### The soft power myth



**TICKER** 

**MIHIR SHARMA** 

as "soft power"

Traditionally, many have argued that it is a significant component of a nation-state's international influence. India, for example, has consistently emphasised soft power components of its international outreach

International Yoga Day being one of the most recent and high profile aspects of this

strategy, but Hindi movies have perhaps been the most long-standing component. No evaluation of Sino-American tensions going forward is complete without an analysis of how American soft power is a crucial aspect of its competitive arsenal.

But some recent developments make it clear that this narrative needs to be complicated. The United States' National Basketball Association or NBA has run into trouble following a statement by an official for the Houston basketball team that expressed support for the pro-democracy protestors in Hong Kong. There was an outcry in mainland China, and the NBA dissociated itself from the statement. One Chinese-origin owner of an NBA team — Joe Tsai, an early backer of Alibaba — managed to respond by linking the tweet to the Opium Wars in the nineteenth century. (Mainland Chinese nationalists can link anything to the Opium Wars, presumably because they have so little other reasons for a grievance against the world.) Subsequently, fans expressing pro-Hong Kong sentiments have reportedly been ejected from American sports games (basketball again, but this time in Philadelphia).

The NBA is very popular in mainland China. The traditional "soft power" assumption here would be that this means that American values of free speech and openness have a route into mainlanders' hearts thanks to their fondness for the NBA. But perhaps that traditional assumption is wrong — in fact, it might be the case that we need to do a full 180-degree turn, and wonder if it works in the opposite direction in some cases. When you rely on the private sector to project soft power, then, it is now becoming clear, the profit motive means that you are in fact providing a lever to other countries instead of extending the strength

Hollywood movies have long been subject to this phenomenon. During the Cold War, it was common to have movies that impacted on geopolitical issues in which the villains were related somehow to the Eastern bloc, or which expressed the Western bloc's values in clear contradistinction to those the Soviet Union might espouse. But you would struggle to imagine a similar movie made about mainland China in recent years. Now that it is a giant market for any big-budget movie, not a single value expressed through movies is likely to challenge the foundation of the Communist Party's authoritarian control. Worse, it will mean that studios bend over backward to indulge every single whim of the Chinese government or the most extreme of its hyper-nationalist online commenters. Earlier this year, when the trailer for the sequel to the 1980s classic Top Gun was released, the extent to which studios are willing to go became clear. In the original movie, Tom Cruise's leather jacket carried patches from the air forces of American allies, including Japan and Taiwan. In the sequel, the jacket was identical — except those patches were missing. Nothing underlines the cowardice of Hollywood more than the fact that it is willing even to compromise on a movie about courageous mayericks.

You think that's the deepest they're willing to go? Consider that the last reboot of *The Karate Kid* didn't have the protagonist practising karate at all. Nope, it was all kung fu, because karate is clearly too offensively Japanese for

What is truly ridiculous is that nobody imagines that power in the same way. NBA stars and managers can happily insult either Democratic or Republican parties, the president, the American system of government. Fans shouting "Help Puerto Rico" at a sports game are never going to be ejected. Hollywood constantly makes movies viciously attacking American political parties or big business or international finance. But Beijing's authoritarian power or its irredentist impulses would not be challenged in the same way. An outspoken Houston basketball star, who created headlines in the past by speaking out about police violence against African-Americans, on this occasion said "we love everything they're (China) about". The contrast could not be more stark.

Soft power is supposed to be about the ability to proiect values. But it turns out that the only people who are successfully projecting their values on to the rest of the world using American soft power are the mainland Chinese. Only money matters. That's the hardest power of all.

## Passport and patriotism

My Indian passport has many disadvantages. But it's me



WHERE MONEY TALKS

SUNANDA K DATTA-RAY

assports are a hateful token of the politicisation of a fractured world, symbolising the elevation of petty national sovereignty above universalism that explains Brexit. There's a sense of utter finality, too, about the booklet I have just collected from India House in London for it will in all probability be my last passport. I said so casually to the cheerfully scruffy but very helpful consular assistant who was horrified. "You mustn't say such things!" he exclaimed in Hindi, "and during the puja too in Kolkata!"

My old passport, which has now been cancelled although it could have run to midNovember, was also issued in London. India's deputy high commissioner in Singapore was responsible for the one before. I had forgotten the man until half-way through a diplomatic occasion in another part of the world it suddenly dawned on me that he had once been my benefactor. Unusual for an Indian bureaucrat, he had been too polite to mention the debt. I say debt because in the bad old days before Maneka Gandhi's plea established a citizen's right to a passport, successive passport officers in India made one feel like a grovelling applicant for illicit favours. One incumbent hinted that a reciprocal gesture would not be amiss.

He dismissed my existing passport, also issued in London, as a document of convenience given only because the government in its compassion didn't want to leave an Indian abroad unprotected. Now that I was back, my financial, educational, political, professional and social credentials would be scrutinised before deciding if I was a fit person for the President of the Republic of India to accept responsibility for me. The police, too, were on the take. Groups of them turned up night after night for free drinks and dinner at a Chinese restaurant whose owner and his family were waiting for passports to emigrate. Of course, there were and are many much more serious abuses by both the authorities and VIPs like the Indian tycoon who mistakenly pulled out his second passport, a Swiss one, at a five-star hotel reception. But those are beyond my ken.

My worst passport memory is from Dhaka's dingy Lalbagh police station way back in 1965 when I had to pay several visits to ancestral Brahmanbaria in what was then East Pakistan. Deplaning in Dhaka, one had to rush to register at Lalbagh as the law demanded before boarding the Green Arrow train for Chittagong. There was always a pile of red India-Pakistan travel passports to be cleared, and the police officer on duty always shoved my blue passport to the bottom of the heap. Each time he came to it, he would again put it last and continue with the red passports while I gnawed my nails in anxiety for fear of missing the train. Once I made so bold as to hesitantly draw his attention to my dilemma and received such a snarl and a shouted order that I retreated in terror. East Pakistan is now Bangladesh. The police registration requirement has gone. But has the mind behind the law, the attitude that shaped it, changed?

I once bumped into Mother Teresa wandering around Bangkok airport looking lost. Offering to help her check in, I asked if she had a white passport and she produced one that was red, explaining, "The Indian government has very kindly given me this diplomatic passport." At the Air India counter, where I also checked in, she was, of course, instantly recognised, lionised and upgraded. Some time later, she appeared on the spiral stairs leading down from business — or first class looking for me. She wanted to know what a white passport was. When I explained it was an official passport, she murmured, "Thank you. That will be very useful for my sisters who have to bring back medicines and things", and went back to her business - or first class — abode.

I have often been asked in the 65 years that I have travelled continuously (not counting a family visit to Brahmanbaria in prepassport 1949 when we all had single-sheet India-Pakistan travel papers) why I didn't acquire a British passport. The answer isn't any lofty patriotism. The answer is that I would have been embarrassed to plonk down the royal coat of arms (or the American eagle for that matter) on a third country's immigration counter. It would have seemed like impersonation. My Indian passport has many disadvantages. But it's me. Being for 10 years, the new one will last out

**LUNCH WITH BS** ▶ AMRUTA FADNAVIS | BANKER, SINGER & SOCIAL ACTIVIST

## A life of her own

**Fadnavis** talks to **Pavan Lall** about her vision of India, getting trolled online, and her views on what it would take to fix the country's infrastructure

hen one holds a public office, enduring the vicissitudes of fame are par for the course. For the spouse of a VIP, however, such an existence can include exhilarating pros and unimagined cons. That's something Amruta Fadnavis, wife of Maharashtra Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis, has learned to come to terms with — and as some would say — the hard way.

Our lunch venue is at the sprawling Varsha Bungalow, the Chief Minister's official and imposing residence in the heart of Malabar Hills complete with gun-toting security personnel, patrol cars and the accompanying bureaucracy. As we meet during the Ganpati festivities, the menu will be vegetarian, I am told. En route to the dining hall, I am greeted by my hostess, who at first appearance could easily be mistaken for a TV soap star and at 40 may well be among the youngest in her position.

She was born to parents based in Nagpur. Her father, Sharad Ranade, was an ophthalmologist, and her mother, Charulata Ranade, a gynaecologist. Her early years were spent learning music, playing tennis and assisting her parents in social projects that included free eye check-up camps for the underserved. She is emphatic that her performance in the classroom was remarkable. "It was always first or second in school, nothing else,' she says. Was that because of an unbridled love for academics? "No it's because I am very competitive," comes the answer with a slow-spreading smile.

Our thalis, made of an alloy of nine different metals, arrive along with glasses of water and extras. It's a colourful medley of classic Marathi fare that includes dal, a cabbage preparation, spiced sovbean, green beans and vogurt. Fadnavis is served a mixed green salad speckled with red pomegranate grains. I throw her a quizzical look. "Too many sweets, too much eating out the last few days," is the explanation.

So what's it like to be a VIP's wife? I see a smile appear. "It's easier to get things done quickly. Every door opens, you always get a reception, and the associated respect and prestige is wonderful." she says. The downside? Her life is always under public glare. "I get trolled online for singing - which is my hobby; I'm actually mocked," she laments. For the record, while Fadnavis counts Asha Bhosle and Lata Mangeshkar as her all-time favourites, she also experiments with Toni Braxton and Celine Dion ballads.

And then there are the barbs. Only recently, social media was rife with speculation that Axis Bank, where she's worked for the last decade, was on an account-opening spree for police officers. The suggestion was the accounts were awarded to Axis because of her husband's position. Fadnavis, vice-president and corporate head for West India at Axis Bank, says those accounts were opened several years ago - well before her husband became chief minister. Then she shrugs as if to say those are things you can do precious little about.

Before coming to Mumbai, Fadnavis got a BCom degree from the GS College of Commerce & Economics in Nagpur and then an MBA in finance from Symbiosis College in Pune. After that she joined Axis Bank in 2003 as an executive trainee. Then, around 2005, she was introduced to her husband-to-be by her parents through some common friends. "The marriage was completely arranged with horoscopes being compared and all." After a couple of months or so of knowing each other the couple decided to take the plunge.

Was two months long enough time to take a decision of a lifetime? "At the time Deven Devendra) was a second-time MLA from Nagpur West and we knew nothing about politics but had heard that he used his position for a lot of social work and bringing about change, which resonated with my parents and me," she says, adding that she made it clear from day one that she would not be tied to the kitchen by her apron strings and would have a life of her own. "He was okay with that," Fadnavis says.

She has actually built a life of her own. In recent years, Fadnavis has walked the ramp in New York as a showstopper to promote the cause of young girls, has sung with Amitabh Bachchan, adopted two villages to help modernise them, worked with acid attack victims and even won awards for playback singing. "I'm a different person when I'm on stage,"

I take a bite of a crisp roti and scoop up



some green vegetables. They're not oily but have a fiery after-kick. I try the dal which is similarly punchy. Seconds later, waiters magically appear to replace empty segments on my plate. I realise this is a trap and that the thali will never be over unless I dismiss the waiters once and for all.

What irks Fadnavis about India? Her

answer would match that of any young urban educated professional, expect she has an inside track. "It's clearly the poor infrastructure and heavy traffic but I can tell you that new project files have been cleared, work has started and those things will make a difference when completed."

Part of the problem is that all the talent in this part of the nation ends up in Mumbai. Decentralising the city and developing satellite towns is one solution. For example, moving government offices to townships nearby would reduce the incoming traffic to certain pockets of the city. "Cities need more parks. There ought to be a park five or 10 minutes from all homes," she adds. The other issue she feels strongly about is farmer suicides. People killing themselves for ₹25,000 is frustrating, she says. "We have to create systems where landlords can't push people to their deaths because that perpetuates a cycle. Children of such people also go ahead and commit suicide," she says, adding, efforts are on to change things around. She then talks about scientific farming and a water conservation scheme named Jalyukt Shivar Abhiyan that aims to make Maharashtra a drought-free state

I'm done with my lunch and taste a little bit of the gulab jamun placed in front of me. "That's homemade... from Nagpur," she says. When will India's political parties come together for a common vision instead of adopting a winner takes all approach designed to obliterate the Opposition? "There's a reason for that and you have to ask what is the driver of politics? Ask any young person who wants to get into it and the real reason will be fame, money and power — not to bring about empowered change in the society issue is that we have just too many political parties in the system, not to mention extremities of wealth, she adds.

A growing concern is that India is staring at a protracted economic slowdown. Is that something that concerns the banker in her? We are in a down cycle and there are liquidity issues, and there is a definite slowdown that is more pronounced in some sectors than others — namely, real estate, manufacturing. More liquidity ought to ease the stress and it's important to realise that this is a cycle and that it will get better."

What is that one wish the chief minister's wife has? "I wish for India to be a super power but with compassion, without losing our core values and while keeping tolerance in place.'

That's a platform that might have a political

### History keeper of Beni Ka Purwa



PEOPLE LIKE THEM

GEETANJALI KRISHNA

am increasingly fascinated by 'lived' oral histories, especially, the ones told to me by people who have been on this planet for almost a century. Some time ago, while in Beni Ka Purwa, a tiny hamlet in UP's Banda district, I met 95-year-old Mulia Devi. Bent double but surprisingly spry, she'd just finished cleaning the village temple when we saw each other. She invited me to sit with her in the shady courtyard. I did and she rewarded me with

Mulia Devi came to Beni Ka Purwa (named after her late husband) as a 12year-old bride. She recalled with precision when each tree was planted, and

every pond or well dug in the village. Sadly, she could also chronicle the demise of each big tree and the drying up of every single village well and pond. Listening to her, I realised she wasn't just the village's history keeper — she was also a living chronicle of its transformation from being a waterabundant area to one now known for its crippling summer drought.

'When I arrived in this village, all one had to do was dig a two-foot trench and groundwater would pool in," she said, her fingers busy on rosary beads. The pond across the temple had water all year round. "Over 30 years ago, my family had a well made next to it," she said. "When the well was being dug, there was so much water at 24-feet that they couldn't dig any deeper." Not far from it, there was a larger pond. "It was deep enough for an elephant to drown," she recalled. With the increasing pressure of population and the consequent need for more land and water, the two ponds started drying up in the summer about 10 years ago. "The land just couldn't keep up with the thirst of the growing population," she said. "Only the pond in front of the temple remains; the bigger pond has long gone and houses have been built over it now," she said.

Small farmers aren't able to till their

land anymore because of water scarcity. "People seem poorer than they used to be though paradoxically, they have more money than their fathers did." she said.

It began to rain and Mulia Devi commented that a good monsoon could breathe new life into the trees and wells in the village. For, every successive drought has resulted in the demise of the trees her husband and father-inlaw planted decades ago. Mulia Devi pointed to a depression on the banks of the pond. "A huge neem tree stood here, planted when I came here as a bride over 80 years ago," she said. 'When it fell, I felt an old friend had died." With the gradual demise of old trees, she said as she hobbled over to offer prayers at the base of an ancient peepal, the villagers lost much more than the shade they provided. "The death of every tree eroded the soul of the village," she said.

Mulia Devi has also noticed that over the last few years, people are digging more and more tube wells in the village. "The more the number of tube wells, the less the amount of water there seems to be," she said. "In the same way, the more the number of people in my village, the lonelier I feel now that my generation is almost entirely gone."

## With friends like these...



PEOPLE LIKE US

**KISHORE SINGH** 

f vou're known by the company you keep then ours hasn't been particularly salubrious. Among our motley friends are gasbags, kleptomaniacs, pretenders and charlatans. There are those who've pinched our ideas, jobs and friends. We've been asked out for dinner to a restaurant but left to pay the bill on some flimsy pretext. Our cars have been borrowed and returned battered and bruised. Some have asked for loans of clothes, others of furnishings, some even our home for setting up meetings with prospective suitors for their children whose weddings we haven't been invited to.

"I like maverick people," I've explained to my children when they've held them up as examples of people not to fraternise with. (Truth is, I find it difficult to pass moral judgement on others.) "You don't give up on people simply because of some tiny flaw," I've explained to them. Only to be reminded of the time one "forgot" to return a considerable sum of money he'd borrowed on the promise of returning it the following day. Another was found lurking in the neighbourhood bushes after inviting us home, to be informed by his wife that they weren't in the mood to entertain that evening, and slamming the door on our face. Or the night that a neighbour asked to be allowed home to watch the World Cup on our television because his TV was bust, then asked his friends over, who helped themselves to our bar

and left the home trashed. There are some we've supped with, or had a drink or coffee with — often as a professional courtesy — who are cooling their heels in judicial custody in London, Mumbai or New Delhi. It's enough to cause you to lose faith in mankind. Those are the ones who flew too close to the sun, but our intimate circle is less prone to such grand malarkey, more likely to pinch hotel towels than shareholders' wealth.

The proof of our pilferage is confined to the odd toilet roll, ashtray or salt-andpepper set — pinched with confidence rather than guilt. There has been the occasional robe too, but only when the hotel has helpfully initialled it with the letters of one's name, making recycling impossible. I don't really like the slippers provided in hotel rooms, so I've never had the urge to pick those up — but my wife has managed to save a set of fruit plates purloined one visit at a time from her hotel room, when buying a dozen might have been simpler — and less expensive.

And what does one make of an acquaintance - my wife's - who, when invited to spend an evening with us, left behind a large gift bag which, when opened after she had left post several hugs and endearments, turned out to consist of several years' assiduous collecting of hotel pickings — soaps, shampoos, conditioners and moisturisers? At a loss, my wife did the only sensible thing promptly shared the spoils with the staff. A seasoned thief when it comes to pinching plants from her varied circle of friends, she stands vigil when her kitty gang visits to ensure they don't return the compliment. Unfortunately, she isn't always on her guard when inside the home — which is why we don't know who made off with the cutlery at the last party. Be warned: She'll be watching closely when we visit next.

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### WEEKEND RUMINATIONS

T N NINAN

### Privatisation to the rescue

he idea of the moment is privatisation. Railway stations and trains, airports, the Container Corporation, Shipping Corporation, completed highway projects, Air India, Bharat Petroleum — all of them and more are to be put on the block. And we're talking not disinvestment but real privatisation, with change of control — last delivered by Arun Shourie in the Vaipavee government. Narendra Modi, it would seem, is finally going to act on his stated position that the business of government is

There may be other motivations. For instance, to rebuild the government's reputation for positive action, since the view has gained ground that the 2016 demonetisation and the flawed goods and services tax have been responsible to some degree for the economic slowdown. Another objective may be to simply close a widening fiscal gap. The government has been announcing one new spending programme after another, and one tax giveaway after another. As the bill has got bigger, tax revenue has fallen short. Money has to be found from somewhere, lest the fiscal gap become embarrassing. The Reserve Bank of India has been made to cough up a one-time transfer but that won't be enough. Privatisation could therefore be handy — except that, with less than half the financial year to go, much of the announced sale of government assets is unlikely to be done by March-end.

Regardless, privatisation is welcome. Fiscal purists would quarrel with the idea of selling assets to pay for current expenditure — such as the payout to farmers and the health insurance programme, for the obvious reason that the process cannot go on forever. At some point, the list of assets available for sale will run out. But that is a distant prospect just now, and on the positive side one must reckon on the systemic benefits of a better use of assets in private hands, and/or better service, which is the real logic of privatisation.

Will it work? Yes, if unlike with Air India the last time round, the government puts out sensible terms for sale or lease. As for who might buy, it is true that most domestic business houses are still in de-leveraging mode, the focus being on reducing debt. Also, many established businessmen find their ability to invest badly eroded by bankruptcy proceedings, or by shares pledged against loans being sold at rock-bottom prices. Anil Ambani, the Ruia brothers, Subhash Chandra, and others have all suffered on this account, while Gautam Thapar and the ex-Ranbaxy Singh brothers are among those who have seen a loss of both financial as well as social capital. On the other hand, corporate de-leveraging over the past few years has reached a point where quite a few companies are sitting on large amounts of cash or have headroom for taking on more debt, but are not investing because of the consumption slowdown. The chance to enter new businesses or buy quality assets may induce them to open their cheque books. Besides which, there could be some international interest.

All this comes with political risk. The RSS chief has sounded a warning on some aspects of policy, and there are stirrings of unrest among trade unions. The Modi government is strong enough to over-ride such resistance, but it should be aware of reputation risk. Privatisation in many countries, including India, has come arm-linked with controversy. The risks get heightened when decisions on complex financial questions about long-term leases are rushed through in a hurry, without mandatory consultations — something already aired in connection with the lease of airports to the Adani group.

Meanwhile, it is not clear why the focus is on entities in the transport sector. While the privatisation drive is masterminded by the Prime Minister's Office and NITI Aayog, it could be that two dynamic ministers are in charge of most of transport: Nitin Gadkari and Piyush Goyal. But that is no reason for not taking a hard look at the more difficult choices facing state-owned entities in other sectors — specifically the loss-ridden telecom twins that have no hope of viability, and government banks, which have already swallowed up an unconscionable ₹2 trillion of taxpayer money in the past five years.

## The ghost of Swadeshinomics

RSS's economic philosophy laid out by Mohan Bhagwat runs contrary to Modi government's recent policies. And it is unlikely to prevail

he *Sarsanghchalak*, as the Rashtriya Swayamsewak Sangh (RSS) calls its chief, makes his equivalent of the State of the Union address on Dussehra at the organisation's headquarters in Nagpur. It always makes some news, but more so now that the BJP is in power, in its second term, with a bigger majority than in the first. Also, when this government is delivering what are considered the RSS's "core concerns": Scrapping of Article 370 in Kashmir, the Uniform Civil Code (UCC), and the Ram Mandir in Ayodhya.

The chief for a decade now, Mohan Bhagwat made more news than usual this year because he waded into the issue of lynching and his definition of who's a Hindu and who's an Indian — both necessarily synonymous His arguments on both issues were contentious and drew much attention, some in criticism and, among his faithful, in appreciation. In the process, a very significant issue that he dwelt on at great length was missed. That's what we are exploring more critically today.

It will be useful if you listened to just some parts of that 63-minute speech again — just the first minute,

and then about 14 minutes from 28:00 to 42:00, laying out his economic philosophy. The key lies in what comes in the very introductory seconds. He begins by mentioning the important anniversaries of two most eminent and venerated Indians - Guru Nanak Dev (550th anniversary) and Mahatma Gandhi (150th). I do not believe many outside the RSS-BJP ecosystem, or those who follow and study Indian politics closely, would be so familiar with the third — Dattopant Thengadi — whose centenary year, he noted, would begin soon (November 10).

That name may not ring a bell. And certainly, he wasn't somebody in the same league as Guru Nanak and Gandhi for anyone, not even the RSS. But he was important enough to find a mention alongside the other two. That it was no insignificant platitude or a passing flourish becomes evident once you hear the second part of those 14 minutes carefully.

Born in Wardha, not far from Nagpur, in 1920, Thengadi was one of the modern (post-Independence) founding fathers (it isn't politically incorrect to use that here) of the RSS and the ideology of its political offspring in both its avatars, the Bharatiya Jana Sangh (BJS) and Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) now. His area of interest was the economy. His thought has defined the economic worldview of the RSS more than any other, especially in the past 30 years, or generally when India began opening up its economy.

 $T^{
m hengadi}$  was a fellow traveller of Atal Bihari Vajpayee. Both formed the Bharatiya Mazdoor Sangh (BMS), the labour arm of the RSS, together in Bhopal in 1955. They also fought bitterly and unforgivingly during the six years of the Vajpayee government. On the economy, Thengadi was the biggest thorn in his side, opposing all his decisions, especially



the privatisation of public sector undertakings (PSUs), reduction in import tariffs, and opening up to foreign direct investment (FDI).

At one point, he demanded the head of Yashwant Sinha, then leading the reform push as finance minister. Vajpayee resisted for a year, but eventually gave in. Thengadi had real power within the "sangathan"

> (organisation) as BJP/RSS people often describe themselves collectively. He also detested Arun Shourie. He likely celebrated when a Supreme Court judgment harking back to old Socialist mindsets, ruled that it was mandatory to seek a parliamentary vote before selling any PSU. It stopped Mr Shourie in his tracks. Important to note in today's context that this happened exactly when the Vajpayee government had put the two big oil-marketing companies — Hindustan Petroleum Corporation and Bharat Petroleum Corporation (BPCL) — on the block.

Thengadi's wasn't a lone voice. His first child, BMS, rotested against the Vajpayee reform era, often louder than the Left and the Congress-affiliated Indian National Trade Union Congress, and grew in strength. Meanwhile, he had formed two more powerful pressure groups: The Bharatiya Kisan Sangh (BKS) in 1979 for farmers, and Swadeshi Jagaran Manch (SJM) – which we are all more familiar with today — in 1991. Remember that year, 1991? When the big Narasimha Rao-Manmohan Singh reform was launched? The SJM subsequently built a national voice and stature by opposing globalisation of trade, beginning with what was called the Dunkel Draft. KN Govindacharya, then the customary RSS man in the BJP as general secretary, was its most prominent spokesman.

By the end of Vajpayee's tenure, the relationship between the two had deteriorated visibly. Often, when a modern new idea was mentioned, Vajpayee would say with a smirk something like "arrey bhai, Thengadi ji ko kaun sambhalega... (who will manage Thengadi now)". But it was in spite of that bitter fight that Vajpayee cleared Bt cotton seeds. In 16 years under Manmohan Singh and Narendra Modi, not one new seed has been cleared.

The fight ended in 2004. In May Vajpayee lost By special arrangement with ThePrint

power. Later that year, on October 14, Thengadi passed away. Probably with the satisfaction that the new UPA government, controlled by the Left, had dumped privatisation forthwith and launched a flurry of welfare schemes of just the kind he would have wanted.

Now that we know more about Thengadi, whom the Sarsanghchalak listed among eminences like Guru Nanak Dev and Mahatma Gandhi, we can translate the 14 minutes on the economy in his annual sermon better.

Quick summary: There's an economic crisis, but don't make too much of it. Why paint the devil on the wall? GDP isn't the only measure of growth. Crack down on corruption, but don't victimise the innocent. We believe in Swadeshi, but that doesn't mean we say isolate yourselves. Trade is global but we should buy only what we cannot make and need. Why import even cow semen from a Brazilian hybrid developed with an Indian native? Use Swadeshi. He then talks about how exports are good, imports are bad, the RSS principle of frugality, buying only what you must, protecting what you make from competition, and so on

Some of it isn't exact translation but my faithful interpretation. Then he comes to FDI. Again, paraphrased: Foreigners can invest but learn from countries that insist on one domestic board member with veto rights. So, foreigners own the shares but power is with our government. On the other hand, see what's happening. Our (new) companies are seen to be owned and run by Indians, but once you look deeper, shareholding is with the Chinese. This is classical

It also runs contrary to many of the recent moves and promises of the Modi government as it battles India's gravest economic downturn since 2008. It is opening more areas to FDI, negotiating new trade arrangements, especially with America, and the Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership closer to the region. It has also announced massive privatisation as the mood-lifter for the economy and a plasma transfusion for the fisc. Both, trade deals and PSU sales, are being opposed by the SJM, as are new agricultural, especially seed technologies.

On each front, the Modi government has made moves in the opposite direction: What would make Vajpayee smile and Thengadi frown. You know what, the biggest PSU put on the block now, BPCL, is exactly what Vajpayee had been thwarted from selling in 2003. We can also see it isn't something Mr Modi thought of just now. Buried in the 187 obsolete laws repealed in a 2016 mass-cull was also the 1976 Act passed under Indira Gandhi to nationalise MNC Burmah Shell and rename it BPCL.

We can't say as yet if, by holding forth on Swadeshi economics in such detail, Mr Bhagwat is showing his intent to fight back again. It is unlikely, given the power differential between Vajpayee and the current prime minister. But not impossible. Our hope: An ideology has yet to be discovered which might even believe that the best way to get out of a hole, especially of the kind India's economy has fallen into, is to keep digging deeper.

### There's a lot in a name



**DEVANGSHU DATTA** 

wo of my friends have strong social media presences. Both have a largeish follower counts on and Instagram Facebook. Their timelines are toxic for the same peculiar reason. They are targets of abuse from strangers.

This is because one shares his name with that of the chief executive officer (CEO) of a large airline, while the other has the same name as the CEO of a large online retailer. Airlines and online retailers are consumer- individuals. It doesn't seem to

standards and this usually leads

offloaded in Port Blair as he flies when the group was first under to Chandigarh, the airline CEO's namesake is tagged by the affected passengers. Anytime there's a problem with delivery, or there's some issue with some product sold by the retailer, the retail CEO's namesake is tagged by customers. The messages are always angry and rarely polite. It can descend into personal threats, and some of the abuse

Both of them (they know each other) have to live with this. They have ALL CAP disclaimers on their social media profiles clearly stating they are not the individuals with whom they share their names. They also have mugshots up there, indicating receive in error are often from that they are entirely different facing organisations. There are matter — angry customers and to share the most fetching

sometimes lapses in their service passengers abuse them anyway! Another of my friends has to loud screams on social media. had to take his share of social Actually going by the volume of media lumps because he has abuse received by my friends, the same name as the CEOsuch lapses happen quite often. founder of the Sahara Group. Anytime a flight is delayed, He actually contemplated or some passenger's luggage is changing his name by deed poll

was incarcerated.

I have actually been the beneficiary of a much more benign version of coincidence of nomenclature. I too have a namesake, and friend, who is well-known in the fashion and retail industry. Indeed, the pair of us ended up getting friendly because we kept receiving messages meant for the other person. This continues to happen and it includes essential stuff like telephone bills. It also includes Facebook "friend

investigation, and when the CEO

meant for the other person. Given the industry he inhabits, the Facebook requests I aspiring models. This is where the benefits accrue. Models tend

requests" and professional emails

images in their portfolios.

stick. He is regularly abused by occasionally gets embarrassing- representing a fringe Bengali ly personal emails from old chauvinistic outfit, the "Amra friends of mine, cit-

ing incidents from Social media must be my murky past in gory detail.

Interestingly, ite a few of the models who wanted to get up-close and personal with him have stayed in touch with me, even after I clarified that I wasn't the person they wanted. They continue to send me updates about their

careers. I'm not complaining enquiries about his suddenly about this scattershot approach developing an affection for the to networking and career-building, but I do find it rather odd.

All of us have a "form letter" stating that messages, FB requests, etc., have been made to the wrong person. My namesake and I have also developed a habit of filtering, and passing on, seems important stuff.

My father had a brief, intense Unfortunately for my name- version of this problem back in sake, he gets the short end of the 1980. A namesake of his, an academic, stood for elections from people, who disagree with my Jadavpur constituency, in what journalistic opinions. He also was then Calcutta. This gent was

**NATIONAL INTEREST** 

SHEKHAR GUPTA

Bangali" Party. My father was absolute hell for then a professor at anybody, who shares his/her name with a

prominent politician

Indeed, there could

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University. People ly enough, that he was the politician. Thankfully, this was pre social collated and analysed media. But we had the impact of naming to field many strange phonecalls. Friends and acquaintances

also made puzzled cause of Bengali chauvinism.

Social media must be absolute hell for anybody, who shares his/her name with a prominent politician. Indeed, there could be some interesting insights, for any social scientist who collated and analysed the impact of naming coincidences on the lives of ordinary people.

### The Pakistani laureate

### **EYE CULTURE**

CHINTAN GIRISH MODI

**→** hen diplomats in India and Pakistan have made it their tility. The proxy war might be profitable for the global military industrial complex, but it has had debilitating consequences for individuals sharing cultural affinities that borders cannot erase.

As the ones holding the reins tighten their grip, others rise up to resist. Artists have always found ways to collaborate even though the visa regime conspires to eliminate contact between Indians and Pakistanis. Not only are they enabled by social media but many of them have opporfunities to meet in a third country away from the cartographic anxieties of nation states threatened by cultural exchange.

The latest Indo-Pak venture that celebrates this desire to overcome barriers is a documentary titled Salam: The First \*\*\*\*\*\* Nobel Laureate, which is now available on Netflix. It is directed by Anand Kamalakar, who was born and raised in India but lives in New York, and produced by Omar Vandal and Zakir Thaver, who grew up in Pakistan and moved to the US for their higher education. This film pays tribute to a Pakistani scientist named Abdus Salam (1926-1996), who was awarded the Nobel Prize for Physics in 1979.

Such an honour is rare, and he was acutely aware of this as a Muslim man from a so-called Third World country working in a predominantly white and Eurocentric universe that looked in a patronising manner at people like himself. Unfortunately, Pakistan did not care as much about his commitment to his faith. Under the dictatorship of General Zia-ul-Haq, it became an Islamic Republic which persecuted the Ahmadivva community that Salam was part of. Ahmadis were forbidden from calling themselves Muslims because they did not consider Muhammad as the last prophet.

The genocide of Ahmadis in Pakistan has come up for discussion in global human rights forums but the volume of reporting has remained abysmally low. This film will hopefully change that. The fact that Salam had helped set up Pakistan's nuclear programme did not earn him any brownie points with the religious extremists, and he felt compelled to live in Europe

where he could pursue his life's calling unafraid of being killed for calling himself a Muslim.

He enjoyed tremendous professional success but was heartbroken priority to shame each oth- by the fact that he had to leave his er on the international stage, the country. It was a wound that festered work of making peace is left to the in his heart until the very end. people of both countries. What they Though he could not reside in seek is not a political office but an Pakistan, he wanted to be buried opportunity to end decades of hos- there after his death. This wish was fulfilled. Unfortunately, those who carried hate in their hearts would not let him rest in peace even after he died. Salam was the world's first Muslim Nobel laureate but the word 'Muslim' was defaced from his gravestone. That is why the title of the film replaces the word with \*\*\*\*\*\*.

Salam wanted to stay connected to his roots, and to give back. He dedicated much of his time, expertise and resources towards establishing the International Centre for Theoretical Physics in Trieste, where young scientists from Pakistan and elsewhere in the Global South could pursue their research interests in a supportive environment and engage in dialogue with peers from all over the world. After stepping down as an advisor to the government of Pakistan, he became a strong advocate for nuclear disarmament. He also visited India. Amidst the rich archival material used in this film is a video clip featuring Salam wherein he is asked to give a message to politicians. "First of all, they should get rid of nuclear weapons," he said.

Whether India and Pakistan are willing to listen is anyone's guess especially when the leadership on both sides is not only uninspiring and jingoistic but caught up in meaningless gestures of one-upmanship that do not benefit their citizens in the least. Salam was born in pre-partition India. He knew of a time when the two countries did not exist as separate entities carved out of bloodshed and barbed wire. While the film does not explore his thoughts on the Partition of 1947, Salam did witness that horrific chapter of history which was drenched in communal discord.

Decades after the violence that broke out under the watch of the British, India and Pakistan are still locked into a conflict that is influenced by religious extremists. The value placed on scientific temper and critical enquiry is on the decline. It is in this context that Salam is an extremely relevant film. It encourages viewers to question state-sanctioned narratives and sectarian violence but also refrain from whitewashing Salam into a hero without any flaws. Watch the film to learn more.

## Identity and separatism



LINE AND LENGTH

T C A SRINIVASA-RAGHAVAN

government says Kashmir is now open to tourists. That's good. After all. it's now more than two months since the Modi government further rendered the provisions of Article 370 ineffective and, in a Colin Powellesque move of "shock and awe", turned the state of Jammu and Kashmir into a union territory.

Kashmiri Muslims have been outraged but silenced. Pakistan has been mewling like a cat stranded on a tree. China, the global exemplar of human rights, has been growling to pacify Pakistan. Indian liberals who have been taken in by the hearts the rest of regional identities

weeping gently, mourning for the has been the Kashmiri contribulost liberalism of Article 370.

All this is in accordance with

What is not, however, is the response of the Kashmiri Hindus, who were so mercilessly kicked out of the Valley in 1990. They had been left to fend for themselves by successive central governments, which thought this was nasty but quite ok.

I have a lot of Kashmiri Hindu friends and my brother's wife is a Kashmiri Hindu. They are very happy but have also been stressing the need to preserve the Kashmiri identity, whatever it is. That is their right and it should not cause offence.

But what I cannot understand is why they think their identity is somehow more important than any other Indian identity, or superior. What's so special about it?

Two questions arise from this. One, why has this belief persisted and strengthened over 70 years when almost all other non-tribal regional identities have receded; and two, should these self-important notions be ignored just as

and minds arguments have been were, or be pandered to? What tion to India after 1947?

The answer to the first question is clear. Separateness and identity got fused because of Article 370, on which Jawaharlal Nehru had insisted.

But the answer to the second question is unclear because of a very simple thing: While Nehru's solution was to a political problem, the identity issue is a sociological one. And sociology is not uni-dimensional. It is very hard to tackle.

There is the added complication: The Kashmiri Hindu identity was always quite distinct from the Kashmiri Muslim one. It's become even more so now.

This is the problem that needs resolving. The experience of Tamil

Nadu offers some hints. It took half a century there — from 1918. when the Dravidian Justice Party was formed, to 1967, when its successor, the DMK, came to power — for it to be resolved. It consisted of a peaceful acquisition of power by the majority.

Had Kashmir been given a similar opportunity — instead of

had the primary-secondary identity problem now. It would have been primary identity Indian, secondary identity Kashmiri.

### The Tamil solution

What Tamil Nadu and Kashmir have in common is that in both places the minority was disproportionately powerful. Few people acknowledge it but at its core the Tamil Nadu problem Modus vivendi between the Brahmins and the rest was one of power.

In Kashmir the Hindus held most of the land and the accompanying political power, while the Muslims were the peasants and powerless. In 1935 it was the Hindus who persuaded the Maharaja to exclude all non-Kashmiris from owning land in Kashmir. That law eventually came back to bite them in their backside.

In Tamil Nadu, in contrast, the Brahmins were insignificant as landlords. But they held social and administrative power. Their power was based on their ability to exclude. It was, if you like, the club approach to power.

has now been pretty much evicted because the Brahmins, despite being a minority, constituting no more than 4-5 per cent of the pop-

In Tamil Nadu the minority

Article 370 — we would not have ulation, were the ones who were socially powerful. Today they are less than 2 per cent. The liberals don't seem to mind very much.

This eviction was achieved by economic and administrative means comprising constitutionally and judicially mandated reservations in jobs and education. In Kashmir, however, the eviction was violent.

of Tamil Nadu have found a modus vivendi where both fiercely defend their Tamil identities — together. But barring some nut cases, they have no love for separateness.

In Kashmir it's the opposite. Separateness fully defines the Kashmiri Muslim. There is no place for the Hindus or even other Indians

It would be highly optimistic to think the Tamil solution can be repeated in Kashmir. It's too late for that now because Article 370 in its coming, living, and dving, too, has rendered the Valley a mental wasteland where a Kashmiri Muslim has no clue what he or she wants: To become a Pakistani, to remain Indian, or become independent.

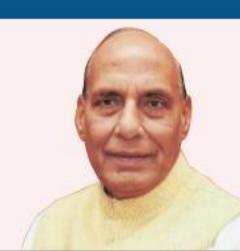
That's why they are better off as a union territory until they sort

Today the Brahmins and the others

themselves out.

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## THE REAL SUPERPOWER Union defence minister, Rajnath Singh

People can say whatever they want. I did what I thought was right and I will continue to do so. This is our faith, that there is a superpower and I have believed it since childhood

## Corporates get responsible about plastic

Govt must announce bans only after a roadmap for transitioning to alternatives is laid down

TIS NOT clear how sustainable the movement will prove, but if a *Business Stan*dard story on MNCs cutting plastic-use is anything to go by, there is a lot of room for optimism. While FMCG major HUL and its parent company, Unilever, are relying on changing the design and packaging of their products—this, Unilever estimates, could help it bring its plastic usage from 700,000 tonnes annually to 100,000 tonnes—Flipkart aims to use only recycled plastic from 2021 and Amazon is targeting eliminating single-use plastic from its operations in India by 2020. Unilever/HUL plans to start refill stations at shops and universities for shampoo and detergent, and has introduced products such as shampoo bars and bamboo toothbrushes. Parle Agro is adopting a PET plastic waste management (PWM) programme, under which the companywill work on easing the annual collection of 310 crore PET bottles, totalling 50,000 tonnes of PET waste. Globally, too, there is a lot afoot, with Coca Cola having committed to have 100% recyclable packaging by 2025 while Dow is financing waste management initiatives that will help reduce the annual global plastic leakage by 45%.

While corporate action is largely a reaction to government policy, or taken in anticipation of stricter standards getting adopted, the government also needs to calibrate its action based on ground reality. In the case of recycling of old vehicles, the government has had to hold back the announcement of a scrappage policy given how the infrastructure for scrapping is quite inadequate—the country's firstever organised, automated facility became operational only in April last year. The laws enacted by the Centre and the states to ban single-use plastics—a TERI factsheet says that 43% of the plastic manufactures in India is for packaging, meaning nearly all of it is single-use—never took into account the fact that better quality plastics can be recycled into buckets, bangles, chairs, etc. And, if 40% of the 9.5 million tonnes of plastic waste generated in the country, as an analysis of Central Pollution Control Board data shows, remains uncollected, it isn't hard to imagine the unrealised recycling/reuse potential. Similarly, moving from use of multi-layered plastics—that pose a serious recycling challenge because of the varying physical and chemical properties of the polymers and other material used—to single-polymer plastics is something that needs to be seriously considered.

The urgency of tackling the plastics problem can't be overstated—a big part of plastic pollution is also the contribution of the plastic lifecycle to greenhouse gas emissions, estimated by the Center for International Environmental Law at 0.86 gigatonnes of carbon-dioxide equivalent (GtCO2e) and projected to grow to 2.80 GtCO2e by 2050. The government needs to consult industrialists, environmentalists, stakeholders in the waste disposal value chain and others, and come up with a workable gameplan that helps the country transit to a low-plastic future. This will entail priming consumers, also, on environmentally-friendly plastic usage and disposal. Rushing into announcing a ban, to coincide with Mahatma Gandhi's 150th anniversary or some such other landmark, is a bad idea.

## Li-ionising battery research

Chem Nobel honours work that led to the Li-ion battery

**IVEN HOW IMPORTANT** battery-storage is for renewable power, leaps in digital, and the future of the automotives, etc, it isn't a surprise that the Nobel in Chemistry this year, should honour three scientists for their role in the discovery of the lithium-ion (Li-ion) batteries that power significant facets of our high-tech lives. The award this year goes to John B Goodenough of the University of Texas at Austin, M Stanley Whittingham of Binghamton University and Akira Yoshino of Meijo University, with equal shares of the prize money for the three.

While the nickel-cadmium battery, discovered much earlier in 1899, powered most devices, research on Li-ion power storage only took off when Exxon, amidst the global oil crisis, commissioned a study on lithium compounds as an alternative for fossil fuel. Whittingham, one of the researchers with Exxon, created a battery with lithium-ion as the anode and titanium disulphide as the cathode that could be recharged at room temperature. Although Exxon gave up the research as oil prices normalised, Goodenough—the oldest Nobel recipient, at 97—improved the idea by replacing titanium with cobalt oxide, which doubled the output voltage of the battery. Yoshino, then working for Asahi Kasei, which wanted lightweight batteries, further improved upon the idea discarding lithium for carbon-based materials that could hold lithium ions. The battery could not only have a higher output but was also safe as lithium tends to catch fire. What we see today are variations of Yoshino's designs powering most consumer electronics, mobile phones and tablets.

Although pricing has a lot to do with lithium-ion batteries' popularity—prices have crashed 85% since 2010, from \$1,160/KWh to \$176, BloombergNEF reports another 40% reduction to \$100 by 2024—a lot has to do with the absence of any competition. Though NiMH batteries are still used in low-powered consumer electronics, lower power and voltage capabilities have ensured that they have a limited scope. More important, with prices falling, lithium has found resonance with large-scale utilities and electric vehicles. Although, in their present form, these cannot provide the kind of solutions the automotive industry needs—cars powered by lithium-ion still can't breach the 500-mile barrier, and utility storage batteries offer power for just four hours—and companies like Toyota are investing on solid-state batteries for practical solutions, lithium-ion may overpower alternatives because of cost benefits. Take the case of Sila Nanotechnologies. The company raised \$170 million from Daimler to create a battery, which holds lithium compounds using silicon rather than graphite. This, it believes, will increase efficiency by 20%—meaning more space to accommodate more batteries in electric cars and thus, longer battery service. Li-ion was successful in powering devices for 4G technologies, but with always-on and connected devices, the technology needs a further upgrade.

## SeeingRIGHT

WHO report shows how big the problem of blindness that could have been prevented is

■ **HE WHO'S FIRST**-ever *World Vision Report* highlights that 2.2 billion people across the globe suffer from vision impairment—of these, nearly a billion cases could have been prevented, if they were addressed with basic necessities for eye care. Impairments like myopia—this affects 2.6 billion people, of which, 312 million are below 19 years of age—can be resolved with basic accessibility to eye-care. The loss to the economy and to society, due to the lack of eye-care coverage, is significant and the report urges policymakers to pay heed.

The annual cost of moderate-to-severe vision impairment ranged from \$0.1 billion in Honduras to \$16.5 billion in the US. However, the annual global costs of productivity losses due presbyopia and uncorrected myopia were estimated to be around \$25.4 billion and \$244 billion, respectively. This economic burden in East Asia, South-East Asia, and South Asia is more than twice that of regions, and equals to more than 1% of GDP. The report, thus, pushes for universal health coverage across the globe to consider to eye-care. The report hailed India's National Programme for Control of Blindness (NPCB). NPCB has provided cataract surgery to 6.5 million people—a cataract surgical rate of over 6,000 per million population—in 2016-17. It has also provided school screening to 32 million children; around 7,50,000 spectacles were distributed. The outcome resulted in an overall reduction in prevalence of blindness—from 1.1% in 2001-02 to 0.45% from 2015-18. If such concerted efforts are taken globally and eye-care is brought under universal health coverage, it would, the report notes, lead to better labour

productivity and quality of life.

### BEHAVIOURAL GAINS

SETTING UP A 'BEHAVIOUR INSIGHT TEAM' IN THE GOVT, TO HELP DIFFERENT MINISTRIES INCORPORATE PSYCHOLOGICAL AND COGNITIVE DIMENSIONS IN PUBLIC POLICY, MAY BE USEFUL

## Swachh Bharat shows how to nudge the right way

OST PUBLIC POLI-**CIES** world over have relied on basic economic principles. This assumes that people act on their own self-interest. However, the last decade has seen burgeoning interest in application of behavioural science in formulation and implementation of public policy. The aim has been to translate the science of behavioural changes into smarter policy interventions and impactful outcomes.

Recently, Cass Sunstein, who pioneered'Nudge Theory'along with Nobel Prize winning economist, Richard Thaler, was effusive in his praise for India's efforts into incorporating behavioural insights in public policy. A new paradigm has been in the making in India, to create impactful yet sustainable policy outcomes by applying behavioural tools in missions like 'Swachh Bharat'.

Swachh Bharat Mission (SBM) has used 'Prospect Theory' in Behavioural Economics extensively for driving behavioural change. Prospect Theory predicts that the way choices are framed has a material impact on people's preferences. It shows that people are loss averse, i.e. people will go greater lengths to avoid a perceived loss than obtaining a perceived benefit, even if the loss and benefit are of equal value. By highlighting the ill effects of poor sanitation and number of deaths it causes through a well-coordinated communication strategy, Swachh Bharat Mission was able to impact behaviours of millions, especially in rural areas.

Similarly, the insights on 'Present-Biases' were also effectively used in SBM. People generally are averse to let go of what they have, for a perceived future gain. However, by organising 'Swachhata Divas' and 'Swachhata Pakhwadas', SBM leveraged the 'Fresh



Debroy is Chairman, PMEAC and Kumar is Director, Ministry of Railways. Views are personal

Start Effect' to persuade people to overcome present biases in favour of decisions which are good for them in long run. Research in behavioural science affirms that the 'Fresh Start Effect' helps in protecting people against present biases. Another concept that has gained

traction is 'Social Proofing'. Studies conducted across the US and India show that making the actions of people more observable adds social pressure on people towards a preferred behaviour. By making open defecation more 'observable' as unaccepted social behaviour, SBM could motivate more and more people to build toilets by applying social pressure. By conducting an annual survey, 'Swachh Sarvekshan', SBM could successfully leverage 'Social Proofing' concepts to bring in a competitive spirit between local bodies. This has also fostered social accountability within these bodies. The department of drinking water and sanitation conducted Swachh Survekshan Grameen to provide a national ranking of all districts and states on the basis of sanitation parameters. Swachh Sarvekshan -Grameen alone has covered about 17,450 villages across 698 districts in addition to 4,240 cities covered under Swachh Sarvekshan - Urban.

SBM was also unique in the way seven lakh 'Swachhagrahis' reached out to villagers to motivate them to build toilets and stop the practice of open defecation. 'Swachhagrahis' have used behavioural tools like 'Plan Making'and'Follow Up'to achieve the milestones by linking behaviour to a concrete future moment. 'Swachhagrahis' have also organised events and disseminated information across communities at regular intervals, making the message of SBM eas-

ily recallable. The 'Ease of Recall' was achieved by ensuring vividness, recency and repetition.

Behavioural tools like wearing 'Swachhata Badges' or participating in 'Swachhata Pledge' have also helped in escalating people's commitment towards a 'Clean India'. In behavioural science it is called foot-inthe-door technique that aims at getting a person

to agree to a large request by having them agree to a moderate request first.

These insights learned from SBM could be valuable while formulating other important government schemes. For example, 'Framing Tools' based on Prospect Theory can be used to promote cashless transactions. Prospect Theory suggests that citizens are more likely to pay with a credit card if price differentials are framed as cash discounts rather than surcharges on the credit card.

Similarly, understanding 'Present Biases' helps nudge people towards 'giving up' subsidies. When there is a trade-off between a 'want' and 'should' option, people prefer the want option in the present. Hence, instead of nudging people to give up subsidies immediately, extracting a commitment to give up at a future date yields a better result. Moreover, simple steps like letting households know how they performed compared to neighbours in waste segregation, water consumption or electricity usage, based on 'Social Proofing' will nudge them towards more segregation and conservation respectively.

There are many behavioural tools

Making open

defecation more

'observable' as

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more and more

people to

build toilets

available for policy makers. However, the tendency of misconstruing correlations as causations has to be overcome before applying these tools. Correlation between two variables can also occur due to mere coincidence, reverse causation or common cause due to an omitted variable. The obvious point is, all correlations are not causations.

In India, most public policy interventions are

directly aimed at improving the quality of life of people. Applying some of the behavioural approaches to public policies, therefore, can enhance the public buy-in and achieve the intended outcomes. However, there is a need to use behaviour insights and science of behavioural changes in a more systemic way. Setting up of a 'Behaviour Insight Team' in government of India, to help different ministries incorporate psychological and cognitive dimensions in public policy, may be useful.

## Going vegan won't save the planet

Our problems are so deep and diverse, and multiplied by local variations in culture, weather and human density, that no one solution will suffice. We are going to need many.





**MEAT CONSUMPTION PLAYS** a huge role in global warming, producing nearly 15% of all carbon dioxide emissions, even more than air travel. This accounts in part for the rapid shift toward vegetarianism, veganism and diets relying less on meat products. In the future, for the health of people and the planet, we should mostly eat vegetables and fruits, whole grains and legumes, with seafood, poultry and red meat playing minor roles in our diets.

But for now, focusing too strongly on meat may risk overselling one idea as a solution to all our problems. Chemically intensive agricultural practices have depleted soils and polluted seas and rivers globally, and farms growing crops have been just as destructive as those raising animals. These problems could get worse, even in a world where no one eats meat at all.

Undoing this damage, while also managing to feed the nearly 10 billion people expected to populate the earth by 2050, is going to require lots of ideas integrated together. That includes less meat, less intensive and more intelligent farming, and the application of new technologies, including ways to produce high volumes of food for cities.

At a recent food festival in Wales, I witnessed an enlightening discussion between two experts on the future of farming. Chungui Lu, a Chinese native who is now a professor in the UK, spoke on the promise of vertical farming high-tech indoor vegetable farming capable of producing more food per acre than traditional farming. In contrast, Patrick Holden, a traditional yet visionary Welsh farmer, argued for the human and ecological benefits of small-scale farming for the local sale of meat, cheese and vegetables produced using fully organic methods.

Their ideas seem to reflect a clash between technology and tradition. But I came away thinking that neither offered a solution by itself. Our prob-

lems are so deep and diverse, and multiplied by local variations in culture, weather and human density, that no one solution will suffice. We are going to need many.

Lu sees vertical farming as a way to produce huge volumes of fresh, healthy vegetables to feed people in tomorrow's megacities, which by 2050 will hold fully two-thirds of the entire human population. Besides its appeal of higher productivity, vertical farming can be done all year as it is not affected by weather and requires no pesticides or fungicides, such as those implicated in the destruction of insect populations, including that of bees. It also offers reductions in transport costs, as

food is grown close to where it is eaten. But the end goal of vertical farming, Lu argued, isn't to move farming off the land permanently. Rather, scaling it up could give China time to feed its people while taking steps to restore the natural fertility of its currently depleted agricultural land. In one project, Lu grew crops in LED light inside temperature-controlled shipping containers, with each container producing three to five metric tonnes a year. The practice has become widespread in large Chinese cities, with supermarkets and hotels growing

their own crops indoors. Vertical farming has also caught the attention of investors. But there is also great appeal in Holden's traditional farming approach, which produces food on a small scale attuned to local Welsh tastes and does so while restoring soils to healthy conditions. This involves careful crop rotation and practices based on deep knowledge of the microbiology of healthy soil. His cows, for example, graze on rich fields of oats, peas and clover under controlled conditions that avoid overgrazing and damaging roots.

From the ecological perspective, Holden said, the meat-versus-vegetable distinction isn't the right one.

Both can be produced in environmentally helpful ways as well as harmful ones, with the latter becoming the norm over the past half-century of industrial farming. Vegan and vegetarian diets may be good for CO2 emissions, but their blind pursuit can exacerbate other issues. He gives one example: It doesn't help the environment to eschew a local organically grown egg in favour of tofu produced with intense pesticide application on a soy plantation carved out of the Amazon rainforest.

Holden's farming reflects a more integrated systems approach that doesn't focus on one problem to the exclusion of others, but tries to offer improvements on many issues at once. It is an idea gaining momentum not only in farming, but also in other areas, such as energy generation. For example, solar energy may be a great idea, but not if installations also end up degrading local ecologies—interfering with plant growth and the insects that feed on them. Engineers have developed principles to guide installations more intelligently so they generate energy while also benefiting the local ecology. A solar farm in Wiltshire, UK, for example, grows native grasses and herbs in the spaces between panels so as to provide a rich habitat for pollinators.

The data on efforts to realise the UN Sustainable Development Goals indicate that reducing CO2 emissions is the one goal most in conflict with all the others. Hence, there is no easy pathway to less CO2 that also addresses the other issues we face, among them feeding a rapidly growing population. Lu and Holden's examples reflect the kinds of small-scale experiments we need to help us find a way through the messy thicket of conflicts to design a truly sustainable future.

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

### **LETTERS TO** THE EDITOR

### Informal summit

Whether the arrival of Chinese President Xi Jinping for the second informal Summit with Indian PM Narendra Modi at the historic town of Mamallapuram, herald a new chapter in the bilateral ties between two Asian giants. It would hopefully pave the way for sustained engagement to iron out differences on issues ranging from lingering border dispute to trade deficit on the ground. Irrespective of the doubts being raised from different quarters over the efficacy of such informal summits in resolving the structural tensions that have enveloped the bilateral relationship between the two countries for long it has raised the prospects for both the countries to arrive at a better understanding of each others concerns and help resolve them. Despite the widening gap in the comprehensive national power of both the countries, reflected in China's aggregate GDP which now stands at \$14 trillion, five times higher than India's \$2.8 trillion, two asian giants have the onus to keep their bilateral relationship on an amiable track to ensure peace, stability and prosperity in Asia. — M Jeyaram, Sholavandan

### End the conflict

Turkev's military offense in Syria has triggered a humanitarian crisis of gargantuan proportions with about 60,000 Kurds displaced, and many more set to flee the country. The US president Donald Trump's action to turn his back on the Syrian Kurds, who have all along been loyal allies of Washington is hard to fathom. Trump's U-turn and the subsequent Turkish assault on Syria could have repercussions for the region. Besides, leaving thousands of Kurds homeless, the Turkish incursion could see the dreaded IS militant group recoup and spread their tentacles yet again. The international community must spare no efforts to impress upon Turkey to restraint and put an end to the conflict. — NJ Ravi Chander, Bengaluru

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**FINANCIAL EXPRESS** 

# Xi and Modi meet at Mamallapuram

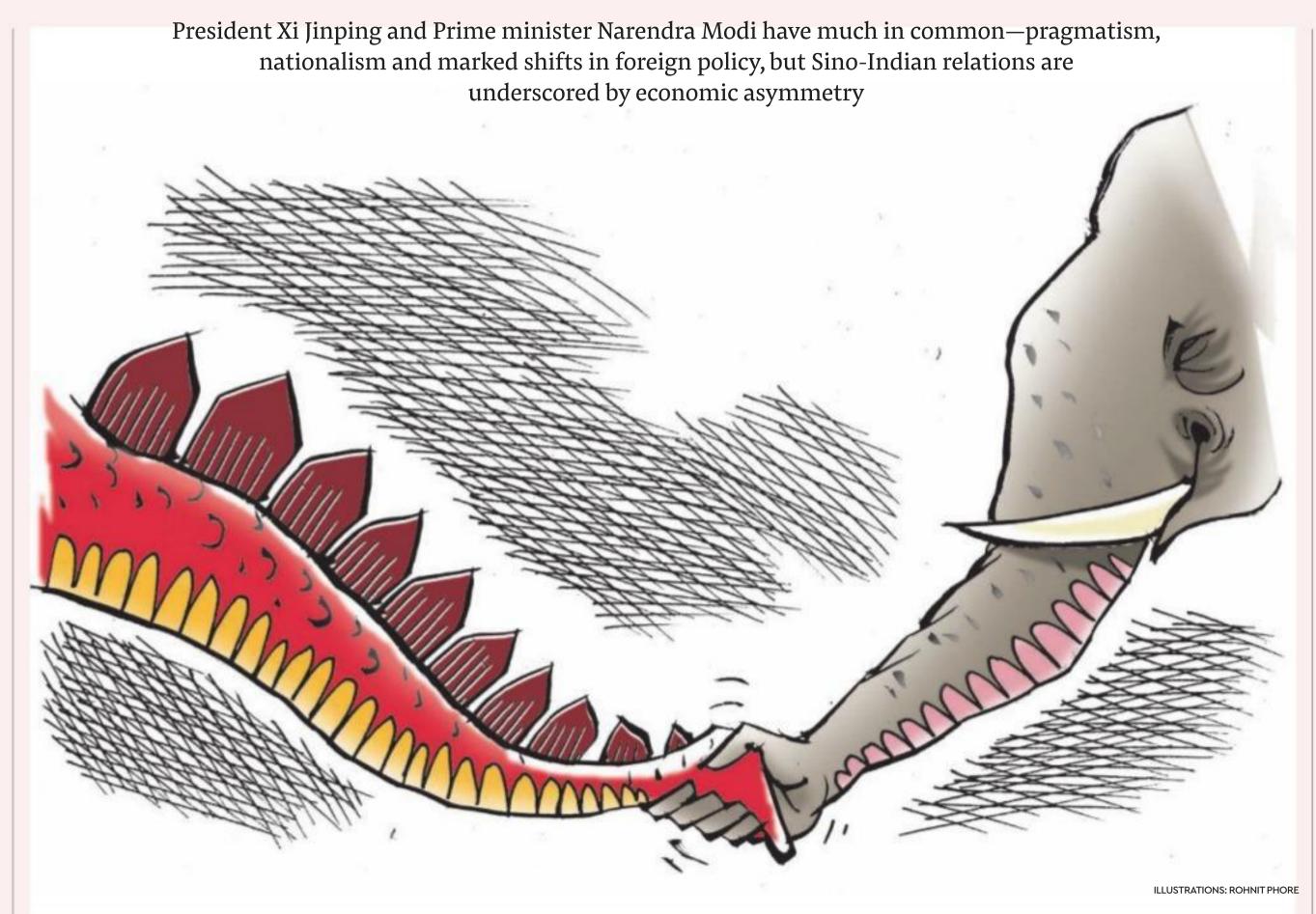
AMALLAPURAM, THE HIS-**TORIC** port town of the Pallava dynasty (early 4th to 9th century CE) is hosting the second informal meet between the Indian prime minister Narendra Modi and the Chinese president Xi Jinping. The present meet is a testament to the "Wuhan spirit" deemed to help manage, if not resolve, the differences that underlie Sino-Indian relations. Yet, the "Mamallapuram spirit" will be obscured by China's pre-occupations—the Hong Kong crisis with more anti-government protests planned this weekend, a restive Xinjiang and worse still, America's blacklisting of eight Chinese Artificial Intelligence (AI) companies associated with the surveillance of Turkic Muslims in Xinjiang. In the Chinese scheme of priorities, these take a lead.

Of course, there is no doubt that Xi and Modi are pragmatic enough to look beyond the optics of Doklam, unresolved border issues, burgeoning trade deficit, Xinjiang and Hong Kong. Pragmatism and common ground between Modi and Xi do some good, but China's economic lead, partly, because of China's 13 year lead in economic reforms (1978) does little good.

Economics is driving Xi's current "goout" foreign policy, a dramatic shift from the earlier "biding its time" policy when China maintained a low profile. The Xi years have witnessed an assertive foreign policy in tandem with China's growing military, economic and diplomatic heft. While this is relative, China's "going out" has metamorphosed into a mix of soft and hard power, interspersed with smart, sharp and stealth power.

Growing prosperity underlies Xi's signature "China Dream" (2013) of national rejuvenation — which may not be a Chinese export, yet. Across the borders in Nepal though, the Communist Party of Nepal is testing waters of "Xi Jinping Thought" with Nepalese cadre being introduced to the scope of "Xi's thought" in a training programme. And China-Pakistan friendship has received a recent Xi-upgrade — from "all-weather friends" to "hardcore friends" (tiegan pengyou).

China's economic heft has enabled Xi to articulate the expand "China Dream" into the "Asia-Pacific Dream" (2014) of Asian cooperation and common prosperity. Not all are on board though, and Taiwan is obviously not. Asean (Association of Southeast Asian Nations, consisting of ten-member



states) is divided over China's rise; India is hesitant about China's increasing geo-political influence in South Asia; and Japan (a curbed military power) is uncomfortable with China's military and economic strides.

China can easily afford smart power initiatives such as Belt and Road Initiative (BRI, 2013) with a slew of initiatives that Japan only hopes to catch up with. Xi's imprint is writ large on the BRI, Asian Investment Infrastructure Bank (AIIB, operational 2016), New Development Bank (BRICS Bank, 2016) all of which footprint continents with a basket of offerings—aid to railways, economic cor-

**ANURAG VISWANATH** Singapore-based Sinologist, and adjunct



In fact, Christopher Walker (National Endowment of Democracy, America) suggests that China's sharp power (seeking opportunities to "pierce, penetrate or perforate" political/information environments) is being tested out in Australia

ridors to military outposts, (engaging)

political circles to media.

and New Zealand (in political circles and in the growing Chinese population).

Today, China trumps the phrase "ruo guo wu wai jiao" meaning weak countries—an oblique reference to Taiwan have little heft in foreign policy. In 2018, American Airlines, Delta Airlines, United Airlines, British Airways and Lufthansa (among others) had to remove references to Taiwan as a country. Instead, websites of these airlines began to list Taipei as a destination (Taipei, China). The airlines had to comply lest they be fined or worse, restricted from operations. Clothing retailer GAP had to apologise for T-shirts that did not show Taiwan as a part of China.

Recently, Kiribati and Solomon Islands, poor but located in the strategic waters of the Pacific switched diplomatic allegiance from Taiwan to China. Taiwan is now left only with a handful of 15 allies including Tuvalu and Nauru—and this may not be for long.

Overall score did not change much, but there was a

Japan's White Paper (Defense of Japan, 2019) suggests China's "continuous and increased actions" in the East China Sea, establishment of an ADIZ (air defense identification zone, China's first, which infringes and overlaps with those of Japan and South Korea) and Chinese naval ships frequently transiting waters near Japan to go to the Pacific. These and China's actions in the South China Sea reclamation in the disputed waters, islands, islets and reefs and building of runways (Fiery Cross Reef) have to be understood in the economic context.

America is increasingly taking cognisance of China flexing its economic, and de-facto, military muscle. Air Force Brigadier General Robert Spalding's "Stealth War: How China took over while America's elite slept" (2019) is one such small example of the discourse in America.

Xi and Modi may be peas of the same political pod-pragmatic, nationalistic and with marked shifts in foreign policy. Modi has been no less diplomatically active, trying to shrug off India's soft state past visiting Mongolia (in 2015; China's neighbour) the first by an Indian prime minister and Fiji, the first in 33 years (2014) among others. India's "Look East" has been recast as "Act East" (2014). India also conducted air strikes in Balakot, Pakistan (2019) and has jumped off the boat of non-alignment with strategic hedging entering into the Logistics Exchange Memorandum of Agreement (LEMOA) with United States (2016). India, under Modi, is engaging with the Quadrilateral Security Dialogue (Quad; US, Japan, Australia) and has not been hesitant to champion a "Free and Open Indo-Pacific". Despite India breaking diplomatic ground with the United States, India's arms purchases from Russia have hit the "break through" \$14.5 billion.

While some of the directions of Modi's foreign policy are astute and praiseworthy, the fact of asymmetry of economic power underscores Sino-Indian relations. The Chinese themselves say, "under Mao, the Chinese stood up" and "under Deng, the Chinese got rich". Today, the Chinese say with pride that (because of Deng) "under Xi, the Chinese are stronger". For India, to make the grand leap to the international stage, it cannot forfeit that critical stage and will need to "get rich first". For India, economic prosperity will be the game-changer.

Infrastructure

ICT adoption

%

Macroeconomic

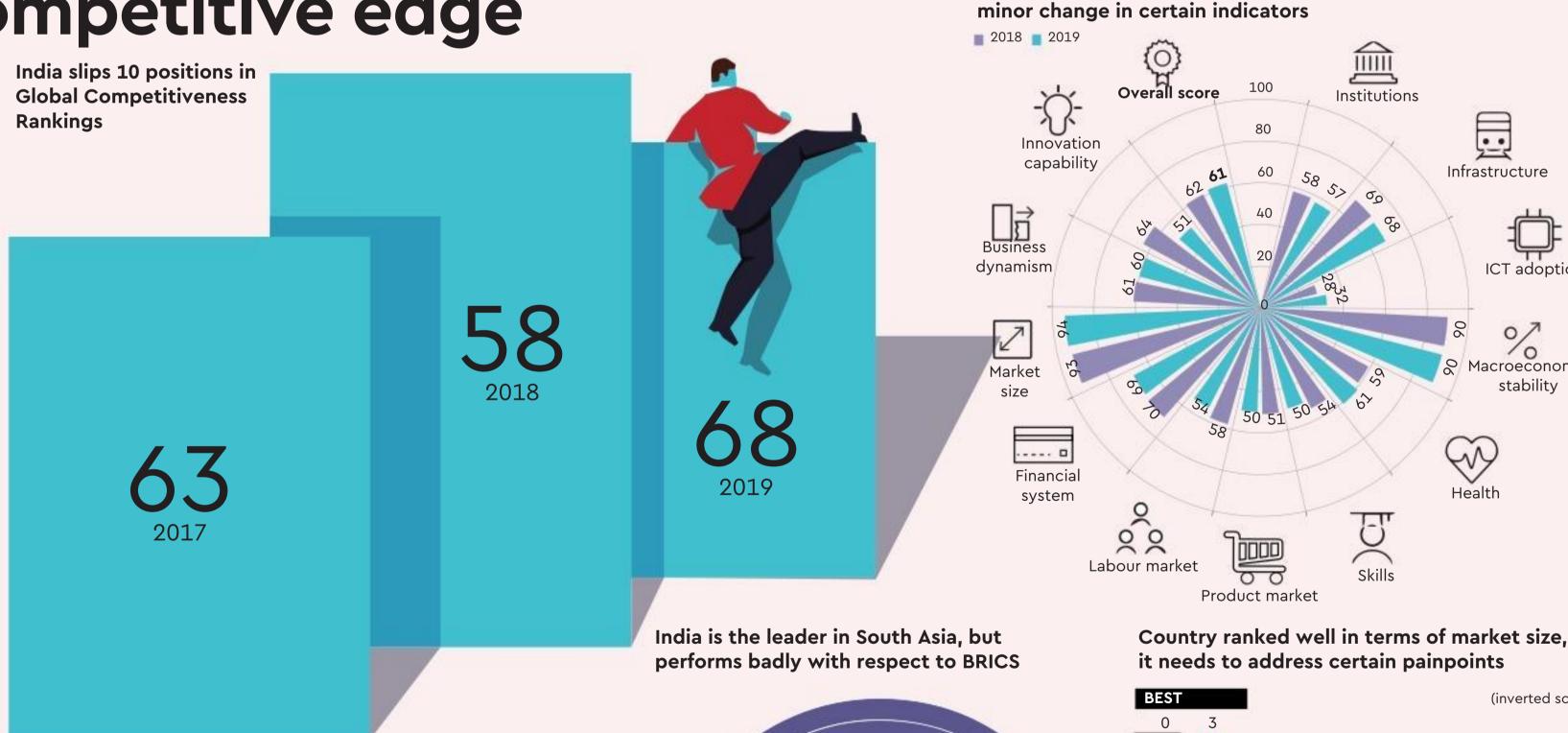
stability

## **DATA DRIVE**

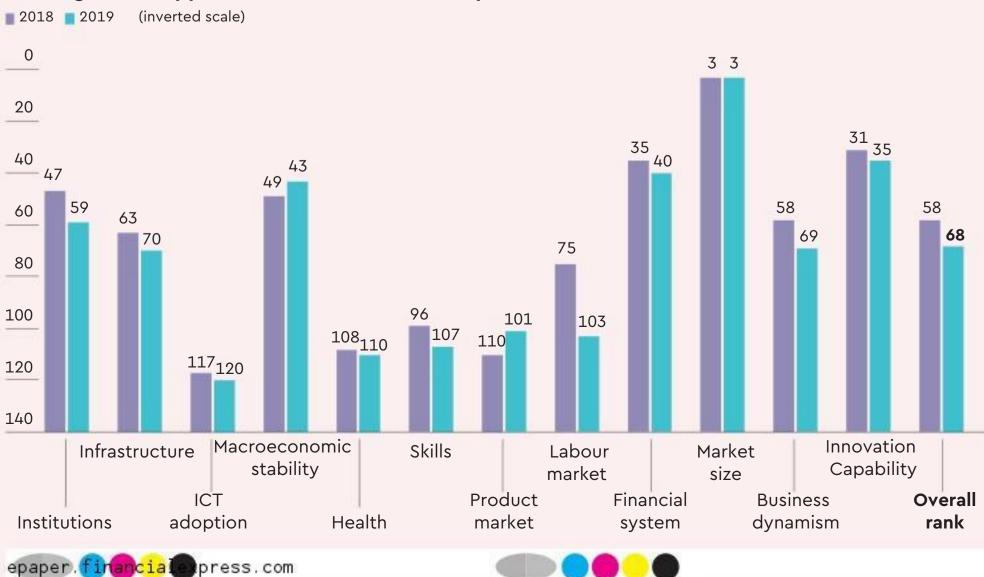
## Losing competitive edge HILE INDIA IS finding it

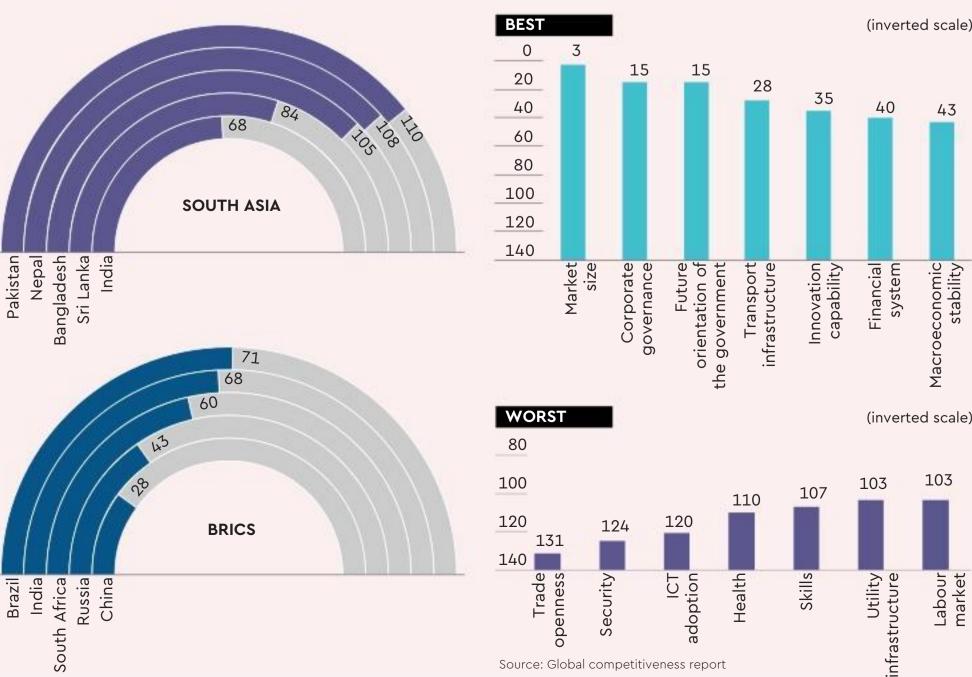
difficult to compete with a Vietnam in wooing manufacturing firms moving out of China, the latest slip in rankings in the Global Competitive Index will cause further heartburn. The 2019 global competitiveness rankings released by the World Economic Forum show that the country has slipped 10 ranks, to 68, out of 141 countries from its previous level—India was ranked 58 out of 140 countries in the 2018 rankings. This is even lower than the 63rd position the country had achieved in the index that was revised a year ago. While India has not slipped much in score—it has a score of 61 against 62 last year—the fall comes on the back of other countries improving much more and faster than India. So, while India was ranked better than its South Asian counterparts—Sri Lanka (84), Bangladesh (105), Nepal (108) and Pakistan (110)—it was the second-lowest ranked economy amongst the BRICS grouping—Brazil ranked 71. More important, the rankings indicate that India needs to do better in terms of global integration and structural changes if it is to compete with the likes of Vietnam. Although India was ranked third in terms of market size, it was 131 in terms of trade openness and 103 in

labour market.



### Rankings have dipped as other countries have performed better





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TELLING NUMBERS

2.2 billion people worldwide living with eye conditions, preventable in 1 billion: WHO



At an eye operation camp in Chandigarh in 2012. Express Archive

THE WORLD Health Organization (WHO) released its first World Vision Report this week, proposing ways to address challenges such as integrating eye care into healthcare systems. The report found that globally, over 2.2 billion people have a vision impairment. In a telling finding, the report said that out of these 2.2 billion, 1 billion people are suffering from conditions that are preventable, or unaddressed. A majority of the cases among these 1 billion cases are of unaddressed presbyopia, at 826 million. This is followed by unaddressed refractive error, at over 120 million.

Rural communities, low-income countries and older people bear the brunt of these impairments, the report said. For instance, the age-specific prevalence of presenting distance vision impairment in an urban population of Delhi (20% prevalence among 60-69-year-olds) was one-third lower than that of a rural population in Northern India (28%). The report estimated that over 11.9

million globally have conditions such as glaucoma, trachoma and diabetic retinopathy, which could have been prevented. The estimated cost of preventing conditions among these 11.9 million people is over \$5.8 billion.

Surgeries for cataract, which is the leading cause of blindness globally, have shown improvements over time, in low middle-income countries. In

#### PEOPLE LIVING WITH EYE CONDITIONS (2.2 BILLION)

CONDITIONS (Z.Z DILLION)	
Myopia	2,600 mn
Age-related macular degeneration	196 mn
Diabetic retinopathy	146 mn
Glaucoma	76 mn
Trachomatous trichiasis	2.5 mn
Presbyopia	1.8 mn

#### PEOPLE WITH PREVENTABLE/ **UNADDRESSED EYE CONDITIONS** (1BILLION)

Unaddressed refractive error	123.7 mn
Cataract	65.2 mn
Glaucoma	6.9 mn
Corneal opacities	4.2 mn
Diabetic retinopathy	3 mn
Trachoma	2 mn
Unaddressed presbyopia	826 mn
Source: WHO	

India the rate of cataract surgery has increased nine-fold (6.000 per million population) between 1981 and 2012. This has been possible due to the National Programme for Control of Blindness, which was launched in 1976 and under which cataract surgeries were performed on 6.5 million people in 2016-2017, the report said.

### SIMPLY PUT

# Delhi diplomacy to fight disaster

At climate summit in New York, PM Modi pushed the global Coalition for Disaster Resilient Infrastructure. As world observes International Day for Disaster Reduction, a look at the initiative India has taken

**AMITABH SINHA** PUNE, OCTOBER 11

WHILE SPEAKING at the UN Secretary General's Climate Action Summit in New York on September 23, Prime Minister Narendra Modi had announced the launch of the Coalition for Disaster Resilient Infrastructure (CDRI) and invited all countries to join it. Ahead of International Day for Disaster Reduction on Sunday, a look at what CDRI is.

### What it proposes to do

Envisaged as an international knowledge platform where countries can collaborate to make their existing and new infrastructure strong enough to withstand natural disasters, CDRI is the fruition of at least three years of discussions that India has had with more than 40 countries on this subject.

In simple terms, CDRI is an attempt to bring countries together to share and learn from the experiences of one another to protect their key infrastructure — highways, railways, power stations, communication lines, water channels, even housing — against disasters.

### Need to protect infrastructure

Many countries, including India, have over the years developed robust disaster management practices that have helped in sharply reducing human casualties in a disaster. However, the economic costs of a disaster remain huge, mainly due to the damage caused to big infrastructure.

According to a recent estimate by the World Bank, Cyclone Fani, which hit Odisha in May this year, caused damage to the tune of \$4 billion. The losses in the Kerala floods last year could be in excess of \$4.4 billion, according to a post-disaster needs assessment report by the state government. In the US, there were 10 climate change disasters this year in which losses exceeded S1 billion.

Much of the developing world is still building its basic infrastructure. Many developed countries are also in the process of replacing old infrastructure that have completed their lifetimes. Future infrastructure needs to take into account the heightened risks arising out



The Biju Patnaik International Airport in Bhubaneswar during Cyclone Fani earlier this year. The World Bank estimates the damage caused by Fani at \$4 billion. ANI

FACT CHECK, GROUND REALITY

Killer cyanide in Kerala: how is it monitored?

There are licences, permits. But in 2002, when 250 kg of the lethal toxin was seized; accused was fined Rs 250

SUDAN

**ERITREA** 

Badme Asmara

**ETHIOPIA** 

Addis Ababa

**KENYA** 

of the increased frequency and intensity of extreme weather events and other adverse impacts of climate change. Even existing infrastructure would need to be retrofitted to make them more resilient. Disaster-proofing a project would involve changes in design, and use of newer technologies. These involve additional costs which, however, are only a fraction of the losses that a disaster can bring.

"We have pretty good evidence to show that wherever we have made investments in making infrastructure more resilient, over a period of time that investment has basically paid for itself," said Kamal Kishore, member of National Disaster Management Authority. The NDMA is operating as the interim secretariat of CDRI as of now.

### An international forum

Disaster preparedness and infrastructure creation are largely national endeavours. However, modern infrastructure is also a web of networked systems, not always confined to national boundaries. There are increasing numbers of trans-national and trans-continental highways and railways; transmission lines carry electricity across countries; assets on a river are shared. Damage to any one node can have cascading impacts on the entire network, resulting in loss of livelihoods and disruption in economic activity in places far away from the site of a disaster. To make entire networks resilient is the

main thought behind the Indian initiative of CDRI. The platform is not meant to plan or execute infrastructure projects. Nor is it an agency that will finance infrastructure projects in member countries. Instead, CDRI will seek to identify and promote best practices, provide access to capacity building, and work towards standardisation of designs, processes and regulations relating to infrastructure creation and management. It would also attempt to identify and estimate the risks to, and from, large infrastructure in the event of different kinds of disasters in member countries.

CDRI hopes to have as its members not just countries, but organisations like UN bodies, financial institutions, and other groups working on disaster management. It seeks to help member countries integrate disaster management policies in all their activities, set up institutions and regulatory provisions to ensure creation of resilient infrastructure, and identify and use affordable finance and technology.

### **CDRI and Belt Road Initiative**

CDRI has sometimes been seen as India's response to the Belt Road Initiative, China's ongoing multi-billion-dollar programme to recreate the ancient Silk Route trading links. China is building massive new land and maritime infrastructure in several countries. India and some other nations view this as an attempt by China to use its economic and military heft to usurp strategic assets in other countries.

Though the comparisons are not surprising given the competing strategic interests of the two neighbours, the magnitude and purpose of the two initiatives are starkly different. Unlike BRI, CDRI is not an attempt by India to create or fund infrastructure proj ects in other countries. Having said that, international initiatives like these are not without any strategic or diplomatic objective.

### **CDRI and Solar Alliance**

A more relevant comparison of CDRI can, however, be made with the International Solar Alliance (ISA) that India launched at the climate meeting in Paris in 2015. ISA, which has evolved into a treaty-based organisation with more than 50 countries already signed up, aims at a collective effort to promote the deployment of solar energy across the world. Its objective is to mobilise more than \$1 trillion into solar power by 2030, and to deploy over 1,000 GW of solar generation capacity in member countries by that time. India hosts ISA, with its headquarters in Gurgaon.

The CDRI secretariat too would be based in New Delhi. While it is not envisioned to take the shape of a treaty-based organisation CDRI can be seen as complementing ISA's efforts. ISA is about climate change mitigation deployment of more solar energy would bring down the reliance on fossil fuels. thereby reducing greenhouse gas emissions. CDRI, on the other hand, is about adapting to climate change, a need that is inevitable.

With these two initiatives, India is seeking to obtain a leadership role, globally, in matters related to climate change.

Kishore of NDMA stressed, however, that CDRI is more than just a climate change initiative. "It does not matter whether the infrastructure is risk from climate-induced disasters or those taking place due to geophysical reasons, like earthquakes, volcanoes, landslides or tsunamis. The infrastructure needs to be strengthened to cope with all these," he said.

### THIS WORD MEANS

### **ELASTOCALORIC EFFECT**

Cooling effect produced by twisting and untwisting of rubber bands. Can it be used in a fridge?

untwisted, it produces a cooling effect. This is called the "elastocaloric" effect, and researchers have suggested that it can be used in a very relevant context today. Researchers from multiple universities, including Nankai University in China, have found that the elastocaloric effect, if harnessed, may be able to do away with the need of fluid refrigerants used in fridges and air-conditioners. These fluids are susceptible to leakages, and can contribute to global warming. The results of the research were published in the journal *Science* on Friday.

WHEN RUBBERS bands are twisted and

In the elastocaloric effect, the transfer of heat works much the same way as when fluid refrigerants are compressed and expanded. When a rubber band is stretched, it absorbs heat from its environment, and when it is released, it gradually cools down. In order to figure out how the twisting mechanism might be able to enable a fridge, the researchers compared the cooling power of rubber fibres, nylon and polyethylene fishing lines and nickel-titanium wires. They observed high cooling from twist changes in twisted, coiled and supercoiled fibres.

They reported that the level of efficiency of the heat exchange in rubber bands "is comparable to that of standard refrigerants and twice as high as stretching the same materials without twisting". To demonstrate this setup, the researchers developed a fridge the size of a ballpoint pen cartridge that was able to bring down the temperature of a small volume of water by 8°C in a few seconds. They suggested that their findings may lead to the development of greener, higher-efficiency and low-cost cooling technology.

**SHAJU PHILIP** THIRUVANANTHAPURAM, OCTOBER 11

POLICE IN Kerala have arrested a woman for allegedly killing her husband, parents-in-law and three other members of the extended family over a period of 14 years using cyanide. The chemical was allegedly supplied to the woman by a jewellery salesman who procured it from a goldsmith. Both have been arraigned as accused in the case.

Cyanide is used in the extraction and polishing of gold, and for gold-plating. The ornament industry uses the chemical to give gold its reddish yellow colour, believed to be the "original" colour of the metal, and for ridding it of impurities.

Kerala is among the country's biggest consumers of gold jewellery. How is cyanide stocked in the state, and how is its distribution regulated?

### The law and monitoring

The stocking and sale of cyanide is regu-

lated by The Kerala Poisons Rules, 1996, which were notified under The Poisons Act, 1919, which empowers state governments "to regulate possession for sale and sale of any poison".

The Drugs Control Department under the Government of Kerala's Health Department issues permits for stocking cyanide for professional use, and licences to stock and sell the chemical. Any individual or institution can apply for both under relevant sections of The Kerala Poisons Rules, 1996. The applicant must have a valid and legal reason to seek the permit or licence, as well as a technically qualified person to oversee the storage and handling of the lethal toxin.

### Number of permits, licences

The Drugs Control Department says only 35 agencies — research institutions, universities, academic bodies, or labs in the government or private sector — have permits to stock cvanide.

An agency can at a time stock only 250 grams; the average annual cyanide intake of an institute in Kerala is 250 g to 500 g.

The chemical has an expiry date of three years from manufacture. Permits have to be renewed every year. There are no valid cyanide licences —

Cyanide crystals come in packets of 250 g.

meant for sale of the chemical — in Kerala at present.

### Legal source of the chemical

Cyanide is legally sourced from a Mumbai-based agency, which sells the chemical under strict restrictions to institutions or individuals who are able to furnish the relevant certificate issued by the Drugs Control Department. The permit-holder has to appear in person before the agency to procure the allotted quantity of chemical.

### Smuggling and illegal imports

The industrial use of cyanide is allegedly dependent on smuggling or illegal imports. The small quantities involved make it difficult to detect and seize illegal consignments, officials said. A police officer of the rank of Sub-Inspector can suo motu register a case of

**SAUDI ARABIA** 

DJIBOUTI

YEMEN

Gulf of Aden

Indian Ocean

illegal trade in cyanide. The last seizure of cyanide that officials

could recall took place in 2002, when sales tax officials at an inter-state border checkpost in Palakkad seized 250 kg of the chemical from a truck. The consignment, imported from Australia, was meant for an individual in Kozhikode. Investigations revealed the chemical was meant for the gold industry The accused individual was convicted and fined a paltry Rs 250 as per the law.

#### What Kerala proposes to do State Drugs Controller Ravi S Menon said

it is proposed to amend The Kerala Poisons Rules in the wake of recurring incidents of acid attacks, as the use and stocking of acid also come under the purview of the Rules. "We are planning to bring the use and

stock of cyanide under the ambit of the proposed amendment in ways such that the accessibility of the public to cyanide is reduced We also plan to incorporate sections to reduce the toxicity of the cyanide that is made available," Menon said.

## Abiy Ahmed Ali, Laureate, for Peace in Horn of Africa: what was his role?

**EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE** NEW DELHI, OCTOBER 11

ETHIOPIAN PRIME Minister Abiy Ahmed Ali was awarded the 2019 Nobel Peace Prize on Friday for "his important work to promote reconciliation, solidarity and social justice". In its citation, the Norwegian

Nobel Committee said: "Abiy Ahmed Ali has initiated important reforms that give many citizens hope for a better life and a brighter future."

### What Abiy did When Abiy became

Prime Minister in 2018, Ethiopia had been locked in conflict with Eritrea for 20

years. In July that year, the former Army officer-turned-PM, then 41, stepped across the border, held Eritrean President Isaias Afwerki in a warm embrace and signalled the beginning of a peace effort, announcing to the world that war was no longer an option.

NOBEL IN

**PEACE** 

The Nobel Committee noted how Abiy. in cooperation with Afwerki, worked out the

principles of a peace agreement, set out in declarations the two leaders signed in Asmara during that July visit and in Jeddah in September. It also listed domestic achievements by Abiy in his first 100 days as Prime Minister — lifting Emergency, granting amnesty to thousands of political prisoners, discontinuing media censorship, legalising

outlawed opposition groups, dismissing military and civilian leaders suspected of corruption, and increasing the influence of women in political and community life.

### The conflict, its roots

The stalemate Abiv helped break is about a border dispute that began in 1998. Conflict between the two

countries, however, has a longer history. Eritrea, once an Italian colony, was merged with Ethiopia in 1936 during Benito Mussolini's regime, then taken over by the British during the Second World War. After the War, a United Nations declaration in 1950 made Eritrea part of a federation with Ethiopia. When Eritrean groups launched



Ethiopia PM Abiy Ahmed (left), who has won the Nobel, helped usher in peace after reaching out to Eritrea President Isaias Afwerki (right). Reuters/File

a struggle for independence in 1961, Ethiopia dissolved the federation and annexed Eritrea in 1962. After a war that lasted 30 years, Eritrea gained international recognition as an independent country in 1993.

Just five years later, however, war broke out over the control of Badme, a border town both countries coveted. The violence, which

went on until an agreement to cease hostilities in 2000, claimed 80,000 lives and separated countless families. Since then, the two countries were in a state the Nobel Committee described as "no peace, no war".

### In the two agreements during and after

What peace brings

### Abiy's visit, the two countries have announced the resumption of trade, diplomatic, and travel ties and "a new era of peace and friendship" in the Horn of Africa.

"... Telecommunications have been restored, allowing families that were split up in the war to contact each other. In the days that followed this breakthrough, some Ethiopians

called Eritrean numbers randomly, and vice versa, just to speak to someone on the other side, simply because they could. Others tracked down parents, siblings and friends," The New York Times reported.

Ethiopia is Africa's second largest country by population, but landlocked, while tiny Eritrea is connecting by sea to the Middle East. Through the years of conflict, Ethiopia had depended heavily on Djibouti for access to the Gulf of Aden and onward to the Arabian Sea. The peace deal opened up Eritrean ports for Ethiopian use.

### Challenges ahead

While the peace effort is a step forward, ethnic rivalries in Ethiopia have flared in recent years and the country has millions of internally displaced refugees. "No doubt some people will think this year's prize is being awarded too early. The Norwegian Nobel Committee believes it is now that Abiy Ahmed's efforts deserve recognition and need encouragement," the Committee said.

It acknowledged Afwerki too: "Peace does not arise from the actions of one party alone. When Prime Minister Abiy reached out his hand, President Afwerki grasped it..."

### WORDLY WISE

BOXING IS REAL EASY. LIFE IS MUCH HARDER.

— FLOYD MAYWEATHER, JR.

## The Indian EXPRESS

∽ FOUNDED BY ∽ RAMNATH GOENKA

BECAUSE THE TRUTH INVOLVES US ALL

## WHAT PMC MEANS

Financial sector scams are a warning: RBI must raise its game to remain a step ahead of the entities it regulates

N AT LEAST three of the major financial sector scams in the last couple of months in India, featuring Punjab National Bank, IL&FS, some private banks and now the latest, Punjab and Maharashtra Cooperative Bank or PMC, apart from poor governance and fraudulent practices, a common thread has been supervisory failure. The country's leading financial sector regulator, the RBI, has been shown as flat-footed, responding only after the event. Like in IL&FS, in the PMC case too, there appears to be culpability on the part of the management and the board of the bank considering that the bank's loan exposure to a single firm, HDIL, alone constituted 73 per cent of its assets and several dummy accounts were created to camouflage this. But often, the issue of dual control by the RBI and state governments has been cited as a hurdle by the regulator for its inability to effectively supervise cooperative banks.

That may be true to an extent, given the limitations in superceding the board of directors or removing directors of these banks, unlike in commercial banks. Yet that alone cannot be a shield for the central bank, considering the role of co-operative banks in ensuring credit delivery to the unorganised sector and last mile access, especially to small businesses, over the last few decades in an economy where the large banks continue to focus on bigger cities and towns. As a recent RBI report shows, fund flows to the commercial sector have declined by close to 88 per cent in the first six months of this current fiscal — to Rs 90,495 crore in mid-September compared to Rs 7.38 lakh crore during the same period a year ago. That would have surely hurt small businessmen, traders and the farm sector. A remarkable feature since liberalisation, has been the resilience of India's financial sector, which may also have to do with the dominance of government-owned institutions or lenders and a strong central bank. If that track record is not to be sullied, clearly, the RBI will have to raise its game on the supervisory front to remain a step ahead of the entities it regulates.

The central bank has already started building an internal cadre for supervision of banks and other entities aimed at enhancing its oversight capabilities. Hopefully, this will be complemented by legislative changes which could lead to greater regulatory control and powers for the RBI over cooperative banks and an insolvency regime for financial firms as indicated by Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman. India needs not just a few large banks and lenders with a national or regional presence but also other players such as cooperative banks, small finance and payment banks. There are voices seeking greater accountability on the part of India's financial regulators. The risk it holds is the prospect of supervisors swinging to the other extreme while poring over the books of banks and compounding the problem, besides stifling innovation. Carving out a separate authority for supervision may only lead to regulators working in silos. With a weakening economy, the last thing India needs is the unravelling of more such firms stoking fears of financial instability.

# The policy way out

Economic slowdown may be structural, not cyclical. It calls for removal of bottle-necks, long-term reform

Amartya Lahiri

IT IS BY now clear that India is in the middle of a sharp growth slowdown. The debate surrounding the slowdown is whether it is a cyclical downturn or a structural correction. Diagnosing the problem is key for devising policy responses. Cyclical slowdowns can be dealt with using temporary fiscal and monetary stimulus. Structural problems, on the other hand, require long-run policy re-

There are a few clues that point to the slowdown being structural rather than cyclical. For one, most of the growth between 2014 and 2017 was sparked by a sharp increase in government spending. Given India's oil imports, the decline in the world price of oil by almost USD 50 a barrel between 2014 and 2016 represented a windfall revenue gain of USD 75 billion annually, or 3 per cent of GDP. Since the fiscal deficit barely moved, the government effectively used the windfall to finance various government schemes. Now that oil prices have reverted towards their previous levels, maintaining a stable fiscal deficit has necessitated a reduction in government expenditures.

The above suggests that absent the oil windfall, Indian growth over this period would have been 2-3 percentage points lower annually. Put differently, the economic slowdown has been ongoing for almost four years now. Cyclical downturns last a few quarters, maybe a year. Negative growth pressures for four years indicate structural problems.

A second clue that the problems are structural can be gleaned from the behaviour of investment demand. Throughout the period 2016-2018, a number of commentators and industry representatives kept up a drumbeat of criticism of the Monetary Policy Committee's refusal to cut rates. The argument was that high real interest rates, along with the restrictions imposed by the Reserve Bank of India on banks' lending in order to deal with the NPA problem, were jointly re-

One of the few transformative ideas that was put forth in the July budget was issuing sovereign bonds. Unfortunately, it appears to have run into headwinds. The idea needs to be pursued for multiple reasons. First, sovereign bonds would force government debt to be priced in a more competitive setting. Currently, it is priced in a sheltered domestic bond market. Second, issuing sovereign bonds will force greater clarity and

the beginning of 2019, both the monetary policy stance as well as the Prompt Corrective Action (PCA) norms have been relaxed by the RBI under a much more pliable RBI leadership. However, investment demand has barely moved in response. The good news is that dealing with struc-

sponsible for low investment demand. Since

tural problems doesn't require fiscal spending. Instead, it involves non-pecuniary costs. The government has to expend some of its considerable political capital in order to usher in long-term labour and land reforms. These aren't easy because the state governments have to be roped in to get these reforms going. The move to lower the corporate tax rate

is a good one. It has the characteristic of a capital market structural reform as long as it is not used as a temporary fiscal measure. The government needs to signal unambiguously to markets that this is a permanent reduction of the base rate. Else, the uncertainty surrounding the longevity of the tax cut will undo a lot of its potential upside.

The financial infrastructure within which the economy operates is another key structural bottleneck that needs to be addressed urgently. At the centre of this problem is the public sector banking network which accounts for 75 per cent of India's banking assets. Public sector banks introduce two complications to the financial system. First, they allow for capture of the credit allocation system by non-market forces. Second, since the regulator of banks is the RBI which is itself owned by the government, this amounts to the regulator regulating the entity that it itself is reporting to! This system is subject to regulatory capture. The government can induce regulatory changes by just changing the personnel it appoints to the upper management of the RBI or to its board, a scenario that played out in gory detail over the last year.

India needs to urgently begin reducing the importance of public sector banks in the economy. This can be done either through privatisation of existing public sector banks or through the granting of banking licenses to private operators. Given that the on-tap banking licenses on offer have attracted little interest so far suggests that the privatisation of public sector banks needs to be prioritised.

One of the few transformative ideas that was put forth in the July budget was issuing sovereign bonds. Unfortunately, it appears to have run into headwinds. The idea needs to be pursued for multiple reasons. First, sovereign bonds would force government debt to be priced in a more competitive setting. Currently, it is priced in a sheltered domestic bond market. Second, issuing sovereign bonds will force greater clarity and transparency of macroeconomic data since international creditors will demand that. Lastly, things like failure to achieve policy targets or reticence in releasing data will attract rapid punishment by markets. This fear will provide greater discipline to policymaking.

The government would also do well to revisit the appointments process to key technical and regulatory bodies. Functions like monetary policy, banking supervision, data collection and dissemination, audit of government financial accounts, are all technical jobs. Moreover, they need to be independent of government direction. It is crucial that technically competent people manage the institutions that oversee these functions. Appointing career bureaucrats with little to no domain training or background to run them doesn't help in either facilitating functional competence or in signaling the independence of these institutions from government control. Domain competence needs to be prioritised.

The writer is professor of economics, Royal Bank research professor and Johal Chair, University of British Columbia, Canada. Views are personal

### HITTING OUT

India's statement on Turkey's military offensive may have more to do with Pakistan. That may not be wise

HE STATEMENT BY Delhi expressing "deep concern" at Turkey's military offensive in the northeastern region of Syria which has a dominant Kurdish population, and expressing fears for the stability of the region and the fight against terrorism is, in all probability, what it seems to be - a hit at Turkey for its critical statements against India on Kashmir. On August 6, a day after the government announced its decision to revoke the special status of J&K and bifurcate the state into two Union Territories, President Recep Tayyip Erdogan had expressed concern that it "could further increase the existing tensions". Later, he was the first to speak at the UN General Assembly to raise the Kashmir issue and say that the world had "failed" to pay attention to what was happening there. It is not incidental here that the Turkey-Pakistan friendship goes back many decades: In recent years, Nawaz Sharif reached out to Erdogan during the attempted military coup against the latter, and visited the Turkish president after he managed to take back control.

It is unusual for India to hit out in this manner. Delhi has not commented before on Turkey's ambivalent role in the crisis that has unfolded in the region since ISIS erupted on the scene in the middle of 2014. In general, India does not comment on actions by a country not in its neighbourhood and unlikely to have an impact, at least immediately, on it. The statement on Turkey may be part of the "with us, or against us" style of diplomacy that has taken hold in South Block in recent years, where a country must profess loyalty to India and be critical of Pakistan to make the cut. This would be all very well if India was an economic powerhouse. But to be struggling along in terms of growth rate, and to make enemies of other nations in this manner, is not the wisest thing to do. As India knows, every country is worth its weight in votes at many multilateral forums. The election of India's nominee to the International Court of Justice at The Hague came in 2017 because of the widespread support that India garnered. As many as 183 countries voted for India's nominee. There were zero votes against him, and 10 abstentions.

Such goodwill may be hard to come by if Delhi goes around dividing its world into Pakistan lovers and Pakistan bashers, and building its foreign relations accordingly. With the India-Pakistan hyphenation it encourages, that would also be so last century.

## MAGNIFICENT MARY

She scales another peak, yet again proves the doubters wrong

CMARY KOM marched with single-minded intent to a record-breaking 8th World Championship medal this week. This glorious achievement has come in three weight divisions — pin-weight (45 kg), light-flyweight . (48 kg) and now the flyweight (51 kg). She was already the best female boxer beating Irish legend, Katie Taylor's, count of six medals, picking the seventh last time. But beating back all mutterings about her capabilities, magnificent Mary assured herself of the eighth, waving a cheery goodbye to Cuban heavyweight Felix Savon, with seven medals from his 20 years of amateur pugilism.

It only needed to be pointed out that none of her medals had come in the Olympic classification of 51 kg, and there she was in Ulan Ude, Russia, thumping the 2016 Games' bronze medallist, Columbia's Valencia Victoria, by a unanimous 5-0 verdict. For two decades now, that's what Mary Kom has done — danced around the ring, proving doubters wrong. She has won world medals when women's boxing was not in the Olympics. Then, when it got included, when she could lord over others in 48 kg, her natural weight, and now when she faces taller and stronger women in 51 kg — often those who scale down from 60 kg retaining their punching prowess even if the weight was down. She's won medals as a late teen, as a mother of twins, and now at 36 after a break when she was an MP in Rajya Sabha.

Mary Kom has been told to leave it to younger contenders. To gracefully make way. To rest on her laurels. With this medal, she has earned the right to slam the door on pretenders and their Twitter amplifiers. For if she can't inspire love, she'll make do with instilling fear by waving yet one more medal at critics and opponents.



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Why India must not reject Gandhi and imitate Pakistan



KHALED AHMED

PAKISTAN'S UNIVERSITIES ARE not counted among the world's top universities. In fact, even in Pakistan nobody in pursuit of knowledge sets much store by them. The reason is an ideology based on religion which doesn't brook revision. One thought India would learn from this negative example but it has actually succumbed. Following religion, India can start looking like Pakistan. But what will happen to the Indians and Pakistanis deeply convinced by the "inclusive" faith of Mahatma Gandhi who believed in Hindus and Muslims living together as one nation?

Minds in India and Pakistan have been gradually closing because of wars and fear of the "other", strangely becoming identical in the process. Great Indians were not reexamined after the rift of 1947. Today, as we all look back, Gandhi emerges as the great South Asian genius who couldn't convince Hindus and Muslims to live together; but in later years kept inspiring others like Martin Luther King and Nelson Mandela. He went further than anyone else in creating a single nation in India. What is happening now will simply create more "nations" and more conflict. The Khilafat Movement, the biggest Muslim movement in history, was led by him. Today, Muslims have become disenchanted with their Partition brainwash and look at him as a martyr who could have created the kind of India that could live with itself without conflict.

The pain of Partition prevented a correct assessment of leaders struggling to come out from the subjugation of British Raj. Looking back, it is Babasaheb Ambedkar who stands out as the extraordinary man who tried but despaired of Hindu-Muslim unity. He founded the new state, so to speak, because he wrote the secular Constitution of India alsuch. He wanted those outside the caste system to be considered socially equal but was realistic enough to know that Muslims and Hindus growing up under the divide-andrule governance of the Raj will not live together after 1947, and wrote the first book on Pakistan as a "separated" state. The rise of the nation state was bound to

though he couldn't clearly designate it as

influence the thinking of India and Pakistan and give rise to nationalism. It is amazing that it has taken a century to realise the genius of Rabindranath Tagore, who warned the world against nationalism as the wars of nationalism were on in Europe. That three "nationstates" of South Asia — India, Bangladesh and Sri Lanka – sing national anthems written by Tagore reminds us of the peace he was thinking of. India ended up producing more leaders of stature because the Hindu community was more evolved intellectually than the others. It is difficult to ignore the fact that the Pakistani recipient of the Nobel Prize for Physics, Abdus Salam, had to travel to India to thank his math teacher, who was a Hindu. Pakistan is weak in math even today because of state ideology. If this is so, why should India reject Gandhi and imitate "ideological" Pakistan?

Had we listened to Gandhi, we could have grown together with the advantage of interaction. William Leitner, a Hungarian Jew who came to India as an educationist, wanted the Muslims of Indian Punjab to learn math and the sciences instead of what was drilled into them in madrasas. His survey of Lahore under Ranjit Singh is discussed by Pakistani scholar Majid Sheikh thus: "What stands out is that the Hindu pundits ran schools which concentrated on Mathematics, Logic, Astrology, Sanskrit and Persian. They had the Chatsalas for traders and the Pathshalas for religious training, medical education and also for astrology and astronomy. The Sikhs concentrated on Gurumukhi and the Granths. The Muslims taught Arabic, the Quran and Persian, with a few also teaching Urdu, which was a relatively new language for the people. This provides a graphic picture of the mindset of the different communal groups."

If there is anything to learn from this for the Hindutva enthusiasts in South Asia it is this. Religion guides you spiritually and teaches you humanity above all, not violent division based on identity. Leitner tried to furtively introduce this humanity through "new" education for the Muslims in Lahore by founding the Government College Lahore and giving it the motto "Courage to Know", a translation of Latin "Sapere Aude", the motto given by Immanuel Kant (1724-1804) to the Enlightenment in Europe. He never told anyone about the real meaning of the motto till Pakistan's great poet Faiz Ahmad Faiz used it in an Urdu poem after Partition. Today, India and Pakistan should be in peaceful coexistence opening up free trade and aiming at "normalisation" rather that "dispute" resolution.

All disputes will be resolved as a consequence of normalisation. (After all China and India, involved in border skirmishes, have a trade turnover of over \$80 billion. Bangladesh and India have disputes but "nor mal relations" have led to them being friends Result: A prosperous Bangladesh. A "failed" Bapu would still have liked an "interactive" South Asia rather than a couple of "nuclearised" states lunging at each other.

> The writer is consulting editor, Newsweek Pakistan

## Koya Is Kerala CM Harijan legislator who had reportedly re-

INDIAN EXPRESS

belled against the leadership of one of the parties which had left the ruling front, is tipped for ministership.

THE DELHI BANDH, called by all the main central trade unions to express solidarity with the striking textile workers, was only partially successful. While industrial workers, bankmen and LIC employees mostly abstained from work, the supply of electricity, water and milk remained unaffected. The DTC bus service was normal and autorickshaws and taxis were freely available. Factories and small-scale units were closed as were Delhi University and Jawaharlal Nehru University. Most of the main markets including Chandni Chowk and Connaught Place were open.

### ESPIONAGE CASE

THE SPECIAL BRANCH of the Delhi Police has. in a surprise move, requested the Additional Chief Metropolitan Magistrate S M Agarwal to discharge the Calcutta businessman C A Martin, an accused in the espionage case which came to light early this year. Martin is a foreign national. Those arrested in the case included a junior government official, Joseph Mahaput. Two members of a diplomatic mission were "asked to leave the country".

## OCTOBER 12, 1979, FORTY YEARS AGO

WITH THE KERALA governor formally appointing the three-member council of ministers, headed by C H Mohammed Koya of the Muslim League, interest has again shifted to the exercise by the partners of the new political alliance to provide some cohesion and credibility to the set-up. As the state assembly, which was adjourned sine die on October 4 following the resignation of the ministry, is proposed to be convened again, possibly in the third week of this month, a sense of urgency has been introduced in the efforts of the leaders to remove the conflicts among the parties and pave the way for an early ex-

pansion of the ministry. It is learnt that a

Today, Muslims have

become disenchanted with

and look at him (Gandhi) as

their Partition brainwash

a martyr who could have

created the kind of India

that could live with itself

without conflict.

PARTIAL BANDH

THE INDIAN EXPRESS, SATURDAY, OCTOBER 12, 2019

## THE IDEAS PAGE

## Un-civic nationalism

Attempts are being made to dismantle the pluralistic ideas of India that are a legacy of Gandhi and Tagore

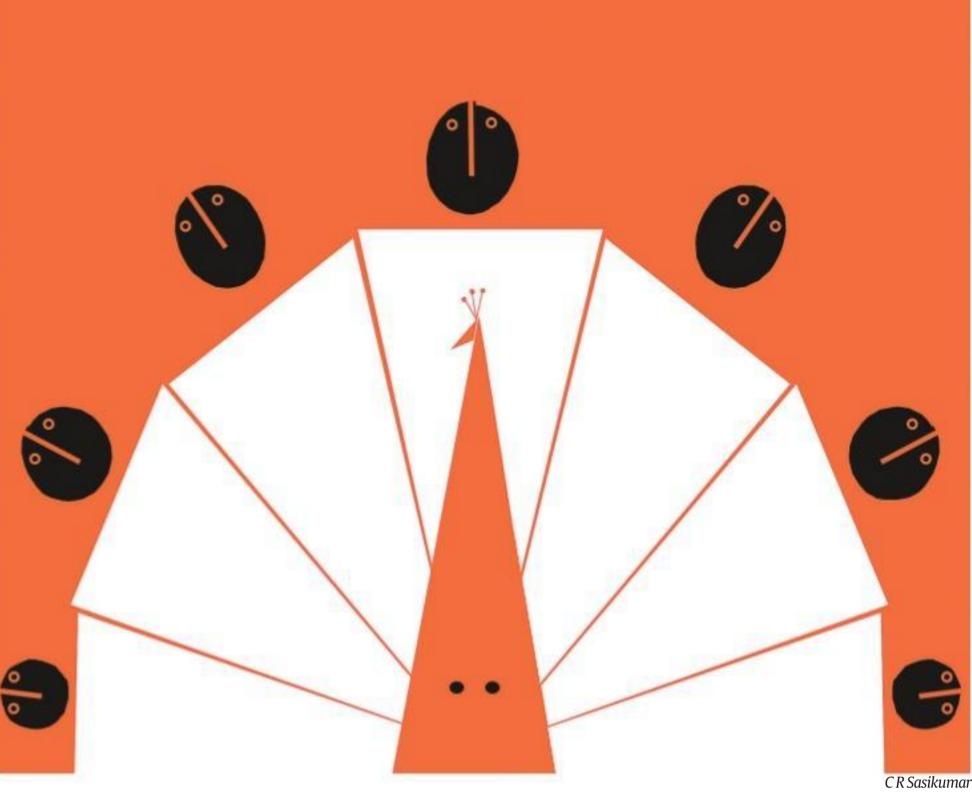


IN THE WORLD'S largest half-democracy, we have by now got used to a constant barrage of spin, half-truths and lies which has successfully hijacked the legacy of past leaders for its own cause — Gandhiji, Patel, Netaji Bose, Bhagat Singh, Vivekananda and even Ambedkar – although all of them were openly against the idea of Hindutva, as currently interpreted, and Hindu Rashtra. In the sphere of ideology, the idea of nationalism is in the process of being hijacked. Already for many in our country (including the hysterically cheer-leading sections of the media), nationalism is narrowly taken as majoritarianism in the service of a jingoistic state and focused on hating a neighbouring country (and, of course, "enemies within"). The British politician, Nye Bevan, after his first visit to Pakistan in its early days is reported to have thus described that country: "I have never been to a country so much in love with hate". Unfortunately, we are fast reaching a situation where this description may fit our country as well. Religion-based nationalism as propa-

gated by Jinnah, and opposed by Gandhiji, was the basis of the formation of Pakistan. All over the world today, ethnic nationalism of one kind or another is making a comeback — Christian nationalism in Poland and Hungary, white nationalism among evangelical Christians in the US, Slavic and orthodoxchurch based nationalism in Russia, Islamic nationalism in Turkey and Indonesia and so on. About a hundred years back, the leaders of social thinking in India applied their mind to what should be the basis of nationalism in the diverse, extremely heterogeneous society of India. I have particularly in mind the thoughts of Gandhiji and Tagore on nationalism expressed in various forms (essays and lectures by both, and in the case of Tagore, also in literature with several poems and at least three novels — one of which later was the basis of a widely-known Satyajit Ray movie, *Ghare Baire*) in the first three decades of the 20th century.

They were, of course, both anti-imperialists, thus sharing in the popular movements of nationalism against colonial rulers, but they wanted to go beyond this to think about a more positive basis of nationalism. Both of them found the nation-state of European history, with a singular social homogenising principle and militarised borders and jingoistic mobilisation against supposed enemy states, unacceptable and unsuitable for India's diverse society. Instead, they both drew upon the long folk-syncretic tradition of Indian society (which grew out of the layers of sediments formed by successive waves of social reform and rebellion, called the bhakti movements, against the dominance of the rigid Hindu brahminical system, over many centuries in different parts of India), extolling inter-faith tolerance and pluralism, and wanted to make that the constructive basis of Indian nationalism.

Both Gandhiji and Tagore were deeply religious persons. But Gandhiji openly said, "Free India will not be a Hindu Raj; it will be an Indian Raj, based not on the majority of any religious sect or community". Tagore was



trenchant in his criticism of the western idea of the nation-state, "with all its paraphernalia of power and prosperity, its flags and pious hymns... its mock thunders of patriotic bragging", and of how it stokes a national conceit that makes society lose its moral balance. Nehru, who was personally close to Gandhiji and ideologically close to Tagore, saw more value in the modern state than they did in providing a unifying structure in a divided society and in unleashing the forces of planned economic development.

By the time the Indian Constitution was framed, both Gandhiji and Tagore were dead. Nehru (along with Ambedkar), in leading the way, drew upon the society-centric pluralistic idea of nationalism of Gandhiji and Tagore and gave it a legal-juridical form in the Indian Constitution. The Nehru-Ambedkar idea of nationalism, forged and refined through elaborate deliberations of the Constituent Assembly, gave India the basis of its civic nationalism that prevailed for many decades.

It is this inclusive idea of civic nationalism that is now being attempted to be dismantled by the Hindu nationalists. Even at the time of the framing of the Constitution, the RSS had opposed the Constitution as "western", even though in their earlier history, many of their leaders used to admire the ethnic basis of nationalism in a western country, Germany — their revered leaders like Savarkar and Golwalkar had expressed open admiration for the efficient Nazi system of mobilising and organising the German nation. Earlier, Japanese nationstate had also been inspired by German history. It is not surprising that Tagore's lectures in Japan as early as 1916 against the aggrandising nation-state did not make him popular with the Japanese.

In the West, the US is a case where the idea of civic nationalism was pursued (though not always successfully). In a 2009 speech, Barack Obama said: "One of the great

strengths of the United States is... we do not consider ourselves a Christian nation, (but) a nation of citizens who are bound by ideals and a set of values", presumably as enshrined in the Constitution. This is a major historical example of what the German philosopher Habermas calls "constitutional patriotism", as opposed to patriotism based on "blood and soil" which used to have popular appeal in Germany, and which in history has been associated with a great deal of persecution, violence and devastation. It is this German history that Einstein may have had in mind when he said nationalism is "an infantile disease, the measles of mankind".

This battle of alternative versions of nationalism is raging all over the world today. Our identities are necessarily multi-layered but ethnic nationalists privilege one of these layers, usually based on the narrow particularities of religion, language or culture that makes it easy to mobilise certain groups. In the name of national integration and fighting enemies, both outside and within, they undermine minority rights and procedures of democracy, they accuse liberals of appeasing the minorities (blacks and Hispanics in the US, immigrants in Europe, Kurds in Turkey, Muslims in India), and try to suppress dissent as "anti-national". Civic nationalism, on the other hand, emphasises the procedural aspects of democracy, and through its stress on liberal constitutional values tries to use the pre-commitment of a foundational document to bind the hands of subsequent generations against majoritarian tendencies curbing basic civil rights. If we lose this ideological battle in India, the foundational values of our multi-cultural society that our earlier great social thinkers adored will be in serious danger.

The writer is professor of graduate school at the department of economics, University of California, Berkeley

### WHAT THE OTHERS SAY

"The ditching of Kurdish-led forces threatens to destabilise the region (Syria) further. It is just the latest proof of the dangers of this president's (Trump) foreign dealings." — THE GUARDIAN

## Reality calls for simple words

There may not be a word for lynching in most Indian languages. There is no doubt that we need one



Saikat Majumdar

"SOUTHERN TREES BEAR a strange fruit," sang Billie Holiday, "Blood on the leaves and blood at the root." What is this strange fruit? Quickly, we get the answer: "Black bodies swingin' in the Southern breeze/ Strange fruit hangin' from the poplar trees"

It is strange fruit. It is strange, of course, because it is no fruit. They are corpses of murdered black men. But it is also strange because that's not where you expect corpses to be. In battlefields, yes. On the roadside, maybe. In the gutter, perhaps.

Corpses are not meant to fly in the sky. Hang from trees in droves. That is almost as terrifying as the marching Birnam Wood was to a villainous Macbeth.

It is strange because it is new. Always. Even after 4,743 bodies — the number of people lynched between 1882 and 1968 in the United States, as estimated by the NAACP, the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People.

The "pastoral scene of the gallant South," in Holiday's haunting words, was split open by "the bulgin' eyes and the twisted mouth" of destroyed black bodies, the "scent of magnolias sweet and fresh" suddenly ripped apart by "the sudden smell of burnin' flesh."

But soon, that which is not a fruit becomes one. It suffers the fate of being eaten by birds, flooded by rains, pushed around by the wind, wizened by the sun. In the end, "for the tree to drop." "Here is a fruit for the crows to pluck/For the rain to gather For the wind to suck/For the sun to

rot/For the tree to drop"./Finally, it becomes crop. /But what a crop! "Here is a strange and bitter crop". Outlandish no more, the metaphor en-

ters reality. The English language too, gets a new word: Lynching. It is a word that is most directly associated with the planned but extrajudicial murder of African-American people in the

American south, carried out by white groups in public. The alleged crimes were anything from resistance to slavery, attempt to escape to freedom, to charges of sedition to perceptions of threats to white property or person, including sexual threats to white women. As with most of the crimes oppressed and enslaved blacks were accused of committing, most of the alleged violations that led to lynching were unfounded or greatly exaggerated.

"Lynch" came from the phrase "Lynch Law," which was a term for this method of "execution" without trial. The two brothers who lent their names to this phrase were Charles and William Lynch, who lived in Virginia in the 1780s.

The claim made this week by the RSS chief, Mohan Bhagwat, that "lynching" isn't an Indian word has rocked the nation. The uproar isn't just about language — the assumption lurking under this claim, that the practice of lynching too, is alien to India,

is what has taken the nation by storm, most of all, people with conscience who have been tormented by the spate of executionstyle murders by frenzied mobs, in most instances, of members of minority groups perceived to have violated customs and beliefs held by the mainstream.

I have to say that Bhagwat is right. Growing up speaking Bangla, I knew the

word "gonodholai," public thrashing, the kind that a pickpocket might get if caught in a crowded bus. But every Bengali knows that the word is actually meant to be funny — the kind reserved for the blasphemer who badmouths Rabindranath or Satyajit Ray on a Calcutta street, rather than a real criminal – though we all know many a pickpocket has been treated to its flavour in public as well.

The word in Hindi that the internet keeps suggesting as its equivalent is "hatya". But "hatya" — murder in most Sanskrit-derived Indian languages — is nothing like a pre-planned, extra-judicial murder by a mob, especially that of a member of a disempowered minority.

Does reality create language? Or does language create reality? Thinkers as varied as Ludwig Wittgenstein and Jacques Lacan would have us believe the latter. But reality is always calling out for new words to be added to our dictionaries. "Twerk", "derp" "selfie", "phablet" were all added in the last few years to articulate aspects of contemporary digital culture. Sometimes, as with "mansplaining", it is the work of a new political conscience.

This is what my colleague, the literary scholar and translator Rita Kothari, had to say in her recent social media post: "Should we then create a tatsam Sanskrit word for 'lynching' so that Mr. Bhagwat is truly convinced of it as a reality? Or should he wonder why we have not needed to use this word before? This business of words signalling realities that existed is used so conveniently by different sections. And states of feeling that have no name must wait till we have named them. Language was not an already formed mansion in which we went to live; it is rather a house in the making that exists in and through incompleteness."

This is why the fruit was strange in Holiday's song. Its corporeality was strange on the trees. Abel Meerapol wrote it as a poem in 1937. Holiday sang it in 1939. Most instances of lynching occurred in the US at the turn of the century. But the NAACP records cases of lynching happening as late as in 1968.

The word "lynching" was coined in the 18th century American South in the sense of a legal term. Extra-judicial or not, the contemporary white sensibility perceived it as more or less a legitimate, if not a legal action. In the 1930s, with the success of the Civil Rights movement still three decades away, bleeding black bodies on southern trees became strange fruit again. Strange, but real.

Reality calls out for metaphors Sometimes, it calls out for simple words with straight meanings. There may not be a word for "lynching" yet in most Indian languages. But finally we have arrived in an India where we need one.

The writer is professor of English and creative writing at Ashoka University. His most recent book is the novel The Scent of God



## Green versus green

On Aarey, a plea to Mumbaikars to give precedence to long-term benefits of Metro

By the time the Indian

Constitution was framed

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SAVIO RODRIGUES

MUMBAI IS CLEARLY divided over the Aarey Depot issue. On one side, there are citizens who believe that pollution in Mumbai has reached devastating levels with resultant impact on the health of the common Mumbaikar. So, we need to have a robust public transport system, the Mumbai Metro, to ease dependency on vehicular transportation. Their belief is that reduction in vehicular traffic will improve the city's environmental conditions. On the other side, we have citizens who believe that the felling of trees at the Aarey Milk Depot site will further deteriorate the environmental conditions in Mumbai because the city needs to retain its green cover.

To be honest, both groups are logical, both love Mumbai and both are environmentally conscious. To the people of Mumbai, the toughest decision is to be able to balance the long-term environmental benefits with the short-term environmental gains.

The Mumbai Metro Rail Corporation Limited (MMRCL) has felled 2,141 trees. It was granted this permission by the Tree Authority; this permission was challenged at the Bombay High Court. The court dismissed the petition and allowed MMRCL to proceed with its scheduled work on the project. The protestors leading one group of concerned citizens approached the Supreme Court, which has ordered a status quo on the

cutting off trees.

I have studied the Mumbai Metro Line -3 (MML-3) project over the last several weeks and have come to understand that MML-3 will carry 17 lakh passengers every day and thereby removing 6.5 lakh vehicle trips off the road, which will, in turn, reduce 2.61 lakh tonnes of CO2 pollution every year. If the same amount of pollution is to be reduced just by planting trees, Mumbai would need more than two crore trees, for which there is no space in the city.

Mumbai is so polluted due to the large number of vehicles in the city. In my understanding, the temporary strain on the environment caused by cutting 2,141 trees at Aarey Milk Colony in terms of CO2 sequestration, will be compensated just by four days of Metro Line 3 operations. The damage envisaged over the trees' lifetime will be compensated by 80 days operations.

The MMRCL in its communication has stated that it has adopted sustainable mitigation measures for the temporary environmental strain the project might cause. It has planted 14,346 trees with 6"x 12" girth and 12-15 feet height of native variety and also planted 9,500 trees as per the Forest Department norms under CSR. A total 23,846 trees have been planted at different locations, including the degraded areas of

Borivali National Park. The trees are of native varieties like Sita Ashok, Kadamb, Arjun and Kanchan. The MMRCL reportedly intends to plant 3,000 more trees and is in discussion with the Maharashtra government to find suitable land to plant these trees.

Every day, at least 10 people die on suburban rail tracks either because of trespassing or by falling from crowded trains. About the same number of people get injured. The loss of 3,500-4,000 lives every year for the past many years has been a matter of great concern for India's financial capital.

Many families have been devastated by the untimely death of their bread earner in such mishaps. Precious lives can be saved only if there is a substantial capacity expansion of rail-based public transport, the Metro. The entire Metro network, I understand, will have the capacity to carry more than one crore passengers by 2041. This would lead to a safer commute on suburban trains as well.

Metro Line-3 will be the most important and efficient corridor of the Mumbai Metro network. It has a huge potential to provide Mumbaikars a safer, more comfortable and reliable mode of transport.

Tree cutting may cause temporary strain to the environment but the benefits of Metro-3 in terms of reduction in pollution, reduction in traffic congestion and saving of lives substantially outweigh this environmental strain.

As a former resident of Mumbai, and someone who travels to Mumbai quite often on work, I am clear that Mumbai needs a robust transport system such as the Metro. I am emotional about the issue, every Mumbaikar would be. But being emotional cannot make us blind to the truth about the dual need of the MML-3: To save the environment and save lives.

Shifting the Metro Aarey Depot is not only illogical at this point of time but also financially unviable. It will also not meet the deadline of the Metro's commencement of operations. The MML-3 project is registered with the United Nations Framework for Climate Change under the Clean Development Mechanism. That gives me confidence that MML-3 project will walk the path of environmental sensitivities and sustainable development.

I appeal to all Mumbaikars. Let's come together to make Mumbai greener with a robust and ecological sound transport system project.

The writer is Founder & Editor-in-Chief, GoaChronicle.com and IndianExpose.com. He is also a social entrepreneur and an environmental rights activist

### LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

### PEOPLE LEFT OUT

from Aarey' (IE, October 10). The MM-RCL started felling trees immediately after the high vourt order. This is an example of opaque governance. People are crucial stakeholders in the process of development but are consistently neglected by the government. Aarey is a reminder that without the involvement of people in governance, a development process cannot succeed.

THIS REFERS TO the editorial, 'Lessons

Ravi Deshmhkh, Parbhani

### VENTURE TRUSTS

THIS REFERS TO the article, 'Charity for business' (IE, October 8). In the past, some charitable/religious trusts have tried to manufacture greeting cards, candles and incense sticks. But their cost of production is so high that they become unsaleable. Investment by them in venture capital would cause misuse or wrong investment which would drain funds of trusts. The government should initiate a deposit scheme for investment by trusts which may be used to finance venture capital. Shobha Ahuja, Parwanoo

### Privacy vs security

THIS REFERS TO the editorial, 'Privacy rights and wrongs' (IE, October 11). Article 19 provides freedom of expression but also empowers the government to impose reasonable restrictions on matters related to defamation and

### LETTER OF THE WEEK

THIS REFERS TO the article, 'Just

THEY DO SPEND

blame it on millennials', (IE, October 10). The spending priorities of millennials are definitely from that of the generation preceding. They do not like to invest in real estate or automobiles unless there is a dire need for the same. But millennials are also known to spend ona a range of products and services. Generous provision for nonfood expenditure is a regular feature of the monthly budget of any millennial. India, in fact, could actually realise the visible benefit of the economic reform of 1991 only after the first batch of millennials entered the

job market. Sudip Kumar Dey, Kolkata

security of state. This mean that the government can impose restriction only when a chat in the OTT violates the reasonable restriction mentioned in Article 19(2). But for that, governments will have to read every chat. The government trying to introduce a surveillance state on the pretext of security.

Suchak D Patel, Ahmedabad

ess.com

### बिज़नेस स्टैंडर्ड वर्ष 12 अंक 203

### निजीकरण की राह

इस समय निजीकरण पर जोर है। रेलवे स्टेशन का काम कारोबार करना नहीं है। और रेलगाड़ियां, हवाई अड्डे, कंटेनर कॉर्पोरेशन, शिपिंग कॉर्पोरेशन, राजमार्ग परियोजनाएं, एयर इंडिया, भारत पेट्रोलियम इन सभी का तथा अन्य संस्थानों का भी निजीकरण होना है। यहां हम विनिवेश नहीं बल्कि पर्ण निजीकरण की चर्चा कर रहे हैं। यानी स्वामित्व में बदलाव। पिछली बार ऐसा वाजपेयी सरकार के कार्यकाल में अरुण शौरी ने किया था। ऐसा लग रहा है कि आखिरकार प्रधानमंत्री मोदी अपनी कही उस बात पर अमल करने जा रहे हैं कि सरकार

इसके लिए तमाम प्रेरक वजहें हो सकती हैं। उदाहरण के लिए सकारात्मक कदम उठाने की सरकार की प्रतिष्ठा बहाल करना। दरअसल 2016 की नोटबंदी और वस्तु एवं सेवा कर के कमजोर क्रियान्वयन से ऐसी धारणा बन गई थी कि मंदी के लिए ये कदम भी कछ हद तक जिम्मेदार हैं। एक अन्य लक्ष्य बढ़ते राजकोषीय घाटे को कम करना भी हो सकता है। सरकार एक के बाद एक नए व्यय कार्यक्रमों की घोषणा कर रही है और कर रियायतें प्रदान की जा रही

हैं। एक ओर जहां व्यय बढ़ा है, वहीं कर राजस्व में कमी आई है। इससे पहले कि राजकोषीय अंतर शर्मिंदा करने वाले स्तर पर पहुंचे, कहीं न कहीं से तो धन जुटाना होगा। भारतीय रिजर्व बैंक को एकबारगी हस्तांतरण करने पर मजबूर किया गया लेकिन वह पर्याप्त नहीं है। ऐसे में निजीकरण उपयोगी हो सकता है लेकिन दिक्कत यह है कि अभी आधे से अधिक वित्त वर्ष बाकी है और जिन सरकारी परिसंपत्तियों की बिक्री की घोषणा की भी गई है, वह मार्च के अंत तक पूरी होती नहीं दिखती।

बहरहाल, चाहे जो भी हो, निजीकरण का स्वागत है। राजकोषीय शद्धतावादी कहेंगे कि मौजूदा व्यय की पूर्ति के लिए परिसंपत्तियों की बिक्री करना उचित नहीं है। वैसे ही जैसे किसानों या स्वास्थ्य बीमा योजना पर व्यय की प्रक्रिया निरंतर नहीं चल सकती। कभी न कभी तो बिक्री के लिए उपलब्ध परिसंपत्ति समाप्त हो जाएगी। हालांकि वह अभी दूर की संभावना है और सकारात्मक रूप से देखें तो निजी कारोबारियों द्वारा संपत्ति के व्यवस्थित इस्तेमाल के अपने लाभ हैं। निजीकरण के पीछे वास्तविक दलील भी यही है।

क्या यह कारगर साबित होगा ? यह कारगर हो सकता है बशर्ते कि सरकार बिक्री या लीज की शर्तें समझदारीपूर्वक तय

करे। वरना एयर इंडिया जैसी

स्थिति बन सकती है। जहां तक

खरीदारों की बात है तो यह सच है कि अधिकांश देसी कारोबारी घराने खर्च करने पड़ सकते हैं। इसके अलावा कुछ अभी नकदी खर्च करने के मिजाज में नहीं हैं। वे कर्ज कम करने पर केंद्रित हैं। इसके अलावा कई स्थापित कारोबारियों की निवेश करने की क्षमता दिवालिया प्रक्रिया के कारण बुरी तरह प्रभावित हुई है। ऋण के बदले जारी किए गए शेयर एकदम मिट्टी के मोल बिक रहे हैं। अनिल अंबानी, रुइया बंधु, सुभाष चंद्रा और अन्य कारोबारी यह झेल चुके हैं जबकि गौतम थापर

और रैनबैक्सी से जुड़े रहे सिंह बंधुओं को वित्तीय पूंजी के साथ-साथ सामाजिक साख भी गंवानी पड़ी है। दूसरी ओर बीते कुछ वर्षीं के दौरान हालात ऐसे बने हैं कि कुछ कंपनियों के पास पर्याप्त नकदी और ज्यादा ऋण लेने की गुंजाइश है लेकिन वे खपत में धीमापन आने

के कारण निवेश नहीं कर साप्ताहिक मंथन रहे। नया कारोबार शुरू

करने या खराब परिसंपत्ति टी. एन. नाइनन खरीदने के लिए उन्हें पैसे अंतरराष्ट्रीय हित भी जुड़े हो सकते हैं।

> इन बातों का राजनीतिक जोखिम भी है। आरएसएस प्रमुख ने इस नीति के कुछ पहलुओं को लेकर चेतावनी दी है। श्रम संगठनों द्वारा भी असंतोष दर्ज किया जा रहा है। मोदी सरकार ऐसे प्रतिरोध से पार पाने में सक्षम है लेकिन उसे अपनी प्रतिष्ठा को उत्पन्न जोखिम को भी ध्यान में रखना होगा। भारत समेत कई देशों में

निजीकरण के साथ विवाद जुड़े रहते हैं। जब लंबे समय की लीज जैसे जटिल वित्तीय मसलों पर जल्दबाजी में बिना मशिवरे के निर्णय लिया जाए तो विवाद उत्पन्न होते हैं। हवाई अड्डों को अदाणी समृह को देना इसका उदाहरण हैं।

इस बीच यह स्पष्ट नहीं है कि पूरा ध्यान परिवहन क्षेत्र पर क्यों केंद्रित है ? निजीकरण की प्रक्रिया जहां प्रधानमंत्री कार्यालय और नीति आयोग की निगरानी में है और नितिन गडकरी और पीयूष गोयल के रूप में दो अत्यंत जीवंत मंत्री परिवहन से जुड़े क्षेत्रों के प्रभारी हैं। लेकिन यह कोई वजह नहीं है कि सरकार अन्य क्षेत्रों की संकट से गजर रही सरकारी इकाइयों के निजीकरण पर ध्यान न दे। खासतौर पर घाटे में चल रही दोनों सरकारी दुरसंचार कंपनियां जिनमें सुधार की उम्मीद नहीं। इसके अलावा सरकारी बैंकों पर भी ध्यान दिया जाना चाहिए जो बीते पांच सालों में जनता के 2 लाख करोड रुपये पचा चुके हैं।



# पुराने बनाम नए बुर्जुआ की बहस में उलझा देश

परिसंपत्ति निर्माण करने वालों की बुराई और नागरिकों पर ठप्पा लगाना राजनीतिक रूप से लाभदायक हो सकता है लेकिन देश के भविष्य के लिए यह सही नहीं होगा। विस्तार से बता रहे हैं श्याम सरन

धानमंत्री नरेंद्र मोदी के नेतत्व वाली भारतीय जनता पार्टी (भाजपा) की मौजूदा सरकार लगातार खुद को जा रहा है या बदला जा रहा है और नया पिछली सरकारों से अलग बताती रही है। संगठनात्मक ढांचा और मानक तय किए यहां तक कि उसने अपने आपको अटल जा रहे हैं। ये नए मानक और ढांचे ऐसे हैं बिहारी वाजपेयी के नेतत्व वाली भाजपा की पिछली सरकार से भी अलग दर्शाया है। यह सरकार एक नव राजनीतिक बुर्ज़ुआ के रूप में सामने आई है जो अधिक समकालीन, विश्वसनीय और देसी सामाजिक और सांस्कृतिक भारतीय यथार्थ का प्रतिनिधित्व करती है।

इसे इस बात से महसूस किया जा सकता है कि यह सरकार सचेत ढंग से और जानबूझकर सामाजिक और आर्थिक प्रगति के मामले में अंग्रेजी भाषा और शिक्षा का अनादर करती है। उसमें उच्च वर्गीय शिक्षण और अनुभव से प्राप्त पेशेवर विशेषज्ञता और कौशल को लेकर निरंतर संदेह का भाव बना रहता है, खासतौर पर अगर इनका प्रदर्शन अंग्रेजी भाषा में किया जाए। परंतु अंतरिक्ष और नाभिकीय ऊर्जा के क्षेत्र में देश की सफलता को देखें तो वह पुराने बुर्जुआओं द्वारा किए गए दूरदर्शी सामूहिक निवेश का नतीजा है। अंग्रेजी भाषा में पकड़ के बिना यह संभव नहीं और प्रक्रियाएं तय किए थे उन्हें नष्ट किया जो नए उभरते बुर्जुआ वर्ग के साथ तालमेल बिठा सकें।

परंतु हमें वैकल्पिक मॉडल के बारे में कोई अंदाजा नहीं है। नए संस्थान और मानकों को अपनी जडें जमाने में वक्त लगता है। निश्चित तौर पर एक दौर तदर्थ प्रावधानों और विवेकाधीन निर्णय प्रक्रिया का भी होता है। उदाहरण के लिए कैबिनेट सचिव की अफसरशाही के मुखिया और अफसरशाही के विभिन्न अंगों के बीच समन्वयक की संवैधानिक भूमिका खत्म की जा चुकी है। प्रधानमंत्री के प्रमुख सचिव और राष्ट्रीय सुरक्षा सलाहकारों को अब कैबिनेट दर्जा हासिल है। जाहिर है ऐसे में कैबिनेट सचिव का कद घटा है। सशस्त्र बलों की बात करें तो अतीत में जो मानक सख्ती से प्रवर्तित किए गए थे उन्हें खारिज किया जा रहा है। वरिष्ठ कमांड ऑफिसर ने सार्वजनिक रूप से सामने आकर ऐसी घोषणाएं करनी शुरू कर दी हैं जो प्रयोजनमूलक आवश्यकताओं से परे

था। इन पुराने बुर्जुआ ने जो संस्थान, मानक 🛮 हैं। हमारा सामना विरोधाभासी परिस्थितियों से होता है जहां एक ऐसी सरकार जो मजबत नेतृत्व और बेहतर प्रदर्शन क्षमता के कारण खुद पर गर्व करती है लेकिन उसमें ससंगतता की कमी भी नजर आ रही है। इसकी ताकत रणनीतिक चपलता. संवाद की कुशलता और सार्वजनिक बहस में उसकी प्रवीणता है। परंतु संस्थानों के कमजोर होने, दूरगामी नीति तैयार करने को लेकर धैर्य न होने और अक्सर हकीकत से कोसों दूर लक्ष्य तय करने के चलते राष्ट्रीय हित में भारी कीमत चुकानी पड सकती है। मौजूदा राजनीतिक प्रतिष्ठान लगातार मंदी की ओर बढ़ती अर्थव्यवस्था और कम होते रोजगार पर से जनता का ध्यान हटाने में कामयाब रहा है। इसके लिए जबरदस्त जनसंपर्क अभियान की सहायता ली गई है। इस बहस में 'लुटियन में रहने वाले बुर्जुआ', 'खान मार्केट गैंग' और 'सीमापार के दीमक' आदि केंद्र में आ गए हैं जो देश को खोखला कर रहे हैं। अल्पसंख्यकों के बारे में प्रचारित किया गया है कि वे हमारे पश्चिमी शत्रु के साथ विश्वासघाती सहानुभूति रखते हैं। ऐसे निराशावादियों का भी जिक्र किया जाता

है जो इस सरकार की उपलब्धियों को कभी

स्वीकार नहीं करते।

जम्म् कश्मीर में सरकार ने जिस तरह बदलाव किए हैं उनसे इस सरकार को तात्कालिक राजनीतिक लाभ मिले हैं। गलती करने की जरूरत नहीं है, जम्मू कश्मीर की राजनैतिक और संवैधानिक स्थिति में जो बदलाव किया गया है उसे लेकर चिंता के बजाय आम जनता में सराहना का भाव है। वहां देश के नागरिकों के साथ जो कुछ हो रहा है, उसके बारे में कोई यह नहीं सोच रहा कि संवैधानिक व्यवस्था और संस्थागत सीमाओं से परे परिस्थितियों में ऐसा हमारे साथ भी हो सकता है। राजनीतिक विचलन की यह नीति कब तक कारगर रहेगी? शायद लंबे समय तक लेकिन इसमें मौजूदा विरोधाभास इसे अस्थायी भी बनाता है। सरकार का लक्ष्य है देश को विश्व समुदाय में अग्रणी स्थान दिलाना। उसे शक्ति और प्रतिष्ठा संपन्न देश बनाना और नागरिकों को परे विश्व में सम्मान दिलाना। हालांकि अतीत की किमयों को बार-बार याद करना बेहतर भविष्य की गारंटी नहीं है हालांकि इससे आत्मविश्वास जरूर आ सकता है। माओ के काल में चीन का उदय हुआ होगा लेकिन उसकी मौजूदा शक्ति सीखने और विकसित देशों से निरंतर सबक लेने से आई है। लाखों चीनी छात्र और विद्वान इसलिए अंग्रेजी सीखते हैं ताकि वे बेहतरीन वैज्ञानिक और तकनीकी ज्ञान हासिल कर सकें। चीन ने अतीत में जो हासिल किया उसके प्रति गौरवबोध था और उसके पास उपलब्धियों की भी कमी नहीं थी। इसे जानने के लिए जोसफ नीधम को पढ़ना श्रेयस्कर होगा। परंतु आज की दुनिया अलग है और हमें यह मानना होगा कि हमें लंबे समय तक दूसरों से ज्ञान लेना होगा भले ही हम ज्ञान के उत्पादक बनने की आकांक्षा में रहें।

इस राष्ट्रीय प्रयत्न के आयोजन में अंग्रेजी भाषा के साथ करीबी और सीखने के उन्नत केंद्रों तक पहुंच (भले ही सीमित वर्ग) महत्त्वपूर्ण परिसंपत्ति है जिसका समझदारीपूर्वक लाभ लिया जाना चाहिए।

प्रधानमंत्री मोदी को प्रवासी भारतीयों के बीच अपार लोकप्रियता हासिल है। हमें हाल ही में ह्यस्टन में इसका नमना देखने को मिला। लेंकिन क्या अमेरिका, ब्रिटेन अथवा ऑस्ट्रेलिया के प्रवासी पुराने भारतीय बुर्जुआ हैं या नए? उन्होंने जो हासिल किया है क्या वह अंग्रेजी भाषा को नकार कर हासिल किया जा सकता था? और क्या उन देशों में उनका स्वागत इसलिए नहीं हुआ कि वे साझा राजनीतिक मुल्यों और संस्थानों वाले देशों से आते हैं?

पुराने और नए बुर्जआ की बहस देश को शक्तिशाली बनाने के तय लक्ष्यों को हासिल करने की राह में बाधा बन रही है। सरकार को प्रतिभाओं को आगे बढाना चाहिए और नागरिकों के कौशल और ऊर्जा को सकारात्मक ढंग से बढावा देकर लक्ष्य हासिल करना चाहिए। नागरिकों का नामकरण करके, उन्हें राष्ट्रवादी और राष्ट्रद्रोही में बांटकर देखना, परिसंपत्ति निर्माताओं की आलोचना करने जैसी रणनीति राजनीतिक रूप से कारगर हो सकती है लेकिन यह देश के भविष्य के लिए कतई नुकसानदेह है।

## डीटीएच ग्राहकों के गुम होने से जुड़े मिथक का सच जब परंपरागत मीडिया को

लेकर बुरी खबर आती है तो विश्लेषकों एवं सोशल मीडिया विशेषज्ञों की प्रतिक्रिया कमोबेश अनुमानित ही होती है। हर बात को बडी तेजी से 'डिजिटल क्रांति' और 'कॉर्ड कटिंग' के जिम्मे डाल दिया जाता है। पिछले हफ्ते भी कुछ ऐसा ही हुआ। द हिंदू बिज़नेसलाइन अखबार में 2 अक्टूबर को प्रकाशित रिपोर्ट में कहा गया है कि इस साल फरवरी में दूरसंचार नियामक ट्राई की तरफ से नया शल्क आदेश लाग किए जाने के बाद से डीटीएच ऑपरेटरों को 2 करोड़ घरों में अपने कनेक्शन से हाथ धोना पडा। इस रिपोर्ट में ट्राई के आंकड़ों का ही इस्तेमाल किया गया था।

इससे तीन सवाल खडे होते हैं। पहला, आखिर डीटीएच कनेक्शन में गिरावट क्यों आई? वजह यह है कि डीटीएच कनेक्शन दर्ज करने का पैमाना ही बदल गया है। कई वर्षों तक ट्राई 120 दिनों से सक्रिय कुल ग्राहकों को आधार बनाता था। दरअसल उसे ऑपरेटर इसी तरह से आंकडे देते थे। इसमें वे ग्राहक भी शामिल थे जो निष्क्रिय थे और 120 दिनों से रिचार्ज नहीं कराए होते थे। इस तरह मार्च 2019 में समाप्त तिमाही में 7.24 घरों में डीटीएच कनेक्शन थे। बहरहाल डीटीएच ऑपरेटरों ने आंतरिक निगरानी एवं प्रसारकों को किए जाने वाले भगतान की गणना के लिए हमेशा ही एक महीने में चार खास दिनों पर आधारित औसत सक्रिय ग्राहको का इस्तेमाल किया है। अपने नए शुल्क आदेश में पूरी पारदर्शिता पर जोर देने वालें ट्राई ने भी औसत सक्रिय ग्राहकों का ही इस्तेमाल करते हुए इनकी संख्या 5.43 करोड़ बताई है। इस तरह दोनों आंकडों में 1.8 करोड से भी बडा फासला है।

अब टेलीविजन दर्शकों के बारे में रिपोर्ट जारी करने वाली संस्था बार्क के आंकडों पर नजर डालते हैं। भारत में 19.7 करोड़ घरों में टीवी सेट हैं जिनमें से 10.5 करोड घरों में केबल, 5.5 करोड़ घरों में डीटीएच और करीब 2.5-3 करोड़ घरों में डीडी के फ्रीडिश कनेक्शन हैं। मोटा अनुमान है कि केवल दूरदर्शन के चैनलों तक पहुंच रखने वाले 80 लाख घर भी हैं।



मीडिया मंत्र

वनिता कोहली-खांडेकर

इसके अलावा इंटरनेट प्रोटोकॉल टीवी वाले घर भी हैं। इन सबको जोडकर सही आंकडा सामने आता है। 120 दिन बनाम बीती रात में

सक्रिय कनेक्शन की बहस कुछ वैसी ही है जैसे प्रिंट मीडिया में कुल पाठक संख्या (पिछले महीने अखबार पढने वाले) बनाम औसत प्रतियां पाठक संख्या (कल अखबार पढने वाले) की बहस है। कुल पाठक संख्या औसत प्रतियां पाठक से अमूमन तीन-चौथाई अधिक होती है। हालांकि विज्ञापनदाता औसत प्रतियां पाठक संख्या को ही मानक मानते हैं। डीटीएच उद्योग को शुद्ध सिक्रय ग्राहक का पैमाना बहुत पहले ही छोड देना चाहिए था।

दूसरा सवाल, अगर इतने ग्राहक नदारद हैं तो फिर 1.8 करोड़ ग्राहक कहां हैं? यह रिपोर्ट इस बिंदु पर आंशिक रूप से सही है। नया शल्क आदेश आने के बाद चैनलों के शुल्क में 40–400 फीसदी वृद्धि हुई है। ऐसे में कुछ घरों ने नि:शुल्क डीटीएच या सस्ता केबल कनेक्शन ले लिया या फिर ओवर-द-टॉप (ओटीटी) प्लेटफॉर्म पर चले गए या एकदम निष्क्रिय ही हो गए। याद रखें कि कई घरों में छट्टियों. परीक्षाओं या फिर अन्य कारणों से टेलीविजन देखना बंद हो जाता है। लेकिन इस दावे पर चर्चा हो सकती है कि अधिकतर दर्शकों ने टीवी देखना ही बंद कर दिया है या ट्विटर पर उसे कॉर्ड कटिंग के तौर पर पेश किया जाता है। इस तथ्य पर गौर कीजिए- 1.8 करोड घरों का मतलब है कि करीब 7.6 करोड लोग दायरे से बाहर चले गए हैं। अगर 83.6 करोड़ टीवी दर्शकों में से 7.6 करोड लोगों ने टीवी देखना बंद कर दिया है तो फिर

टीवी दर्शकों की संख्या में भारी गिरावट आनी चाहिए थी। लेकिन इस साल के पहले 39 हफ्तों में दर्शकों की संख्या 2018 की समान अवधि के आंकड़े से आगे निकल चुकी है।

आख्यानों के आंकडे तो कुछ और ही कहानी कहते हैं। ट्राई के शुल्क आदेश में चैनलों एवं बुके को चुनने में कई तरह की शर्तें एवं पाबंदियां लगाई गई हैं। 10.5 करोड़ घरों में कनेक्शन देने वाले केबल ऑपरेटरों के पास ऐसी लोचशीलता एवं क्रियाशील सुविधा है कि करोड़ों ग्राहकों को एक-एक चैनल चुनने की सुविधा दे सकें। इससे हताश होकर उपभोक्ता डीटीएच प्लेटफॉर्म का रुख कर रहे हैं।

तीसरा सवाल, टेलीविजन या अखबारों से मिलने वाली किसी भी बुरी खबर को लेकर इतना बेखबर उल्लास क्यों देखा जाता है ?

भारत दुनिया में डिजिटल के सबसे तेजी से बढ़ते बाजारों में से एक है लेकिन सारा मीडिया साथ-साथ बढ़ रहा है, कुछ अधिक तो कुछ कम। अखबार अब भी मीडिया उद्योग के सबसे लाभदायक क्षेत्रों में से एक है लेकिन पाठक संख्या में वृद्धि की दर धीमी पड रही है। टीवी दर्शक, कनेक्शनों की संख्या और राजस्व सबकी वृद्धि दो अंकों में हो रही है। ब्रॉडबैंड कनेक्शन वाले 59.4 करोड़ भारतीय रोजाना 50 मिनट तक ऑनलाइन वीडियो देखते हैं। यह 83.6 करोड भारतीयों द्वारा टीवी देखने में बिताए जाने वाले औसतन 3.45 घंटे के समय से काफी पीछे है। ध्यान रखें कि फिल्मों ने उस साल बॉक्स ऑफिस पर अच्छा प्रदर्शन किया है जब ओटीटी ने भी रफ्तार पकडा है। लिहाजा ऑनलाइन प्लेटफॉर्म की बढ़त पूरक साबित हुई है,

ऐसे में डिजिटल के हाथों दूसरे उद्योगों को निगलते हुए देखने की इतनी जरूरत क्यों है ? अगर भविष्य में ऐसा होने की संभावना देख आप रोमांचित होते हैं तो फिर इसके बारे में सोचिए। दनिया के डिजिटल विज्ञापन राजस्व के तीन-चौथाई से भी अधिक हिस्सा गूगल एवं फेसबुक युगल के नियंत्रण में है। क्या भारतीय मीडिया बाजार को भी ऐसा ही हो जाना चाहिए?

दीर्घकालीन, स्थायी, बहुक्षेत्रीय,

स्वभक्षी नहीं।

### कानाफूसी

### हाशिये पर बुजुर्ग

कांग्रेस की उत्तर प्रदेश इकाई में पिछले कुछ समय से जो तूफान उठा है, वह थमने का नाम ही नहीं ले रहा है। जब से प्रियंका गांधी प्रदेश कांग्रेस में सिक्रय हुई हैं, दिक्कत और बढ़ गई है। दरअसल, पार्टी के कुछ वरिष्ठ नेताओं के मन में उत्तर प्रदेश कांग्रेस

> कमेटी के पुनर्गठन और पार्टी की महासचिव प्रियंका गांधी वाड़ा की पदाधिकारी का चयन करने की कार्यशैली को लेकर अच्छी खासी नाराजगी है। हाशिये पर किए जाने से नाखुश पार्टी के वरिष्ठ नेता और उत्तर प्रदेश में पार्टी का प्रमुख मुस्लिम चेहरा माने जाने वाले सिराज मेहदी ने पार्टी से इस्तीफा दे दिया है। उन्होंने पार्टी अध्यक्ष सोनिया गांधी को एक भावनात्मक खत लिखा हैऔर इस बात पर नाराजगी जाहिर की है कि प्रदेश कांग्रेस में अब शिया समुदाय का प्रतिनिधित्व नहीं बचा है जबिक भारतीय जनता पार्टी ने केंद्र और उत्तर प्रदेश दोनों जगह शियाओं को अहम पदों पर नियुक्ति दी है। मेहदी ने यह आरोप भी लगाया है कि कांग्रेस में अब 50 वर्ष से अधिक उम्र के नेताओं के लिए कोई जगह नहीं है।

### आपका पक्ष

#### पारंपरिक तरीके से प्लास्टिक हटेगा

मानव ने प्लास्टिक का आविष्कार अपनी सहूलियत के लिए किया था। लेकिन वह इतना हावी हो गया कि इसके बिना जीवन असंभव सा लगता है। प्लास्टिक के बढ़ते इस्तेमाल से मानव जीवन के साथ पृथ्वी भी बुरी तरह प्रभावित हो रही है। इससे निपटने के लिए जनभागीदारी जरूरी है। केवल सरकार द्वारा एक बार इस्तेमाल होने वाले प्लास्टिक पर प्रतिबंध लगाने से इस समस्या का हल नहीं हो सकता है। प्लास्टिक कचरे में सबसे अधिक मात्रा एक बार इस्तेमाल होने वाले प्लास्टिक की है जिसमें बोतल बंद पानी, स्ट्रॉ, एक बार इस्तेमाल होने वाले प्लेट तथा गिलास, चिप्स आदि के पैकेट शामिल हैं। इन पर रोक लगाने के लिए लोगों को जागरूक करने की जरूरत है। इसके अलावा सरकार



को इसके विकल्प तलाशने होंगे। : दिल्ली में प्लास्टिक पर रोक राज्यों को चाहिए कि वह इस अभियान को सफल बनाने के लिए कोई कसर नहीं छोड़े। हमें यह भी ध्यान रखने की जरूरत है कि प्लास्टिक उद्योग से लगभग सात करोड़ लोग जुड़े हुए हैं। उनके लिए रोजगार की उपलब्धता सुनिश्चित ः मिट्टी का कुल्हड, कांच की बोतल,

लगने के बाद कपड़े की थैली बांटती एक संस्था की सदस्य

की जाए। प्लास्टिक के विकल्प में जूट की थैली, चाय-पानी के लिए

संरक्षण जरूरी

### देश के भविष्य का

बढावा देने की जरूरत है।

पत्ते की प्लेट आदि के इस्तेमाल को

संगीता चौधरी, जयपुर

संयुक्त राष्ट्र द्वारा निर्धारित सतत विकास लक्ष्यों के अनुसार भारत में पांच वर्ष से कम उम्र के बच्चों की मृत्यु दर में कमी आई है। भारत ने वर्ष 2030 तक इसे 25 बच्चे प्रति 1,000 तक की वचनबद्धता भी व्यक्त की है। भारत इस संख्या को 2025 तक 23 तक लाने का लक्ष्य रखा है। राष्ट्रीय बाल नीति 2013 में इस बात को स्वीकार किया गया है कि बच्चों के अच्छे स्वास्थ्य के साथ विकास करने के लिए

समन्वित और समावेशी दृष्टिकोण अपनाना जरूरी है। इस नीति में यह भी माना गया है कि प्रत्येक बच्चों को जीवित व स्वस्थ रहने, पोषाहार, शिक्षा, संरक्षण और सहभागिता का अधिकार है। बच्चों को अच्छा पोषाहार और संरक्षण सूचित करने के लिए महिला और बाल विकास विभाग और स्वास्थ्य एवं परिवार कल्याण मंत्रालय द्वारा अनेक कार्यक्रम चलाए जा रहे हैं। बच्चों को पोषण और स्वास्थ्य की उचित देखभाल की जरूरत होती है क्योंकि यही बच्चे देश के भविष्य होते हैं। पौष्टिक आहार संबंधी लक्ष्यों को प्राप्त करने के लिए, कार्यक्रमों को लागू करने में विद्यमान कमियों को दूर करने और सेवाओं का दायरा बढ़ाने जैसी चुनौतियों से निपटना भी जरूरी है क्योंकि बच्चों को पौष्टिक आहार की समस्या के समाधान के लिए यह जरूरी है।

सूर्यभानु बांधे, रायपुर

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



आग सोने को परखती है, विपत्ति महान मनुष्यों को

### भरोसा बढाने का समय

चीनी राष्ट्रपति का भारत आगमन ऐसे समय पर हुआ है जब दोनों देशों के बीच वैसा कोई जटिल मसला नहीं है जैसा वृहान बैठक के पहले डोकलाम को लेकर था। वृहान में दोनों देशों के नेताओं के बीच हुई मुलाकात की अगली कड़ी ही मामल्लपुरम है। भारतीय प्रधानमंत्री ने चीनी राष्ट्रपति की दिल्ली के बजाय सुदूर दक्षिण के मामल्लपुरम में अगवानी कर यही रेखांकित किया कि वह अपनी विदेश नीति के जरिये दुनिया को भारत की सांस्कृतिक विरासत और विविधता से भी परिचित करा रहे हैं। वृहान की तरह मामल्लपुरम की बैठक भी अनौपचारिक है। अनौपचारिक बैठक का यह सिलसिला इसलिए उल्लेखनीय है, क्योंकि इसमें वार्ता का एजेंडा तय करने और फिर वक्तव्य जारी करने की बंदिश नहीं रहती। इसका मतलब है कि ऐसी बैठकों में कूटनीतिक सीमाओं से परे हटकर हर मसले पर बातचीत हो सकती है। इससे एक-दूसरे के प्रति समझ-बूझ बढ़ने और बेहतर नतीजे निकलने की उम्मीद बढ़ जाती है। मामल्लपुरम में भारतीय प्रधानमंत्री और चीनी राष्ट्रपति की बैठक के बाद यह सार्वजनिक हो या न हो कि उन्होंने किन मसलों पर क्या बात की, लेकिन दोनों देशों के हित में यही है कि द्विपक्षीय रिश्ते आगे बढ़ते दिखें। ऐसा तभी होगा जब चीन कश्मीर पर पाकिस्तान के सुर में बोलने से बाज आए और अरुणाचल के मामले में अपनी निरर्थक आपत्तियां जताने का सिलसिला बंद करे।

यदि चीन यह चाहता है कि भारत उसके हितों की चिंता करे तो यही काम उसे भी करना होगा। उसे भारत के खिलाफ पाकिस्तान को मोहरा बनाने की अपनी रणनीति पर नए सिरे से विचार करना ही होगा। यदि वह ऐसा नहीं करता तो फिर भारत को यह संकेत देने में संकोच नहीं करना चाहिए कि उसके पास भी तिब्बत से लेकर ताइवान तक ऐसे मसले हैं जिन पर वह मुखर हो सकता है। भारत के पास चीन को नसीहत देने के लिए हांगकांग का भी मसला है और उइगर मुसलमानों के उत्पीड़न का भी। इसके साथ ही दक्षिण चीन सागर का भी मामला है। इस पर तो दुनिया के बड़े देश भी भारत के साथ हैं। चीन यह मानकर नहीं चल सकता कि वह भारत से अपनी शर्तों पर रिश्ते कायम कर सकता है। वह इस समय तो ऐसा और भी नहीं कर सकता, क्योंकि एक तो उसकी अर्थव्यवस्था ढलान पर है और दूसरे, अमेरिकी प्रतिबंधों के चलते उसकी मुश्किलें बढ़ रही हैं। ऐसे में उचित यही है कि चीन मतभेद वाले मसलों को किनारे कर उन मुद्दों पर ध्यान केंद्रित करे जो एक-दूसरे के लिए हितकारी होने के साथ आपसी भरोसे को बढ़ाने वाले भी साबित हों। भरोसा बढ़ेगा तो मतभेद वाले मसले भी कम होंगे।

### इसानियत पर कलक

बंगाल के मुर्शिदाबाद में दशहरे के दिन हुए तिहरे हत्याकांड की जितनी भी भर्त्सना एवं निंदा की जाए कम है, क्योंकि यह हत्याकांड इंसानियत पर बड़ा कलंक है और जिसने भी हत्याएं की है उसने पूरे मानवता को शर्मसार कर दिया है। कोई भी व्यक्ति क्या इस तरह हैवान हो सकता है जिसे न तो गर्भवती महिला और न ही आठ वर्ष के मासूम बच्चे पर दया आई। एक साथ पुरे परिवार को धारदार हथियार से काट डाला। ऐसे मानवता के दुश्मन को कड़ी से कड़ी सजा मिलनी चाहिए, ताकि फिर से कोई भी ऐसी जघन्य हत्या के बारे में सोचने से भी डरे। गुरुवार को राज्यपाल जगदीप धनखड़ ने कहा-'मैं इस तरह की वारदात से स्तब्ध और दुखी हूं। यह बंगाल में कानून व्यवस्था की संकटपूर्ण स्थिति को दिखा रहा है। उन्होंने कहा, यह घटना मानवता को शर्मसार करने वाली है। यह दिखाता कि किस तरह राज्य में सरकारी तंत्र और पुलिस काम कर रही हैं। राज्यपाल ने राज्य सरकार से घटना की तत्काल रिपोर्ट मांगी है। बता दें कि बंधु प्रकाश पाल (35), उनकी गर्भवती पत्नी ब्यूटी मंडल पाल (30) और बेटे अंगन बंधु पाल (8) की घर से खून से लथपथ लाशें मिली थीं। उनकी धारदार हथियारों से हत्या की गई थी। अज्ञात लोगों के खिलाफ हत्या का मामला दर्ज कर पुलिस छानबीन में जुटी है। राष्ट्रीय स्वयंसेवक संघ की बंगाल शाखा के सचिव जिष्ण बस ने बंध प्रकाश पाल के संघ के सिक्रय कार्यकर्ता होने का दावा किया है। वहीं वारदात को लेकर राष्ट्रीय महिला आयोग ने कहा कि बंगाल में पुलिस की निष्क्रियता के चलते ही अपराधियों का दुस्साहस बढ रहा है। ज्यादातर घटनाएं बंगाल में दिनदहाड़े हुई हैं। उम्मीद है कि महिला मुख्यमंत्री होने के नाते ममता बनर्जी बंगाल में महिलाओं की दुर्दशा को समझेंगी और तत्काल कार्रवाई करेंगी। भाजपा महासचिव एवं बंगाल के प्रभारी कैलाश विजयवर्गीय ने कहा-'इससे ज्यादा जघन्यता क्या होगी? जहां आम आदमी सुरक्षित न हो, उस राज्य की कानून व्यवस्था को अच्छा कैसे माना जाए?' राज्यपाल के बयान पर तणमल ने भी कड़ी प्रतिक्रिया दी है। तुणमूल महासचिव एवं मंत्री पार्थ चटर्जी ने कहा कि जब राज्य में इतने बड़ी दुर्गा पूजा का आयोजन शांतिपूर्ण संपन्न होता है तब राज्यपाल को इस पर कुछ भी बोलना अच्छा नहीं लगता, लेकिन मुर्शिदाबाद में हुई पारिवारिक मामले में राज्यपाल हस्तक्षेप कर रहे हैं। यह ठीक नहीं है और संवैधानिक मर्यादा का उल्लंघन है।

## विशिष्ट नेताओं की सुरक्षा का सवाल



सुरेंद्र किशोर

कुछ बड़े नेता पहले तो अपनी सुरक्षा को लेकर लापरवाही बरतते हैं, फिर कोई अनहोनी होने पर उनके साथी सरकार को जिम्मेदार टहराने लगते हैं

हुल गांधी जिस तरह गुपचुप रूप से विदेश यात्रा पर गए उसी तरह से वापस भी लौट आए। उनकी विदेश यात्रा के बीच ही यह खबर आई कि केंद्र सरकार ने यह तय किया है कि एसपीजी सुरक्षा से लैस व्यक्तियों की विदेश यात्रा में सुरक्षा कर्मी उनके साथ जाएंगे। इसका मतलब है कि भविष्य में यदि राहुल अथवा अन्य एसपीजी सुरक्षा वाला विशिष्ट व्यक्ति सुरक्षाकर्मियों को अपने साथ ले जाने से इन्कार करता है तो उसकी विदेश यात्रा रोकी भी जा सकती है। इस प्रस्तावित व्यवस्था पर कांग्रेस कह रही है कि भारत सरकार विदेश यात्राओं के दौरान राहुल गांधी की जासूसी करना चाहती है। कांग्रेस नेताओं को इसकी अनदेखी नहीं करनी चाहिए कि सुरक्षा मामले में लापरवाही के कारण आजादी के बाद अब तक महात्मा गांधी, इंदिरा गांधी और राजीव गांधी की हत्याएं हो चुकी हैं। इसके अलावा कुछ और महत्वपूर्ण जानें भी गई हैं। इन दुखद घटनाओं के बावजूद राहुल गांधी सावधानी बरतने से इन्कार कर रहे हैं। वह बिना सुरक्षा दस्ते के कंबोडिया की निजी यात्रा पर चले गए। 2016 में जब राहुल गांधी को जान से मारने की धमकी मिली थी तो कांग्रेस के शीर्ष नेताओं के एक प्रतिनिधिमंडल ने तत्कालीन गृह मंत्री से मुलाकात कर उनसे आग्रह किया था कि वह राहुल गांधी की सुरक्षा का बेहतर प्रबंध करें। इसे ध्यान में रखते हुए भारत सरकार ने 9 मई, 2016 को एसपीजी और आइबी को निर्देश दिया था कि वे राहुल गांधी की सुरक्षा को लेकर अधिकतम सावधानी बरतें। पूर्व गृह मंत्री राजनाथ सिंह के संसद में दिए एक बयान के मुताबिक राहुल गांधी करीब 21 बार सुरक्षा नियमों का उल्लंघन कर चुके हैं। उनका यह भी कहना था कि अपनी विदेश यात्राओं में एसपीजी को नहीं ले जाकर राहुल गांधी लगातार सुरक्षा नियमों की अवहेलना करते रहे हैं। वर्ष 2017 में अपने गुजरात दौरे के समय राहुल गांधी ने एक निजी कार में सफर किया, जबिक एसपीजी नियमों के तहत ऐसा करना मना है। इसी तरह एक बार गणतंत्र दिवस के अवसर पर जब प्रधानमंत्री नरेंद्र मोदी सुरक्षा नियम को नजरअंदाज करते हुए भीड़ के बीच चले गए थे तो उसे खतरनाक माना गया था।

जाहिर है कुछ बड़े नेता पहले तो अपनी सुरक्षा को लेकर लापरवाही बरतते हैं, पर कोई अनहोनी होने पर उनकी पार्टी के लोग सरकार को जिम्मेदार ठहराने लगते हैं। आजादी के बाद इस देश में ऐसा कई बार हो चुका है। मौजुदा केंद्र सरकार इस बात को लेकर चिंतित लग रही है कि फिर वैसी कोई नौबत न आ पाए! महात्मा गांधी, इंदिरा गांधी और राजीव गांधी की हत्याओं के विस्तार में जाने पर यह साफ हो जाता है कि सुरक्षा नियमों का कड़ाई से पालन हुआ होता तो संभवतः वे बहुमूल्य जानें बचाई जा सकती थीं, पर समस्या यह है कि इन घटनाओं के बावजूद हमारे अधिकांश नेता अब भी सबक नहीं ले रहे हैं। इतिहास से नहीं



अवधेश राजपुत

सीखना हमारी आदत में शुमार है।

चंपारण सत्याग्रह शताब्दी समारोह में एक बुजुर्ग गांधीवादी ने कहा था कि 'महात्मा गांधी पर बढ़ते खतरे की उस समय की सरकार ने अनदेखी की। हत्या से कुछ ही दिन पहले उनकी प्रार्थना सभा में बम फटा, लेकिन किसी ने सुरक्षा का पुख्ता इंतजाम नहीं किया, जबकि दिल्ली की गदुदी पर तमाम गांधीवादी ही बैठे हुए थे।' आम धारणा यही है जो उस गांधीवादी ने कही, पर असलियत यह है कि तत्कालीन गृह मंत्री सरदार वल्लभ भाई पटेल गांधी जी के लिए अभेद्य सुरक्षा व्यवस्था करना चाहते थे, लेकिन महात्मा गांधी ने पटेल को यह धमकी दे दी कि यदि प्रार्थना सभा में आने वाले किसी भी व्यक्ति की तलाशी ली गई तो वह उसी क्षण से आमरण अनशन शुरू कर देंगे। इससे पटेल सहित परी सरकार सहम गई थी। उस उम्र में अनशन गांधी जी के लिए खतरनाक साबित हो सकता था। इसलिए गांधी जी इच्छा के खिलाफ जाकर उनकी सुरक्षा की कोई विशेष

व्यवस्था नहीं की गई। सरदार पटेल ने कहा था कि 'मैंने स्वयं गांधी जी से पुलिस को उनकी रक्षा के लिए कर्तव्य पालन की अनुमति देने के लिए वकालत की, परंतु हम असफल रहे।' याद रहे कि 30 जनवरी, 1948 को नाथ राम गोडसे ने प्रार्थना सभा में गांधी जी की हत्या कर दी थी। यदि तलाशी की व्यवस्था होती तो गोडसे पिस्तौल लेकर बिड़ला भवन में नहीं

ऑपरेशन ब्लू स्टार की पृष्ठभूमि में 1984 में तत्कालीन प्रधानमंत्री इंदिरा गांधी के आवास से सिख सुरक्षाकर्मियों को हटा दिया गया था। ऐसा इंदिरा जी की पूर्वानुमित के बिना संबंधित अफसरों ने किया था। खुफिया रिपोर्ट के आधार पर संबंधित अफसरों ने खुद यह कदम उठाया था, पर जब इंदिरा जी को पता चला तो उन्होंने सिख सरक्षाकर्मियों को अपनी सरक्षा में वापस बुला लिया। उन्हीं सुरक्षाकर्मियों के हाथों उनकी हत्या हुई। इंदिरा जी ने यह कदम तो इस दृष्टि से उठाया था कि किसी पूरे समुदाय पर

उस घटना ने देश को यह शिक्षा जरूर दे दी कि ऐसे मामलों में नेताओं को खुद निर्णय नही करना चाहिए। याद कीजिए कि इंदिरा गांधी की हत्या के प्रतिशोध में देश में हजारों सिखों का संहार कर दिया गया। इसी के साथ 21 मई 1991 की उस दर्दनाक घटना को भी एक बार फिर याद कर लें। उस दिन पूर्व प्रधानमंत्री राजीव गांधी तमिलनाडु के श्रीपेरंबदूर गए थे उन्हें देखने सुनने वालों की काफी भीड़ थी उसी भीड़ में लिट्टे आतंकी भी थे। मानव बम बनी धनु राजीव गांधी के नजदीक पहुंचना चाहती थी। एक सुरक्षाकर्मी अनुसूइया उसे रोक रही थी। दूर खंड़े राजीव गांधी ने उससे कहा कि वह उसे आने दे। धनु पास गई और सब कुछ समाप्त हो गया। बाद में कांग्रेस ने यह आरोप लगाया कि वीपी सिंह सरकार ने राजीव गांधी की एसपीजी सुरक्षा वापस ले ली थी, जबिक हकीकत यह थी कि एसपीजी से संबंधित कानून राजीव गांधी के कार्यकाल मे ही बना था। उसमें प्रतिपक्ष के नेता को वैसी सुरक्षा नहीं मिलनी थी। याद रहे कि जब राजीव की हत्या हुई तब केंद्र में कांग्रेस समर्थित चंद्रशेखर की सरकार थी।

एसपीजी सुरक्षा कैसी हो, यह तय करने का काम नेता नहीं कर सकते। क्या ऐसा कोई कानून नहीं बन सकता कि खुद पर खतरा आमंत्रित करने वाले नेताओं को नियमों के दायरे में रहने के लिए विवश किया जा सके? ध्यान रहे कि बड़ी हस्तियों की हत्याओं से उनके परिवार के साथ-साथ देश का भी नकसान होता है। कभी-कभी तो ऐसी हत्या के बाद भीषण दंगे भी हो जाते हैं जिनमें अनेक जानें जाती हैं उम्मीद है कि राहुल गांधी और कांग्रेस के बड़े नेतागण पूर्व की इन घटनाओं से सबक लेंगे।

(लेखक राजनीतिक विश्लेषक एवं वरिष्ट स्तंभकार हैं

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## हर मोर्चे पर मात खाता पाकिस्तान

गर आप कभी पाकिस्तान जाएं और वहां के **3** गर आप कभा पाकिस्तान जाए आर वहा क किसी शख्स से मुश्किल से मुश्किल काम के लिए कहें तो यही जवाब मिलेगा, कोई मसला नहीं। दरअसल यह वहां के लोगों का मनपसंद जुमला है, लेकिन पिछले कुछ सालों से पाकिस्तान इतने अधिक मसलों में उलझ गया है कि उसकी रही-सही अहमियत भी खत्म होती जा रही है। हाल के एक सर्वेक्षण के अनुसार पाकिस्तानी जनता की नजर में बेरोजगारी, अर्थव्यवस्था, अलगाववाद, महंगाई, आतंकवाद सरीखे बड़े मसले हैं। विडंबना यह है कि इन मसलों को भूलकर पाकिस्तान कश्मीर मसले को तूल देने में लगा हुआ है। पाकिस्तान कर्जे में डूबा मुल्क है। पूरे देश में अस्थिरता का माहौल है। ऐसे माहौल में भी जिस एक बात ने साल-छह महीने में एक बार ही सही पाकिस्तानियों को गर्व का मौका दिया और उनके चेहरे पर मुस्कान बिखेरी वह कुछ खेलों में उसका प्रदर्शन होता था। अफसोस अब इस मोर्चे पर भी वह बुरी तरह नाकाम हो रहा है। पाकिस्तान जिन परंपरागत खेलों में अंतरराष्ट्रीय स्तर पर नाम कमाता था वहां भी उसकी शर्मनाक हार हो रही है। हॉकी से लेकर क्रिकेट तक जिन खेलों में पाकिस्तानियों की जान बसती थी उनमें भी दर्दशा का आलम है। क्रिकेट में पाकिस्तान को हालिया हार

तीन मैचों की सीरीज में श्रीलंका ने पाकिस्तान को उसी के घर में 'व्हाइटवॉश' किया। इस हार से पाकिस्तान में कोहराम मच गया है, क्योंकि पाकिस्तान की टीम टी-20 रैंकिंग में दुनिया की नंबर एक टीम है और श्रीलंका की टीम सातवीं पायदान पर है। सातवीं पायदान की टीम से इस तरह हारना पाकिस्तान के क्रिकेट फैंस को पचा नहीं।

श्रीलंका के खिलाफ टी-20 सीरीज में मिली।



देश तो क्या क्रिकेट भी नहीं संभल

रहा है शिवेंद्र कुमार सिंह उनकी नाराजगी इसलिए और ज्यादा थी, क्योंकि श्रीलंका ने इस सीरीज के लिए सुरक्षा वजहों से अपनी 'बी' टीम

भेजी थी। श्रीलंका के प्रमुख दस खिलाडियों ने इस दौरे पर जाने से इन्कार कर दिया था। ऐसा नहीं कि एक देश के तौर पर भारत के सामने चुनौतियां नहीं हैं। चुनौतियां यहां भी हैं, लेकिन पाकिस्तान के मुकाबले हर मामले में भारत की स्थिति आज काफी मजबूत है। पाकिस्तानी जनता को यह सालता है कि भारत में शिक्षा से लेकर स्वास्थ्य तक सभी सुविधाएं बेहतर हैं। एक समय पाकिस्तान कुछ मामलों में खुद को भारत से बेहतर पाता था, लेकिन आज भारत उससे हर मामले में

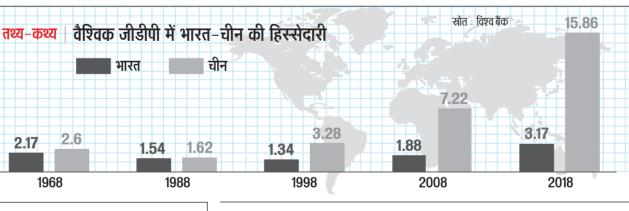
आगे निकलता दिख रहा है। भारत की जीडीपी पाकिस्तान से कई गुना ज्यादा है। भारत में आइआइटी की तादाद लगातार बढ़ रही है और एम्स की संख्या भी दर्जन भर पहुंचने वाली है। देश के दस शहरों में मेट्रो चल रही है। दूसरी तरफ पाकिस्तान है जहां लाहौर में मेट्रो ही शुरू नहीं हो पा रही है। पाकिस्तान में अन्य उद्योगों के साथ फिल्म इंडस्ट्री का हाल भी चौपट है। राजनीतिक अस्थिरता का

आलम यह है कि कोई नहीं जानता कि इमरान खान कब तक सत्ता में हैं?

बीते दिनों इमरान खान ने संयुक्त राष्ट्र महासभा के मंच से भारत को खुली धमकी दी और एक तरह से जेहाद की पैरवी की। हैरत नहीं कि क्रिकेटर रहे इमरान के इस भाषण की आलोचना तमाम क्रिकेटरों ने की। पाकिस्तानी जनता को लग रहा है कि इमरान खान से देश तो क्या क्रिकेट भी नहीं संभल रहा है। पिछले दिनों पाकिस्तान का एक वायरल वीडियो हुआ जिसमें कुछ लोग श्रीलंका की टीम के साथ चल रहे सुरक्षा काफिले की गाड़ियां गिन रहे थे। पाकिस्तान का मीडिया यह सवाल उठा रहा है कि आखिर श्रीलंका के खिलाफ सीरीज कराकर पाकिस्तान क्या संदेश देना चाहता है? अगर यह कि अब पाकिस्तान अंतरराष्ट्रीय क्रिकेट मैचों के लिए सुरक्षित जगह है तो उसे अपनी उस जनता को धोखा नहीं देना चाहिए जो श्रीलंका के साथ हुए मैचों के दौरान बंधक सी बना ली गई थी। सरक्षा के चलते लाहौर में कर्फ्यू जैसे हालात थे और एंबुलेस तक को रोका जा रहा था। लाहौर शहर में ही 2009 में श्रीलंका की टीम पर आतंकी हमला हुआ था। साफ है कि दस साल बाद भी पाकिस्तान जहां का तहां है।

पाकिस्तान के पूर्व कप्तान रमीज राजा का कहना है कि उनकी टीम रद्दी प्रदर्शन कर रही है। कुल मिलाकर संकट से घरे पाकिस्तान को अपनी जमीन पर श्रीलंका से मैच खेलने से कोई फायदा नहीं हुआ। सख्त सुरक्षा में हुए मैच और उनके नतीजों, खासकर टी-20 मैचों के नतीजों के चलते वहां की जनता असंतोष के साथ निराशा से घिरती दिख रही है।

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### दिल के आईने में

आईना वह होता है जिसमें व्यक्ति का व्यक्तित्व नजर आता है। व्यक्ति का व्यक्तित्व केवल बाहरी आईने में ही नजर नहीं आता, अपितु दिल के आईने में भी नजर आता है। व्यक्ति का दिल एक ऐसा आईना है जो पल भर में सामने वाले के सामने उसके व्यक्तित्व की सूरत और सीरत दोनों प्रस्तुत कर देता है। जिन व्यक्तियों का दिल एकदम साफ होता है, उन्हें पढ़ना बेहद सरल होता है और ऐसे लोग ही दिलों को छ जाते हैं। जो व्यक्ति अपने दिल में ईर्ष्या, लोभ, प्रतिशोध आदि की भावना को दबाए रखते हैं, उनके दिल को अनेकों रोग लग जाते हैं। जिंदगी को भरपूर जीने के लिए सबसे अधिक महत्वपूर्ण दिल का साफ होना ही होता है। जीवन के सफर में हमारा मुकाबला प्रतिदिन अनेक कठिन चुनौतियों से होता है। इन चुनौतियों का सामना जो सच्चे दिल से करते हैं, वे जीत जाते हैं। वहीं जो लोग चुनौतियों को देखकर भयभीत होकर भाग जाते हैं या झूठ का सहारा लेते हैं वे सदा टेढ़े मेढ़े रास्तों पर ही भटकते रहते हैं।

जिन लोगों के पास विश्वास करने वाला हृदय होता है, उनके अधिकांश जीवन में स्वस्थ और दीर्घायु रहने की संभावना ज्यादा होती है। किसी भी संबंध को जीवन भर निभाने का सूत्र भी यही है कि व्यक्ति का दिल साफ होना चाहिए। वे लोग जिनके हृदयों में एक-दूसरे के प्रति ईर्ष्या एवं नफरत आदि के भाव हों, कभी एक दूसरे के साथ समर्पण भाव से नहीं रह सकते। साफ हृदय न केवल दिलों को छता है, बल्कि आईना बनकर जीवन भर चमकता है और उसमें लोगों को नई दिशा दिखाता है। बहुत अच्छी सुरत के अंदर अगर एक खुबसुरत दिल नहीं है तो वह ज्यादा समय तक प्रभावित नहीं कर सकती। जब व्यक्ति दिल से जुड़े मामलों के बारे में आश्वस्त और सुरक्षित हो जाता है तो उसके व्यक्तित्व में आत्मविश्वास एवं उत्साह झलकने लगता है। जिस तरह साफ इंजन हमेशा शक्ति देता है, उसी तरह दिल का साफ आईना भी व्यक्तित्व को ताजगी एवं ऊर्जा देता है। इसके माध्यम से व्यक्ति शिखर पर पहुंच सकता है।

## अभी शेष है महिलाओं का संघर्ष

एक वह समय था जब हरियाणा से लड़िकयों की कम संख्या, महिला विरोधी बातें और लड़िकयों के साथ भेद-भाव की खबरें ही आती थीं, लेकिन आज जब हरियाणा की बात होती है तो फोगाट बहनों और साक्षी मलिक की कुश्ती, साइना नेहवाल का बैडमिंटन और मानुषी छिल्लर की खूबसूरती जेहन में आती है। समय के साथ-साथ हरियाणा ने काफी हद तक महिलाओं के प्रति अपनी सोच बदली है। और नतीजा यह है कि राज्य में लिंग अनुपात में सुधार आ रहा है। इस राज्य से ऐसे नाम निकलकर आ रहे हैं जो दुनियाभर में हरियाणा का नाम कर रहे हैं, लेकिन महिलाओं को लेकर यह बदलाव सिर्फ सामान्य लोगों में नजर आता है, राजनीति में नहीं। हरियाणा की मुख्य राजनीतिक पार्टियों ने आने वाले विधानसभा चुनावों में जिस तरह से टिकट वितरण किया है उससे यही लगता है कि इस राज्य में महिलाओं का संघर्ष खत्म होने में अभी और वक्त लगेगा।

हरियाणा में विधानसभा की कुल 90 सीटों पर चुनाव होने हैं, लेकिन उम्मीदवारों की सची में महिलाएं न के बराबर ही नजर आ रही हैं। कांग्रेस ने 90 सीटों वाली हरियाणा विधानसभा चुनाव के लिए केवल 9 सीटों पर महिलाओं

### फिर से

हरियाणा में विधानसभा के चुनाव होने हैं, लेकिन उम्मीदवारों की सूची में महिलाएं न के बराबर ही नजर आ रही हैं

को टिकट दिए हैं। यानी विधानसभा में भागीदारी के लिए सिर्फ 10 फीसद महिलाओं को ही मौका दिया गया है। यह वह पार्टी है जिसने हमेशा महिलाओं के लिए 33 फीसद आरक्षण की मांग की है। इस मामले में भाजपा भी कांग्रेस जैसी ही है। भाजपा ने 90 सीटों में से 12 पर महिला प्रत्याशियों को चुनाव में उतारा है। वह भी तब जब भाजपा राज्य में सत्ता में है। वहीं आइएनएलडी ने इस बार 15 महिला प्रत्याशियों को टिकट दिए हैं, जबिक जननायक जनता पार्टी ने सिर्फ 7 महिलाओं को ही टिकट दिए हैं। कांग्रेस ने 2014 के चुनावों में 10 महिला उम्मीदवारों को मैदान में उतारा था, जिनमें से तीन महिलाएं जीती थीं, जबिक भाजपा की बात की जाए तो 2014 में पार्टी ने 15 महिला उम्मीदवारों को मैदान में उतारा था,

इनमें से 8 महिलाओं ने जीत दर्ज की थी। साफ है कि यहां हर क्षेत्र में महिलाएं आगे हैं, लेकिन राजनीति में नहीं। हरियाणा की खास बात यह है कि इस राज्य की 90 सीटों में से 58 सीटें ऐसी हैं जहां से कभी भी कोई महिला विधायक बनी ही नहीं। राज्य में सिर्फ बेटी बचाओ, बेटी पढ़ाओ पर ध्यान दिया जा रहा है। इसके आगे नहीं। बेटी क्या कर सकती है इस पर अभी भी हमारे राजनेताओं को शक है।

महिलाओं को लेकर अक्सर राजनीतिक पार्टियां महिला हित की बातें करती हैं, लेकिन जब चुनाव का समय आता है तो राजनीतिक दल यह साबित कर देते हैं कि उनकी कोई भी बात भरोसा करने लायक नहीं है। महिलाओं को सत्ता में लाए बिना महिलाओं के हित की बातें बेमानी हैं। और जब बात हरियाणा जैसे राज्य की छवि को सुधारने और विकास की हो तो महिलाओं को तो आगे लाना ही होगा। देश में अगर किसी राज्य की महिलाओं ने सबसे ज्यादा पितृसत्ता के दंश झेले हैं तो वह हरियाणा ही है। ऐसे में चुनावों में महिलाओं को सम्मानित भागीदारी न देकर एक बार फिर वही गलती दोहराई जा रही है।

(साभार : आइचौक.इन में पारुल चंद्रा)

### सही विश्लेषण

समावेश का संदेश देने वाला संबोधन शीर्षक से लिखे अपने लेख में अद्वैता काला ने मोहन भागवत के विजयादशमी संदेश को आधार बनाकर लिंचिंग जैसे मामलों में मीडिया के एक वर्ग और देश के कुछ निहित स्वार्थी तत्वों के एकपक्षीय रुख के पीछे छिपे एजेंडे को बेबाकी से उजागर किया है। यह सही है कि लिंचिंग एक पश्चिमी अवधारणा है तथा इसका हमारी संस्कृति से कोई संबंध नहीं। सनातन संस्कृति तो अहिंसा परमो धर्मः और वसुधैव कुटुंबकम की मूल अवधारणा पर आधारित है, लेकिन देश के कुछ तथाकथित बुद्धिजीवी बड़े ढीठ तरीके से भीड़ की हिंसा के उन्हीं मामलों को उठाते और उसका प्रचार करते हैं, जहां पीड़ित पक्ष मुस्लिम हों। पिछले कुछ समय की घटनाओं का तथ्यपरक विश्लेषण किया जाए तो इस प्रकार की हिंसा में हिंदू और मुस्लिम दोनों लगभग समान रूप से प्रभावित हुए हैं, लेकिन अफवाह फैलाने को आदी इन स्वार्थी तत्वों को केवल अखलाक, तबरेज और पहलू खान दिखते हैं, अंकित सक्सेना (दिल्ली), रामालिंगम (तिमलनाडु), राजू त्यागी (दिल्ली), चंदन गुप्ता (उप्र), जमुना टाटी और अजय टाटी (असम) तथा बंधु प्रकाश पाल (बंगाल) आदि नहीं। क्यों? क्या इसलिए, क्योंकि पीड़ित हिंदू उन छद्म बुद्धिजीवियों की समुदाय विशेष की राजनीति में फिट नहीं बैठते ? इन परिस्थितियों में यह आवश्यक हो चला है कि दुष्प्रचार करने वाले इन तत्वों के मूल एजेंडा को हम हर मंच पर उजागर करें, उन्हें कदापि न सफल होने दें।

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प्रत्येक 10 वर्षों में होने वाली भारत की जनसंख्या

करना होगा।

मेलबाक्स

की जनगणना (2021) में महज दो साल शेष है। ऐसे में संयुक्त राष्ट्र की सेक्सुअल एंड रिप्रोडिक्टव हेल्थ एजेंसी ने स्टेट ऑफ वर्ल्ड पॉपुलेशन 2019 की रिपोर्ट जारी की। इसके अनुसार वर्तमान समय में भारत की जनसंख्या 1.36 अरब है, जो विश्व की कुल जनसंख्या का लगभग 19 प्रतिशत भाग है। भारत और चीन की जनसंख्या में अब महज 6 करोड़ जनसंख्या का ही फासला रह गया है। जहां चीन 142 करोड़ जनसंख्या के साथ पहले स्थान पर है, वहीं भारत 136 करोड़ जनसंख्या के साथ दूसरे पायदान पर है। प्रजनन दर की इस वृद्धि के आंकड़ों को देखे तो 2030 तक भारत, चीन को पछाड़ विश्व का सबसे अधिक जनसंख्या वाला देश बन जाएगा। संयुक्त राष्ट्र जनसंख्या कोष की रिपार्ट के अनुसार 2010 से 2019 के दौरान भारत की जनसंख्या 1.2 प्रतिशत की वार्षिक वृद्धि से बढ़ी है, जबिक चीन में यह वार्षिक वृद्धि दर 0.5 प्रतिशत की दर से बढ़ी है। इसी मुद्दे को नजर रखते हुए प्रधानमंत्री नरेंद्र मोदी ने बीते 15 अगस्त को लालकिले पर भाषण देते हुए जनसंख्या विस्फोट पर चिंता जाहिर की थी। देश में जनसंख्या बढ़ने का सबसे बड़ा कारण एक बड़े वर्ग का अशिक्षित होना है। इसमें अवैध प्रवासियों का भी बहुत बड़ा योगदान है। इस वजह से स्कूल-कॉलेज, अस्पताल, सड़कें सभी संसाधन छोटे पड़ते जा रहे हैं। इस पर नियंत्रण बहुत जरूरी है। सरकार को विभिन्न योजनाओं के जरिये छोटे परिवार के लिए लोगों को प्रोत्साहित करना चाहिए। इसके लिए जनता को जागरूक

अखिल सिंघल, नई दिल्ली

### अब मिली सही दिशा

अनुच्छेद 370 हटने के बाद कश्मीर में लगातार सेना व पलिस के द्वारा भर्ती अभियान चलाए जा रहे हैं। इसमें घाटी के युवा बढ़ चढ़ कर भाग ले रहे हैं। इन युवाओं को सेना व पुलिस सेवा में आने से घाटी में न केवल नया सवेरा आएगा, बल्कि इन युवाओं व परिवारों में भारतीयता की लौ भी जलेगी। इन युवाओं को अब तक बरगला कर भटकाया जा रहा था। इन्हें पत्थर बाजी की घुट्टी पिला कर गुमराह किया जाता था। अब इन्हें सही दिशा व मंजिल मिलना तय है. जो देश के साथ-साथ कश्मीरियों के लिए शुभ संकेत है hemahariupadhyay@gmail.com

### दीपावली पर पटाखे

दीपावली पर हर वर्ष आगजनी और पटाखों से करोड़ों का नुकसान होता है। इससे जलने वाले बच्चों और युवाओं को जिंदगी भर जख्म का भार सहन करना पड़ता है। पटाखों से प्रदूषण भी फैलता है। यह पर्व रोशनी के साथ मनाना चाहिए। इसमें पटाखों का क्या काम?

skcbe9@gmail.com

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

## एक आर कदम

महाबलीपुरम में शुक्रवार शाम चीन के राष्ट्रपति शी जिनपिंग और भारत के प्रधानमंत्री नरेंद्र मोदी की अनौपचारिक बातचीत ने दोनों देशों के रिश्तों में एक और आयाम जोड़ दिया है। यह दोस्ती की नई इबारत है। पिछले डेढ़ साल में यह दूसरी अनौपचारिक मुलाकात इस बात का प्रमाण है कि भारत और चीन रिश्तों को और मजबूत करने की दिशा में आगे बढ़ा चुके हैं। जिनपिंग और मोदी की यह मुलाकात ऐसे समय में हुई है जब भारत के अपने एक और पड़ोसी पाकिस्तान के साथ रिश्ते तनावपूर्ण चल रहे हैं। ऐसे में इसके कूटनीतिक मायने भी महत्त्वपूर्ण हो जाते हैं। इस मुलाकात का बड़ा मकसद रिश्तों को मौजूदा स्तर से और बेहतर बनाना है। दोनों देशों की कोशिश रही है। कि पाकिस्तान की वजह से रिश्तों में कहीं कोई दरार न आए। इसलिए रिश्तों को मजबूत बनाने की दिशा में तभी बढ़ा जा सकता है जब रणनीतिक संतुलन भी बना रहे। ऐसे में अनौपचारिक मुलाकातें और बैठकें ज्यादा महत्त्वपूर्ण हो जाती हैं, जिनमें निर्धारित एजेंडे से अलग हट कर भी गिले-शिकवे दूर किए जा सकते हैं। इस तरह की मुलाकातों से जटिल से जटिल मुद्दों को हल करने का रास्ता ज्यादा आसानी से बन सकता है। इस दृष्टि से महाबलीपुरम में भारत और चीन की दोस्ती का नया कदम नई उम्मीदें लिए हुए है।

इसमें कोई दो राय नहीं कि जम्मू-कश्मीर से अनुच्छेद 370 को निष्क्रिय करने और राज्य को दो हिस्सों में बांट कर जम्मू-कश्मीर तथा लद्दाख को केंद्र शासित प्रदेश बनाने के भारत के फैसले से चीन भी खुश नहीं है। उसकी पीड़ा लद्दाख को लेकर ज्यादा इसलिए है कि लद्दाख क्षेत्र में भारत और चीन की विशालकाय सीमा है। चीन इस बात को भी अच्छी तरह समझ रहा है कि कश्मीर के मुद्दे पर भारत का रुख एकदम स्पष्ट है और इस पर वह किसी से कोई समझौता नहीं करेगा या कश्मीर पर वार्ता को लेकर किसी तीसरे पक्ष को बीच में नहीं आने देगा। इसलिए अंदर से चीन भारत के कठोर रुख से बेचैन है। चीन इस हकीकत को भी भलीभांति समझ रहा है कि इस तरह के मुद्दों को लेकर तनाव बनाए रखना न दोनों देशों के हित में है, न एशियाई शांति के लिए यह अच्छा है। ऐसे में चीनी राष्ट्रपति की यह भारत यात्रा रिश्तों के नए दौर का संदेश देती है।

चीन और भारत के रिश्ते कोई सौ-दो सौ साल के नहीं, बल्कि सदियों पुराने हैं। हजारों सालों से दोनों देशों के बीच व्यापार चलता रहा है। चीनी लोग भारत आकर यहां की संस्कृति को समझते रहे हैं। बौद्ध धर्म तो फैला ही भारत से है। कारोबारी नजरिए से देखें तो आज भी चीन के लिए भारत बड़ा बाजार है। ऐसे में किसी भी मुद्दे पर टकराव दोनों देशों के हितों में नहीं है। जहां तक भारत और चीन के बीच सीमा विवाद जैसे कुछ जटिल मुद्दे हैं तो उन्हें बातचीत के जरिए ही सुलझाया जा सकता है। भारत हमेशा से ही शांति और वार्ता का पक्षधर रहा है। लेकिन अतंकवाद के मुद्दे पर चीन को अपने रुख में बदलाव करना होगा। पूरी दुनिया जानती है कि पाकिस्तान किस तरह से भारत में आतंकवाद फैलाता रहा है और बड़े आतंकी हमलों से भारत को गहरे जख्म दिए हैं। ऐसे में भारत चीन से यही उम्मीद करता है कि वह आतंक के मुद्दे पर पाकिस्तान का साथ न दे। महाबलीपुरम की मुलाकात से दोनों देशों के बीच पुख्ता समझ बननी चाहिए, जो विवादों को हल करने की दिशा में मील का पत्थर साबित हो सके।

## अनियमितता के कोष

वित्तमंत्री निर्मला सीतारमण ने भरोसा दिलाया है कि वित्तीय अनियमितता करने वाले सहकारी बैंकों के खिलाफ कड़े कानून बनाए जाएंगे। इसके लिए एक सिमति गठित की जाएगी, जिसमें भारतीय रिजर्व बैंक के डिप्टी गवर्नर भी शामिल होंगे। अगर जरूरत पड़ी तो संसद के शितकालीन सत्र में जरूरी विधायी संशोधन किए जाएंगे। दरअसल, पंजाब एवं महाराष्ट्र बैंक यानी पीएमसी नामक सहकारी बैंक में वित्तीय गड़बड़ियां पाई जाने और उस पर पाबंदी लगाई जाने के बाद लोगों में अपने धन की सुरक्षा को लेकर जो आशंकाएं पैदा हो गई हैं, उससे सहकारी संस्थाओं की साख को गहरा धक्का पहुंचा है। पीएमसी के खातों और उसके कारोबार की छानबीन के बाद मिली गड़बड़ियों के मद्देनजर सरकार के लिए भी ये संस्थाएं चिंता का सबब बन गई हैं। पीएमसी की महाराष्ट्र में करीब एक सौ बीस शाखाएं थीं। दूसरे राज्यों में भी उसका कारोबार फैला हुआ था। वह तेजी से उभरता हुआ सहकारी बैंक था। बताया जा रहा है कि वह बैंकिंग की मुख्यधारा में शामिल होने के लिए लाइसेंस पाने की फिराक में था। इसलिए उसने अपने खाता संबंधी ब्योरों में अपने कारोबारी मुनाफे को बढ़ा-चढ़ा कर दिखाया था। जबकि उसने जो कर्ज बांटे थे, उसमें से अधिकतर डूब चुके थे। इसी के मद्देनजर रिजर्व बैंक ने उस पर नकेल कसने का फैसला किया।

हालांकि सरकार इस बात के लिए प्रतिबद्ध है कि पीएमसी के ग्राहकों का पैसा डूबने न पाए, पर चिंता इस बात की है कि ऐसे और कितने बैंकों की अनियमितता की परतें उघड़ेंगी। सहकारी संस्थाओं के गठन और उनके जरिए लेनदेन को बढ़ावा देने का नियम इस मकसद से बना था कि लघु बचत करने, दूर-दराज के इलाकों में रहने वाले वित्तीय रूप से कमजोर किसानों, बुनकरों, हस्तशिल्प आदि के काम में लगे लोगों को आसान शर्तों पर वित्तीय मदद पहुंचाई और उन्हें बचत के लिए प्रोत्साहित किया जा सके। मगर सहकारी संस्थाओं के गठन के शुरुआती दिनों में ही यह पोल खुल गई थी कि वे धीरे-धीरे भ्रष्टाचार के अड्डे बनते गए हैं। किसानों, बुनकरों, छोटे उद्यमियों आदि को कम ब्याज दरों पर दिए जाने वाले कर्ज का लाभ ज्यादातर बड़े कारोबारी उठाने लगे और फिर वह धन बट्टेखाते में जाता रहा। जाहिर है, उसमें खाताधारकों और सहकारी बैंकों या समितियों के अधिकारियों की साठगांठ थी। इस तरह कई सहकारी समितियां बंद हो गईं। कई मामलों में काले धन को सफेद करने का जरिया भी ये संस्थाएं बनती रही हैं। नोटबंदी के समय के खुलासे इसके हाल के उदाहरण हैं। लिहाजा, सहकारी संस्थाओं पर कडी निगरानी की जरूरत लंबे समय से रेखांकित की जाती रही है।

अर्थव्यवस्था को मजबूत बनाने में सहकारी संस्थाओं और गैर-बैंकिंग वित्तीय कंपनियों की कारगर भूमिका मानी जाती है। देश के बहुत सारे लोग, जो बड़े बैंकों से नहीं जुड़े होते या फिर बैंकों के पास बहुत छोटी रकम की वित्तीय सहायता जैसे खाद, बीज, सूत, मवेशी आदि खरीदने के लिए कर्ज देने का प्रावधान नहीं होता, वे इन सहकारी या फिर गैर-बैंकिंग वित्तीय संस्थाओं की मदद से अपने कारोबार को आगे बढ़ाते रहे हैं। पर ये कुछ खिलाड़ी कारोबारियों या कालाधन जमा करने वालों के हाथ की कठपुतली बन जाएं और भारी पैमाने पर अनियमितता करने लगें, तो इन्हें गठित करने का मकसद ही कहीं खो जाता है। इसलिए केंद्रीय वित्त मंत्रालय की सहकारी संस्थाओं पर कड़ी नजर रखने और अनियमितता करने वालों के खिलाफ सख्ती बरतने का इरादा सराहनीय है।

### कल्पमधा

मनुष्य के कर्म उसके विचारों की सबसे बड़ी परिभाषा हैं। -लांगफेलो

## घटते वन, बिगड़ता पर्यावरण

अभिजीत मोहन

निश्चित रूप से विकास के लिए प्रकृति प्रदत्त संसाधनों का दोहन आवश्यक है। लेकिन इसकी सीमा भी निर्धारित होनी चाहिए, जिसका कि पालन नहीं हो रहा है। विकास के नाम पर जंगलों को उजाड़ने का ही नतीजा है कि आज मनुष्य को बढ़ते वैश्विक तापमान, ओजोन परत के क्षरण, भूकम्प, भारी वर्षा, बाढ़ और सूखे जैसी विपदाओं का सामना करना पड़ रहा है।

राहत की बात है कि सुप्रीम कोर्ट ने देश की वाणिज्यिक राजधानी मुंबई की आरे कालोनी में पेड़ों की कटाई पर रोक लगा दी है। इस कालोनी में मेट्रो कारशेड के लिए ढाई हजार से ज्यादा पेड काटे जाने थे और वहां के निवासी और पर्यावरण संरक्षक इसका विरोध कर रहे थे। प्रशासन ने विरोध करने वाले प्रदर्शनकारियों को गिरफ्तार कर जेल में डाल दिया। तब मामला शीर्ष अदालत में पहुंचा। हालांकि तब तक दो हजार से ज्यादा पेड़ काटे जा चुके थे। सरकार का तर्क है कि छोटे हिस्से से पेड काटे गए हैं। सरकार ने यह दलील भी दी कि इन पेड़ों को काटने से पहले तेईस हजार आठ सौ छियालीस पेड़ लगाए जा चुके हैं और पच्चीस हजार पौधे वृक्षारोपण के लिए बांटे गए हैं। लेकिन अदालत ने दो टूक कहा कि सवाल छोटे हिस्से का नहीं, बल्कि यह कानूनन गलत है तो इसकी इजाजत नहीं दी जा सकती।

सर्वोच्च अदालत के पूर्व आदेश के अनुसार राज्यों

को किसी क्षेत्र को जंगल के रुप में अधिसूचित करना आवश्यक है, लेकिन महराष्ट्र सरकार ने अभी तक ऐसा नहीं किया है। पर्यावरण संरक्षकों और विशेषज्ञों की मानें तो आरे को 'अवर्गीकृत जंगल' के रुप में समझा जाता था और वहां पर्यावरण के प्रति संवेदनशील क्षेत्र में पेडों की कटाई अवैध है। महाराष्ट्र सरकार के मुताबिक यह अवर्गीकृत जंगल नहीं है और न ही यह संवेदनशील क्षेत्र है। सरकार ने पेड़ों की कटाई तब शुरू की थी जब बबई हाई कोर्ट ने आरे कालोनी को वन क्षेत्र घोषित करने और मुंबई नगर निगम की मेट्रो कारशेड के लिए पेड़ों की कटाई की इजाजत देने वाली अधिसूचना रह करने की मांग ठुकरा दी थी।

आज जिस तरह विकास के नाम पर पेड़ों की अंधाधंध कटाई हो रही है और वनों को उजाडा जा रहा है, उससे पर्यावरण संतुलन बिगड़ गया है। पिछले साल भारतीय अंतरिक्ष अनुसंधान संगठन (इसरो) ने दावा किया था कि अगर जंगलों को बचाने

की पहल तेज नहीं हुई तो 2025 तक देश के अन्य हिस्सों के साथ-साथ पूर्वोत्तर के छह राज्यों असम, मणिपुर, मेघालय, मिजोरम, नगालैंड और त्रिपुरा और केंद्र शासित प्रदेश अंडमान और निकोबार द्वीप समूह का वन क्षेत्र खत्म हो जाएगा, जो आकार में मॉरीशस के कुल क्षेत्रफल के बराबर बैठता है। इन 🗽 राज्यों में 2005 से 2013 के बीच वन क्षेत्र में 0.3 प्रतिशत की दर से कमी दर्ज की गई है। वैज्ञानिकों ने इन्हीं राज्यों के घटते वन क्षेत्र को 2025 के वन क्षेत्र के अनुमान के लिए आधार बनाया है और उनका यह शोध पिछले दिनों 'अर्थ सिस्टम साइंस' नामक जर्नल में छपा है। चूंकि यह शोध हैदराबाद स्थित इसरो के नेशनल रिमोट सेंसिंग सेंटर और

तिरुवनंतपुरम स्थित इंडियन इंस्टीट्यूट ऑफ इसलिए शोध की विश्वसनीयता पर संदेह नहीं किया जा सकता। वैज्ञानिकों का दावा है कि एक सौ तैंतीस साल में चालीस प्रतिशत वन क्षेत्र कम हो चुका है। वर्ष 1880 में देश में 10.42 लाख वर्ग किलोमीटर वन क्षेत्रफल होने का अनुमान लगाया गया था, जो देश के 37.1 प्रतिशत भौगोलिक हिस्से को दर्शाता था। लेकिन विकास के नाम पर वनों की अंधाधुंध कटाई की वजह से 1880 से 2013 के बीच इसमें चालीस प्रतिशत की कमी आई है। गंभीर चेतावनी तो यह है कि साल 2025 तक इसमें और कमी आने की आशंका है।

वन क्षेत्र में आ रही कमी के बारे में अध्ययन के लिए वैज्ञानिकों ने कंप्युटर पर लैंड चेंज मॉडलर

सॉफ्टवेयर पर प्राचीन भारत के वन क्षेत्र का मॉडल तैयार किया है। इनमें उन इलाकों का पर्यवेक्षण किया गया है, जहां वन क्षेत्र में सर्वाधिक कमी हो रही है। वैज्ञानिकों का कहना है कि उत्तर-पूर्वी राज्यों में गैर-सरकारी संस्थाओं द्वारा अधिकांश वन क्षेत्र की भूमि को लीज पर लेने और बड़े स्तर पर वन क्षेत्रों को कृषि के लिए उपयोग में लाने के कारण वन क्षेत्र में लगातार गिरावट आ रही है। तथ्य यह भी कि अंधाधुंध विकास के नाम पर मानव प्रति वर्ष सात करोड़ हेक्टेयर वनों का विनाश कर रहा है। एक आंकड़े के मुताबिक पिछले सैकड़ों सालों में हमने प्रकृति की एक तिहाई से अधिक प्रजातियां नष्ट कर डाली हैं। जंगली जीवों की संख्या में भी पचास प्रतिशत की कमी आई है।

वन किसी भी राष्ट्र की अमूल्य निधि होते हैं, जो वहां की जलवायु, भूमि की बनावट, वर्षा, जनसंख्या



स्पेस साइंस एंड टेक्नोलॉजी के वैज्ञानिकों ने किया है. के घनत्व, किष और उद्योग आदि को अत्यधिक प्रभावित करते हैं। भारत प्राकृतिक वन संपदा की दृष्टि से एक संपन्न देश रहा है। भारत में पौधों और वक्षों की सैंतालीस हजार प्रजातियां पाई जाती हैं। लेकिन वनों की कटाई के कारण प्रजातियां नष्ट हो रही हैं और जंगल सिकुड़ते जा रहे हैं। यह स्थिति तब है जब वनों को बचाने के लिए 1950 से लगातार हर वर्ष जुलाई के प्रथम सप्ताह में वन महोत्सव कार्यक्रम आयोजित होता है, जिसके जरिए खेतों की मेड़ों, निदयों, नहरों और सड़कों के किनारे तथा बेकार भूमि पर वृक्षारोपण किया जाता है। वन-विकास कार्यक्रम को गति प्रदान करने के लिए सरकार ने 1952 में ही वन-नीति बना ली थी और

वन विकास के लिए नई-नई घोषणाओं के साथ वनों का क्षेत्र बाईस प्रतिशत से बढ़ा कर तैंतीस प्रतिशत करने के संकल्प व्यक्त किया था। इसके अलावा वनों पर सरकारी नियंत्रण रखने और वृक्षों की हरित पट्टी विकसित करने के कार्यक्रम भी तय किए। यही नहीं, वनों को बचाने के लिए 1965 में केंद्रीय वन आयोग की स्थापना भी की गई थी। इस आयोग का कार्य वनों से संबंधित आंकड़े और सूचनाएं एकत्रित करना और उन्हें प्रकाशित करना है। लेकिन विडंबना है कि इस कवायद के बावजूद वनों का क्षेत्रफल बढ़ने के बजाए उसमें लगातार घटता ही जा रहा है। स्थिति यह है कि आज देश के कुल भौगोलिक क्षेत्रफल के महज 20.64 प्रतिशत हिस्से पर ही वन क्षेत्र रह गया है। अगर समय रहते वनों को संरक्षित नहीं किया गया तो न केवल लकड़ी, उद्योगों के लिए कच्चा माल, पशुओं के लिए चारा, औषधियां, सुगंधित तेल का संकट उत्पन होगा, बल्कि

पर्यावरण भी तेजी से प्रदूषित होगा।

वैज्ञानिकों का कहना है कि वनों के विनाश से वातावरण जहरीला होता जा रहा है। प्रतिवर्ष दो अरब टन अतिरिक्त कार्बन-डाइआक्साइड वायुमंडल में घुल-मिल रही है। इससे जीवन का सुरक्षा कवच मानी जाने वाली ओजोन परत को भारी नुकसान पहुंच रहा है। वायुमंडल में छत्तीस लाख टन कार्बन डाइआक्साइड की वृद्धि हो चुकी है और चौबीस लाख टन आक्सीजन समाप्त हो चुकी है। अगर यही स्थिति रही तो 2050 तक पृथ्वी के तापक्रम में लगभग चार डिग्री सेल्सियस तक वृद्धि हो सकती है। ओजोन परत को होने वाले नुकसान से कुछ खास किस्म के अत्यंत अल्पजीवी तत्वों (वीएसएलएस) की संख्या में तेजी से वृद्धि हुई है जो मानव जाति के अस्तित्व के लिए खतरनाक हैं। इन खास किस्म

अत्यंत अल्पजीवी तत्वों की ओजोन को नुकसान पहुंचाने में भागीदारी नब्बे फीसद है।

निश्चित रूप से विकास के लिए प्रकृति प्रदत्त संसाधनों का दोहन आवश्यक है। लेकिन इसकी सीमा भी निर्धारित होनी चाहिए, जिसका कि पालन नहीं हो रहा है। विकास के नाम पर जंगलों को उजाड़ने का ही नतीजा है कि आज मनुष्य को बढ़ते वैश्विक तापमान, ओजोन परत के क्षरण, भूकम्प, भारी वर्षा, बाढ़ और सुखे जैसी विपदाओं का सामना करना पड़ रहा है। अगर हालात ऐसे ही बने रहे और जंगलों को संवारने एवं संरक्षित करने की चेष्टा नहीं की गई तो वह दिन दूर नहीं जब पृथ्वी पर मनुष्य का जीवन असंभव हो जाएगा।

## स्मृतियों में गांव

घनश्याम कुमार देवांश

चि की एक खुशबू होती है, इसका पता तब चला, जब सब कुछ छोड़ कर मैं गांव से शहर चला आया। या फिर कहा जाए कि माता-पिता द्वारा शहर में ले आया गया। शहर, जहां चारों ओर कंक्रीट ही कंक्रीट दिखता है, मिट्टी के लिए थोड़ी बहुत जगह या तो बाग-बगीचों और पार्कों में होती है या फिर घर के गमलों में। जाहिर है, शहर में आने के साथ ही मिट्टी की अपनी खुशबू से भी दूर हुआ। जब अपने गांव से दूर हो गया, तब उसकी मिट्टी की खुशबू और उसकी कीमत का अंदाजा हुआ। आज भी जब गांव जाता हूं तो लगता है, अपने घर आ गया हूं।

गांव मुझे बहुत पसंद हैं। हालांकि वहां रहने की अपनी बड़ी समस्याएं भी हैं, लेकिन इसके बावजूद गांव मुझे आकर्षित करता है। अब तो हालात इतने खराब हैं कि गांव के लोग खुद भी वहां रहना नहीं चाहते। गांवों के सब पुराने काम लगभग खत्म हो चुके हैं, खासकर हाथ से किए जाने वाले काम। हालांकि सामाजिक दृष्टि से देखें तो समाज के अलग-अलग समृहों के पारंपरिक पेशे की अपनी समस्याएं थीं। लेकिन इससे इतर देखें तो खेती से

लेकर घर-बाहर के अनेक ऐसे काम हैं, जिन्हें अब मशीनों के जरिए किया जाता है। इससे वहां आजीविका और पेट पालने के साधन पहले से बहुत कम हो गए हैं। खेती के खर्चे इतने ज्यादा बढ़ गए हैं कि फसल तैयार होने पर आमतौर पर उसकी लागत का खर्चा भी नहीं निकल पाता। जो बैंक किसानों की मदद के नाम पर किसान क्रेडिट कार्ड और कर्ज की योजनाएं लेकर सामने आए थे, उन्होंने किसानों के जीवन को बर्बाद

दुनिया मेरे आगे है। सरकार की ओर से कर्ज और दूसरी सुविधाओं की घोषणा का जमीनी सच यह है कि किसान कर्ज के चंगुल में ऐसे फंस जाते हैं कि फिर उनका निकलना ही मुश्किल हो जाता है।

करने में कोई कसर नहीं छोड़ी

ग्रामीण इलाकों में अशिक्षा और गरीबी आज भी भयानक स्तर तक कायम हैं। जब तक वहां के बच्चों को अच्छी और गुणवत्तापूर्ण शिक्षा नहीं मिल जाती, तब तक वहां के जीवन में कोई बदलाव आएगा, ऐसा सोचना शायद महज खामखयाली है। अशिक्षा के कारण ही गांवों में आज भी अंधविश्वास और सामाजिक कुरीतियां जमी हुई हैं। महिलाओं की स्थिति कई स्तरों पर खराब है और ज्यादातर महिलाएं अब भी अपने-अपने घरों में बंद जीवन गुजारती हैं। उनके

पास न सपने हैं, न उन सपनों को पूरा करने के लिए उड़ान। सुविधाओं का जैसा भयानक अकाल गांवों में दिखाई देता है, वह आतंकित करने वाला है। हालत यह है कि जिले के सबसे बड़े अस्पताल भी दयनीय हालत में दिखाई देते हैं। शायद ही कहीं डॉक्टर ईमानदारी से अपनी ड्यूटी करते दिखाई देते हैं। ऐसे में इलाज की क्या स्थिति होगी, यह अंदाजा ही लगाया जा सकता है। आमतौर पर देखा गया है कि डॉक्टरों के निजी क्लीनिकों और बाकी

बेहद संवेदनहीन तरीके से बर्ताव किया जाता है। अस्पतालों के दृश्य देख कर कई बार तो विश्वास नहीं होता कि यह आधुनिक युग का कोई अस्पताल है।

अस्पतालों में मरीजों के साथ

आम बातचीत में 'गंवार' शब्द का प्रयोग धडल्ले से किया जाता है। खासतौर पर पढ़े-लिखे और खुद को समझदार मानने वाले लोग आमतौर पर पर इसका प्रयोग करते हैं। मुझे लगता है कि यह शब्द संभवतः गांव से बना और प्रचलन में आया होगा। शहर के लोग इस शब्द का इस्तेमाल मूर्ख, असभ्य और अनपढ आदमी के अर्थ में करते हैं। इससे हम बड़ी सरलता से यह अनुमान लगा सकते हैं कि गांव के लोगों को लेकर शहर के लोग क्या सोचते हैं! यों

शहरों में भी हालात कुछ ज्यादा अच्छे नहीं हैं, लेकिन गांवों से बेहतर है। शहर में लोग अपने रोजगार का प्रबंध कर लेते हैं। भोजन-पानी का जोड़-जुगाड़ हो जाता है। मनुष्य वहां मनुष्यों की भीड़ में रह कर खुद को सुरक्षित महसूस करता है।

लेकिन शहर भी इन दिनों बुरी तरह से अव्यवस्था के शिकार हैं। इधर-उधर बने बेतरतीब घर-मकान, बस्तियां शहर में जीवन का एक कठोर चेहरा दिखाती हैं। एक तरह से देखा जाए तो शहर कृत्रिम हैं, जबिक गांव सहजता से बसते हैं। शहर को अगर ठीक से योजना बना कर न बसाया जाए तो सदियों तक उसके नफा-नुकसान चलते रहते हैं। इसलिए अच्छा हो कि उन्हें बेहतर योजना बना कर बसाया जाए। लोगों तक पीने का पानी कैसे पहुंचेगा, एक इलाके में कितनी जनसंख्या होनी चाहिए, रोजगार के क्या साधन होंगे, कितनी दुकानें होंगी, यातायात की क्या व्यवस्था होगी, कानून, शिक्षा और स्वास्थ्य से जुड़ी सुविधाएं कैसी होंगी- ऐसी बहुत सारी बातों का खयाल सरकार को रखना चाहिए। एक तरह से देखा जाए तो शहर और गांव, आज दोनों के लिए ही बहुत अच्छी योजनाओं की जरूरत है, जिसमें सभी सुविधाओं और आवश्यकताओं का ध्यान रखा जाना चाहिए। सिर्फ विकास के नाम पर गांव को बदल कर शहर नहीं बना देना चाहिए!

र्वेट्जरलैंड ने हाल में कालेधन की सूचना के स्वतः आदान-प्रदान की नई व्यवस्था के तहत भारत के साथ-साथ विश्व के पचहत्तर अन्य देशों को भी उनके नागरिकों के स्विस बैंक खातों की सूचना प्रदान की है। पहली बार भारत सरकार को स्विस बैंक में खाता रखने वाले अपने नागरिकों के बारे में इस तरह की सूचनाएं मिली हैं। स्विस सरकार ने पिछले साल भी इस तरह की सूचना छत्तीस देशों के साथ साझा की थी।

यह जरूरी नहीं है की जो सूचनाएं भारत सरकार को स्विट्जरलैंड से मिली हैं, उसमें सभी अवैध खातों की जानकारी हो। उसमें कुछ खाताधारक ऐसे भी होंगे जो वैध तरीके से अपने व्यवसाय या अपनी शिक्षा के लिए स्विट्जरलैंड से जुड़ाव रखते होंगे। भारत सरकार को अब द्वितीय चरण में उन खाताधारकों के भी बारे में जानकारी एकत्र करने का प्रयास करना होगा जिनके खाते अब बंद हो चुके हैं। 2018 की रिपोर्ट के अनुसार स्विस बैंक में भारतीयों का कुल जमा सात हजार करोड़ रुपया था। सूचनाओं का स्वतः आदान-प्रदान एक औपचारिक प्रक्रिया है। इसलिए हमारे पास ज्यादा सूचनाएं आएंगी तो इससे निश्चित तौर पर कर चोरी रोकने में मदद मिलेगी। पहले सिर्फ आपराधिक व्यक्तियों की सूचनाएं ही साझा होती थीं। इस माध्यम से प्राप्त सूचनाओं को हम सार्वजनिक नहीं किया जा सकता, लेकिन इनके आधार पर कार्रवाई जरूर हो सकती है। सवाल यह है कि जो सूचनाएं हमें स्विस बैंक से मिली हैं. वे हमारे लिए कितनी उपयोगी हैं? क्योंकि किसी भी खाता धारक का नाम और उसका स्थायी पता किसी भी अन्य देश को नहीं सौंपा जाता है। इसके अतिरिक्त बैंक बैलेंस की जानकारी भी इस प्रकार के सूचनाओं के अंतर्गत नहीं दी जाती है।

इसलिए यह हमारी सुरक्षा एजेंसियों के लिए एक

चुनौती होगी। इस प्रकार की सूचनाएं एक विशेष मेनहोल के रखरखाव की जिम्मेदारी स्थानीय प्रशासन कोडिंग प्रक्रिया के तहत उपलब्ध होती हैं, जो मात्र की होती है। प्रशासन और सरकार पूरी तरह से अंखें इशारा कर सकती हैं, और उस को अंजाम तक मूंदे रहती हैं और लोग मरते रहते हैं। अफसोस इस पहुंचाना जांच एजेंसियों का काम है।

स्विट्जरलैंड उन्हीं देशों को सूचनाएं उपलब्ध कराता है, जहां गोपनीयता के कानून परिपक्व हैं। भारत के लिए राहत की बात यह है कि भारतीयों द्वारा जो धन स्विस बैंक में जमा किया गया है, उसके आधार पर भारत विश्व में चौहत्तरवें नंबर पर आता है। लेकिन आशंका यह भी जताई जा रही है कि हो सकता है विगत वर्षों में अवैध रूप से जमा रहे धन

बात का है कि प्रशासन के पास भारी-भरकम अमला होते हुए भी लापरवाही बरती जाती है और इसकी कीमत लोगों को जान देकर चुकानी पड़ती है।

> • पूजा नेनावा साह, पुणे नजीर पेश करे चीन

आपका संपादकीय 'वक्त का तकाजा' पढा। भारत एक संप्रभ

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

कुछ भी कहना उचित नहीं होगा। • कुलिंदर सिंह यादव, दिल्ली

का प्रवाह किसी अन्य देश में हो गया हो। इसलिए

जब तक कुछ साल पुरानी सूचनाएं भी न आ जाएं,

## मौत के गड़े

मुंबई के ठाणे क्षेत्र में सड़क पर गड्ढे ने तेईस वर्षीय महिला डाक्टर की जान ले ली। उनकी स्कृटी गड़े में फंसने से पलट गई और पीछे से आ रहे ट्रक ने उन्हें कुचल दिया। मुंबई हो या दिल्ली, कोलकाता हो या चेन्नई या अन्य कोई शहर, देश में गड्डे मौत का बड़ा कारण बन गए हैं। खासतौर से हर साल बारिश के बाद सड़कें टूट जाती हैं और कदम-कदम पर गड्ढे तैयार हो जाते हैं। सड़क पर गड्ढों की मरम्मत और है और हमें अपनी संप्रभृता में कोई दखल बर्दाश्त नहीं करना चाहिए। जिस तरह पाकिस्तान के साथ भारत का कश्मीर विवाद और इससे जुड़ा सीमा विवाद है, उसी तरह से चीन के साथ भी हमारा सीमा विवाद है। चीन ने अरुणाचल को लेकर भी विवाद कर रखा है। चीन के अपने घर में हांगकांग का मसला चल रहा है। ऐसे में चीन का जोर भारत-पाकिस्तान के बीच में घुसने की बजाय भारत के साथ सीमा विवाद को सुलझाने पर होना चाहिए।

चीन को चाहिए कि वह अपने दोस्त पाकिस्तान को आतंकवाद की राह छोड़ कर शांतिपूर्ण तरीके से भारत के साथ विवाद सुलझाने को कहे और खुद भारत-चीन के बीच के सभी मसले शांतिपूर्ण तरीके से सुलझा कर पाकिस्तान और दुनिया के

सामने एक नजीर पेश करे। वक्त का सच्चा तकाजा यही है।

🌘 बृजेश माथुर, गाजियाबाद

### हताशा के कदम

'मन के हारे हार है और मन के जीते जीत', यह लोकोक्ति बहुत कुछ बयान करती है। आज हम देख रहे हैं कि युवा कितनी जल्दी निराश हो जाते हैं। बोर्ड परीक्षा हो या कोई अन्य परीक्षा हो, परीक्षा हमेशा हमारे धैर्य की परीक्षा भी लेती है। इन परीक्षाओं से डर कर जिस तरह से बच्चे निराशावादी होकर आत्महत्या या अन्य दुखद कदम उठा कर परिवार, समाज अथवा देश के लिए परेशानी का सबब बनते जा रहे हैं, उस बारे में अब व्यापक स्तर विचार करने की आवश्यकता है। आज यह जानना अत्यंत आवश्यक हो गया है कि आखिर किस स्तर पर कमी सबसे अधिक है जिसकी वजह हमारे बच्चे निराशा में घातक कदम उठा रहे हैं। यह बहुत साफ है कि केवल एक ही स्तर इसके लिए जिम्मेदार नहीं है। आज देश में शायद ही कोई ऐसी परीक्षा हो जिसमें घोटाले न उजागर हुए हों। युवा मेहनत करके परीक्षा दें, बाद में उसे उसका फल न मिले तो वह निराशा में कोई भी कदम उठा सकता है। यही हाल स्कूल व कॉलेज की परीक्षाओं का है। अध्ययन और अध्यापन दोनों में बहुत बड़ी कमी की वजह से परिणाम अच्छे नहीं आ पाते हैं। फिर, पारिवारिक संस्कार और परिवार का दबाव भी बहुत हद तक इसके लिए जिम्मेदार है। हम सबको यह समझना चाहिए कि सफलता केवल वह नहीं है जो हम सोचते हैं बल्कि सफलता वह भी है जो हमें परिश्रम करते हुए नेक पथ पर चलना सिखाती है।

• हेम कुमार यादव, गोंडा

नई दिल्ली