, ऐसे में रक्त का पर्याप्त आरक्षित भंडार होना अत्यंत आवश्यक हो जाता है।

(लेखक स्वतंत्र टिप्पणीकार हैं)

## गांधी जी के विचारों को अपनाने की दरकार

'गांधी के स्मरण का सही तरीका' शीर्षक से हृदयनारायण दीक्षित ने गांधी जी के नाना रूप तथा विविध आयामों का गंभीर विश्लेषण किया है। निश्चित रूप से गांधी विश्व इतिहास की सर्वोत्तम अभिव्यक्ति हैं। उन्होंने समाज, राष्ट्र तथा अंतरराष्ट्रीय स्तर के विभिन्न मुद्दों पर गंभीरता से विचार किया। उनका चिंतन भूत, वर्तमान तथा भविष्य को लेकर था, इसलिए भारत ही नहीं विश्व समुदाय ने गांधी को स्वीकार किया और कर रहा है। गांधी जी को आज व्यक्ति मानकर नहीं एक विचार मानकर स्वीकारने और स्मरण करने की आवश्यकता है। समाज जीवन के छुआछुत, सांप्रदायिकता, गरीबी, बेरोजगारी, स्वच्छता, पर्यावरण, किसान, महिलाएं, युवा, शिक्षा, स्वास्थ्य, राजनीति तथा नैतिकता आदि सैकड़ों ऐसे आयाम हैं जिन पर गांधी जी ने विस्तार से चिंतन किया है। 'हिंद स्वराज' तथा 'मेरे सपनों का भारत' नामक पुस्तकें उनके भूत, वर्तमान तथा भविष्य को लेकर चिंतन के महत्वपूर्ण दस्तावेज कही जा सकती हैं। किंतु विडंबना यह है कि एक लंबे समय तक निहित स्वार्थों के चलते नीतियों में गांधी नाम तो उपयोग किया गया, किंतु उनके विचार उपेक्षित रहे। आज आवश्यकता गांधी के विचारों को व्यापक स्तर पर अपनाने की है। इससे राष्ट्रीय तथा अंतरराष्ट्रीय समस्याओं के समाधान संभव हो सकेंगे। डॉ. वेदप्रकाश, हंसराज कॉलेज, दिल्ली

## महात्मा गांधी होने का अर्थ

दैनिक जागरण के 30 सितंबर के अंक में हृदयनारायण दीक्षित का लेख, गांधी के स्मरण का सही तरीका, पढ़ा। कमी हर इंसान में होती है तो गांधी जी में भी रही होगी, पर उनकी अच्छाइयां इतनी हैं कि उनके बीच उनकी कमियों

## मेलबाक्स

का कोई अस्तित्व नहीं। गांधी का सत्य अहिंसा, समानता व सबसे प्रेम का विचार इस देश की आत्मा है। हम अगर इतिहास के पन्नों में झांकें तो पाएंगे कि ये विचार हमारी सभ्यता में अनादि काल से हैं। चूंकि हम बहुत लंबे समय तक गुलाम रहे तो अपने इन मूलमंत्र को भूलकर कभी अपने मन से, कभी दबाव के कारण तो कभी प्रलोभनों के कारण बाहर से आई सभ्यता को ओढ़ने में लग गए थे जो हमारे पतन का कारण बना। गांधी जी वाकई में महात्माई गुणों से युक्त थे। उन्होंने इनके प्रति हम सबको जगाया और तब तक जगाते रहे जब तक कि हमने बाहर से आई सभ्यताओं को, उनके विचारों को यहां से भगा नहीं दिया। गांधी जी अब हमारे बीच नहीं हैं, पर उनके विचार उनके अनेकानेक लेखों, पुस्तकों और उनके द्वारा किए अनुभवों व प्रयोगों के रूप में विद्यमान हैं। जरूरत है उन्हें पढ़ने और अपने जीवन में उतारने की। यही उन्हें याद करने और सच्ची श्रद्धांजलि देने का उत्तम तरीका है।

सतीश त्यागी काकड़ा, इंदिरापुरम

## प्याज की जमाखोरी

प्याज की कीमतों में वृद्धि का कारण महाराष्ट्र में बारिश से फसल को हुए नुकसान को बताया जा रहा है। लेकिन प्याज की फसल तो अप्रैल-मई में तैयार होती है। उस समय इसे कोल्ड स्टोरेज में रख लिया जाता है। प्याज को जब किसान पैदा करता है तब बाजार में इसका मृल्य बहुत कम हो जाता है। यहां तक कि बहुत से किसान प्याज पैदा करने के बाद इसकी खुदाई व बाजार तक ढुलाई का खर्च उठाने की स्थिति में नहीं होते हैं। उस समय व्यापारी बहुत कम कीमत में किसानों से प्याज खरीदते हैं। बाद में सप्लाई रोक कर बाजार में संकट पैदाकर ऊंचे भाव में बेचते हैं। प्याज का संकट इसकी कमी नहीं है, बल्कि इसका बड़ा कारण जमाखोरी है। बाजार में प्याज उपलब्ध है तभी तो अधिक कीमत पर मिल रही है। अगर कमी होती तो बाजार में प्याज दिखती ही नहीं। सरकार को प्याज की कालाबाजारी रोकने के लिए सार्थक उपाय करने चाहिए थे।

दीपक गौतम, सोनीपत

## टगों से सावधान

आप जीत सकते हैं पांच किलो सोना, आपके बैंक खाते में आएंगे पचास हजार रुपये। साइबर ठग ऐसी ही बाते कर बैंक ग्राहकों को अपने चंगुल में फंसा लेते हैं। फिर उन्हें मीठी-मीठी बातों में उलझाकर बैंक, एटीएम का ब्योरा जुटाकर खाते में जमा राशि निकाल लेते हैं। अखबारों में ऐसी रपटें रोज छपती हैं। साइबर अपराध काफी बढ़ गय है। हमारी सुरक्षा एजेंसियां चाहकर भी उनका समाधान नहीं कर पा रही हैं।

एम. प्रशांत यादव, दिल्ली

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**

## आफत की बरसात

हार और उत्तर प्रदेश में बरसात ने जिस तरह का कहर ढाया है, वह किसी बड़ी प्राकृतिक आपदा से कम नहीं है। लेकिन देखने की जरूरत यह भी है कि ऐसी स्थिति का सामना करने के लिए हमारी सरकारी व्यवस्था कितनी तैयारी करती है। बिजली गिरने, बाढ़ में डूबने, दीवार गिरने से लेकर करंट की चपेट में आने की वजह से उत्तर प्रदेश में अस्सी और बिहार में करीब तीस लोगों की मौतें और कई शहरों में पानी भर जाने से सड़क और रेल यातायात सहित बाकी जनजीवन ठप होने की स्थिति यह बताने के लिए काफी है कि विकास के नाम पर अच्छी सड़कों और ऊंची इमारतों का हवाला देने की हकीकत जमीन पर क्या है। पटना सहित उत्तर बिहार के कई जिलों में पिछले तीन-चार दिनों से लगातार हुई बारिश ने लोगों के सामने एक बड़ा संकट खड़ा कर दिया है। खासतौर पर पटना में हालत यह है कि मुख्य सड़कों से लेकर ज्यादातर मुहल्लों में तीन से पांच फुट पानी भर गया और भूतल पर रहने वालों को घर छोड़ना पड़ा। बाजारों और अस्पतालों तक में पानी घुस गया, बिजली और पानी की आपूर्ति में भी व्यापक बाधा आई है और एक तरह से भूखे-प्यासे रहने की हालत में पहुंचे लोगों को आपात मदद की जरूरत है।

आखिर बरसात की वजह से किसी शहर के डूबने की स्थिति क्यों पैदा हो जा रही है? पटना में एक बड़ा सवाल यह खड़ा हो गया है कि अगर बरसात पूरी तरह रुक भी जाती है तो गलियों-मुहल्लों में जमा पानी कैसे निकलेगा! फिलहाल मुख्य वजह यह है कि पटना से सटी गंगा, पुनपुन, गंडक और सोन निदयां पहले से ही खतरे के निशान से ऊपर बह रही हैं और शहर के नालों का पानी उनमें भी नहीं निकल पा रहा है। ऐसी स्थिति में सरकार के पास लोगों की सुरक्षा और उनका जीवन बचाने के क्या इंतजाम हैं ? शहरी नियोजन में जल-निकासी की समुचित व्यवस्था एक सबसे अहम शर्त होनी चाहिए। लेकिन चारों तरफ ऊंची इमारतों का संजाल खड़ा हो जाता है, मगर इस पहलू पर ध्यान देना जरूरी नहीं समझा जाता कि बरसात या बाढ़ की हालत में पानी के निकलने का रास्ता क्या होगा। पटना में घनी आबादी वाले इलाकों में पहले ही पानी की निकासी की व्यवस्था को संतोषजनक नहीं कहा जा सकता है। फिर आपदा प्रबंधन विभाग की तैयारी भी सवालों के घेरे में है।

भूकम्प या बाढ़ जैसी आपदाओं के बारे में हर बार कोई निश्चित पूर्वानुमान लगा पाना मुमिकन नहीं होता है, लेकिन इन्हें प्राकृतिक उथल-पुथल का एक अनिवाये हिस्सा मान कर इनसे बचाव के इंतजाम करना अपने बस में जरूर होता है। पर यह शहरी जीवन के अभ्यास में नहीं होने का ही नतीजा है कि देश के किसी हिस्से में अचानक काफी ज्यादा बरसात हो जाती है और समूचा इलाका डूबने के कगार पर आ जाता है। हाल के वर्षों में मुंबई या चेन्नई जैसे महानगरों में भारी बारिश की वजह से जो हालत देखी गई, उसकी वजहें किसी से छिपी नहीं हैं। फिर भी देश के दूसरे इलाकों में सरकारें ऐसी तबाही को ध्यान में रख कर बचाव और राहत के दूसरे इंतजामों सहित जल-निकासी के पर्याप्त इंतजाम करना जरूरी नहीं समझतीं। हालांकि बरसात के दौरान मुश्किल केवल शहरी इलाकों में भयानक बाढ़ जैसे हालात खड़े होने की ही नहीं होती, बल्कि बिजली गिरने, पानी में करंट फैलने आदि से भी मौतें होती हैं, लेकिन अगर सिर्फ पानी की सहज निकासी की व्यवस्था को दुरुस्त कर लिया जाए तो ऐसी आपदाओं के दौरान आधी से ज्यादा समस्याओं को नियंत्रण में लाया जा सकता है।

## निगरानी का सवाल

📺 बई स्थित पंजाब एंड महाराष्ट्र सहकारी बैंक (पीएमसी बैंक) 🛂 में घोटाले और अनियमितताओं की परतें अब जिस तरह से खुल रही हैं, उससे ज्यादा हैरानी इसलिए नहीं होनी चाहिए कि भारत की बैंकिंग प्रणाली की असल तस्वीर यही है। ऐसा कोई पहली बार नहीं हुआ है। लेकिन अब यह साफ हो चुका है कि बड़ी-बड़ी कंपनियां कर्ज डकार कर बैंकों को खोखला बना रही हैं और आम जनता की गाढ़ी कमाई पर मौज कर रही हैं। भारतीय रिजर्व बैंक अगर ईमानदारी से जांच कराए तो पता चलेगा कि ज्यादातर सहकारी बैंकों में इसी तरह के खेल चल रहे हैं। देश में हजारों की संख्या में सहकारी बैंक चल रहे हैं और इनका नियंत्रण राज्य सरकार के हाथ में होता है। सहकारी बैंकों के संचालन में नेताओं के दबदबे और हस्तक्षेप भी जगजाहिर हैं। लेकिन इनका नियामक रिजर्व बैंक है। ऐसे में अगर किसी बैंक में कोई अनियमितता पाई जाती है, जनता के पैसे डूबने का खतरा खड़ा होता है तो उसके लिए रिजर्व बैंक जिम्मेदारी से बच नहीं सकता। भारत में जिस तरह से बैंक घोटाले हो जाते हैं, उससे यह साफ है कि बैंकों पर निगरानी करने वाला तंत्र वाकई बेहद लापरवाह, कमजोर और अक्षम साबित हुआ है।

पीएमसी बैंक में लोगों के जिस तरह से पैसे फंस गए हैं, वह चिंताजनक है। इस बैंक के ग्राहकों में बड़ी संख्या तो उन लोगों की है, जिन्होंने जीवनभर की कमाई बैंक में सावधि जमा के रूप में भी जमा की थी। लोगों की पगार, पेंशन सब इसमें जमा होती है, उस इलाके के छोटे दुकानदारों और आवास समितियों के खाते इसमें हैं। पर अब सब बंद हैं। अस्पताल, बच्चों की फीस और रोजमर्रा के खर्च के पैसे पर बैंक ने ताला जड़ दिया है। छह महीने में मात्र दस हजार रुपए निकाल कर लोग कैसे अपना गुजारा कर पाएंगे, यह शायद रिजर्व बैंक ने नहीं सोचा। अब यह खुलासा हुआ है कि बैंक ने सारे नियम-कायदों को ताक पर रखते हुए लोगों का पैसा इस तरह लुटाया और बड़ी संख्या में फर्जी खाते खोल कर कंपनियों के विकास में योगदान किया और रिजर्व बैंक की आंखों में धूल झोंकी।

सहकारी बैंक हों या बड़े सरकारी और निजी बैंक, पिछले कुछ सालों में जिस तरह से इनमें घोटालों और गड़बड़ियों का खुलासा होता रहा है, उसने बैंकिंग व्यवस्था पर लोगों का भरोसा डिगाया है। हाल में एक निजी बैंक के कर्ज देने पर रोक लगा दी गई। इससे लोगों में यह डर बैठना स्वाभाविक है कि कहीं किसी दिन उनके बैंक में भी ऐसा न हो जाए। ऐसे मामलों में समस्या यह होती है कि जब किसी बैंक पर ग्राहकों के धन की निकासी जैसी कठोर पाबंदियां लगा दी जाती हैं तो पैसा लंबे समय तक के लिए अनिश्चितता में फंस जाता है। उस वक्त कोई यह नहीं बता सकता कि अंतिम समाधान कितने महीनों या सालों में होगा और लोगों की फंसी पूंजी कब निकलेगी। रिजर्व बैंक को इस बारे में सोचना चाहिए कि अगर किसी बैंक पर इस तरह की कड़ी कार्रवाई करने की जरूरत है तो पहले यह सुनिश्चित हो कि लोगों के पैसे जब्त न हों। उन्हें रकम निकासी के तुरंत विकल्प दिए जाएं। बैंकों में होने वाली गड़बड़ियां बता रही हैं कि ऑडिट प्रणाली ठप-सी है। पंजाब नेशनल बैंक घोटाले में यही हुआ था और लंबे समय तक उस शाखा का ऑडिट ही नहीं हुआ जो नीरव मोदी और मेहुल चौकसी पर मेहरबान थी। सहकारी बैंकों को लूट से बचाने के लिए रिजर्व बैंक को अपना निगरानी तंत्र मजबूत करने की जरूरत है।

## कल्पमधा

जितना दिखाते हो उससे अधिक तुम्हारे पास होना चाहिए; जितना जानते हो उससे कम तुम्हें बोलना चाहिए। -शेक्सपियर

## टीबी से निपटने की चुनौती

अरविंद कुमार सिंह

स्वास्थ्य सेवाओं के इन बदतर हालात के लिए सरकार की नीतियां जिम्मेदार हैं। स्वास्थ्य क्षेत्र को लेकर सजगता और गंभीरता का हमारे नीति-निर्माताओं में घोर अभाव है। पिछले दो दशकों में यह देखने में आया है कि सरकारों ने विभिन्न रोगों की रोकथाम और कल्याणकारी परियोजनाओं के मद में धन की कटौती की है।

हा चिंताजनक है कि देश में टीबी उन्मूलन 🤻 अभियान के बीच पिछले एक साल में टीबी के साढे इक्कीस लाख नए मरीजों की पहचान हुई है। केंद्रीय स्वास्थ्य मंत्रालय की ताजा रिपोर्ट में कहा गया है कि इन मरीजों में बीस फीसद मरीज देश के सबसे बडे राज्य उत्तर प्रदेश में हैं। उत्तर प्रदेश के अलावा महाराष्ट्र में दस फीसद, राजस्थान, मध्यप्रदेश और गुजरात में सात-सात फीसद और तमिलनाडू, बिहार और पश्चिम बंगाल में पांच-पांच फीसद पाए गए हैं। गौर करें तो इन मरीजों में नवासी फीसद की आयू पंद्रह से उनहत्तर वर्ष के बीच है। इनमें महिलाओं की अपेक्षा पुरुषों की संख्या सबसे ज्यादा है। हाल ही में प्रधानमंत्री नरेंद्र मोदी ने भारत से टीबी के खात्मे की समयसीमा विश्व स्वास्थ्य संगठन (डब्लूएचओ) की समयसीमा वर्ष 2030 से पांच साल पहले यानी 2025 तक की तय की। लेकिन मौजदा हालात को देखते हुए यह कह पाना मुश्किल है कि 2025 तक इस

लक्ष्य को साधा जा सकेगा। ऐसा इसलिए है कि भारत दुनिया में टीबी के मरीजों का सबसे बड़ा केंद्र बनता जा रहा है। टीबी मरीजों की संख्या कम होने के बजाय बढ़ती जा रही है। अगर इस साल के आंकड़ों को शामिल कर लिया जाए तो भारत में टीबी मरीजों की तादाद पैंतीस लाख से ऊपर पहुंच चुकी है। गौर करने लायक बात यह है कि एक ओर भारत ने 2025 तक टीबी पर नियंत्रण पाने का लक्ष्य सुनिश्चित किया है और इसमें विश्व स्वास्थ्य संगठन मदद कर रहा है, वहीं दूसरी ओर टीबी के मरीजों की बढ़ती संख्या यह रेखांकित करती है कि टीबी से निपटने की चुनौती जस की तस बनी हुई है।

केंद्रीय स्वास्थ्य मंत्रालय की रिपोर्ट से इतर विश्व स्वास्थ्य संगठन के आंकड़े भी यही बता रहे हैं कि भारत में टीबी के मरीजों की संख्या हर साल बढ़ रही है और साथ ही इस रोग से मरने वालों की संख्या में भी इजाफा हो रहा है। 2015 में भारत में टीबी के अट्ठाईस लाख मामले

आए थे और उस साल इस बीमारी से करीब पांच लाख लोगों की मौत हुई थी। समस्या यह है कि भारत में टीबी के ज्यादातर मामले तो दर्ज भी नहीं होते हैं। दर्ज नहीं होने वाले मामलों में विश्व में हर चौथा मामला भारत का होता है। वर्ष 2013 में दुनिया के दस देशों में तकरीबन चौबीस लाख टीबी के मामले दर्ज ही नहीं हुए थे, जिनमें सर्वाधिक संख्या भारतीयों की थी।

दरअसल, भारत में टीबी रोग में वृद्धि का मूल कारण जागरूकता की कमी और उचित इलाज का अभाव है। उसी का नतीजा है कि भारत में टीबी के मरीजों की संख्या में इजाफा हो रहा है। टीबी माइक्रोबैक्टीरियम

टुबरक्लोरसिस नामक जीवाणु के कारण को टीबी के कारण मौत के मृंह में जाना पड़ता है। टीबी का फैलाव इस रोग से ग्रस्त व्यक्ति द्वारा लिए जाने वाले श्वास-प्रश्वास के द्वारा होता है। केवल एक रोगी पूरे वर्ष के दौरान दस से भी अधिक लोगों को संक्रमित कर सकता है। यह बीमारी प्रमुख रूप से फेफड़ों को प्रभावित करती है। लेकिन, अगर इसका समय रहते उपचार न कराया जाए तो यह रक्त के द्वारा शरीर के दूसरे भागों में भी फैल कर उन्हें संक्रमित करती है। ऐसे संक्रमण को द्वितीय संक्रमण कहा जाता है। यह संक्रमण किडनी, डिंब वाही निलयों, गर्भाशय और मस्तिष्क को प्रभावित कर सकता है। टीबी महिलाओं के लिए गंभीर

स्वास्थ्य समस्या है। टीबी केवल महिलाओं में बांझपन का कारण ही नहीं बनती, पुरुष भी इससे बुरी तरह प्रभावित होते हैं। महत्त्वपूर्ण तथ्य यह कि इसके लक्षण तत्काल दिखाई नहीं देते हैं और लक्षण दिखाई देने तक ये प्रजनन क्षमता को पहले ही नुकसान पहुंचा चुके होते हैं। आंकड़े बताते हैं कि टीबी से पीड़ित हर दस महिलाओं में से दो गर्भधारण नहीं कर पाती हैं। अधिकतर वही लोग इसकी चपेट में आते हैं जिनकी रोग-प्रतिरोधक क्षमता कमजोर होती है और जो संक्रमित व्यक्ति के संपर्क में आते हैं। जब संक्रमित व्यक्ति खांसता या छींकता है तब बैक्टीरिया वायु में फैल जाते हैं और जब हम सांस लेते हैं तो ये हमारे फेफड़ों में पहुंच जाते हैं।

महिलाओं के साथ बच्चों के लिए भी टीबी एक बहुत बड़ा खतरा है। बच्चों के कुछ समूह अन्य लोगों की तुलना में टीबी के दायरे में ज्यादा होते हैं।



होती है। भारत में हर वर्ष तीन लाख से अधिक लोगों ऐसे में आवश्यक हो जाता है कि टीबी की जद में आने वाले बच्चों के लिए तत्काल इलाज की व्यवस्था की जाए। बीसीजी का टीका बच्चों में टीबी के उपचार में काफी हद तक कारगर साबित हो रहा है। आमतौर पर टीबी के साधारण लक्षण होते हैं जिनकी आसानी से पहचान की जा सकती है। तीन सप्ताह से अधिक समय से खांसी या थूक के साथ खन आए तो सतर्क हो जाना चाहिए। टीबी की जद में आने वाले व्यक्ति को अक्सर रात में बुखार आता है और धीरे-धीरे उसका वजन कम होता जाता है। भख भी नहीं लगती है और शरीर कमजोर होता चला जाता है। अगर ऐसा कुछ लक्षण दिखे तो तत्काल डॉक्टर से परामर्श लेकर उचित इलाज होना चाहिए।

यह विडंबना है कि भारत में टीबी के नियंत्रण के लिए कई योजनाएं चल रही हैं, लेकिन इस जानलेवा बीमारी ने एड्स को भी पीछे छोड़ दिया है। विशेषज्ञों का कहना है कि गरीबी, कुपोषण, सरकारी अस्पतालों में डॉक्टरों और दवाओं की कमी और सार्वजनिक स्वास्थ्य संबंधी योजनाओं के लिए धन की कमी इस जानलेवा बीमारी पर नियंत्रण लगाने की राह में सबसे बड़ी बाधा बन रही है। नतीजतन, टीबी के खिलाफ लड़ाई कमजोर पड़ रही है। भारत में सार्वजनिक स्वास्थ्य प्रणाली की दशा कितनी दयनीय है, यह किसी से छिपा नहीं है। कस्बों और शहरों में तो अस्पताल, नर्सिंग होम, डॉक्टर और दवा उपलब्ध हैं, लेकिन गांवों की हालत बेहद खस्ता है। यहां न तो डॉक्टर हैं और न ही अस्पताल। भला ऐसे में टीबी पीड़ित मरीजों का इलाज कैसे होगा, यह गंभीर सवाल है।

स्वास्थ्य सेवाओं के इन बदतर हालात के लिए सरकार की नीतियां जिम्मेदार हैं। स्वास्थ्य क्षेत्र को लेकर सजगता और गंभीरता का हमारे नीति-निर्माताओं में घोर अभाव है। पिछले दो दशकों में यह देखने में आया है कि सरकारों ने विभिन्न रोगों की रोकथाम और कल्याणकारी परियोजनाओं के मद में धन की कटौती की है। आंकड़ों पर गौर करें तो केंद्र सरकार ने वर्ष 2012 से 2015 के दौरान टीबी पर नियंत्रण लगाने से संबंधित परियोजनाओं के लिए सिर्फ 24.30 करोड़ डॉलर की रकम जारी की थी, जबिक संबंधित संस्थाओं ने इन योजनाओं को प्रभावी तरीके से लागू करने के लिए कम से कम तियालीस करोड़ डॉलर की मांग की थी। अगले दो वर्षों का भी हाल कमोबेश ऐसा ही रहा। स्वास्थ्य विशेषज्ञों का कहना है कि सत्तारूढ़ राजनीतिक पार्टियां

चुनाव अभियान में जितनी रकम खर्च कर देती अगर उसका एक हिस्सा भी टीबी पर नियंत्रण की योजनाओं में लगाया जाए तो टीबी के विरुद्ध जंग को फतह किया जा सकता है। स्वास्थ्य विशेषज्ञों की मानें तो सरकार को दूसरे गैर-जरूरी खर्चों में कटौती करके सार्वजनिक स्वास्थ्य से संबंधित परियोजनाओं को पर्याप्त धन मृहैया कराना चाहिए इसलिए और भी कि धन की कमी की वजह से टीबी से आधी-अधूरी लड़ाई लड़ी जा रही है, जो बेहद खतरनाक है और इसका खिमयाजा देश की भावी पीढ़ी को भूगतना पड़ रहा है। उचित होगा कि भारत सरकार टीबी पर प्रभावी नियंत्रण के लिए ठोस योजना तैयार करे और विश्व स्वास्थ्य संगठन सहित अन्य निजी संगठनों की मदद ले।

## आधा-आधा कुआं

संजीव राय

**अन्**बकी बार गांव गया तो देखा कि बचपन में जिस कुएं का पानी हम पीते थे और अक्सर जहां नहाते थे, अब उसमें पानी नहीं है। दरअसल, यह पक्का कुआं काफी गहरा था और इस कुएं ने बचपन में हमें ही नहीं आस-पडोस और माता-पिता, चाचा-चाची, भैया-भाभी, रिश्तेदार-नातेदार सबको पानी दिया है। इसका पानी इतना ठंडा था कि 1970-1980 के दशक में हमारे टोले में जब भी शादी-ब्याह होता, पीतल की गगरी से पानी निकाला जाता और उसी से मेहमानों-बारातियों के लिए शरबत बनता। तब तक गांव में ठंडे पेय यानी कोल्ड ड्रिंक्स और बर्फ की सिल्ली नहीं आती थी।

दुनिया में कुएं का इतिहास कोई आठ हजार साल पुराना है। पहले कुएं, खेतों के आसपास ही बनाए जाते थे। मौजूदा समय में इजराइल में सबसे पुराने कुएं का पता चला है जो 7500-8000 साल पहले का है। हम सबके पुरखे, पहले नदी-तालाब-पोखरे से पानी पीते थे। फिर कुएं बनाए जाने लगे। उन्नीसवीं शताब्दी के शुरुआती वर्षों तक लकड़ी की मदद से खुदाई करके कुएं बनाने की तकनीक प्रयोग में थी। कुएं

खुदवाना एक पुण्य का काम समझा गया, इसीलिए कई राजाओं ने सरेराह कुएं और बाबड़ी खुदवाए। राजस्थान के अभनेरी में नौवीं शताब्दी में बनी चांद बावड़ी बहुत प्रसिद्ध है। इसमें पानी तक जाने के लिए सीढ़ियां बनी हैं। यह चौंसठ फुट गहरी है और कहा जाता है कि भारत की यह सबसे गहरी और विशाल बावड़ी है, जिसमें तेरह मंजिल हैं। बढ़ती मांग ने कुएं-बावड़ी की खुदाई की तकनीक में लगातार सुधार

किया। बीसवीं सदी में लोहे की आधुनिक मशीनों से कुएं-बावड़ी की खुदाई का काम शुरू हो गया, लेकिन अब कुएं खत्म होते जा रहे हैं।

सात-आठ साल पहले गांव के कुएं से जोड़ कर एक हैंडपंप लगा दिया गया था। राह चलते लोग भी आसानी से यहां पानी पी लेते थे। दरअसल, यह कुआं दो परिवारों की जमीन में आधा-आधा पड़ता हैं तो आधा-आधा बंट गया। अब हैंडपंप उखड़ चुका है। कुएं के आधे हिस्से को नए बने मकान ने ढक लिया है। संयुक्त परिवारों के विभाजन ने हमारे गांव में ही कई कुओं को समाप्त कर दिया। देश भर में कुओं की संख्या ऐसे ही घटती जा रही है, लेकिन उत्तरी कर्नाटक, मध्यप्रदेश, राजस्थान, गुजरात में अभी भी कुएं की महत्ता अधिक है। मेरे गांव में कई कुएं खत्म हो चुके हैं तो कुछ को इस हाल में छोड़ दिया गया है कि वे किसी काम के नहीं रहे।

पूर्वी उत्तर प्रदेश में 1990 के दशक में पहले घरों में हैंडपंप आए और फिर बिजली आने के बाद टंकी और जेट पंप लगने लगे। हमारे इलाके और गांव में ज्यादा पानी बटोर कर रखने का चलन नहीं था. लेकिन अब गांव में लोग छत पर प्लास्टिक की टंकी रखने लगे हैं। जो कुआं पानी से लबालब भरा रहता था, धीरे-धीरे उसका पानी नीचे दुनिया मेरे आगे

जाने लगा। लोग बिजली की

मोटर की मदद से ट्यूबवेल

और कुएं से पानी खींचने लगे! नौजवानों को नहीं पता चला कि कुआं भी बूढ़ा हो रहा है। कुएं के साथी. पीतल वाली गगरी और डोरी तो कब के चले गए। शायद ही किसी घर में पुराने गगरा-गगरी मिलें! अपने ही गांव में बाबा-आजी, काका-माई,अम्मा -पिताजी, घुरपत्तर कितने लोग स्मृति के पन्नों में समाहित हो गए। ऐसे में यह कुआं मेरे भरोसे और पुरखों की याद दिलाता हुआ अभी भी वहां खड़ा है। यह कुआं कम से कम सौ साल पहले बना हुआ

था। बाद में इसके किनारे गोलाई में पक्का चबृतरा बना। लोग इस चबूतरे पर बैठ कर बातें करते, नहाते, कपड़े और अनाज सुखाते। अब कुएं की

जगह मोटर और पानी की टंकी आ गए हैं। कुछ लोग गैलन का पानी खरीद कर पी रहे हैं। शादी-ब्याह और भोज में अब बोतल का पानी चलने लगा है। पुराने लोग, जिनके साथ कुएं का दाना-पानी, हल-बैल, गीत-गंवई के संबंध रहे हैं, उनमें से अधिकतर लोग गुजर गए। जो बुजुर्ग अभी भी मौजूद हैं, वे दुखी और लाचार हैं कि उनकी कोई नहीं सुनता। गांव में रह रहे मेरे एक भतीजे ने बताया कि आसपास के लोग कुएं में कूड़ा फेंकते ै हैं। जब मैंने झांक कर देखा तो कुएं में पानी नहीं दिखा। कूड़े का ढेर काफी ऊपर आ चुका था।

उसी दिन मुझे दिल्ली वापस आना था। ज्यादा समय नहीं था वहां रुकने के लिए। मेरे भीतर कुछ अजीब-सा महसूस हुआ। मेरे कानों में छपाक-छपाक कुछ बजने लगा, जैसे गगरी कुएं में पहुंच गई हो और कुआं यानी 'इनार' कह रहा हो- 'हम तो आपके कंधे से लिपट कर, रोकर अपना मन हल्का कर लेना चाहते हैं, क्योंकि आप बहुत दिनों के बाद आते हैं और शायद आप जब अगली बार आएं, तो मेरा कोई निशान ही यहां नहीं मिले।' सुविधाएं कैसे किसी समाज को इतना लापरवाह बना देती हैं कि वह उन बुनियाद को भी खत्म करने से नहीं हिचकता, जिन पर उसका जीवन टिका रहा।

## प्लास्टिक से आजादी

🎹 धानमंत्री ने देशवासियों से अपील की है कि वे महात्मा गांधी की 150वीं जयंती को भारत को प्लास्टिक मुक्त बनाने के दिवस के रूप में मनाएं। साथ ही उन्होंने नगर निकायों, गैर सरकारी संगठनों और कारपोरेट सेक्टर का आह्वान किया कि वह प्लास्टिक कचरे का दिवाली से पहले निस्तारण करने के लिए आगे आए। उन्होंने स्वतंत्रता दिवस पर भी देशवासियों से एक ही बार इस्तेमाल होने वाले प्लास्टिक का प्रयोग बंद करने का आह्वान किया था। केंद्र सरकार का प्लास्टिक से निपटने का यह प्रयास प्रशंसनीय ही नहीं सराहनीय भी है। असलियत यह है कि प्लास्टिक कचरे की समस्या से आज समूचा विश्व जूझ रहा है। इससे मानव ही नहीं बल्कि समूचा जीव-जंतु एवं पक्षी जगत तक प्रभावित है। यदि इस समस्या पर शीघ्र ही अंकुश नहीं लगाया गया तो आने वाले समय में स्थिति और विकराल हो जाएगी और तब इससे निपटना असंभव हो जाएगा।

गौरतलब है कि हमारे देश में हर साल 56 लाख टन प्लास्टिक कचरा निकलता है जिसमें से सिर्फ नौ हजार टन पुनर्चिक्रित (रिसाइकिल) हो पाता है। यही नहीं, छह हजार टन प्लास्टिक हर साल फेंका जाता है जो अंत में समुद्र में जाकर मिल जाता है। इससे समुद्री जीव-जंतओं का जीवन संकट में आ जाता है। केंद्रीय प्रदूषण नियंत्रण बोर्ड के अनुसार देश के अकेले चार महानगरों में से दिल्ली में 690 टन. चेन्नई में 429 टन, कोलकाता में 426 टन और मुंबई में 408 टन प्लास्टिक कचरा हर रोज फेंका जाता है जो कई सालों तक पर्यावरण में मौजूद रहता है।

प्लास्टिक से निपटने के मामले में हमारा देश बांग्लादेश, आयरलैंड, आस्ट्रेलिया और फ्रांस से भी पीछे है। बांग्लादेश ने तो अपने यहां 2002 में ही

प्लास्टिक पर प्रतिबंध लगा दिया था। कारण, वहां के उसकी हालत इतनी खराब कर दी है कि सिर्फ चीन को नाले प्लास्टिक के चलते जाम हो गए थे। आयरलैंड ने छोड़कर कोई अन्य बड़ा और प्रभावशाली देश उसकी प्लास्टिक बैग के इस्तेमाल पर अपने यहां 90 फीसद सुनने को भी तैयार नहीं है, खासकर मुसलिम देश। तक टैक्स लगा दिया है। ऑस्ट्रेलिया सरकार ने अपने नागरिकों से स्वेच्छा पूर्वक प्लास्टिक के इस्तेमाल में कमी लाने की अपील की। नतीजतन, वहां इसके इस्तेमाल में 90 फीसद की कमी आ गई। फ्रांस ने अपने यहां इसके इस्तेमाल पर 2002 से पाबंदी लगाने का काम शुरू किया जो 2010 तक पूरा हो गया। देर से ही सही, हमारी सरकार ने भी प्लास्टिक पर रोक लगाने पर विचार किया लेकिन इस अभियान में आम लोगों का सहयोग बेहद जरूरी है। लोगों को समझना

• राम मूरत 'राही', सूर्यदेव नगर, इंदौर

## सुरक्षा का सफर

भारतीय रेलवे दुनिया का तीसरा सबसे बड़ा नेटवर्क है। इससे औसतन रोजाना 2.3 करोड़ यात्री सफर करते हैं जो आस्ट्रेलिया जैसे देशों की जनसंख्या के लगभग बराबर है, अर्थात

प्रतिदिन एक ऑस्ट्रेलिया भारत की ट्रेनों में रहता है। लेकिन क्या

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

होगा कि प्लास्टिक का इस्तेमाल हमें कुछ पलों के लिए सह्लियत जरूर देता है। लेकिन कुछ पलों की सहलियत भविष्य के लिए बडा संकट है।

## • रोहित यादव, महर्षि दयानंद विवि, रोहतक आतक पर प्रहार

संयुक्त राष्ट्र महासभा के मंच से हमारे प्रधानमंत्री ने आतंकवाद पर न सिर्फ करारा प्रहार किया, बल्कि इसे प्रश्रय देने वालों की भी खिंचाई की। 2014 के पहले कोई देश आतंकवाद पर हमारी बातें सूनने के लिए तैयार नहीं होता था, खासकर अमेरिका। लेकिन यह मौजूदा प्रधानमंत्री के नेतृत्व का ही कमाल है कि आज सिर्फ अमेरिका नहीं बल्कि दुनिया भर के ज्यादातर देश हमारी बातें सुन रहे हैं और भारत का समर्थन भी कर रहे हैं। प्रधानमंत्री ने पाकिस्तान से जंग किए बिना ही

यह सफर पूरी तरह सुरक्षित है? हम सभी बगैर हकीकत को जाने-समझे 'मंगलमय यात्रा' की कामना करते हैं, लेकिन किसी अनहोनी से यात्रियों का विश्वास टूट जाता है। लगातार हादसों के बाद जांच समिति के गठन के बाद, बगैर हादसे की वजह की जांच के रेलगाड़ियां पुनः पटरी पर दौड़ने लगती हैं, और हादसे होते रहते हैं। कई लोको पायलट अपने केबिन में उच्च-स्तरीय सुविधाओं के अभाव में एक हाथ में छाता और दूसरे हाथ में रेल का संचालन बारिश के मौसम में करते देखे गए।

क्या यह यात्रा सुरक्षित है? कई ट्रेनों के इंजन में बरसात का पानी घुस जाता है। कभी आग तो कभी करंट लगने की आशंका बनी रहती है। कई इंजन खराब पड़े हैं, जिन्हें जल्दी ठीक करना होगा और ऐसे इंजन जो पूरी तरह खराब हैं उन्हें सेवा मुक्त कर देना

होगा। बड़ी संख्या में असामाजिक तत्त्व रेलगाड़ियों में आपराधिक वारदातों को अंजाम देते हैं। इसे रोकने के लिए रेलवे पुलिस और संपूर्ण रेल विभाग को यात्रियों का सुरक्षा को वरीयता देते हुए कठोर कदम उठाने होंगे और विशेष रणनीति के तहत कार्य करना होगा।

उम्मीद है कि सरकार रेल विभाग को और बेहतर बनाने के तमाम छोटे-बड़े प्रयास करेगी ताकि आने वाले समय में भारतीय रेल दुनिया का सबसे बड़ा होने के साथ सबसे सुरक्षित्नेटवर्क भी कहा जा सके।

किपल एम.विड्रियार, उत्तर पश्चिम रेलवे, जोधपुर

## सुधार का इतजार

सरकार को बुनियादी ढांचा क्षेत्र में निवेश के लिए खजाने का मुंह खोलना होगा। यह इसलिए जरूरी है ताकि इस निवेश का असर चाल वित्त वर्ष में ही महसूस हो और मंदी पर काबू पाया जा सके। यदि लगे तो राजकोषीय अनुशासन के मामले में कुछ छूट ली जा सकती है, लेकिन यह केवल बुनियादी ढांचा क्षेत्र में निवेश की शर्त पर हो। वैसे भी यह क्षेत्र शिद्दत से सुधार का इंतजार कर रहा है और इसमें अर्थव्यवस्था को व्यापक रूप से फायदा पहुंचाने की बहुत संभावनाएं हैं।

प्रधानमंत्री को संवाद स्थापित करने की कला में महारत हासिल है। अपने इस कौशल का उपयोग उन्हें सभी क्षेत्रों के उद्यमियों और निवेशकों का प्रत्येक मोर्चे पर हौसला बढ़ाने में करना होगा। उन्हें 'आधुनिक भारत का सपना' इस तबके के बीच लोकप्रिय बनाना होगा। इस साल पंद्रह अगस्त को उन्होंने लालकिले की प्राचीर से कहा था कि संपत्ति सृजित करने वालों का सम्मान करना चाहिए। प्रधानमंत्री को यह आश्वस्त करना होगा कि वास्तविक गलितयां और नुकसान स्वीकार्य होंगे और कानूनी ढंग से कमाई स्वागतयोग्य है।

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