The broom is mightier than the camera

How a village clean-up programme by an NGO gave a facelift to the area in and around Jim Corbett National Park



OUT OF THE BLUE

ANJULI BHARGAVA

f you eat a packet of chips, what will you do with the empty packet?" asks Pawan, a coordinator of the Waste Warriors programme, during a workshop at the Sunderkhal Government Junior High School in Corbett area of Nainital district.

A gaggle of around 50 stu-

Hindi in unison. "We'll put the aging them to participate and packet into our bag and put it in the right trash bag at home for collection". A couple of kids look confused but, for the most part, they all have the same, clear reply.

Pawan then opens a massive bag and starts to pull out items. He holds each item up, asking the children to identify if the item constitutes wet, dry, medical or electronic waste and segregates them into four piles. He asks them how long each item takes to biodegrade and be one with Mother Earth. Nine hundred and sixty years, 350 years, 200 years and so on, the children pipe up again. The 11-14 vear olds are able to answer almost everything most adults, including me, cannot. Three benevolent looking, rotund gentleman seated on chairs presumably the heads of school — look upon the students dents pipe up and answers in proudly from a corner, encouroffering them a "shabaash" as a reward as and when due.

After around 45 minutes of a well delivered, engaging and, at times, humorous lesson on waste, the children are divided into three groups. The youngest group plays a board game focused on solid waste management. The other two groups are lined up, made to wear gloves and handed litter pickers. The children scamper away giggling and excited. Within a few minutes, they reappear, thrilled with their pickings. They deliver before Pawan and his team, kilograms of PET bottles, plastic, banana peels and other icky looking items with oohs and yucks, each claiming to have done better than his or her peers. If only some of their sincerity and enthusiasm could rub off on the safai karamcharis of the municipalities or even the political leaders and bureaucrats who routinely have their photographs printed in newspapers, broom in hand, hoping their boss will notice the next morning, I think to myself.

I learn from the Waste Warriors team that what I witnessed was the regular "Children's Day" programme that they conduct in 78 schools in the area and reach around 8,500 children annually. Workshops are usually conducted two or even three times a year in the schools by teams trained by them. Children in and around the Corbett landscape are better informed than those in most cities. In fact, they are better informed than most educated adults in many cities.

This incidentally is only one part of the clean up exercise Waste Warriors has undertaken in the Corbett region of Uttarakhand, the area that attracts among the highest number of annual tourists in the state after Haridwar, Rishikesh and Nainital.

Before I reach the school, I

accompany two ladies from the Ringora self-help group who undertake door-to-door collection of segregated waste in the Gebua Khempur village. We visit and collect waste (no wet waste is usually collected in these areas as it is fed to their livestock) in over 25 houses. These are members who have agreed to segregate and pay between ₹30 and ₹50 as a monthly user fee for the service. Twenty ladies in the community have been trained in the self-help groups and they rotate and take turns to do the job. They are paid a daily rate for their efforts. The collected waste is transported to larger warehouses rented by the NGO and is later disposed off in the best possible manner. The

exercise is, however, currently miniscule in scope since only 15 villages in the area are covered. In many villages, the collection is financed through funds raised by the NGO from donors who support them.

The job of NGOs such as Waste Warriors and a few others operating in the area is usually made not easier but harder by park officials, municipal bodies and the powers-that-be whenever possible. A few years ago, a well intentioned director of the reserve had roped in a few NGOs to help clean up within the park but the effort, funds and intention is often limited to the tenure of the official concerned.

I happen to visit at the worst possible time. It's the off-season (the park is closed), the sun is unrelenting and the temperature and humidity are at their peak. I find the outside periphery of the Corbett reserve reasonably litter-free. When I mention this to those who accompany me, they advise that I visit again once the park is open. Seeing, they say, is actually believing.

PS: A related video is available on

India's economy suffers a perception problem

WEF's latest global competitiveness report shows that the global business community's opinions are often at variance with the facts

SUBHOMOY BHATTACHARJEE

here are some surprising ranks in the Global Competitiveness Report, 2019, released by the World Economic Forum (WEF) last week. On perceived market dominance by a company over a country, WEF ranks Saudi Arabia 17 notches better than India — despite Riyadh

being a one-trick pony with Aramco which generates almost 90 per cent of the kingdom's income. Or Malaysia at nine despite Petronas, which accounts for 30 per cent of government revenue (a higher rank denotes less dominance by a company or a industrial group over the economy). There are some more, such as the same dismal rank for India's insolvency regime which is, surprisingly, on a par with Singapore. Albania far outshines

these economies, it seems. Still, such inconsistencies aside, the annual report published by the WEF since 1979 shows the global business community has a clear perception problem with the Indian economv. This carries a risk for the economy in its effort to draw in skittish global capital. Improvements on the ground often are not reflected adequately in corporate boardrooms when they evaluate investment destinations. India's reform story seems to be a bits and parts story like the country's

Olympic Games contingents. In no sector is the economy seen to be playing like a global leader, and there are plenty of fields with no-hopers.

The report has ranked India overall at 68 among the 141 countries, a dip of 10 ranks from 2018. The fall is partly because "of a relatively small decline in score (61.4, -0.7 points), but also, and more significantly, the progress

made by several countries ranked close to India," it notes

A closer look shows why India has dipped. Of the 103 indicators to track the economies included in the report, 47, accounting for 30 per cent of the overall, are derived from the World Economic Forum's Executive Opinion Survey. There is a questionnaire adminis-

tered to approximately 15,000 business executives worldwide with the help of 150 partner institutes.

Based on the business leaders' responses and another set of scores generated from data sets such as those of the World Bank, a detailed score sheet is prepared. Those scores are clubbed into 12 pillars: Institutions, infrastructure, macroeconomic stability, labour and product markets, education, skills and innovation capability, among others. The numbers for India show that among business peonle the percention is either mediocre



or, at best, somewhere in the middle of the pack.

India's scores on all the 103 indicators can thus be bunched into three types. They are the worst in pillars like health and labour. They are indifferent even when there have been reforms but have not kept pace with what has happened in the rest of the world such as insolvency and capacity-building. The only bright spots are in infrastructure and environment issues. But here, too, perception often trails performance. For instance, the index ranks India very high on airport connectivity at fourth position globally. But on the perceived efficiency of air transport services in India is 59th. The question was, "In your country, how efficient (i.e. frequency, punctuality, speed, price) are air transport services?' Similarly for shipping services

India ranks 25th among the nations. But when guizzed about the efficiency of seaport services, the rank dips to

VARIABLE VIEWS

Enabling environment	80
a) Perception survey — crime	91
b) Homicide rate	81
Transparency	66
a) Perception survey — judicial	51
b) Budget transparency	41
Corporate governance	15
a) Perception survey — audit standards	67
b)Shareholder governance	2
Government adaptablity	31
a) Perception survey — policy stability	42
Source: WEF	

49. The quality of India's transport infrastructure is ranked 28th, behind only the developed nations. It could have been far better if the perceptions had improved. Shyamal Mukherjee, Chairman (India), Pricewaterhouse-Coopers, agrees. "Quite a few of the changes made in the business policies need to get a wider audience," he told Business Standard.

India is losing the perception battle even in areas in which it has supposed strengths. On judiciary, for instance, on the question, "In your country, how independent is the judicial system from influences of the government, individuals, or companies?" respondents have ranked India at 51 behind China at 47. Malaysia is at 29 and Qatar

Equally striking is the perceptional score for the strength of auditing and accounting standards. India ranks 67, behind Zimbabwe, a basket case for then, that in response to the survey question "In your country, how competitive are the provision of professional services (legal services, accounting, engineering, etc.) India ranks a poor 78th. The one sector where India does quite well is on environmental regulations. It ranks 21st on commitment to sustainability. That decent ranking, perhaps, may be on account of the fact that no surveys being conducted in this sector.

The one sector where India seems to be clearly on the move is innovation. It weighs in at 35 and the perception based questions show a similar rank. Dilip Chenoy, Secretary General, Ficci, said India has become an attractive destination for foreign investment. "Still on competitiveness, the challenge is to improve the perception on certain issues. Once it is done, the ranks will climb steadily".

In sectors where the economy's failings are demonstrably high, the ranks are made worse by perceptions. "In your country, to what extent does organized crime (mafia-oriented racketeering, extortion) impose costs on businesses?" India ranks 91, behind every major developing economy. It takes about the last position in trade but on labour issues there is an interesting dichotomy. India ranks quite well in its hiring and firing practices for labour but seems to be making itself uncompetitive by paying more on labour tax and contributions as a percentage of commercial profits compared with nimble competitors such as Bangladesh, Cambodia or even Kenya. They pay far less and top the league, while India is at a distant 93. If it's any consolation, the Nordic countries are even further behind

CHINESE WHISPERS

Winner takes all



The relentless squabbling in the Opposition camp in Uttar Pradesh has provided the much-needed breather to Chief Minister Adityanath (pictured), who today ranks among the star campaigners of the Bharatiya Janata Party. His government is so confident of victory in the coming bypolls to 11 Assembly seats that he hasn't begun canvassing in these constituencies yet, although he has been campaigning arduously for the saffron party in poll-bound Maharashtra and Haryana. After wrapping up his election rallies in the two states, the chief minister will finally kick-start his campaign in UP on Tuesday with 11 rallies spread over three days. The state BJP leadership has proclaimed it would wrest all the 11 seats as a dispirited Opposition appears to have reconciled to the idea of a complete rout.

Tatkal at work

Shares of IRCTC more than doubled on their stock market debut on Monday. A large number of investors who failed to get an allotment during the IPO, which was subscribed 111 times, bought the shares of the online railway-ticketing company. One stock broker likened the dash for shares to booking tatkal tickets. "Given its monopoly status and the tremendous potential offered by internet companies, several investors thought it was prudent to board the IRCTC train even if that meant buying tickets paying the tatkal premium," he said.

Not high, just dry A Delhi government order directing hotels

and restaurants to throw away alcohol lying in the bar for more than eight days has created a supply crunch at the capital's Indira Gandhi International Airport (IGIA) since late August, when it was issued, and pinched customers hard during the recent Durga puja-Dusshera festivities. Sources at IGI — including some bar and lounge owners who operate in the three IGIA terminals - said that traditionally, footfall goes up during the festival season and with passengers in vacation mode, alcohol sales also see a spike. However, things are different this year. Thanks to the order. they have not been able to hold stock for long, and because of the lengthy procedures involved, replenishment has been slow - so much so that some popular brands are not available for days together. "Try explaining that to a passenger..." rued a retailer. With Diwali less than a fortnight away, these outlets are dreading round two of the crunch.

ON THE JOB

Rural unemployment rises

ANALYSIS BEHIND



MAHESH VYAS

fter remaining well below the 8 per cent mark in each of the four weeks of September, the unemployment rate has risen above the 8 per cent mark in October. During the first two weeks of the month, the unemployment rate was 8.4 per cent and 8.6 per cent respectively.

The increase has come about because of a reversal of the sharp drop in the unemployment rate in rural India. Unemployment in rural India had dropped to 6 per cent in September after having reached 7.5 per cent in August. At 6 per cent, the rural unemployment rate was also the lowest in over a year.

This September fall in rural unemployment was the result of a sharp increase in kharif sowing activities because of a late recovery in monsoon rains. This led to a big increase in demand for labour in rural India. As the sowing season comes to a close by the end of September, we had expected this employment surge to recede.

Data for the first two weeks of October suggest that this is indeed true.

The rural unemployment rate in the week ended October 6 was 8.3 per cent and in the second week it was 8.2

While a reversal of the exceptionally low unemployment rate of

September was expected, the magnitude of the reversal surprises us. October is a month of festivals and the demand for casual labour, of the kind that usually gets absorbed in agricultural activities, is expected to remain high. We had therefore expected the rural unemployment to rise from the 6 per cent level of September to around 7 per cent. But, the data show a rise to over 8 per cent and that is surprising and disappointing. The data seem to suggest that while

employment opportunities in rural India declined in the first two weeks of October, labour did not leave the labour markets. They continued to look for jobs. The labour participation rate was 44.3 per cent in the first two weeks of October. This is the same as it was in the month of September. But, employment opportunities

had declined. The employment rate declined, from 41.6 per cent in September to 40.7 per cent in the first two weeks of October, which is the same as the average of the preceding three months. The employment rate has reverted to its average after spiked momentarily having in September.

Rationally, it can be expected that labour would retreat partially, during the remaining weeks of October as it becomes evident to them that job opportunities have declined. This would lead to a fall in the labour participation rate which in turn could reduce the rural unemployment rate. We, therefore, expect the rural unemployment rate to decline a bit, from its 8.2 per cent level in the first half.

It is assumed in the above projections that the employment rate would continue to remain around 40.7 per cent and that the festival season till Diwali would have no further impact. This assumption could well turn out to be true because the first two weeks of October already include a part of the festival season.

The unemployment rate is higher in urban India. The average unemployment rate during the first two weeks of October was 9 per cent. This is lower than the urban unemployment rate in August and September which were 9.7 per cent and 9.6 per cent, respectively.

The small fall in the urban unemployment rate is welcome. It is not an insignificant fall.

The urban unemployment rate shot up sharply in the quarter ended September 2019. After remaining stable at 8.1 per cent in two consecutive quarters, March and June 2019, it shot up to 9.3 per cent in the quarter ended September. The recent urban unemployment figures suggest some weakening of its upward trajectory.

First, the September 2019 urban unemployment rate at 9.6 per cent was lower than it was in August. And, the September 2019 estimate was influenced by an unusual spike in the last week. This spike of the last week is offset by a sharp fall in the rate in the first week of October.

Urban unemployment rate data for the past few weeks are somewhat noisy. It had peaked at 10.8 per cent during the week ended September 29. But then it fell to 8.5 per cent in the next week before scaling up to 9.4 per cent in the week of October 13. The fall in September and then the fall in the first two weeks of October indicate that the urban unemployment rate could be stabilising at a little over 9 per cent but below 10 per cent.

But the urban unemployment rate at 9 to 10 per cent is too high. The rate comparable to the official definition could be 12-13 per cent. It is imperative that these rates come down substantially.

The author is the MD & CEO of CMIE

LETTERS

Breakthrough needed

The optics of Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Chinese President Xi Jinping as a pair in a laidback mood in an idyllic setting was excellent, yet deceptive. Plogging by Modi left the popular seaside resort more salubrious and demonstrated his commitment to Swachh Bharat. The Chinese leader appeared pleased by the gift of a special gold-and-red silk shawl featuring him. Also, the summit yielded the new alliterative coinage "Chennai Connect", a variant

of "Wuhan Spirit". That said, the high profile summit can be reckoned only as a "qualified success" as both the leaders stuck to their known positions on the bilateral and global issues and made no significant breakthroughs in the candid, "heart-to-heart" talks. The decision "to prudently manage the differences and not let them become disputes and show sensitivity in ties" encapsulates the outcome of the summit.

It is hard to know what exactly transpired in a tête-à-tête unless it is divulged for public consumption. The Indian side categorically stated that the Kashmir issue did not figure in the one-to-one meeting. Neither side threw light on the "domestic developments" said to have been discussed in the confidential deliberations. Jinping briefing Modi on Pakistani PM Imran Khan's recent visit to Beijing made just a footnote. The Chinese leader had earlier stated that he was keeping a close watch on Kashmir. PM Modi should not go by what Xi and Khan say or don't say but follow the requirements of our democracy.

On the positive side, China agreed to set up a high-level economic and trade dialogue mechanism for addressing the issue of trade and investment imbalance. India's annual trade deficit with China runs over \$53 billion. But as for resolving border

disputes, no perceptible progress has been made in the parleys. In a spirit of good neighbourliness, China must stop aggressive patrolling and transgressions by the People's Liberation Army along the Line of Actual

G David Milton Maruthancode

Dragon dilemma

This refers to "Moving the needle" (October 14). Wearing a veshti or serving coconut water and his imageprinted shawl to the Chinese President Xi Jinping may look good but in the larger context, it's insignificant. As far as trade deficit with China is concerned, there is not a single reason why China should be concerned at all and the proposed meeting between our finance minister and their vice-president may not achieve the desired results.

It's our headache that we still remain an import-driven economy. China's interests are safeguarded here. We will not become an exportdriven economy overnight. Xi might not have spoken about Kashmir but we all know where his priorities lie.

It's an open secret that he would always prefer Pakistan over India and its potential stand at the Financial Action Task Force forum where Pakistan could be seriously penalised, if found not acting against terrorists, will again prove that. Trade and other interests in Pakistan are critical to

China. And now with this direct proposed train link between Lhasa and Kathmandu, China has once again given us proof of its growing ambition in this part of the world and what kind of role it wants to play here.

Thus, it is India which needs to be wary of Chinese moves. Our immediate focus should be on the revival of our economy and nothing



else. Yes, dialogue and communication are important and should be continued, but it would be better if we bring our economy back on track and also bring normalcy in the valley in the coming months.

V S K Pillai Kottayam

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

HAMBONE COMPUTER YES, YOU SHOULD HAVE DOWN AGAIN? HAD THESE LAGGED

Econ Nobelists transformed policy evaluation

or the second time in five years, the Royal Swedish Academy of Sciences has awarded the Nobel Memorial Prize in Economic Sciences to researchers in the field of development economics. Angus Deaton, who won in 2015, has been joined this year by Abhijit Banerjee, Esther Duflo, and Michael Kremer. But the three economists this year have a very different approach to Prof. Deaton's, although they look at similar questions of poverty, inequality, and welfare. The latter won for work that uses large survey data sets to make useful but arguable inferences. This year's laureates, on the other hand, have reduced the same questions to smaller, bite-sized pieces about which something certain can be said. The hope is that coming out with more rigorous results will allow for evidence-based policy to take hold in developing economies.

The basic approach is similar to the clinical trials performed in medicine: A randomised group is exposed to the "treatment" of the policy being investigated, and another group is not — they are, in other words, served a policy placebo. Once the policy has been administered, then the effects on the two groups are compared. If it is statistically clear that there is a greater difference in the desired outcome for the experimental group than the control group, then a clear inference can be drawn that it is due to the effects of the policy. Since the two groups were randomly constituted, no other factor is likely to be responsible for a difference in outcomes. This approach is extremely important in contested and ideological fields like development economics, where policies could be attacked for merely enhancing inherent advantages of a particular group, or contrariwise pushed forward in spite of not having any real merit. Randomised control trials (RCT) have, over time, become dominant in the field of development economics — much to the annoyance of "big picture" econometricians and theorists like Prof. Deaton.

The impact of such thinking on the Indian state must be acknowledged. Some influential recent policy innovations in this country, from Aadhaar to reform of the public distribution system, have been pioneered following RCT studies. This Nobel would not, indeed, have been won without the co-operation with the three laureates and others in their field of multiple individuals and agencies of the Indian government at both the Union and state levels. It is easy to see why RCT-based analysis is so appealing in the Indian context. Bureaucrats are inundated with more proposals than they have the time, energy, or resources to implement. Proposals that are accompanied with a clear proof of their worth are, therefore, likely to be prioritised. But it is also true that evidence-based policy-making has not spread as much as it should have. In fact, one common criticism of RCTs is that governments have been reluctant to scale them up. In the education sector in particular, only one or two interventions emerging from RCT studies have been adopted at scale by the Indian bureaucracy. It is to be hoped that the Nobel awards will cause many more in the policy hierarchy to sit up and take note of what the academics have been producing.

UDAY's second rise

State governments will need to reduce subsidies

uccessive governments' struggles to price services at market rates are amply demonstrated by the crisis in UDAY, or the Ujwal Discom Assurance Yojana, the 2015 scheme to boost ailing state power distribution companies (discoms). Now into its fifth year, UDAY has proven no more effective than two other attempts to solve the chronic discom debt problem in this century. The cumulative losses of 21 states that adopted UDAY stand at ₹28,639 crore in FY19. To be sure, this is a significant reduction on ₹51,562 crore in FY16, the first year of the scheme, but a massive 88 per cent increase over FY18. First-quarter indications for FY20 suggest that these numbers could get worse.

Ironically, this recent burgeoning of losses is principally on account of the Saubhagya national electrification scheme, which saw discoms getting meters installed in more households but failing to generate bills from them. But as the Reserve Bank of India's report on state finances observes, the debt position of state governments is showing "incipient signs of instability", principally on account of UDAY. The main sticking-point in discoms' deteriorating financial situation is the politics of populism. Discoms typically supply electricity to designated consumers — farmers or rural households — either free or at subsidised rates for which they are compensated from the state exchequer, or through cross subsidies. Since there is usually a lag in this compensation, discoms find themselves saddled with mounting losses.

With the stressed banking sector increasingly unlikely to finance additional loans, UDAY sought to improve on the One-Time Settlement (2003) and the Financial Restructuring Plan (2012) by linking discoms' bailout to tariff increases. State governments were to take over 75 per cent of the discoms' debt and then issue bonds to banks and financial institutions. Since these bonds carry a higher coupon than other state loans, UDAY sought to pressure state governments to eliminate or reduce subsidised tariffs and make the discoms profitable.

Under the agreement with discoms, the difference between the average cost of supply (ACS) and realisable revenue (ARR) was to come down to zero and technical and commercial (AT&C) losses down to 15 per cent. Given that the majority of UDAY states were ruled by the same party as the Centre, this realignment was expected to be seamless. By FY19, however, the ACS-ARR gap stood at ± 0.27 per kWh and AT&C losses at 18 per cent. No surprise, then, by June this year the discom dues to generating companies stood at $\pm 73,425$ crore, an indicator of yet another NPA crisis in the making.

Clearly, the policy of enabling states to borrow to clear discom debt (via UDAY bonds) without penalising the latter for non-performance was untenable. This prompted the power ministry to modify the scheme to UDAY 2.0 in June. The new scheme involved, among other things, making discoms mandatorily open letters of credit to get supplies from power generators (essentially reviving a stipulation in the Electricity Act of 2003), reducing the permissible level of cross-subsidy and imposing a surcharge, at commercial rates of interest, on delayed payments. These are sensible proposals but the proof of their workability is, as always, open to questions. But it is a crisis the country's slowing economy can ill afford.

ILLUSTRATION: AJAY MOHANTY



We said, Xi said...

There is little to be gained from a Sino-Indian summit where competitive rhetoric outpaces the reality

BROADSWORD

AJAI SHUKLA

otwithstanding the gushy media coverage, which even featured the detailed dinner menu, of last week's "informal summit" between Prime Minister Narendra Modi and China's President Xi Jinping at Mamallapuram, this was hardly a breakthrough in the testy relations between the two countries. If there was diplomatic success, it lay in New Delhi's forbearance in allowing the summit to take place at all. A country less complaisant towards China might well have

called off the summit three days before it happened, when Beijing, after Xi's meeting with Pakistan's Prime Minister Imran Khan, publicly declared that China supported Pakistan's all "core concerns". This amounts to backing Islamabad's claim over all of Jammu & Kashmir (J&K) and, in effect, the abandonment of Beijing's professed neutrality on the Kashmir dispute. New Delhi's placid acceptance of this, without even a strongly worded rebuke, must have signalled to Xi that New Delhi desired the optics of a Modi-Xi summit far

more than Beijing did. This would have been confirmed during the summit when Modi silently heard out Xi's account of his meeting with Khan.

The key achievement of the summit, as prominently advertised by both sides, apparently was that Modi and Xi spent over five hours in one-onone talks on global affairs, investment and trade, combating terrorism, tourism and people-to-people contacts. Afterwards, Modi talked up the "Chennai Connect" that, he felt, would usher in "a new era" in Sino-Indian ties. Xi declared these were "heart-to-heart" conversations and that he and Modi were "like real friends." However, expe-

rience teaches that an exchange of national visions between the leaders of two countries does not naturally pave the path to peace, especially when there exists a deep-rooted strategic rivalry between them. Observers with a sense of history would recall the four-and-a-half hours of documented conversations between Mao Zedong and Jawaharlal Nehru in October 1954 in which the two leaders similarly discussed America's role in the region, the global environment and India's

and China's place in it. Yet, eight years later they were at war.

True, New Delhi has little choice but to diplomatically engage an increasingly powerful, wealthy and assertive Beijing. However, it cannot be so distracted by the rhetoric of friendship and fraternity as to miss the fact that, since the first "informal summit" at Wuhan last year, China has done nothing to allay India's key security or economic concerns. The Indian Army has been unable to reduce a single soldier on the borders and our military's deployment

posture remains predicated on the possibility of a two-front war. We are no closer to resolving the Sino-Indian border dispute, with the Chinese continuing to stonewall even the first step towards that — which is to exchange maps marked with each side's perceived alignment of the Line of Actual Control (LAC), the de facto border. Recent delegations from influential Chinese think tanks (which accurately reflect Beijing's official stance) have recited to Indian audiences the hackneyed formulation that a border solution "should be left to future generations." The official briefings after Chennai indicate that the Chinese stuck to the

same line. With little accommodation in the present, Xi's proposal for a "hundred-year plan" for cementing ties between the two countries only kicks the can so far down the road that it ceases to be visible at all.

New Delhi's economic concerns remain unaddressed too, primarily its expanding \$53 billion trade deficit with China and misgivings over the terms of the Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership — a gigantic free trade pact being negotiated between 16 countries that together constitute some 40 per cent of the world's economy. Here, too, the can has been kicked down the road, with a "High-Level Economic and Trade Dialogue Mechanism" being set up to tackle these issues. That this is merely a hastily-applied band-aid was tacitly acknowledged by Foreign Secretary Vijay Gokhale's admission: "It was a brief discussion."

The experience of previous committees warns us to temper expectations. In the realm of border management, the Working Mechanism for Consultation and Coordination on India-China Border Affairs, signed in January 2012; and the Border Defence Cooperation Agreement, signed in October 2013 failed spectacularly to calm the Line of Actual Control (LAC). Instead, there was a three-week-long standoff at Depsang, Ladakh, in April 2013; followed by a 16-day face-off at Chumar, Ladakh, in September 2014; and then the tense 73-day confrontation at Doklam, Bhutan, in June-August 2017. The brief spell of peace on the LAC after Wuhan reverted inexorably to the scattered confrontations of earlier days.

Gokhale told the media that the two leaders did not discuss Kashmir as it is "an internal matter" for India. There was good reason to avoid discussing Kashmir, but it is, in fact, far from an internal matter. China physically occupies about 45,000 square kilometres of J&K state as claimed by India, including 3,000 square kilometres captured in the 1962 war and never returned; and 5,180 square kilometres ceded to China by Pakistan in 1963. If the only J&K issue that remains to be discussed with Pakistan is the return of Pakistan Occupied Kashmir to India, it is hard to justify remaining silent about the return of China Occupied Ladakh.

The concept of "informal summits" seems here to stay, with Modi having already accepted Xi's invitation to come and chat next year in China. However, there is little to be gained from a summit that is reduced to a spectacle and where competitive rhetoric far outpaces the reality. If Modi was reduced to writing poetry, China's envoy to India, Sun Weidong tweeted: "From Wuhan to Chennai, from Yangtze river to Ganges, China and India join hands and stand together. Dragon and Elephant have a tango." Sun should have known that such saccharine descriptives sound patronising to Indians when China and India still stand far apart on so many issues. For a dragon to ever tango with an elephant seems a long way from where we are now.

The key to benefiting from a trade deal

Prime Minister Narendra Modi's recent push for India to be in the Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership (RCEP), despite opposition from his ministries and industry, is a good sign that he realises that India needs to strengthen its global integration, especially with respect to the buoyant Asian economies. The PM also made efforts to improve our bilateral trade relations with key partners, highlighted by his recent visit to the US to strike a trade deal with President Donald Trump. These are all steps in the right direction to boost exports and sustain high and inclusive

But India cannot benefit from any trade deal — bilateral or plurilateral— without first putting its domestic house in order with urgent unilateral trade liberalisation that began in 1991 and was further strengthened under Atal Bihari Vajpayee. Since the United Progressive Alliance-II, and continuing till now, exports have stagnated as we did not continue with tariff rationalisation, a realistic exchange

rationalisation, a realistic exchange rate management, and moving away from an archaic trade negotiating strategy that is reactive. Trade and logistics facilitation reforms are another big constraint to rapid growth of exports and foreign direct investment (FDI). But to the credit of PM Modi, considerable reforms were undertaken during his tenure in this particular area, which are reflected in sharp improvements in the rankings of World Bank's Ease of Doing Business, Trading Across Borders and Logistics Performance indicators. Also, the PM's Economic Advisory Council (PMEAC) had brought out a report in October 2018, outlining a clear road map for further reforms in these areas. This is what

we need to do immediately:

Tariff rationalisation: This is the first reform we need to maintain international competitiveness and make industry fully integrated into the global economy. To achieve this, we must have a two-year plan to bring our average tariff levels to single-digit ASEAN levels. Average tariff level in India for non-agriculture sectors is 13.6 per cent, a bit higher with tariff hike in the recent Budget, compared to 5.3 per cent in Malaysia, 7.3 per cent in Thailand and 8.4 per cent in Vietnam. This reduction is a must for not only pro-

moting exports, but to also benefit from RCEP, or any bilateral freetrade agreement (FTA).

Realistic exchange rate: We need to immediately correct the overvaluation of exchange rate over the past few years. This is crucial for reviving the export momentum. I am most surprised that this does not receive as much attention as the push for interest rate cuts.

Trade and logistics facilitation

reforms: To the credit of the Central Board of Indirect Taxes and Customs (CBIC), our cargo dwell time in ports and airports has been considerably reduced through adoption of modern risk management systems and automation. So has logistics development under the special wing created in the Ministry of Commerce and Industry. We now just need to complete the reforms clearly outlined in PMEAC report on logistics development.

Trade negotiating strategy: We need to behave like a major global player and take a proactive stance in trade in services, removal of subsidies and non-tariff barriers by not consistently pushing for temporary

relocation of labour (Mode 4 of the General Agreement on Trade in Services) and Special and Differential Treatment (S&D). It is high time that we didn't hide behind the logic that we need these because we house the largest number of poor people in the world. This also does not go well with our flagging that we will be a \$5 trillion economy by 2025.

Connecting with the largest global value chain:

A good way to carry forward unilateral trade liberalisation to next generation trade reforms is to start preparing to join the Comprehensive and Progressive Agreement for Trans-Pacific Partnership (CPTPP) comprising the 11 original members of TPP, excluding the US. They are: Japan, Australia, New Zealand, Brunei, Singapore, Malaysia, Canada, Peru, Chile, Mexico, and Vietnam. The CPTPP will incorporate the original TPP agreement, with suspension of a limited number of provisions. Membership in CPTPP will require achieving gold standard trade policy in elimination of tariffs and other barriers to trade and investment, a WTO + IPR regime and trade in services, adherence to competition policy, trade facilitation, reform of state-owned enterprises, investment policy, and government procurement. Labour and environment policies are also on the agenda, though how far these will be enforced is not yet clear. India does need to move swiftly on most of these policies on its own to fulfill its objective of closely integrating with the largest global value chain to boost exports and create jobs.

Along with the unilateral trade liberalisation policies outlined earlier, these are also the policies the government needs to undertake to fully benefit from RCEP, and other ongoing and proposed bilateral and plurilateral trade deals.

The writer is a former economic advisor in the Union commerce ministry

Of Vedanta & de-risking global finance



BOOK REVIEW

TAMAL BANDYOPADHYAY

There are many books on the global financial crisis triggered by the collapse of US investment bank Lehman Brothers and the lessons learnt from it. But this book, written by someone who has been a central banker for more than a decade, is different from the pack.

Ravi Mishra, currently an executive director of the Reserve Bank of India (RBI), had headed its financial stability unit (set up in the aftermath of the crisis) and was a princi-

pal chief general manager of the risk monitoring department. These assignments have a bearing on his narrative: He has dealt with a very complex subject with relative ease.

Macroprudential regulations are a work in progress but Mr Mishra has raised relevant questions and tried to answer them. The book traces the origin of the crisis, its impact on the global financial system and the long-term consequences. The academic world will definitely find this a useful reference book. The book has four parts: Regulatory reforms after the crisis: how macroprudential policies are being used to manage the systemic risks; the framework of crisis management; and the emerging new world of coordinated international policy-making. An epilogue deals with central banks' potential concerns a decade after the Lehman collapse.

India, which has a predominantly bankled financial system, has always focused on

the resilience of the system — important in the current context of the unholy nexus among some banks, shadow banks and bankrupt real estate firms that could threaten financial stability. The book describes in detail RBI's early experiments with (a) the investment fluctuation reserve (when banks were making too much money on their bond portfolio with the fall in interest rates early this century, they were asked to create this buffer against rising rates); (b) assignment of risk weights depending on the sensitivity of the sector (jacking up the cost of capital for banks as a disincentive to lend to such sectors); and (c) capping exposure limits to certain sectors.

In 2004, the RBI also started keeping tabs on the interconnectedness of different entities within the financial system. It's another matter that not every entity is respecting this, creating all sorts of problems — the latest crises in cooperative banks and shadow

banking being cases in point.
While regional integration

JAYANTA ROY

While regional integration is a systemic process of economic, political and legal synergy and it takes a long time to achieve, Mr Mishra recommends that the lessons learnt from the Eurozone integration can be replicated in other parts of the world to avoid a crisis in future.

crisis in future.
Citing the Sanskrit phrase Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam (the world is one family) Mr Mishra says Vedanta philosophy should be applicable to financial innovations. How? Human beings are the driving force behind the "family" mentioned in the phrase and they are made of mind, intellect and spirit. The synergy of the three creates energy, which empowers human beings to innovate. As enshrined in Vedantic philosophy, this synergy has to move from micro to macro. Mr Mishra says all nations must explore this synergy and reap the benefits of financial innovations. Globalisation is nothing but an expression of this synergy.

There are many roadblocks to global financial and economic integration. The recent tariff wars between the US and China

is one of them. His theory is: All nations must look for the so-called Pareto-optimal economic integration —that is making some countries better off without hurting others. The need of the hour, according him, is creating a system to ensure global monetary and financial stability.

He extends this to linking payments systems of different nations, because interoperability will ensure cross-border access to international markets and bring down transaction costs. An international financial infrastructure should be set up for sharing technology platforms and data networks to facilitate payments and settlement of funds. He also supports the need for a global repository of regional statistics. This is easier said than done since the RBI itself believes in data localisation.

Finally, Mr Mishra has also dealt with concept of an international monetary system at length and the versions of top-down and bottom-up frameworks. The International Monetary Fund is losing its relevance in the world of finance because it does not know how to deal with a crisis of international

dimensions even as the World Bank is not designed to handle financial crisis. The time, according to Mr Mishra, is ripe for a "multilateral" international surveillance framework. He quotes from the discourse of Lord Krishna in the *Mahabharata* ("Be like a garland maker, O King, not like a charcoal burner"). Indian mythology also illustrates this.

A garland has flowers of many hues and forms strung together for a pleasing effect while charcoal is the result of burning all kinds of wood and reducing diversity to homogeneous dead matter. The charcoal burner is reductionist and destroys diversity but the garland maker celebrates diversity. Instead of discriminating economies in terms of the powers they wield, Mr Mishra advocates a "common-friend-of-all-but-enemy-to-none" approach. Any takers?

SYSTEMIC RISK AND MACROPRU-DENTIAL REGULATIONS: Global Financial Crisis and Thereafter Ravi N Mishra; Sage, 455 pages, ₹1,445







OUT OF FOCUS Congress leader Rahul Gandhi

The government took out the money from common man's pockets and handed it to Ambani and Adani. Both Modi and Khattar are working for businessmen and keep deviating your focus from real problems

L-1 has hurt govt & PSUs, so good if CVC reviewing it

In the case of PSUs, abolish L-1 where the market is a competitive one; make it more flexible for govt tenders

VEN THERE ARE around 340 central PSUs alone, and possibly 2-3 times as many owned by various state governments, it is clear that even an aggressive privatisation programme can't fix the problem of PSUs rapidly losing value; in which case, reforming the way they are run has to be top priority. While heavily unionised workers, and vast overstaffing is a major reason for the poor performance of PSUs, equally important is the issue of what is called L-1-itis, or the fact that, since PSUs are seen as an arm of the state under Article 12 of the Constitution, they have to issue tenders for most purchases/contracts; indeed, they do not have the freedom to enter into JVs, or other such partnerships. In the case of ONGC, for instance, when it tried to tie up with Brazil's Petrobras and Norway's Statoil, which had deep-sea drilling experience, it was told it needed to float a tender even though the firms were both PSUs; had ONGC been able to do the tie-up, chances are it would have done a better job in the deep waters of the KG Basin. Similarly, one of the reasons for BSNL falling behind in providing mobile phone connections is that, on at least two occasions, its tenders were challenged in court and it had to go in for re-tenders. Given how most of BSNL's competitors, like Bharti Airtel, for instance, have outsourced a large part of their network operations to firms like Siemens and Ericsson, not having such flexibility can cripple the organisation.

This is why it is good news that, as *Hindustan Times* reported, the Central Vigilance Commission (CVC) is relooking the issue of L-1, to make it more responsive. One solution being talked about is to replace the concept of L-1 (the lowest bidder wins) with, for instance, Quality-cum-Cost-based-solution (QCBS) or Quality-Based-Selection (QBS) where, instead of just the lowest bid, the govt/PSU would first choose the firm on the basis of technical parameters and then go in for a price-bid, or only on the basis of a technical evaluation. A Swiss-Challenge could also be adopted where, once a firm has given its techno-commercial bid, this can be thrown open for others to match. These are undoubtedly good suggestions, but as a general rule, as long as PSUs are operating in a competitive environment, ideally, the concept of needing to bid should be done away with. This can be done if Article 12 of the Constitution is modified to say that PSUs which function in a competitive marketplace will not be covered by it since, for them, the ability to respond quickly to market situations is of paramount importance; as for a QBS-type of selection process, if the transaction is large enough, such as an ONGC tie-up with a Petrobras or a Statoil, such a justification will, in any case, have to be made to the company's board.

While many will argue that the change in procedures will result in large corruption, no system is foolproof. In the case of the Delhi airport privatisation bid many years ago, for instance, despite the elaborate procedures, the evaluation of the bid was faulty, and would have favoured one firm; this was stopped after an alert bureaucrat spotted this, and an expert group was set up to relook the post-bid evaluation process. It is important to keep in mind that, while no system is foolproof getting work on time—or even before time—is itself a very big saving given how lengthy delays of even decades in many cases push up costs inordinately; had BSNL been able to increase its mobile-phone capacity on time, for instance, this would probably matter less than if the price-bid was not the most competitive.

Q2 GDP could be worse

In which case, even a 6% FY20 growth could be at risk

IVEN THE SLUGGISH loan growth, contracting four-wheeler sales and slowing volume momentum in a host of other sectors, it is not altogether surprising that factory output contracted by 1.1% year-on-year (y-o-y) in August. The deterioration was particularly marked in segments such as capital goods, which shrank 21% y-o-y on the back of a 7.2% y-o-y fall in July, and durables, which fell 9.1% y-o-y, reflecting the very anaemic demand partly arising from weak credit flows to many sectors of the economy. As has been pointed out, despite excess liquidity to the tune of ₹200,000 crore in the banking system—the system has been in a surplus for close to five months now—banks are being ultra-cautious while sanctioning loans. They are not to be blamed. For one, much of corporate India is still fairly leveraged, and in the current difficult environment, cash flows aren't improving. Moreover, the quality of corporate balance sheets remains worrying as seen from the daily downgrades by ratings agencies. Indeed, the second NPA cycle has started, and could get exacerbated by weakening commodity cycles, the global slowdown, and also the unhelpful policies relating to the ownership and operatorship of infrastructure assets; as experts have pointed out the IRRs for some infra projects are unremunerative given that prices are below market levels. The fact that state governments have been dishonouring contracts—as has happened with some renewable energy projects—will also hurt banks' portfolios.

The offtake of loans by individuals, too, is slowing because incomes are growing slowly and consumer confidence is low. It is precisely because companies don't see the need to produce when demand isn't picking up that manufacturing is contracting—the August data of a negative 1.2% was the worst in five years. It is hard to see greenfield investments by the private sector picking up meaningfully in the next couple of years, and, as a share of GDP, it could actually fall. That is because capacity utilisation is around 73%, and distressed assets are being bought at attractive valuations via the IBC route. Very few new projects are being announced.

However, existing projects that are stressed or stalled—like in the residential real estate sector—can be revived with relatively small incremental investments. That could then help fuel demand for a range of products and, at the same time, help banks recover their loans. Over a period of time, household savings should move up, and can be used to fund investments. Unless some sectors get an immediate boost, it is hard to see the economy re-bounding. With high frequency data at their lowest levels since 2008, growth in Q2FY20 could well be lower than the 5% y-o-y clocked in Q1FY20. That, then, increases the risk of the economy growing at below 6% in 2019-20.

TwitterTAKEOFF

Railways model of Twitter governance can help DGCA tackle errant airlines

ORLDWIDE, FLYERS HAVE found Twitter a convenient platform to air grievances with airlines, and the latter, ever fearful of negative publicity (remember Delta Airlines's woes), have seemed eager to redress these. That said, the Directorate General of Civil Aviation's (DGCA's) plan to harness Twitter to get airlines to serve customers better is going to be a tall ask. The aviation regulator in a meeting on Thursday directed airlines to offer timely redressal of all grievances, warning against laxity. It asked them to provide regular SMS updates of delays and boarding, and said that the airlines need to give drinking water, refreshments and meals to passengers stuck because of delays, in keeping with the Civil Aviation Regulations (CAR). Although DGCA had laid down clear norms under CAR, these have been observed more in breach than in compliance.

While the DGCA started the Airsewa portal, it has not been as successful as awareness regarding the platform has been limited. Twitter governance can ensure better service delivery, but the DGCA needs to come up with the right plan for this. The current proposal, of airline resolving disputes raised on their respective Twitter handles, is not only difficult to track but also impossible to implement. A Railways-style approach can work better. While Railways is the only operator, in this case, the DGCA can ask all complaints to be tagged to the DGCA account. This way, not only would it be able to track requests, it would also be able to account for airline response. And, if it has worked in the case of Railways—the service lists over 20 accounts for complaints besides its official Twitter handle with 4.15 million followers—it can do so for airlines too. More important, what DGCA and airlines need to address is the issue of refunds—ambiguity in CARs with regards to the minimum period for refunds has led to airlines delaying these.

EDUCATION 2.0

ONLINE LEARNING WILL 'MASS-IFY' HIGHER ED, WHICH IS WHAT A \$5-TRN ECONOMY NEEDS.BUT, 35 UNIVERSITIES APPLIED FOR A LICENCE FOR ONLINE COURSES, AND NONE HAS RECEIVED IT

Over-regulation choking online learning potential

N A RECENT US investor roadshow, a portfolio manager at one of India's largest foreign investors asked us, "How do you get something done in India after everybody important in the government agrees with you?" His rhetorical question is relevant; the gap between India's performance and potential is not a lie, but a disappointment. For example, most policymakers agree that a \$5 trillion economy needs 'mass-ifying' higher education because our farm to non-farm transition is happening to services, not manufacturing. The agreement that some traditional universities do a poor job of balancing cost, quality, scale, and employability triggered a reexamination of a one-size-fits-all education regulation that stifles innovation, and led to lifting a ban on online higher education in July 2018. Yet, not one of the 35 universities that applied has been licensed, and the posture and tone has scared off another 150 eligible universities. This gap between intention and execution must end; it handicaps Indian universities over global ones, holds back expansion of our gross enrollment ratio (GER), and sabotages our \$5-trillioneconomy ambition.

As context, the University Grants Commission (UGC) banned online higher distance education in 2015 in the name of consumer protection. Granted, that there were surely some fly-by-night operators, yet drunk driving is not an argument against cars. But, UGC has no jurisdiction over global universities who continued to enroll over 1 million Indian students annually in various courses. The need for reform was recognised, and UGC reviewed its decision in July 2018 by inviting universities to apply for licences. In January 2019, more than 35 applied, but not one has yet received the goahead. Besides, immediately issuing online licences, we would like to make a case for six policy changes:

End two separate regulations: Separate regulations for open and distance learning (ODL), and online programmes is unnecessary, complex, and akin to friendly fire. The MANISH SABHARWAL **& SHANTANU ROOJ**

Sabharwal is with TeamLease Services and Rooj is with Schoolguru Eduserve. Views are personal

frontiers between ODL and online education are blurring; an ondemand, on-the-go, always-on, modular, and multi-modal education system is where they both are headed. The regulator should evolve a single regulation that sets basic benchmarks, creates a framework for selfgovernance, and dumps the licence raj by allowing all universities to launch online programmes.

Allow capacity expansion: The monopoly of brick-and-mortar higher education has been challenged by online learning and competency-based education; more and more students are turning to online education to pursue degrees that may have been otherwise—geographically or financially out of reach. However, UGC's newfound approach to control quality, which allows only universities with a NAAC grade above 3.26 and NIRF Top 100 rank to apply for the licence, places huge amounts of red tape in the way of online learning expansion, and blunts the expansion of GER in the country. Parameters of quality should apply to all formats of education, and not only to online offerings. Blocking universities from launching online programmes murders the multiple statistically independent and genetically diverse tries that lead to innovation,

vision: UGC's online regulations permit universities to launch only those courses which have one batch of graduates—this thwarts innovation, autonomy, and competition. Regulations should focus on providing a framework, and permit universities to think anew, collaborate with industry, and launch new-age student focused, self-

Move from regulation to super-

competition, and better value.

paced subscription models in online education. Universities will, then, not only innovate for fresh students but also for those already in the labour market who would come would bring their aspirations, past experiences, qualifications, and current jobs. Repair and Upgrade need a different thought world than Prepare. View technology as

the medium: Current online regulations require universities to recruit many employees before launching their online programmes. But, advancements in technology, machine learning, artificial intelligence, and bot-based services mean universities can use their existing ecosystems as the academic home for their distance and online courses, and their existadministration teams to manage the online students. This

would mean a standard experience for students irrespective of their mode of learning. Leveraging technology shall help optimise student service, improve governance, fix accountability and control costs—the benefits of which will surely be passed on as lower course fees because of competition.

De-regulate admission cycles: The stereotype of a university student as a privileged, 18-year-old, urban male, who will spend three years, full-time, physically at the institution, no longer holds. Today's students are just as likely to be female, older, from rural areas, and studying part-time, concurrent with full-

time work. The line between corporate training and higher education is blurring, and traditional models of provision no longer work for these students. A recent research report suggested that the number of employed-learners is expected to surpass that of traditional learners in the next four years. Clearly, labour market and education outsiders need more flexibility in admission processes, criteria, and deadlines. This needs rolling admissions, and ondemand exams.

Encourage employability: Automation, artificial intelligence, and intangible assets are transforming the employment landscape; nobody can predict the future, but we can make ourselves worthy of it.

Employability is a function of qualifications, work knowledge, experience, job search strategies and signalling value, amplified by networks; E = (O+WK+E+JSS+SV)NMicheal Spence's Nobel prize winning work on the signalling value of higher education has important implications for recognising apprenticeships as a classroom, having multiple on- and off-ramps, and thinking differently about the regulatory regime for skill universities that focus on employability over build-

ings, and research.

De-regulating

online education

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employers,

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and students

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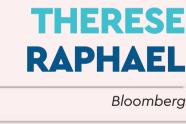
that are

currently banned

Education, employability, and employment change lives in ways that no subsidy ever can, and India's problem is not jobs, but productivity. Deregulating online education will enable employers, universities, and students to combine apprenticeships, degrees, and learning in ways that are currently banned. The poet Iqbal once said, "Dhoondh koi nayi raah khud ke liye. Kab tak qadeem raahon par chalta rahega?" (Find a new path for yourself; how long will you keep walking on ancient paths?). Time to take his advice in higher education.

What's on the table in Brexit talks

Even though the two sides haven't yet entered the famed negotiating "tunnel," at least they appear to be struggling toward the light



won the

Conservative

leadership on a

prospect

NO NEWS CAN be good news sometimes. The logic of past Brexit negotiations suggests that the less we hear about what is happening in intensive Brussels talks, the greater the chance that those talks are getting somewhere. Once the details start to leak and the anonymous briefings start, what is left tends to be dead on arrival. Yet even with scant details on the

new negotiations between the Brits and the EU, or what concessions either side might have made to activate them, it is possible to draw some conclusions about what is being discussed.

First, what it doesn't mean. The quiet luxury wedding venue in Cheshire, where the UK Prime Minister Boris Johnson met with his Irish counterpart Leo Varadkar on Thursday (discovering a "pathway to a possible deal") is a long way from the Justus Lipsius building in Brussels, or wherever the nitty-gritty of any possible Brexit deal might be thrashed out. As my colleague Lionel Laurent wrote on Friday, negotiations don't mean an agreement is a sure thing; there are many degrees of separation between the parties.

Any deal must satisfy three requirements if it is going to fly politically in the UK and the EU. It must let Johnson bring Britain out of the bloc by October 31 or very soon after, as he has promised his supporters. Second, Northern Ireland must be deemed part of the UK customs territory for any future trade deals struck by Britain. Third, an agreement would have to avoid customs checks in Ireland that would threaten either the Good Friday peace settlement or the EU's single

Once a deal ticks those seemingly contradictory boxes, it must also pass muster with the Democratic Unionist Party of Northern Ireland. The DUP leader Arlene Foster gets very twitchy about anything that separates Northern Ireland from the rest of the UK. Without her support of any compromise agreement, it will be very difficult for hardline Brexiters in Johnson's ruling Conservative Party to back a deal. That means Johnson would have to rely on Labour MPs if a deal came to a parliamentary vote, although he would be unlikely to put his initials on one without some assurance of support from his own side.

The window in which to sell any agreement would be small. If, as many For someone who suspect, Johnson is considering a variation on part of his predecessor Theresa May's maligned Chequers deal—a "cuspromise of leaving toms partnership" with on October 31, "no the EU but that includes ifs or buts," having only Northern Ireland rather than her plan to to ask for a delay is include the whole of the an unappetising UK—agreement would be difficult to secure and implementation would be

messy. It would also be

ironic since Johnson resigned over May's plan and the EU rejected it out of hand. There is nothing in Johnson's past

that suggests he is a slave to his positions, quite the contrary. He is perfectly happy, shamelessly so at times, of changing with the wind if it delivers political victory. By contrast, everything in the DUP's history suggests that it doesn't budge even when the case for doing so is compelling. It says it won't accept Northern Ireland staying in the EU's customs union.

Ireland's own position is delicate too. Any Varadkar concessions would need to be less onerous than the cost to Ireland of accepting no deal. Each side will be doing rapid calculations of whether a deal works better than the ugliest alternatives.

You can see why there has been an 11th hour push, though. If Varadkar and Johnson hadn't found their "pathway," there wouldn't have been much to discuss at next week's EU council meeting other than an extension to the Halloween Brexit date.

That would have been grim for Johnson, who has been forced

by his own parliament to seek an extension if he can't strike a deal. For someone who won the Conservative leadership on a promise of leaving on October 31, "no if sorbuts," having to ask for a delay is an unappetising prospect. On the EU side, they

had no doubt rather get this done and move on to other things before a new European Commission takes its seat and before a new budget is voted on next year; especially if they can avoid

chucking Dublin under a bus. Even though the two sides haven't

yet entered the famed negotiating "tunnel,"where they pore over the draft legal text of an agreement, at least they appear to be struggling toward the light. That doesn't mean they'll get there. But the alternatives of an eternal Brexit process (or no deal) are far darker places. This column does not necessarily

reflect the opinion of the editorial board or Bloomberg LP and its owners

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Even smog, odd solution The yearly tradition continues, as

smog rules the NCR-skies during

early morning & late evening hours, and authorities continue to procrastinate over the matter by forecasting a further spike in PM2.5/PM10 levels over the next few weeks. Instead of distributing antipollution masks to combat the falling AQI, it is time that state PCBs take due cognisance of the chronic problem, which persists nearly throughout the winter season every year. It is well-implied that measures forcing shut-down of power-plants, restrictions on garbage-burning at landfill sites, and use of green crackers throughout the festive season are insufficient to eliminate the impediment. Proactive steps are needed. Authorities ought to steepen the learning curve, and act before the smog-layer thickens. Experiments based on road-rationing scheme for a couple of weeks, with multiple exemptions on offer and lacking collaboration among authorities, cannot work wonders in the long-term. A strong political will, and regular micro-monitoring is needed to prevent the hazard and preserve public-health. A hitherto defensive approach towards the known root-cause has aggravated the problem. Besides imposition of stringent traffic rules, a time-bound plan is also needed to ensure adherence to evolving emission standards, expedite the launch of evehicles, and implement a long-term framework. It is time to explore sustainable solutions and educate the rural farmers, instead of expending time towards non-viable activities viz. impounding old vehicles, halting construction projects, generating artificial-rainfall via cloud seeding, or brainstorming on anti-smog guns. — Girish Lalwani, Delhi

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FINANCIAL EXPRESS







N SUNDAY, OUR son, Karna, his wife, and our grandson dropped in for dinner. While chatting, conversation drifted to the Economics Nobel Prize this year, and we did some guessing and gossiping about who might get it. Karna predicted that it would go to Abhijit Banerjee, Esther Duflo and Michael Kremer. We all agreed that would be a fantastic choice. The only question was: They are so young (58 years, 46 years and 54 years, respectively); would this happen this year or would we have to wait for a few years more?

It is so rare to get the Nobel prediction right that when I was woken up on Monday morning by journalists calling to get my reaction, and learned that the Prize has just been announced and it has gone to exactly the three names we had talked about the previous evening, I was thrilled.

This is a richly-deserved award. The prize has been given for their work on randomised control trials used in the broad area of poverty eradication and policies for better health and education. Research done by Abhijit, Esther and Michael has transformed the way development economics is practiced nowadays, not just in the US, where they are based, and India and France, where Abhijit and Esther are from, but the world over. The Poverty Action Lab that they founded is active all over the world, from Asia and Africa to Latin

Let me give you a sample of some their work which I have used elsewhere. It had long been suspected that there is a connection between the better provision of local public goods and the local government having women leaders. But, we had no idea which way the causality runs. Is it that more progressive villages elect women or women leaders are more effective as policymakers and facilitate the better provision of public goods? Esther Duflo, along with Raghav Chattopadhyay, did an outstanding study of India's decision to reserve some of the leadership of local governments-village panchayats—for women. Since the choice of which seats are to be reserved for women is done by lottery in India since 1993, following a constitutional amendment, this turned out a perfect setting for studying how the election of women leaders could affect economic



ECONOMICS NOBEL 2019

Fighting poverty: Expertise from experiments

The Nobel for Abhijit Banerjee, Esther Duflo, and Michael Kremer is richly deserved. Banerjee's win should remind India of the importance of fostering scientific thinking

The Royal Swedish Academy of Sciences has decided to award the Sveriges Riksbank Prize in Economic Sciences in Memory of Alfred Nobel 2019 to

Abhijit Banerjee

Massachusetts Institute of Technology, Cambridge, USA

Esther Duflo

Massachusetts Institute of Technology, Cambridge, USA

Michael Kremer Harvard University, Cambridge, USA

"for their experimental approach to alleviating global poverty"

This year's Laureates have introduced a new approach to obtaining reliable answers about the best ways to fight global poverty. In brief, it involves dividing this issue into smaller, more manageable, questions - for example, the most effective interventions for improving educational outcomes or child health. They have shown that these smaller, more precise, questions are often best answered via carefully designed experiments among the

people who are most affected. FROM NOBELPRIZE.ORG

well-being in the locality. By studying a massive data-set from West Bengal and Rajasthan, they proved that the provision of local public goods, like water supply, improves in statistically significant ways in villages where women are elected to lead.

Likewise, Michael Kremer's research, done with Ted Miguel, on what deworming in schools in Kenya could do for child health and absenteeism of school students was quite remarkable. By doing a massive randomised controlled study, they showed that benefits of deworming could be staggering, way beyond the costs of such an intervention. There are many similar and important findings recorded in the book by Abhijit Banerjee and Esther Duflo, Poor Economics: A Radical Rethinking of the Way to Fight Global Poverty.

It should be mentioned here that, quite apart from the field for which the three of them got the Nobel Prize, they have made important contributions to other areas of economics. Michael Kremer's research on O-rings, which uses an analogy from the disaster that occurred when the space shuttle, Challenger, crashed in 1986, to explain poverty traps, was pioneering. It is a model that I have used in my own work. Abhijit Banerjee's work on the mathematics of herd behaviour, which he did as a PhD student at Harvard University, is an outstanding piece of research.

Congratulations to all three of them! All three of them are not just great economists, but also wonderful people with genuine commitment to do their bit for a better world.

It is worth pointing out here that since I chair the Jury for the Infosys Prize in the Social Sciences, I feel very happy, personally, that two of the Nobel Prize winners this year won the Infosys Prize even earlier—Abhijit Banerjee and Esther Duflo. (And Michael Kremer, I may add, could not get it because he was

not eligible!) With Abhijit having studied at Kolkata's South Point School, Presidency College and then at JNU in Delhi, India should be proud of his achievement and remind itself of the importance of science and scientific thinking. With the slowdown in India's economic growth, it is important for us to use this prize not just for celebration but to harness the best of science and careful reasoning to policymaking.

MISSION DRIVEN INNOVATION

Innovative collaboration



ATER THIS MONTH, India will generously host a State Visit by the King and Queen of the Nether-

India and Netherlands have been cooperating on innovation for more than a decade

lands, as well as an economic mission and a Tech Summit with the Netherlands comprising four cabinet ministers and more than 200 participants form companies, knowledge institutes and the government. Central to this are two things that will create more win-win opportunities for both countries: joint mission-driven innovation as a way to tackle global challenges and public-private partnerships as a means of finding cost-effective solutions in the areas of water, health and agriculture. More than a decade ago, India and the Netherlands began

to cooperate on innovation, this great driver of sustainable economic growth. Together we started innovating in areas of common interest, such as crop sciences, medical devices for affordable health, smart energy grids, big data and urban water systems. Over the years, we have funded no fewer than 34 research projects, which not only generated new knowledge and economic value, but also brought more safety, health, and opportunities to our communities.

Take the LOTUSHR project, for example. India and the Netherlands implemented a holistic approach to recovering water, energy and nutrients from the 1.6 million liters of waste water produced by New Delhi each day at the Barapullah Drain. In the past, this water would end up untreated in the Yamuna, thereby polluting New Delhi's water source. This new approach reduces water scarcity and treatment costs and complements the Modi Government's

Swachh Bharat mission to clean up India.

Key to our work has been Together, India and Netherlands can contribute towards sufficient energy, water, food and health for billions of people, and further schemes like Ayushman **Bharat**

public-private partnerships between government, the private sector and academia, an approach pioneered by the Netherlands when the country began transforming into a knowledge economy in the 1980s. Partners from all three domains share knowledge, pool investments and align goals according to long-term roadmaps, which allows all to achieve better and more costeffective solutions. The Netherlands ranks highly on

the global innovation index and is the world's secondlargest agri-food exporter.

Last year, the Netherlands innovated its approach to innovation. Next to focusing innovation on practical, industry-specific solutions, we now focus our innovation policy on a higher purpose. Dubbed mission-driven innovation, we now encourage public-private partnerships to address the global challenges that face mankind. The four social themes that inspire our missions are Energy transition and sustainability, Agriculture, water and food, Health and Healthcare, and Security.

Inspired by these themes, the Netherlands has formulated 25 missions. These missions focus on ensuring a greater and healthy life expectancy, sufficient clean water and safe food, lower greenhouse gas emissions, affordable sustainable energy and a safe Netherlands to live and work in.

In addition to this, we have also identified the key technologies we need to realise our mission. These are among others biotechnology, photonics, nano technology, artificial intelligence and quantum computing. In the coming years, our focus lies on these four themes and the relevant key technologies through multi-year programmes that cover the entire chain from fundamental research to market introductions. Thus, we may also address the societal challenges we share with India along this route.

The State Visit and the Tech Summit will mark the beginning of a new period in which India and the Netherlands will begin work on a new bilateral knowledge and innovation agenda. Together, we can contribute towards sufficient energy, water, food and health for billions of people. For example, we can aim to double farmers' income through sustainable supply chains and provide accessible and affordable healthcare, in line with the Ayushman Bharat scheme.

PMC CRISIS

F LATE, BANKS in India have been in the news for all the wrong reasons—NPAs, continued deterioration in asset quality, grossly inadequate capital levels, etc.

While the PMC is small compared to the size and reach of most commercial banks, it is still the fifth largest cooperative bank. As of FY19 it had 137 branches, deposits of ₹11,617 crore, advances of ₹8,383 crore, NPAs of 4%, capital adequacy of 12% and a net profit of ₹99.69 crore compared to ₹100.90 crore a year ago. This made PMC seem like a relatively well-run co-operative bank.

After the whistle blower's September 17, 2019 letter, the MD and CEO Joy Thomas wrote a detailed five-page confession to RBI. RBI responding "swiftly and promptly" curbed all activities of PMC Bank and appointed an administrator for six months. It was found that PMC Bank's exposure to the bankrupt Housing Development Infrastructure Ltd (HDIL) was ₹6,226 crore—four times the regulatory cap with the single exposure limit for banks being 15% of capital fund. It was 73% of the banks entire loan book.

In terms of RBI's sweeping restrictions, curbs were placed on fresh lending, accepting fresh deposits and investments. Customers withdrawal was initially capped at ₹1,000 (later raised first to

Way down we go

Commercial banks vis-à-vis cooperative banks are subject to greater regulatory rigors of RBI



₹10,000 and again to ₹25,000) from the Bank, irrespective of the type, total balance or the number of accounts. In the event of emergencies like hospitalisation, etc., the RBI may grant a case-by-case exception, though it is not certain to come through. RBI also sacked the Board and suspended the MD and CEO.

PMC created over 21,000 dummy accounts (mostly of dead account holders), did creative banking and showed large number of project loans and, worst, deliberately delayed computerisation. The FIR shows the modus operandi. HDIL promoters allegedly colluded with the bank management to draw loans from

the Bank's Bhandup branch.

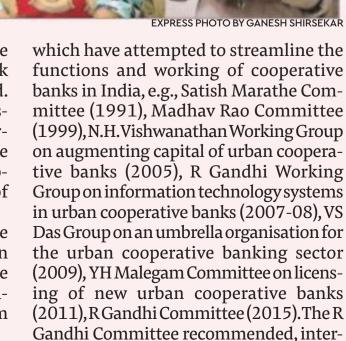
Further, PMC Bank had also reportedly granted a personal loan of ₹96.5 crore to HDIL's promoter Sarang Wadhawan. These aspects forced the bank to go down under.

Generally commercial and cooperative banks are seen to be similarly placed but there are several important differences. Considered in a proper historical and comparative perspective, commercial banks vis-à-vis cooperative banks are subject to greater regulatory rigors of RBI; generally, the levels of manpower and operational efficiency are discernibly higher and they are also required to list on the stock exchanges, thereby subjecting them to market discipline.



often. The Madhavpura Mercantile Cooperative Bank failure of 2001 because of Ketan Parekh is a case in point. Historically, the dual control of the

state government and RBI has often been identified as an important reason for the mess. No wonder, the number of cooperative banks have steadily declined from 1,926 in 2004 to 1,551 in 2018. There have been several Committees,



alia, an accelerated winding up/merger

process, effective regulation of such banks and meeting the capital needs of urban cooperative banks in a greater measure.

Besides, with deposit insurance limited to ₹1 lakh per bank account, India is among the countries with lowest protection to depositors in the unlikely event of bank failure. While India's DICGC's scheme covers 70% of bank deposits, accounts with less than ₹1 lakh together account for only about 8% of cumulative bank accounts.

Issues of contagion effect, short-termism as against sustained growth, cor porate governance and conflict of inter est also need to be carefully considered for a comprehensive assessment and per spective. RBI's measures like revamping its regulatory and supervisory structure by creating a specialised cadre of supervisory officers, strengthening its analyt ical vertical and enhancing onsite super vision, market intelligence and statutory auditor roles for supervision and creating an institutional mechanism for sharing of fraud-related information among urban cooperative banks (UCBs) like Credit Fraud Registry (CFR) for commercial banks are contextually significant.

In the ultimate analysis, given the interplay between cooperative banks and the socio-political system, the issue boils down to greater political will to address the fault-lines in a coordinated and concerted manner with a sense of urgency.

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WORDLY WISE

IF I COULD EXPLAIN IT TO THE AVERAGE PERSON, I WOULDN'T HAVE BEEN WORTH THE NOBEL PRIZE.

— RICHARD FEYNMAN

The Indian EXPRESS

S FOUNDED BY S

✓ RAMNATH GOENKA

BECAUSE THE TRUTH INVOLVES US ALL

EASING POVERTY

2019 Economics Nobel affirms value of evidence-based policy-making in addressing intractable problems

N MONDAY, THE Royal Swedish Academy of Sciences awarded the 2019 Nobel Prize in Economics to Abhijit Banerjee, Esther Duflo and Michael Kremer for their "experimental approach to alleviating global poverty", which, it said, has had a clear impact on policies to fight poverty around the world. Among the things that make this moment special is the fact that Banerjee becomes the second Indian to have received the Nobel prize in Economics, and Duflo is only the second woman to have been awarded after Elinor Ostrom in 2009.

Banerjee and Duflo co-founded the Abdul Latif Jameel Poverty Action Lab, which has helped popularise Randomised Control Trials (RCT), a technique of exploration which draws from medical research to examine the impact of policy interventions on individual behaviour through controlled trials. It involves selecting two sets of individuals at random, one of the two is then exposed to a policy intervention. The experiment examines the impact of such interventions, often over long periods of time, to gauge the impact of policy, and whether it justifies the costs associated with it. Drawing on these field experiments to understand the lives of poor, they have examined government interventions to see what works and what doesn't in developing countries. For instance, they found that it was possible to dramatically increase the quality of education in urban India, at a relatively reasonable cost, through remedial education and computer assisted learning programmes. The results of another experiment suggested that multi-topic medical training of informal healthcare providers may offer an effective short-run strategy for improved health care, while another found that most businesses funded by microfinance firms tended not to grow. Banerjee, who has been in favour of shifting to cash transfers, has in the past argued for a universal basic income architecture.

Though RCTs have become widespread in recent times, some are sceptical about overrelying on them. Angus Deaton, who won the 2015 Nobel prize in economics, noted that while RCTs can play a role in building scientific knowledge, they can only do so as part of a cumulative programme. "Small scale, demonstration RCTs are not capable of telling us what would happen if these policies were implemented to scale", he noted. But, despite the conditional nature of these studies, it is difficult to deny that policy interventions require better understanding to ensure efficient outcomes, especially in countries with limited state capacity and resources. In India, where billions are poured in the name of the poor, often without proper understanding of what works and what doesn't, and where there is little faith in evidence-based policy-making, such research can be enormously valuable in informing public debate.

No zero sum

India needs to view Nepal-China intimacies with equanimity, work on repairing its own relationships in the neighbourhood

RESIDENT XI JINPING'S visit to Nepal after the Mamallapuram meeting with Prime Minister Narendra Modi underlines starkly the challenges India faces in its relationship with China, with Nepal, and more generally, with China's deeppocketed outreach in the entire neighbourhood. In fact, Xi's visit to India was sandwiched between receiving Pakistan Prime Minister Imran Khan, and his Nepal visit. If Delhi has been disturbed at the signals from these engagements around the Mamallapuram summit, it has managed to hide it well. It cannot but know that, as far as Nepal is concerned, the problems are largely self-inflicted.

Xi was the first Chinese President to land in Kathmandu in over two decades, and the visit acknowledged the closeness between the two countries from the last decade, but more so, since 2015. That was when Nepal Communist Party leader Kharga Prasad Oli took office as prime minister. His first term, which lasted barely a year, was dominated by a crippling blockade of the Nepal border at Birgunj from the Indian side. China stepped in at the time to provide fuel and other essentials. Oli was quick to strengthen Nepal's relations with its northern neighbour. He was ousted from office within a year, but much to India's surprise, returned even stronger in an election in early 2018. Modi's three visits, and agreements for more infrastructure projects, including a rail line from Kathmandu to Raxaul at the border, have clearly not persuaded landlocked Nepal that the only friend it needs in the neighbourhood is India.

Xi's generous assistance to Nepal of USD 495 million was of a piece with the style with which China makes friends with India's neighbours. There is to be a feasibility study on a trans-Himalayan train link between the two countries, and a road link from Kathmandu to Kerung, on Nepal's border with Tibet, as part of the Belt and Road Initiative. Both connections will increase Nepal's access to the Chinese economy. To the extent that this pushes up the possibility of Chinese goods flooding India through Nepal, Delhi should be concerned. But it must also come to terms with the reality that there can be no zero sum games in foreign policy. Viewing relations with neighbouring countries only through the prism of India's security has its limits. As the region's largest economy, India needs to find better ways to make friends with its neighbours, and retain these friendships.

MARTIN'S LAMENT

Scorsese criticises superhero films, points to a trend: The story comes second to VFX

HE LATEST RE-IMAGINING of a classic superhero character, *Joker*, is heavily inspired by a Martin Scorsese classic, *The Kings of Comedy* (1983). Scorsese, one of the most successful and respected directors today, though, has scant regard for films based on comic books, especially the "summer blockbusters" that Marvel and DC churn out every year. He has remarked that these films were "not cinema", blamed them for turning the theatre into an "amusement park" and said they were "invading" the public imagination, crowding out art that explores human complexity.

While Scorsese's lament has, predictably, caused much chagrin among superhero movie producers and fans, it is worth taking his criticism seriously. The audiovisual is arguably the most widely-consumed and accessible form of public art. It shapes public conversations and opens up worlds. Unidimensional characters, and fairly formulaic plots have come to dominate the big screen in the US, as have remakes. Original writing — the story — seems to be coming in second to VFX extravaganzas for an attention-deficit audience. And while the case has been made that the plethora of choice allows all forms of cinema to find their audience, big distributors for big films crowd out other films. Scorsese's

point, really, is that character-driven cinema need not be pushed to the sidelines. In his polemic against the superhero, Scorsese did make a confession: He wasn't able to watch all the important films in the genre. If he had, perhaps he would have realised that over the last two decades, these films, too, have evolved. The generation that watched the first Spiderman (2002), is now looking for its characters to grow. Or, maybe Scorsese is right, it's time for new stories, and for the security blanket of childhood comforts to be relegated to nostalgia. In the end, though, Samuel Jackson, a staple in superhero movies who has also worked with Scorsese, put it best: "Everybody's got an opinion, so I mean it's okay. Ain't going to stop nobody from making movies."

An economics for the poor

Banerjee, Duflo and Kremer introduced a



paradigm shift in approach to alleviating poverty

While it would have been

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on the lives of the poor, it is

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require better facts and

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THE NOBEL Prize in Economics for 2019 has been awarded to Abhijit Banerjee, Esther Duflo and Michael Kremer for "their experimental approach to alleviating global poverty". The approach, popularly known as Randomised Control Trial (RCT), has been the buzzword among development economists for almost two decades. Banerjee, Duflo and Kremer have used this technique

(inspired by the use of RCTs in medical sci-

ence) to test the effect of small interventions

on individual behaviour. Most of these interventions carried out

under the aegis of Abdul Lateef Jameel Poverty Action Lab (J-PAL), co-founded by Banerjee and Duflo, in Africa and Asia, have produced evidence on the response to a particular intervention by the poor using these randomised trials. The approach basically examines the impact of these micro interventions by treating one set of individuals/households and comparing the outcome with another set of individuals/households, which are similar in all other respects but have not been treated with the intervention. India has been among the biggest laboratories of these experiments with several experiments on diverse themes such as literacy, nutrition, health, microfinance and so on.

The RCT approach has its share of supporters as well as critics. While it has enamoured a large number of development economists for its simplicity, where inferences on what works or not are drawn from field experiments, it has also been criticised for reducing the study of poverty to small interventions unconnected to the lived experiences of the poor. The discomfort among many established scholars is that this fashionable trend has made the historical, institutional and social structures of the persistence of poverty less relevant to understanding why the poor continue to remain poor. Others have picked holes in the methodology. However, it has not deterred development economists from using this ap-

ducting them to understand how the lives of poor people change as a result of these micro interventions. There have been questions about whether the results can be replicated in different societies, as well as on the ethics of some of the experiments, which have been conducted in collaboration with participating governments. It is also worth pointing out that the method is as good as the range of interventions that can be undertaken. While critics may have been unfair to RCTs in some respects while correctly point-

proach for designing experiments and con-

ing out the pitfalls in an RCT-based approach, there is no denying that all the three scholars have contributed a great deal to putting poverty and development economics back on the agenda of economics. Newer methods and approaches are necessary for the discipline struggling to find relevance in an increasingly complex world, which is as much defined by the microeconomics of small interventions as well as the macroeconomics of development such as government policy and structures of production. As Angus Deaton (Nobel Prize winner of 2015) says: "RCTs can play a role in building scientific knowledge and useful predictions but they can only do so as part of a cumulative programme, combining with other methods, including conceptual and theoretical development, to discover not 'what works', but 'why things work'".

RCT has become almost like a movement, encouraging many young economists (sometimes called "randomistas") to visit rural areas and observe the lives of the poor. It may not have had any credible and long lasting impact on the lives of researchers and the population studied, but the fact that so many young economists are immersing themselves in the lives of the poor and trying to understand poverty is itself an achievement. More so at a time when economics has often been criticised for being far removed from reality.

The other achievement, although not

necessarily for the better, has been the attempt to give scientific colour to the discipline of economics through the use of evidence generated from these experiments. It certainly has convinced many governments to use facts and evidence in policy prescriptions and induced a degree of caution while introducing new interventions. Even in India, there is evidence of RCTs contributing to improvements in financial management and flow of funds for various government programmes including in the field of education.

While it would have been good if RCTs could predict the effects of demonetisation on the lives of the poor, it is also a reality that most such decisions are not contingent on evidence based on hard facts but on the whims and fancies of the government of the day. Despite the tentative nature of much of this evidence, there is no denying that policy interventions do require better facts and evidence for efficient outcomes. This is true not only for evidence generated by RCTs, but also data generated by our statistical systems including the National Sample

Incidentally, both Kremer and Banerjee did their PhD work at Harvard University. Banerjee had completed his MA in economics from the Centre for Economic Studies and Planning (CESP), JNU, before proceeding to Harvard for doctoral studies. Banerjee supervised Duflo's doctoral work at MIT. While both Banerjee and Duflo remain engaged with research in India, Kremer was one of the first to use these experimental methods and look at micro-interventions to examine their impact on poverty. The Nobel recognition will hopefully encourage more rigorous work on some of the long-standing problems of development economics, including on poverty and social mobility. Hopefully, it will spur our own government to take data and evidence more seriously.

The writer teaches economics at JNU

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Nobel Prize winners this year won the

Infosys Prize even earlier — Abhijit Banerjee

Congratulations to all three of them. All

outstanding piece of research.

TIME FOR INDIA TO CELEBRATE

It is important to use Nobel to harness the best of science, reasoning to policymaking

KAUSHIK BASU

LAST NIGHT OUR son, Karna, his wife and grandson dropped in for dinner. While chatting, conversation drifted to the Economics Nobel Prize this year, and we did some guessing and gossiping about who might get it. Karna predicted it would go to Abhijit Banerjee, Esther Duflo and Michael Kremer. We all agreed that would be a fantastic choice. The only question was, they are so young (58 years, 46 years and 54 years, respectively), would this happen this year would we have to wait for a few more years.

It is so rare to get the Nobel prediction right that when I got woken up this morning by journalists calling to get my reaction and learned that the prize has just been announced and it has gone to exactly the three names we talked about the previous evening, I was thrilled.

This is a richly-deserved award. The prize has been given for their work on randomised control trials used in the broad area of poverty eradication and policies for better health and education. Research done by Abhijit, Esther and Michael has transformed the way development economics is practised nowadays, not just in United States, where they are based, and India and France, where Abhijit and Esther are from, but the world over. The Poverty Action Lab that they founded is active all over the world, from Asia and Africa to Latin America.

Let me give you a sample of some of their work which I have used elsewhere. It had long been suspected that there is a connection between the better provision of local

This is a richly-deserved award. The prize has been given for their work on randomised control trials used in the broad area of poverty eradication and policies for better health and education. Research done by Abhijit, Esther and Michael has transformed the way development economics is practised nowadays, not just in the United States, where they are based, and India and France, where Abhijit and Esther are from, but the world over.

public goods and the local government having women leaders. But we had no idea which way the causality runs. Is it that more progressive villages elect women, or that women leaders are more effective as policymakers and facilitate the better provision of public goods? Esther Duflo, along with Raghav Chattopadhyay, did an outstanding study of India's decision to reserve some of the leadership of local governments — village panchayats — for women. Since the choice of which seats are to be reserved for women is done by lottery in India, since 1993, following a constitutional amendment, this turned out to be a perfect setting for studying how the election of women leaders could affect economic well-being in the locality. By studying a massive data set from West Bengal and Rajasthan, they proved that the provision of local public goods, like water supply, improves in statistically significant ways in villages where women are elected

Likewise, Michael Kremer's research, done with Ted Miguel, on what de-worming in schools in Kenya could do for child health and absenteeism of school students was quite remarkable. By doing a massive randomised controlled study, they showed that benefits of deworming could be staggering, way beyond the costs of such an intervention. There are many similar and important findings recorded in the book by Abhijit Banerjee and Esther Duflo, Poor Economics: A Radical Rethinking of the Way to Fight Global Poverty. It should be mentioned here that quite

and Esther Duflo. With Abhijit having studied at Kolkata's South Point School, Presidency College and then at JNU in Delhi, India should be proud of his achievement and remind itself of the importance of science and scientific thinking With the slowdown in India's economic

growth it is important for us to use this prize not just for celebration but to harness the best of science and careful reasoning to policymaking.

The writer is C Marks Professor at Cornell University and former chief economist and senior vice president, World Bank

INDIAN EXPRESS

OCTOBER 15, 1979, FORTY YEARS AGO

MILL STRIKE OFF WORKERS OF THE Ayodhya Textile Mill decided to call off their 110-day-old strike from the morning of October 15 following an agreement with the owner of the mill, the National Textile Corporation. Out of 24,000 striking workers of five textile mills in the national capital, about 3,100 belong to the Ayodhya mill. The remaining workers are employed in three mills of the DCM group and one mill of the Birlas. The action committee of the textile unions, which has been leading the agitation, said that the indefinite strike will continue in all the four mills till the managements accept its demands.

CASTEISM CHARGES PRIME MINISTER CHARAN Singh denied casteism charges levelled against him by Congress (I) and Janata leaders and said they themselves were perpetuating the division of society on the basis of birth. How could they accuse him of casteism when they preached a system which could not be got rid of except by change of religion, Singh asked while inaugurating the election campaign of the Lok Dal in Kaithal, Haryana. The PM offered to retire from politics if Indira Gandhi and the Janata Party leader, Atal Bihari Vajpayee, accepted his thesis that only those would be allowed to enter government service who married outside their "biradari".

THE MINISTER OF State at the London home office, Timothy Raison, is visiting India, Bangladesh and Pakistan, this week to study how best he can control the inflow into Britain of those who claim that they have a

STOP IMMIGRANTS

right to come and stay here permanently as British citizens. Last week, at the Conservative Party annual convention at Blackpool, immigration became an emotive issue — the rightwingers vehemently demanded immediate stoppage of immigrants especially South Asians, into Britain. They demanded that the "small" island of Britain be not overwhelmed by immigrants and that jobs be available to "our own people" only.

5 THE IDEAS PAGE

WHAT THE OTHERS SAY

"Chinese society is full of goodwill to India and hopes to see India achieve peaceful development. They should expand their friendly collaboration." -GLOBAL TIMES, CHINA

Turning away from Mahatma

Those who denigrate his legacy today must answer: Is it possible to imagine India without Gandhi?



ADOOR GOPALAKRISHNAN

THIS YEAR, ON January 30 — the day commemorating Mahatma Gandhi's assassination — a group of people led by a woman stood before a large cut-out of Gandhiji. The woman was wielding an air pistol which she aimed at the image and shot at point-blank range — reminiscent of the original assassination by Nathuram Vinayak Godse. Then, each one in the group followed suit. This was followed by an announcement that the performance would be an annual event.

Watching the unbelievable video clip of this event, that was making the rounds all over the country, my heart broke. My naive mind started imagining that the culprits would be caught red-handed and put in jail for the extreme act of disrespect and defilement to the Father of the Nation.

Some of us in Thiruvananthapuram got together in front of the government secretariat later and held a meeting to seek pardon from Bapuji for our compatriots' vandalistic expression of ingratitude and desecration, graphically caught on camera, and, circulated for everyone's consumption.

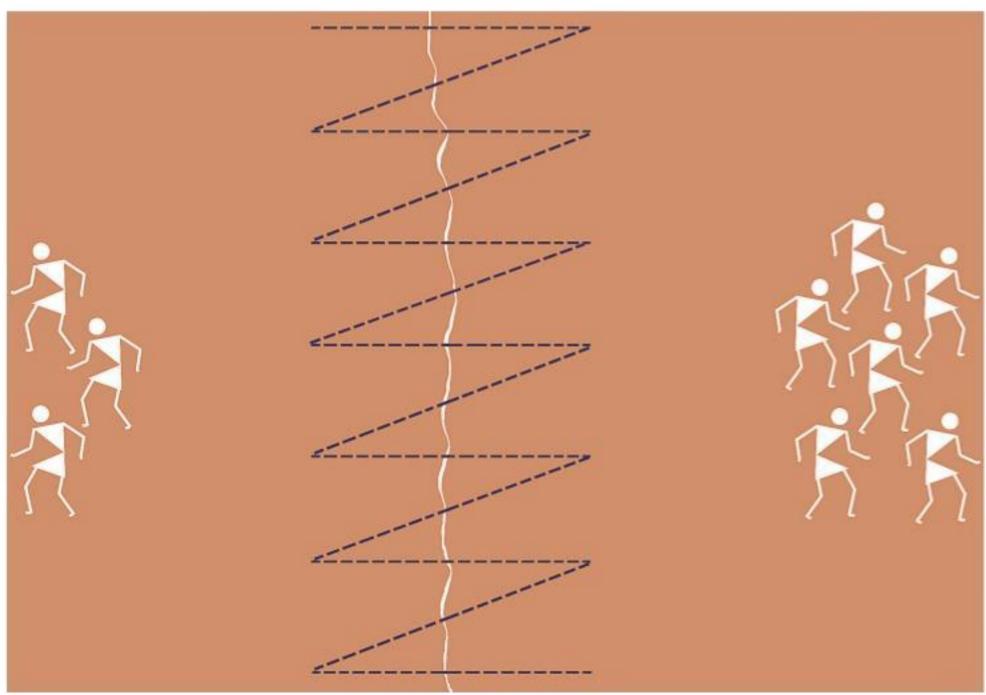
Sadly, we were very wrong to believe that people who share such radical beliefs might recognise the error of their ways: Another woman with similar radical beliefs was elected to the Lok Sabha with an astounding

No one would have imagined that Gandhiji could, one day, become an object of malice and hatred in a country that he fought and died for: This has to be seen against the 150th birth anniversary of Gandhi being commemorated across the world with installation of his statues in city squares and streets being named after him.

Is our memory so short? Is it possible for us to think about an India without Gandhiji's spiritual guidance? The Indian independence movement he spearheaded and fought for had no precedent in history. It assumed especially epic proportions as it was fought with the weapons of non-violence and noncooperation against a mighty empire like the British Raj. Gandhiji could garner the support and involvement of every proud, thinking Indian in his struggle. Freedom from colonisation was the birthright of each and every citizen of India, he had declared.

He lived a life of such absolute austerity and honesty, that anyone who watched could only learn and be inspired. Gandhiji used to say that his life is his message — and there was no duality about what he professed and practised. His autobiography, My Experiments with Truth, is a testament to how an introverted person overcame inhibitions and how honesty and adherence to personal values moulded him into an individual unafraid to fight for causes — whether for a community or for his country.

Animosity and hatred had no place in his mind. In every difficult confrontation with the British, and even when caught in the midst of religious fanatics with a propensity towards violence, he would resort to satyagraha to cleanse his conscience of any un-



GANDHI

TODAY

AN EXPRESS IDEAS SERIES

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C R Sasikumar

truth and anger.

A devout Hindu, he always believed in cordial co-existence with other religions. He used to assert that he was a Hindu, Muslim and Christian all at once. He took lessons from Christianity and Islam and also from faiths closer home like Sikhism, Jainism and Buddhism. He never saw these religions as inimical to his pursuit of sanatana dharma. He was the essential Indian.

Gandhiji's favourite Hindu god was Ram, but I think he was also highly influenced by Lord Krishna, who was an adept statesman and had great tact in solving complex worldly problems: Gandhiji's personality was a unique combination of both these puranic purushas. Otherwise, he could not have negotiated so effectively with the British for so long till we achieved freedom. One need only study the stance Gandhiji took regarding the participation of Indians in World War I. The British did not keep their promise that once the War was over, India's claim for independence would be considered. Undeterred, he went on to ensure an overwhelming Indian participation in World War II as a tactical means of bargain. This time, after the War was over, the British had to relent and active parleys started.

It should be remembered that the prefix of "Mahatma" was bestowed on him by no less a personality than Rabindranath Tagore. On his visit to Santiniketan, when Gandhiji addressed Tagore as Gurudev, Tagore in turn addressed him as Mahatma. Gandhiji became Mahatma thereafter for the whole country and the rest of the

The Indian National Congress and Gandhiji, along with his close associates — Jawaharlal Nehru, Vallabhbhai Patel, B R Ambedkar, Abul Kalam Azad, Subhas Chandra Bose and a host of other leaders instilled into every Indian the thirst for freedom and the willingness to sacrifice. The strongest-willed and, occasionally, even stubborn among them, was Gandhiji. But he was also the most soft-spoken and un-

derstanding. He spoke in Gujarati, Hindi and English depending on the region where he was speaking. His language was simple and direct, and its appeal always deep and clear.

Gandhiji's life and teachings attracted many admirers — world leaders such as Nelson Mandela and Martin Luther King Jr, among many others. Without winning a Nobel, he became the apostle of peace and harmony among people of various faiths and pursuits.

Gandhiji firmly believed that in independent India, democracy should be practised from the grass roots. Gram panchayats were his dream. Men and women who represented the voters, he believed, should be leaders of immaculate character and should serve the people with devotion and selfless-

Self-reliance was the great mantra he wanted every Indian to practise. For instance, he could make yarn from cotton on a charkha and the yarn could go in for weaving after that for making regular clothes. Every village should become self-sufficient in producing food, clothing and shelter using materials available in its locality, he believed. He asserted that Nature can give what we need, but it cannot feed our greed.

It seemed as if he had a simple solution to every complex problem. While he always preferred our hands to be engaged in producing things, he was never averse to mechanisation that eased and assisted human labour. When the stitching machine was introduced by Singer company, he duly termed it "the most useful machine man has invented".

The great humanistic philosophy of Mahatma Gandhi is forever. Becoming blind to his contributions does not augur well for humanity and India, in particular. The legacy of this great son of India is for us to celebrate and feel proud of, not denigrate.

The writer, a filmmaker, studied at Gandhigram Rural Institute, Tamil Nadu

Xi's security diplomacy

India needs to pay close attention to deepening of Nepal-China cooperation



PRESIDENT XI Jinping's brief but significant visit to Kathamandu was defined by the determination to accelerate the development of an ambitious trans-Himalayan corridor between China's Tibet and Nepal. While Delhi will debate the issues generated by China Nepal Economic Corridor for some time to come, it also needs to pay attention to an equally important dimension of China-Nepal relationship — the deepening of bilateral security cooperation. We are not referring to military and defence exchanges but to the expanding engagement between the police forces, intelligence agencies, border management organisations and law-enforcement authorities of the two nations. China's interest in "security diplomacy" as separate from "defence diplomacy" is not limited to Nepal.

Security diplomacy has emerged as a major element of China's international relations in all geographies. The globalisation and digitalisation of the Chinese economy, the growing movement of people across Chinese borders and expanding capital and human assets beyond borders have made law enforcement cooperation with the rest of the world a major priority for China. The range of issues involved in security diplomacy include tracking down fugitives from Beijing's anti-corruption campaign, criminals seeking safe haven in other countries, countering terrorism, preventing drug trafficking, assisting Chinese citizens and tourists abroad, and reining in political dissidents active in other countries. In the case of neighbours, security diplomacy takes on an added dimension, given the dynamic interaction between internal political stability and the situation across the frontiers.

The importance China attaches to security diplomacy is reflected in the fact that four of the 20 documents signed in Kathmandu relate to law enforcement. These agreements touched on border management, supply of border security equipment, mutual legal assistance, and collaboration between Nepal's Attorney General and China's "Supreme People's Procurator" (or the prosecutor general).

Xi's emphasis on internal security was evident in his remarks to Prime Minister KP Sharma Oli: "Anyone attempting to split China in any part of the country will end in crushed bodies and shattered bones," Xi said, according to official Chinese media. He also warned other countries against interfering in the internal affairs of China. The context of the remarks is easy to see. The protests in Hong Kong that have taken a violent turn in recent days are testing Beijing's patience. The Chinese Communist Party is angry with attempts in the US to link trade negotiations with the situation in Hong Kong. But there might be a more specific reason, Tibet, for Xi to choose Kathmandu for making the harsh remarks.

Nepal's northern border with China is entirely with Tibet, and Beijing sees security cooperation with Kathmandu as critical in controlling the movement of people across

this frontier. Nepal, which was once hospitable to Tibetan refugees fleeing China now extends full support to Beijing's law enforcement agencies in tracking and deporting them. Nepal's security cooperation has become intense ever since trouble broke out in Tibet in the early years of this century.

Growing bonhomie between China and Nepal's political leaders has provided a more permissive environment for this cooperation on Tibet. In recent years, Chinese security agencies have apparently gained effective access to border areas on the Nepali side in dealing with Tibetan exiles and have every reason to be pleased with Kathmandu's sup-As the joint statement issued after Xi's

talks in Kathmandu put it, the two sides agreed to "respect and accommodate each other's concerns and core interests". Nepal "reiterated its firm commitment to One-China policy" and acknowledged that Tibetan matters "are China's internal affairs". Kathmandu also promised not to allow "any anti-China activities on its soil". China, in turn, declared, its firm support to Nepal in upholding the country's independence, sovereignty and territorial integrity, and its firm support and respect to Nepal's social system and development path, independently chosen in the light of Nepal's national conditions. The statement also signalled satisfaction at the signing of the "Treaty on Mutual Legal Assistance in Criminal Matters and expressed hope for an early conclusion of the Treaty on Extradition." China, in turn, has promised to enhance the capacities of Nepal's law enforcement agencies.

Strengthening internal security in China's far flung provinces with significant religious and ethnic minorities has always been a major political priority for the People's Republic of China in dealing with its neighbouring countries. Trouble within or across the borders of Xinjiang, Tibet and Yunnan has meant greater cooperation with the neighbouring states. In the case of Xinjiang, the focus is on the three Central Asian states (Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan) as well as Pakistan and Afghanistan that share a border with the province. Securing the Tibetan frontier has been an integral part of China's difficult political engagement with India and an increasingly productive cooperation with Nepal. Collaboration with Myanmar is central to China's security management of the Yunnan province.

Massive modernisation of its internal administrative structures, significant investments in new technologies, and an effective integration of law enforcement into China's foreign policy have transformed China's pursuit of security diplomacy. It is by no means limited to neighbours and is now spread across all geographies — from developed countries in North America and Europe to the developing world in Asia and Africa. China is also participating in the development of new international rules on law enforcement, shaping the discourse on issues at hand, and seeking leadership positions in multilateral organisations dealing with law enforcement. Like the other great powers that preceded it, China sees security diplomacy and law enforcement cooperation as important tools of statecraft.

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

Babasaheb's warning

country.

In politics, hero-worship is a path to degradation and eventual dictatorship



BHIMRAO RAMJI Ambedkar, affectionately known as Babasaheb Ambedkar, was the main architect of our Constitution. The task of framing free India's Constitution was formidable. The first meeting of the Constituent Assembly for this purpose was held on December 6, 1946. Ambedkar was elected on August 29, 1947 as the chairman of the drafting committee. He was insistent that the guarantees of fundamental rights be expressly incorporated in the Constitution and that remedies for their enforcement be easily accessible and expeditious. With that in view, draft Article 25, corresponding to the current Article 32 was incorporated. According to Ambedkar, "If I was asked to name any particular article in this Constitution as the most important — an article without which this Constitution would be a nullity — I could not refer to any other article except this one. It is the very soul of the Constitution and the very heart of it".

Ambedkar's prescription for the successful working of the Constitution was that there must be no glaring inequalities and that there must be neither an oppressed class nor a suppressed class. He believed that unless the moral values of a Constitution are upheld, grandiloquent words will not protect the freedom and democratic values of people. He attached great importance to constitutional morality in the working of the Constitution which meant "a paramount reverence for the forms of the Constitution, enforcing obedience to authority acting under and within these forms, yet combined with the habit of open speech, of action subject only to definite legal control, and unrestrained censure of those very authorities as to all their public acts". According to Ambedkar, constitutional morality is "not a natural sentiment. It had to be cultivated. We must realise that our people have yet to

On the concluding day of the Constituent Assembly, November 26, 1949, Ambedkar expressed his misgivings about the successful functioning of democracy in our country in these memorable words: "A thought comes to my mind: What would happen to her democratic constitution? Will she be able to maintain it or will she lose it again? When there was no way left for constitutional methods for achieving economic and social objectives, there was a great deal of justification for unconstitutional methods. But where constitutional methods are open, there can be no justification for these unconstitutional methods. These methods are nothing but the grammar of anarchy and the sooner they are abandoned, the better for us". The grammar of anarchy is still prevalent and Ambedkar's hope that it would be abandoned has not fructified.

Hero worship is endemic in our country and personality cult flourishes. There is nothing wrong in admiring our leaders as heroes, but the risk is that in the process, the tendency is to entrust such persons with vast powers and uncritically accept the exercise of these powers, without insisting on accountability, which is a sine qua non of any genuine democracy.

Ambedkar was aware of these lurking dangers. He underlined the importance of observing caution which John Stuart Mill had uttered to all who are interested in the maintenance of democracy, namely, not "to lay their liberties at the feet of even a great man, or to trust him with powers which enable him to subvert their institutions". There is nothing wrong in being grateful to great men who have rendered life-long service to the country. But there are limits to gratefulness.

Ambedkar emphasised that this caution is far more necessary in the case of India. For in India, bhakti, or what may be called the path of devotion or hero-worship, plays a part in politics, unequalled in magnitude by the part it plays in the politics of any other country. Bhakti, in religion, may be a road to the salvation of the soul. But in politics, Bhakti or hero-worship, is a sure road to degradation and to eventual dictatorship.

On the last day of the Constituent Assembly, Ambedkar pointed out the perils of a "life of contradictions" in these memorable words: "On January 26, 1950, we are going to enter into a life of contradictions. In politics, we will have equality and in social and economic life we will have inequality. In politics we will be recognising the principle of one-man one-vote and one-vote one-value. In our social and economic life,

we shall by reason of our social and economic structure, continue to deny the principle of one-man one-value. How long shall we continue to deny equality in our social and economic life? If we continue to deny it for long, we will do so only by putting our political democracy in peril. We must remove this contradiction at the earliest possible moment else those who suffer from inequality will blow up the structure of political democracy which this Assembly has so laboriously built up".

The anguished questions posed by Ambedkar continue to haunt us. Equality and banishment of discrimination, the abolition of untouchability and the inhuman practices associated with it were uppermost in Ambedkar's mind. How could it be otherwise? He knew and had suffered the hurt and humiliation of being an untouchable and was painfully conscious of the sufferings of those who were outcastes on account of their "untouchability". Social justice, which is the signature tune of our Constitution, still eludes us. Political leaders, so-called intellectuals, eminent journalists do not observe constitutional morality. But, the struggle for social justice must continue with determination. Its achievement will be the best tribute we can pay to one of the greatest sons of India, Babasaheb Bhimrao Ambedkar.

> The writer is former Attorney General for India

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

IDENTITY AND PROOF

THIS REFERS TO the article, 'Where do I belong?' (IE, October 14). I tried for six years to open a bank account for my domestic help, a young man of 30. Somehow the system operates like a game of snakes and ladders. When you are sure you have nearly made it, you fall down and start again. I have won the game finally and Anil, my domestic help inspite of a meager Rs 14,000 in his account, feels like a crorepati. I think his journey to find a legal identity is about

to end. Hopefully. Abhimanyu K, New Delhi

NOT ON BOARD

THIS REFERS TO the editorial, 'In his company' (IE, October 14). It is not shocking to learn about findings of the CS Gender 3000 Report. Barring a few big names such as Kiran Mazumdar Shaw, Anu Aga, Renuka Ramnath and Kalpana Morparia there are hardly any women on boards or in the top management team in Indian companies. Indian women have broken glass ceilingsWe surely can take a leaf out of Sweden, Italy, France or Norway. Bal Govind. Noida

TIME FOR RESEARCH THIS REFERS TO the article, 'Time to TOP up' (IE, October 14). Increase in food pro-

WEEK AWARD

To encourage quality reader

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

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mention their postal

address and phone number.

cessing capacities and value addition in the tomato, onion and potato has been advanced as the most promising solution to high price fluctuations. But the food processing industry has quality requirements that require farmers to adhere to certain standards. Agricultural policy need to address such issues.

Sudip Kumar Dey, Kolkata

ess.com

be extended if they showed good results) in-

stead of having fewer students per "perma-

nent" teacher, in order to reduce the burden on teachers and incentivise them to teach.

The "new, powerful tool" employed by

the Laureates is the use of Randomised

Control Trials (or RCTs). So if one wanted to

understand whether providing a mobile vac-

cination van and/or a sack of grains would

incentivise villagers to vaccinate their kids,

then under an RCT, village households would

bile vaccination van facility, Group B would

be given a sack of foodgrains, Group C would

get both, and Group D would get neither.

Households would be chosen at random to

ensure there was no bias, and that any dif-

ference in vaccination levels was essentially

while others are called "treatment" groups.

Such an experiment would not only show

whether a policy initiative works, but would

The use of RCTs as the provider of "hard"

and incontrovertible evidence has been

questioned by many leading economists –

none more so than Angus Deaton, the win-

ner of the Economics Nobel in 2015, who said

"randomisation does not equalise two

groups", and warned against over-reliance

households makes it likely that the groups

are equivalent, randomisation "cannot guar-

antee" it. That's because one group may per-

form differently from the other, not because

of the "treatment" that it has been given, but

because it has more women or more edu-

While randomly assigning people or

Group D is called the "control" group

Group A would be provided with a mo-

be divided into four groups.

because of the "intervention".

Is there a flip side to RCTs?

on RCTs to frame policies.

cated people in it.

And what is their "new experiment-

based" approach?

#ExpressExplained

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

TELLING NUMBERS

After a clean spell, how Delhi's air is getting worse now

SHIVAM PATEL

NEW DELHI, OCTOBER 14

AS DIWALI and winter approach, the air quality in Delhi has started to deteriorate. The average air quality index (AQI) moved into the 'Poor' zone on Thursday (October 10), and worsened progressively every day until Sunday before improving marginally on Monday. The situation is not expected to get better this week.

The reason for the worsening of the air was the accumulation of pollutants after the burning of Ravan effigies on Dussehra on Tuesday, and a change in the wind direction, which brought in pollutants from Punjab and Haryana in the north-west, where the seasonal burning of crop residue is under way.

It ended a happy spell of three months, during which the air quality in the city oscillated between 'Satisfactory' and 'Moderate'. In September, the highest AQI recorded was 173, which is considered 'Moderate'; the lowest was 60, which is 'Satisfactory'. The average AQI for the whole month was 98, in the 'Satisfactory' range — this is the lowest AQI the capital has had in the month of September since 2015.

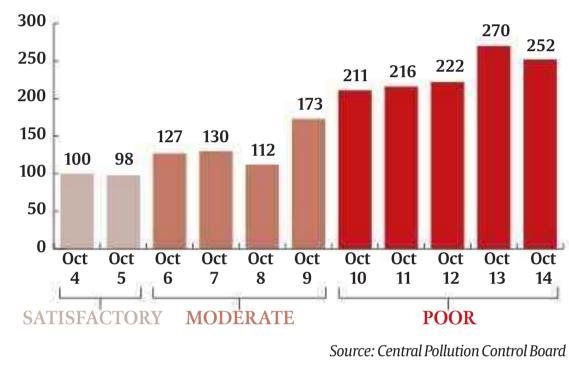


The seasonal burning of farm stubble is currently under way in Punjab and Haryana, impacting air quality in Delhi. Express Archive

The contribution from stubble burning to Delhi's air in the form of particulate matter of 2.5 micrometres (PM2.5) started around Friday, and has increased since. Its share in the overall pollution increased from 1% on Friday to 8% on Monday.

The capital's AQI is forecast to touch the higher end of the 'Poor' category on Tuesday at 297 — just four points less than the 'Very poor' air quality band. Further deterioration could start from the fourth week of October, with the burning of firecrackers around Diwali contributing to the bad air.

AQI IN DELHI, LAST 10 DAYS



TIP FOR READING LIST

FOR THE LOVE OF TEA

HENRIETTA LOVELL, the author of *Infused: Adventures in* Tea, is the founder of Londonbased Rare Tea Company, a boutique tea business that sells a small, exclusive range of teas that it sources directly from tea gardens across the world. As the title of Lovell's book and its review in *The New York Times* suggests, she hates tea bags a dislike that she announces in

her Twitter bio: "Always loose, never

In the preface of *Infused*, Lovell pitches it directly: "This is the story of my adventures in tea. I hope to seduce you, a little,

into a love of loose leaves. It's a highly personal, partisan account rather than an objective treatise on tea in general. It's my story of tea, not the story of tea. I want to tell you about the really good stuff that fuels me, and the places it takes me. There is so much I long to share, you could think of this book as an unburdening of my loves."

The many short chapters in the 256-page book are named after important places in the author's journey. There are Meghalaya and Sikkim in that list, and also Sri Lanka and Nepal — but neither Darjeeling nor Assam.

SIMPLY PUT QUESTION & ANSWER

Breaking down Laureates' work

What is the argument of Abhijit Banerjee and Esther Duflo for moving away from the 'big questions' on poverty? What is the winners' new 'experiment-based approach' that the prize has recognised?

UDIT MISRA

NEW DELHI, OCTOBER 14

THE 2019 Sveriges Riksbank Prize in **Economic Sciences in Memory of Alfred** Nobel has been awarded jointly to Abhijit Banerjee, Esther Duflo and Michael Kremer "for their experimental approach to alleviating global poverty". The award carries a purse of 9 million Swedish krona (about Rs 6.5 crore) to be shared among the three winners.

When asked what she would do with the "considerable" prize money given that most of her work is on alleviating poverty, Duflo recalled Marie Curie, who had bought a gram of radium with the prize money from her first Nobel (in Physics in 1903): "We will discuss and decide what our 'gram of radium' is."

Like Curie, who won the 1903 Nobel with her husband Pierre, Duflo is married to Banerjee, with whom she shares the honour in part. They have been collaborating for long, and in 2011 wrote the book *Poor Economics*: Rethinking Poverty & The Ways to End it together. The couple are at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology; Kremer is at Harvard University.

Why have Banerjee, Duflo, and Kremer won the Nobel Prize?

"The research conducted by this year's Laureates has considerably improved our ability to fight global poverty," the Nobel citation says. "Their new experiment-based approach has transformed development economics."

In Poor Economics, Banerjee and Duflo bemoaned how the debates on poverty "tend to be fixated on the 'big questions': What is the ultimate cause of poverty? How much faith should we place in free markets? Is democracy good for the poor? Does foreign aid have a role to play? And so on".

Banerjee, Duflo and Kremer, who have been working together since the mid 1990s, are different in that they do not get stuck with the "big questions". Instead, they break down a problem, study its different aspects, conduct various experiments and, based on such "evidence", decide what needs to be done.

Thus, instead of looking for the silver bullet to prop up the 700 million people globally who still live in extreme poverty, they look at the various dimensions of poverty — poor health, inadequate education, etc. They then drill down further on



Nobel Laureates Abhijit Banerjee and Esther Duflo at The Indian Express office in New Delhi on January 15, 2015. Ravi Kanojia/Express Archive

While the 2019 Nobel

honours Randomised

Control Trials as a new

and powerful tool, the

2015 Laureate Angus

Deaton had warned

each of these components. Within poor health, for instance, they look at nutrition, provisioning of medicines, and vaccination, etc. Within vaccinations, they try to ascertain "what works" and "why".

As Duflo said immediately after the announcement: "People have reduced the poor to caricatures without un-

derstanding the roots of their problems. (We decided) let's try to unpack the problem and analyse each component scientifically and rigorously."

How does this approach work in practice? "The lack of a grand uni-

versal answer might sound vaguely disappointing, but in fact it is exactly what a policy maker should want

to know — not that there are a million ways that the poor are trapped but that there are a few key factors that create the trap, and that alleviating those particular problems could set them free and point them toward a virtuous cycle of increasing wealth and investment," Banerjee and Duflo said in *Poor* Economics.

Breaking down the poverty problem and focussing on the smaller issues such as "how best to fix diarrhea or dengue" yielded some very surprising results.

poor countries (like India) do not have the resources to adequately provide education,

> the primary problem. that neither providing more

biggest problem is that teaching is not sufficiently adapted to the pupils' needs. In other words, providing

education in the short to medium term. Similarly, on tackling teacher absenteeism, what worked better was to employ

them on short-term contracts (which could

also provide a measure of the difference it brings about. It would also show what happens when more than one initiatives are combined. This

For instance, it is often believed that many would help policymakers to have the evidence before they choose a policy.

> and that this resource crunch is the reason why school-going children do not learn more. But their field experiments showed that lack of resources is not In fact, studies showed

textbooks nor free school

meals improved learning

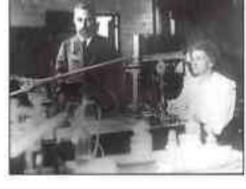
against over-reliance outcomes. Instead, as was on it. A debate brews. brought out in schools in Mumbai and Vadodara, the

teaching assistants to the weakest students was a far more effective way of improving

More fundamentally, RCTs do not guarantee if something that worked in Kerala will work in Bihar, or if something that worked for a small group will also work at scale.

This Nobel, albeit indirectly, for RCTs will likely stoke this debate again.

OTHER MARRIED LAUREATE COUPLES



Marie & Pierre Curie Nobel Prize in Physics, 1903

IN 1895, the year Marie and Pierre married, Henri Becquerel discovered that minerals containing uranium emitted a strong radiation. In 1898, Marie and Pierre Curie discovered two new elements polonium and radium. In 1903, Becquerel won the Nobel for his discovery of spontaneous radioactivity, along with the Curies for their supporting researches on the

radiation phenomena.



Nobel Prize in Chemistry, 1935

IRÈNE, DAUGHTER of Marie

Irène Joliot-Curie & Frédéric Joliot

and Pierre Curie, and Joliot married in 1926, when they were working at the Curies' Radium Institute. The couple researched both individually and together, in particular on the projection of nuclei, which was an essential step in the discovery of neutron and positron. They were awarded the Nobel for discovering artificial radioactivity.



Gerty & Carl Cori Nobel Prize in Physiology or Medicine, 1947

GERTY AND Carl Cori went through medical school together, graduated, married, and emigrated from Vienna to Buffalo as anti-Semitism rose in Europe. In the US, they collaborated in most of their research on how hormones and enzymes cooperate. After 30 years of team work, they were awarded the Medicine Prize for research on glycogen and glucose metabolism.



Gunnar Myrdal Prize in Economic Sciences, 1974

Alva Myrdal

Nobel Peace Prize, 1982

THE MYRDALS, social scientists, are the only wife/husband team to win two awards in different disciplines. Gunnar and Friedrich August von Hayek won for their analysis of interrelations between economic, social and political processes. Alva was recognised for her work countering nuclear proliferation.



May-Britt & Edvard Moser Nobel Prize in Physiology or Medicine, 2014

MAY-BRITT and her then husband Edvard were awarded the Medicine Prize for their discovery of our "inner GPS". In a podcast, Edvard Moser talked about their long collaboration and the importance of their different personalities. In 2016, the Mosers announced they were divorcing. They shared the Nobel Prize with John O'Keefe. Source: nobelprize.org

Bench strength, validity of law: Why land acquisition matter is back in SC

APURVA VISHWANATH NEW DELHI, OCTOBER 14

ON TUESDAY, a five-judge Constitution Bench of the Supreme Court will begin hearing a case to clarify the interpretation of the law on land acquisition, specifically the provision related to compensation awarded to land owners. Two three-judge Bench rulings delivered by the apex court in 2014 and 2018 on the same issue differed in their interpretations, prompting the court to refer the matter to a larger Bench.

The scheduled hearing will decide the legality of several cases of land acquisition that took place across the country before 2009. The matter also raises significant questions on judicial discipline, and how judgments of the court are applied while deciding subsequent cases on similar issues.

What is the provision of the law in question?

The issue involves Section 24(2) of the Right to Fair Compensation and Transparency in Land Acquisition, Rehabilitation and

Resettlement Act. 2013, which replaced the colonial 1894 land acquisition law.

The provision says that in cases where acquisition proceedings were initiated under the 1894 law and compensation had been determined, the proceedings would lapse if the state did not take possession of the land for five years, and also had not paid compensation to the landowner.

Once the proceedings lapse under the old law, the acquisition process would be initiated again under the new law, allowing the owner to get a higher compensation.

The term "paid" needed interpretation — and since it placed the responsibility on the government, cases were filed before courts soon after the law was implemented.

What did the two conflicting judgments say?

In 2014, in the first such case involving the interpretation of the new law, a threeiudge Bench comprising Justices RM Lodha. Madan Lokur and Kurian Joseph in *Pune* Municipal Authority v Harakchand Misirimal *Solanki* said that the state depositing the compensation in its own treasury cannot be

equated with the landowners being "paid". In exceptional circumstances, where the landowner refuses the compensation, the sum can be deposited with the court, but a deposit in its own treasury would not suffice.

This ruling was followed as precedent by High Courts in several cases, and was affirmed by the apex court itself in 2016. However, in February 2018, a three-

judge Bench comprising Justices Arun Mishra, Adarsh Goel and Mohan Shantanagoudar while dealing with a similar issue, ruled in *Indore Developmental* Authority v Shailendra that in cases where the landowner had refused compensation, depositing it with the treasury was sufficient, and the state was not obligated to deposit it with the court.

The court also said that the only consequence of not depositing the compensation with the court "at the most in appropriate cases may be of a higher rate of interest on compensation", and not lapse of acquisition.

In doing so, the court also invalidated the settled law on the issue – the 2014 judgment by another three-judge Bench on the same issue — and declared it "per incuriam".

The two senior judges formed the majority in the 2018 verdict; Justice Shantanagoudar dissented.

Why was a referral to a larger Bench

Days after the 2018 verdict was pronounced, another three-judge Bench comprising Justices Lokur, Joseph (both of whom were part of the 2014 verdict that was invalidated), and Deepak Gupta noticed the inconsistency and stayed all cases relating to this provision of the land acquisition Act in High Courts across the country until the question of law was settled.

It also asked "other Benches of the Supreme Court" to not take up the issue until it was decided by a larger Bench.

Justice Joseph in oral observations made in the court strongly criticised the 2018 ruling, and said that the verdict had deviated from "virgin principles" of the institution in declaring a verdict of equal Bench strength as per incuriam.

Subsequently, separate Benches headed by Justices Goel and Mishra referred the case to then Chief Justice of India Dipak Misra requesting him to set up a larger Bench.

What is the problem with an ruling being invalidated?

The controversy stemmed from not only the fact that the 2014 ruling was declared per incuriam, but also because it was done so by a Bench of equal strength. In common law, a judicial system that is followed in India, a judgment of the court is used as the basis or precedent for determining future cases.

A ruling of the Supreme Court is binding on all High Courts, and a ruling of the Supreme Court by Benches of larger or equal strength is binding on other Benches of the court.

A three-judge Bench cannot hold a decision by another three-judge Bench to be per incuriam, but can only ask for consideration by a larger Bench if it disagrees with the precedent.

Similarly, a Bench cannot ask other Benches to not follow a judgment.

Since the Supreme Court sits in Benches of two or three (unlike in the US where all justices of the Supreme Court sit together for hearing every case), the prac-

tice of following precedent ensures consistency and certainty in law. Hence, larger Bench rulings are preferred to make sure that the law laid down by the court is predictable as far as possible.

And what does it mean for a case to be declared *per incuriam*?

'Incuria' is Latin for "carelessness", and when a judgment is declared per incuriam, it means that the case was wrongly decided, mostly because the judges were illinformed about the applicable law. A judgment can also be declared per incuriam if it has materially deviated from earlier precedents.

A judgment that is *per incuriam* has no legal force or validity and does not have to be counted as a precedent.

Justice Shantanagoudar in his dissent agreed with the interpretation of the law with Justices Mishra and Goel who wrote the majority opinion, but declined to declare the 2014 ruling per incuriam. He said that the ruling had considered all aspects of the law, but since it was the first decision on the provision, had taken a different view.

बिज़नेस स्टैंडर्ड वर्ष 12 अंक 205

प्रमाण आधारित नीति का सम्मान

एकेडमी ऑफ साइंस ने विकास संबंधी अर्थशास्त्र के शोधार्थियों को नोबेल पुरस्कार के लिए चुना है। सन 2015 में एंगस डीटन डफ्लो और माइकल क्रेमर को यह पुरस्कार दिया गया। हालांकि इन सभी ने गरीबी.

पांच वर्ष में दूसरी बार रॉयल स्वीडिश विषयों पर शोध किए हैं लेकिन इस वर्ष पुरस्कृत तीनों अर्थशास्त्री प्रोफेसर डीटन से एकदम अलग रुख रखते हैं। डीटन को यह पुरस्कार उस काम के लिए मिला जिसमें के बाद इस वर्ष अभिजित बनर्जी, एस्टर उन्होंने व्यापक डेटा सेट का उपयोग किया और उपयुक्त लेकिन बहसतलब अनुमान पेश किए। दूसरी ओर इस वर्ष के विजेताओं असमानता और जनकल्याण जैसे समान ने उक्त प्रश्नों को छोटे आकार में कर दिया

है जिनके बारे में सुनिश्चित होकर बात कही जा सकती है। आशा यह है कि अधिक श्रमसाध्य तरीके से अर्जित परिणाम विकासशील अर्थव्यवस्था वाले देशों को प्रमाण आधारित नीति बनाने में मदद करेंगे।

यहां भी बुनियादी रुख करीब-करीब वैसा ही है जैसा कि चिकित्सा के क्षेत्र में किए गए परीक्षण यानी बेतरतीब समृहों को जांची जा रही नीति के समक्ष उपचारार्थ पेश किया जाता है जबकि दूसरे समूह के साथ ऐसा नहीं किया जाता। दूसरे शब्दों में कहें तो इन्हें नीतिगत प्रायोगिक औषधि के रूप में इस्तेमाल किया जाता है। नीतियों का प्रयोग करने के पश्चात दोनों समृहों पर प्रभाव की तलना की जाती है। अगर प्रायोगिक समह और नियंत्रित समह के बीच

सांख्यिकीय रूप से स्पष्ट और वांछित अंतर नजर आता है तो नीतियों के प्रभाव को लेकर ठोस नतीजे निकाले जा सकते हैं। चूंकि दोनों समुहों का गठन बेतरतीब था इसलिए नतीजों में अंतर के लिए कोई अन्य कारक उत्तरदायी नहीं हो सकता। विकासात्मक अर्थशास्त्र जैसे वैचारिक और बहसतलब क्षेत्र में यह रुख अत्यंत आवश्यक है। इस क्षेत्र में तो नीतियों पर इसलिए भी हमला हो सकता है कि वह किसी खास समृह के निहित लाभ को बढ़ावा दे रही है या वास्तविक श्रेष्ठता न होने पर भी उन नीतियों को बढावा दिया जा रहा है। समय के साथ विकास अर्थशास्त्र में ऐसे परीक्षणों का दबदबा बढ रहा है। इससे प्रोफेसर डीटन जैसे व्यापक संदर्भों पर काम करने वाले

अर्थशास्त्रियों और सिद्धांतकारों का खीझना लाजिमी है।

इसका भारत जैसे देश पर निश्चित रूप से प्रभाव पड़ेगा। हाल के कुछ प्रभावशाली नीतिगत नवाचार, उदाहरण के लिए आधार से लेकर सार्वजनिक वितरण प्रणाली में सधार तक में इस तरह के अध्ययन शामिल किए गए हैं। यह नोबेल प्रस्कार भी तीनों विजेताओं के तथा इस क्षेत्र में काम कर रहे अन्य लोगों तथा संस्थानों के सहयोग के बिन मिलना संभव नहीं होता। ऐसे संस्थानों में भारत सरकार की केंद्र और राज्य स्तर की एजेंसियां भी शामिल हैं। यह देखना आसान है कि आखिर क्यों ऐसा विश्लेषण भारतीय संदर्भों में मायने रखता है। अफसरशाहों के पास क्रियान्वयन के लिए

जितना समय, ऊर्जा या संसाधन होते हैं, उससे कहीं अधिक प्रस्ताव होते हैं। जिन प्रस्तावों के साथ सफलता का सुनिश्चित प्रमाण संलग्न हो उनको प्राथमिकता मिलने की संभावना रहती है। परंतु यह भी सही है कि प्रमाण आधारित नीति निर्माण को उतना विस्तार नहीं मिला है जितना मिलना चाहिए था। वास्तव में इस रुख की एक आलोचना यह है कि सरकार इनको व्यापक तौर पर लागू करने की इच्छुक नहीं रही। खासतौर पर शिक्षा क्षेत्र में ऐसे प्रयोग से उभरे केवल एक या दो हस्तक्षेप अपनाए गए हैं। आशा की जानी चाहिए कि नोबेल परस्कार मिलने के बाद नीतिगत क्षेत्र के लोग जागेंगे और अकादिमक जगत से सामने आ रहे निष्कर्षों पर ध्यान देंगे।



कॉर्पोरेट कर कटोती और सकारात्मक प्रभाव

घटी हुई दरें तभी प्रभावी असर छोड़ सकती हैं जब उनके साथ नीतिगत सुधारों को भी अंजाम दिया जाए। ऐसा होने पर ही मध्यम अवधि में वृद्धि में सुधार देखने को मिलेगा। विस्तार से बता रहे हैं शंकर आचार्य

त 20 सितंबर को वित्त मंत्री निर्मला सीतारमण ने देश में बड़ी कंपनियों पर लगने वाले कर ढांचे में अहम सुधार की घोषणा की। कंपनी आयकर की बुनियादी दर को 30 प्रतिशत (उपकर और अधिभार सहित 35 फीसदी) से घटाकर 22 फीसदी (उपकर और अधिभार सहित 25 फीसदी) कर दिया गया। इसके अलावा 1 अक्टूबर, 2019 के बाद स्थापित होने वाली नई विनिर्माण इकाइयों के लिए 15 फीसदी (उपकर और अधिभार सहित 17 फीसदी) कर दर रखी गई। न्यूनतम वैकल्पिक कर (मैट) को उपकर और अधिभार समेत घटाकर 17 फीसदी कर दिया गया। इन घटी कर दरों का लाभ लेने के लिए कंपनियों को प्रोत्साहन और रियायत छोडने को कहा गया। शेयर बाजार सूचकांकों में उछाल आई और उद्योग जगत भी उत्साहित नजर आया। विश्लेषकों और टीकाकारों की टिप्पणी अवश्य मिलीजुली रही। वे सतर्कतापूर्वक स्वागत कर रहे थे लेकिन साथ ही राजकोषीय तनाव के दौर में कंपनियों को दी जा रही राहत को लेकर चिंतित भी थे। संतुलित विचार कायम करने के लिए उचित यही होगा कि कंपनी कर नीतियों में हुए इस बड़े बदलाव के आर्थिक प्रभाव पर चर्चा की जाए।

राजकोषीय प्रोत्साहन देती है। सरकार का अनुमान है कि इससे 1.45 लाख करोड रुपये या जीडीपी के 0.7 फीसदी के बराबर की क्षति होगी। परंतु तमाम विश्लेषकों (बिज़नेस स्टैंडर्ड में ए के भट्टाचार्य और हिंद बिजनेस लाइन में सी रंगराजन तथा डी के श्रीवास्तव) के मृताबिक यह अनुमान अतिरंजित हो सकता है। ऐसा इसलिए क्योंकि शायद इसमें उस महत्त्वपर्ण राजस्व लाभ को भी शामिल किया गया हो जो कम कर दर से लाभान्वित होने के लिए दी गई रियायतों के कारण हासिल होना हो। जबकि रियायतों को त्यागना कम कर दर के लाभ लेने के लिए आवश्यक है।

बजट अनुमान के मुताबिक 2018-19 में कॉर्पोरेट कर से जुडी रियायत और प्रोत्साहन पर 1.08 लाख करोड रुपये गए। मोटे तौर पर ऐसा अधिमूल्यन में तेजी और निर्यात संबंधी लाभ के कारण हुआ। 2019-20 में इसके अच्छे खासे हिस्से को त्यागकर घटी कर दर का लाभ लिया जा सकता है। ऐसे में कर कटौती के कारण होने वाली राजस्व हानि जीडीपी के 0.4 से 0.5 फीसदी

दुसरा, इस प्रोत्साहन के साथ अतिरिक्त सरकारी उधारी की सहायता से उच्च

पहला, कर कटौती अल्पाविध में राजकोषीय घाटे की भरपाई की जाएगी। इससे मध्यम और लंबी अवधि में ब्याज दरों में इजाफा होगा जो निवेश को नुकसान पहुंचा सकता है। इसके आधार पर घोषणा के बाद मानक प्रतिफल में बढ़ोतरी की बात को समझा जा सकता है।

> 10 वर्ष के सरकारी बॉन्ड में 20 आधार अंक की बढ़ोतरी की बात कही गई है। यानी निवेश को कुछ सकारात्मक प्रोत्साहन मिलेगा तथा बॉन्ड बाजार के किया जा सकेगा।

तीसरा, कंपनी कर में यह अहम कटौती कॉर्पोरेट निवेश पर सकारात्मक असर डाल सकती है। कर दर को 35 फीसदी से घटाकर 25 फीसदी करना कर पश्चात प्रतिफल दर को बढ़ा सकता है। परंतु कुछ और बातें हैं जिन पर ध्यान देना होगा। प्रोत्साहन और रियायत के कारण कर कटौती का असर अलग-अलग कंपनियों पर अलग-अलग होगा। हो सकता है कई कंपनियां रियायतों को ही चुनें। कई ऐसी कंपनियां जिनको कर कटौती से लाभ हो रहा है उनकी बैलेंसशीट नकदीकृत हो सकती है। ऐसे में शायद वे अल्पाविध में अपने पूंजीगत व्यय की योजनाओं में तब्दीली न करें। कर बचत के अन्य लाभार्थी इस लाभ का इस्तेमाल नकदी की तंगी दूर करने और तनावग्रस्त बैलेंस शीट में सुधार करने में करेंगे। क्रेडिट सुइस ने 30 सितंबर को प्रभाव विश्लेषण जारी किया जिसमें अनुमान जताया गया है कि अल्पावधि की कर कटौती से होने वाले लाभ का 90 फीसदी हिस्सा या तो अतिरिक्त मुनाफे के रूप में रहेगा या नकदीकरण के काम आएगा। यकीनन आगे चलकर अन्य आर्थिक और वित्तीय घटनाक्रम के चलते कॉर्पीरेट निवेश पर सकारात्मक प्रभाव पडने की भी अपेक्षा है।

नई कंपनियों के लिए कर दर को 35 फीसदी से घटाकर 17 फीसदी करने से आने वाले समय में इस क्षेत्र में घरेलू और विदेशी दोनों तरह का निवेश बढ़ना चाहिए। परंतु कर कटौती से जुटने वाले निवेश की राशि कुछ अन्य नीतिगत बातों पर भी निर्भर करेगी जिनमें भूमि और श्रम नीतियां, वित्तीय और बुनियादी ढांचा क्षेत्र की स्थिति, कारोबारी सुगमता, अन्य कर नीतियां, राजकोषीय विवेक तथा विनिमय दर प्रतिस्पर्धा आदि शामिल हैं। अगर इन मामलों में सकारात्मक कदम उठते हैं तो निवेश पर सकारात्मक असर होगा। लेकिन इसका उलटा भी हो सकता है।

चौथी बात. कर कटौती निजी निपवेश और निजी क्षेत्र की गतिविधियों के लिए स्पष्ट संकेत लिए हुए है। इसका कंपनियों की निवेश योजनाओं पर सकारात्मक असर होना चाहिए। जाहिर है इससे आर्थिक गतिविधियों पर प्रभाव पड़ेगा। बहरहाल यह सकारात्मक असर भी व्यापक नीतिगत कारकों का मोहताज होगा।

पांचवां, कुछ लोगों का कहना है कि 20 सितंबर के कदमों के बाद शेयर बाजार में आई उछाल शेयर बाजार के मूल्यांकन और इस प्रकार संपत्ति पर पर सकारात्मक असर डालेगी और इससे खपत और निवेश में व्यय बढेगा।

मैं इसे लेकर दो वजह से शंकालु हूं। पहली बात, देश में परिसंपत्ति प्रभाव का विश्वसनीय मात्रात्मक आकलन अप्राप्यता के लिए जाना जाता है। दसरा, शेयर कीमतों में इन दिनों जबरदस्त उतार-चढाव देखने को मिल रहा है। हाल ही में इसका सटीक उदाहरण देखने को मिला।

मुझे इस बात को लेकर अचरज ही है कि कर कटौती से कितना विदेशी पूंजी निवेश आएगा और किन क्षेत्रों में आएगा। मेरी चिंता यह है कि यदि गैर कारोबारी क्षेत्रों में विदेशी पूंजी निवेश आया तो क्या होगा। इससे पहले से अधिमल्यित विनिमय दर और बढ़ेगी। विनिमय दर अधिमूल्यन, आयात सब्सिडी और निर्यात पर कर का कल मिलाकर निवेश और आयात प्रतिस्पर्धा तथा औद्योगिक निर्यात वृद्धि पर नकारात्मक असर हो सकता है। इससे बचने के लिए हमें विनिमय दर का बेहतर प्रबंधन करना होगा।

यानी संक्षेप में और मध्यम अवधि में कर कटौती का निवेश और वृद्धि पर क्या असर हो सकता है ? यह कह पाना मुश्किल है। मेरी अपनी समझ कहती है कि अल्पाविध में इसका मामुली असर होगा और मध्यम अवधि में सकारात्मक प्रभाव देखने को मिलेगा। अगर सार्थक सुधार अपनाए गए तो यह सकारात्मकता कई गुना बढ़ सकती है।

थर्मोइलेक्ट्रिक जेनरेटर दूर कर सकते हैं ऊर्जा का गतिरोध

सौर ऊर्जा हरित आंदोलन के आधारस्तंभों में से एक है। जहां सौर उपकरण विनिर्माता पर्यावरण पर नकारात्मक प्रभाव डालते हैं. वहीं इसने जीवाश्म ईंधनों की जरूरत कम कर दी है। लेकिन सौर ऊर्जा की एक बड़ी खामी भी है। उसमें निरंतरता की कमी है। रात के समय पड़ने वाले गतिरोध के अलावा ध्रुवों के नजदीक ऐसे इलाके भी हैं जहां कई महीनों तक सुर्य दिखता ही नहीं है। इसका मतलब है कि वहां अन्य ऊर्जा स्रोतों की भी जरूरत है।

ऐसा ही एक वैकल्पिक ऊर्जा स्रोत 200 वर्षों से प्रचलित परिघटना का दोहन कर सकती है। यह स्रोत थर्मोडलेक्टिसिटी है यानी तापमान भिन्नता से पैदा होने वाली बिजली। कई तरह के प्रायोगिक थर्मोइलेक्ट्रिक जनरेटरों का प्रयोगशाला एवं वास्तविक हालात में परीक्षण किया जा रहा है। इटली के वैज्ञानिक अलेसांद्रो वोल्टा ने 1790 में पाया था कि ताप भिन्नता होने पर विद्युत-धारा एक सर्किट के जरिये प्रवाहित होती है। इसके उलट अगर कोई विद्युत धारा प्रवाहित हो रही है तो ताप भिन्नता की स्थिति पैदा होती है। थॉमस सीबेक और ज्यां-चार्ल्स पेटियर ने 1820 के दशक में इस धारणा को और परिष्कृत किया। लॉर्ड केल्विन ने भी 1850 के दशक में इस पर शोध कर प्रभावों को परिभाषित करने वाले अहम समीकरणों के बारे में बताया। किसी घर की भीतरी एवं बाहरी दीवारों के बीच भी प्राकृतिक रूप से ताप विभेद हो सकती है। इन प्राकृतिक ताप भिन्नताओं का चतुराई से प्रयोग कर थर्मोडलेक्टिक जनरेटरों का निर्माण किया जा सकता है। स्टैनफर्ड युनिवर्सिटी के वेई ली की अगआई वाली टीम ने यह कहा है कि उन्होंने किस तरह एक ऐसा जनरेटर बनाया जो एलईडी बल्बों को रोशन करने लायक बिजली पैदा कर लेता है। इस जनरेटर में दो एल्युमीनियम प्लेटें लगी हैं जिनमें से निचली प्लेट तत्त्वों के संपर्क में रहने के नाते आसपास की हवा के तापमान से प्रभावित होती है। वहीं ऊपरी प्लेट एक पारदर्शी आवरण में सीलबंद

होती है जिससे होकर सौर

विकिरण गुजरता है। ऊपरी प्लेट

पर परत चढाई जाती है ताकि वह

हवा के संपर्क में आकर गर्म या

ठंडी न हो जाए। रात में यह

सीलबंद प्लेट तेजी से ठंडी हो



तकनीकी तंत्र देवांग्शु दत्ता

जाती है क्योंकि यह उष्मा को इन्फ्रारेड में बिखेर देती है। इस दौरान निचली प्लेट आसपास की हवा के चलते गर्म होती रहती है।

गत दिसंबर में कैलिफोर्निया में किए गए इस उपकरण के परीक्षण के दौरान तापमान में 2 डिग्री सेल्सियस की भिन्नता पाई गई थी। इतनी भिन्नता प्रति वर्ग मीटर प्लेट में 25 मिलीवाट बिजली पैदा करने के लिए काफी है। शोध टीम का मानना है कि बेहतर डिजाइन और अधिक चतुर उपयोग से पैदा होने वाली बिजली की मात्रा बढाई जा सकती है। करीब 500 मिलीवाट प्रति वर्ग मीटर बिजली उत्पादन का लक्ष्य

रखा जा सकता है। वह बिजली भी सौर पैनलों से पैदा होने वाली बिजली से काफी कम होगी जो प्रति वर्ग मीटर इलाके में 100 वाट से भी अधिक बिजली पैदा करता है। हालांकि जगह के अभाव को कोई अवरोध न मानें तो ऐसे 'नाइट पैनल' सौर ऊर्जा से वंचित इलाकों में लगाए जा सकते हैं। यह शोधपत्र कहता है, रात में बिजली पैदा करने की क्षमता हासिल करने का मतलब यह है कि दरदराज के मौसमी स्टेशनों में रोशनी करने एवं कम खपत वाले सेंसरों जैसे कई कामों में इसका इस्तेमाल किया जा सकेगा। अगर इस डिजाइन को जमीन पर उतारा जा सकता है तो रात के समय की प्राकृतिक शीतलता का इस्तेमाल सलीके से हो सकेगा। हालांकि थर्मोइलेक्ट्रिक

जनरेटरों को क्रियाशील बनाने और उन्हें वाणिज्यिक रूप से सक्षम बनाने के लिए कई इंजीनियरिंग चुनौतियों से पार पाना है। पहला, जनरेटर में इस्तेमाल सामग्री उच्च विद्युत चालक हो और आदर्श रूप में तापीय चालकता निम्न हो। उच्च विद्युत चालकता होने से धारा का प्रवाह आसान हो जाता है जबकि निम्न

बढ़ाने पर ध्यान देना होगा।

तापीय चालकता यह सुनिश्चित करती है कि ताप विभेद बहुत जल्द सामान्य न हो जाए। ऐसी अधिकांश सामग्री बहुत महंगी होती है। फिर भी स्टैनफर्ड यनिवर्सिटी के डिजाइन में एल्युमीनियम का इस्तेमाल कर समस्या दूर करने की कोशिश की गई है। नैनो-तकनीक भी विद्युत चालकता पर डाले बगैर सामान की तापीय चालकता कम करने का किफायती रास्ता बताने का वादा करती है। थर्मोइलेक्ट्रिक जनरेटरों के कुछ खास लाभ भी हैं। उसका कोई हिस्सा चलायमान नहीं होने से रखरखाव की भी कम जरूरत है। इसके अलावा उन्हें ईंधन या लुब्रिकेंट की भी जरूरत नहीं है। वे अवशिष्ट ऊष्मा को बिजली में तब्दील कर सकते हैं जो कारों एवं कई औद्योगिक प्रक्रियाओं के लिए बड़ी बात है।

नासा एवं अन्य अंतरिक्ष एजेंसियां इनका खास तौर पर इस्तेमाल करती हैं। ये उपकरण अंतरिक्ष में भी काफी कारगर हैं जहां सीधी रोशनी और अंधेरे में रखी वस्तुओं के तापमान में बडा फर्क होता है।

थर्मोइलेक्ट्रिक जनरेटरों के लिए वैश्विक बाजार वर्ष 2015 में महज 32 करोड़ डॉलर ही था लेकिन इसके 15 फीसदी की चक्रवृद्धि दर से बढ़ने का दावा किया जा रहा है। इस वृद्धि के पीछे एक बडी वजह वाहन निर्माताओं से मांग में आई तेजी है। ऑटो कंपनियां इंजन से निकलने वाली गर्मी को बिजली में तब्दील करने के लिए इसका इस्तेमाल करने लगी हैं। शरीर में पहने जा सकने वाले उपकरण भी मददगार हो सकते हैं। यह संभव है कि शरीर की उष्मा का इस्तेमाल छोटे उपकरणों को चलाने में किया जाए। सोनी ने जेब के आकार के एयर कंडिशनर 'रेयॉन पॉकेट' को प्रदर्शित किया है। क्राउड-सोर्सिंग से तैयार इस जेबी एयर कंडिशनर को अगले साल उतारने की तैयारी है। यह 13 डिग्री सेल्सियस तक तापमान घटा और फिर 8 डिग्री तक बढा सकता है।

इंटरनेट ऑफ (आईओटी) की वजह से कम ऊर्जा वाले थर्मोइलेक्ट्रिक को रफ्तार मिल सकती है। आईओटी में अमुमन कम ऊर्जा वाले सेंसरों की जरूरत होती है और इसमें रखरखाव की भी कम जरूरत होती है। इसका भी बडा बाजार हो सकता है।

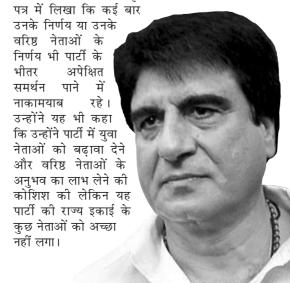
कानाफुसी

परिवार का साथ

रैनबैक्सी के पूर्व प्रवर्तकों मालविंदर मोहन सिंह और शिविंदर मोहन सिंह के बीच के झगड़े में परिवार छोटे भाई शिविंदर के पक्ष में खड़ा नजर आता है। पिछले दिनों जब आदेश की प्रति लेने के अवसर पर मेट्रोपॉलिटन मजिस्ट्रेट की अदालत के बाहर परिजनों और शिविंदर के बीच का लगाव साफ झलक रहा था। शिविंदर को पुलिसकर्मियों द्वारा ले जाए जाने के पहले आधे घंटे तक परिजनों ने उनसे खूब बातचीत की। इस अवधि में मालविंदर ज्यादातर वक्त अकेले बैठे रहे। उनके साथ केवल उनके वकील और कुछ अन्य लोग नजर आए। अभी किसी नतीजे पर पहुंचना सही नहीं होगा लेकिन ऐसा लग रहा है कि परिवार अपना मन बना चुका है कि इस लड़ाई में किसका साथ देना है। शुक्रवार को निचली अदालत ने दोनों भाइयों को दिल्ली पुलिस की आर्थिक अपराध शाखा की चार दिन की हिरासत में भेज दिया था।

राज बब्बर का खत

उत्तर प्रदेश कांग्रेस के निवर्तमान अध्यक्ष राज बब्बर ने राज्य इकाई को विदा कहते हुए पार्टी के नए अध्यक्ष विधायक अजय कुमार लल्लू को एक पत्र लिखा। बब्बर ने कहा कि अपने तीन साल के कार्यकाल के दौरान तमाम गंभीर प्रयासों के बावजूद वह अच्छे नतीजे दे पाने में कामयाब नहीं रहे। बब्बर ने पार्टी के शीर्ष नेतृत्व पर भी टिप्पणी की। उन्होंने



आपका पक्ष

सुस्ती खत्म करना नामुमकिन नहीं

आर्थिक समीक्षा 2018-19 में निवेश को देश की तरक्की के लिए सबसे महत्त्वपूर्ण बताया गया था और कोई भी इससे इनकार नहीं कर सकता है। इससे नई नौकरियां पैदा होती हैं, नई तकनीक आती है साथ ही उत्पादन क्षमता और गुणवत्ता में वृद्धि होती है। लेकिन अगर आज के हालात को देखें तो ऐसा होता दिख नहीं रहा है। हालांकि सरकार निवेशकों को लुभाने की लगातार कोशिश कर रही है। सरकार कॉरपोरेट कर में कटौती कर यह संदेश देने की कोशिश कर रही है कि वह उद्योग जगत के साथ खड़ी है। इससे उद्योग जगत में उत्साह का माहौल है। प्रधानमंत्री नरेंद्र मोदी ने अमेरिका यात्रा के दौरान निवेशकों को भारत में निवेश करने का निमंत्रण दिए। लेकिन कितना निवेश आएगा यह कहना मुश्किल है। आर्थिक सुस्ती से निजात पाने के लिए जो कदम उठाए गए हैं उनका झुकाव आपूर्ति बढ़ाने की तरफ ज्यादा है जबकि आर्थिक



सस्ती का चक्रव्यह तोड़ने के लिए : आर्थिक सुस्ती खत्म करने के मांग बढाने पर ज्यादा ध्यान देना होगा। मौद्रिक नीति में नरम रुख अपनाने से कुछ नहीं होने वाला है। सरकार को जमीनी स्तर पर ऋण की उपलब्धता की उचित और ! तो कर रहे हैं लेकिन हकीकत कुछ सार्थक प्रयास जारी रखने होंगे।ऋण मेले में ऋण लेनेवालों की भागीदारी बहुत उत्साहजनक नहीं रही। बैंक आसान शर्तों पर ऋण देने की बात 🗄 जरूरत है। ग्रामीण क्षेत्रों में मांग

लिए सरकार को मांग बढ़ाने पर अधिक ध्यान देना होगा

और ही है। जरूरतमंद व्यापारियों को आसान शर्तों पर उचित अनुपात में ऋण मिले इसपर काम करने की

प्रधानमंत्री किसान सम्मान योजना एक अच्छा प्रयास है लेकिन जमीनी स्तर पर ठीक से अमल नहीं हो पाया है। सरकार को सार्वजनिक निवेश बढ़ाना होगा। इससे ग्रामीण जनता को रोजगार मिलेगा। उनकी आमदनी बढ़ेगी और मांग में बढ़ोतरी होगी। मनरेगा, ग्रामीण सड़कों का विस्तार, लघु सिंचाई योजनाओं का विस्तार जैसी योजनाओं से नए रोजगार के अवसर पैदा होंगे। घाटे में चल रही सरकारी कंपनियों का निजीकरण करना उचित कदम हो सकता है। अगर सरकार ने बीएसएनएल को 10 साल पहले बेच दिया होता तो इसकी कीमत एक लाख करोड़ रुपये होती। आज इसे दोबारा खड़ा करने के लिए सरकार को एक लाख करोड़ रुपये के निवेश की जरूरत है।

राजीव सिंह, हैदराबाद

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

रोजगार उन्मुख शिक्षा व्यवस्था जरूरी

एक रिपोर्ट के मुताबिक देश में बेरोजगारी दर 7 फीसदी है और पिछले दो वर्षों से बेरोजगारी दर में इजाफा हुआ है। सरकार बेरोजगारी दूर करने में अब तक असफल रही है। केंद्र एवं राज्य सरकार के विभागों में रिक्त पद पर नियुक्ति नगण्य रही है जबकि निजी कंपनियों में अवसर होने के बावजूद कुशल उम्मीदवार नहीं मिल रहे हैं। अशिक्षित लोगों के मुकाबले शिक्षित लोगों में बेरोजगारी की दर अधिक है। देश में रोजगार उन्मुख शिक्षा व्यवस्था लागू करना जरूरी है। इसके लिए शिक्षा पाठ्यक्रम एवं व्यवस्था में बदलाव लाने की जरूरत है। प्रधानमंत्री कौशल विकास योजना की किमयों को दुर करके उसे ठीक से क्रियान्वयन करना चाहिए। बेरोजगारी समस्या से निपटने एवं आर्थिक विषमता कम करने के लिए सरकार को शिक्षा तंत्र की उन्नति के लिए आवश्यक उपाय खोजने चाहिए।

निशांत महेश त्रिपाठी, नागपुर



प्रार्थना हृदय की पुकार है

कश्मीर की चुनौती

कश्मीर में पोस्ट पेड मोबाइल सेवाएं शुरू होना इस बात का संकेत है कि केंद्र सरकार घाटी के हालात तेजी के साथ सामान्य बनाने में लगी हुई है। पोस्ट पेड मोबाइल सेवाएं शुरू होने से कश्मीर के लोगों को तो सहलियत मिलेगी ही, दुनिया को यह संदेश भी जाएगा कि भारत सरकार अपने उस वादे को पूरा करने के प्रति गंभीर है जिसके तहत यह कहा गया था कि भेदभाव भरे अनुच्छेद 370 को हटाए जाने के बाद देश के इस हिस्से में लगाई गई पाबंदियां अधिक समय तक नहीं रहेंगी। इसकी अनदेखी नहीं की जानी चाहिए कि पोस्ट पेड मोबाइल सेवाएं शुरू करने के पहले भी कई ऐसे कदम उठाए जा चुके हैं जिनसे यह संकेत मिलता है कि मोदी सरकार कश्मीर के हालात सामान्य करने को लेकर हरसंभव उपाय कर रही है। जम्मू-कश्मीर को 31 अक्टूबर को औपचारिक रूप से केंद्र शासित प्रदेश बनना है। उम्मीद की जानी चाहिए कि तब तक कश्मीर के सभी 10 जिलों में लगाई गई हर तरह की पाबंदियों को हटा लेने की नौबत आ जाएगी। वैसे भी अब प्री पेड मोबाइल सेवाओं और इंटरनेट की बहाली के साथ कुछ प्रमुख नेताओं की नजरबंदी हटना ही शेष है। यह भी ध्यान रहे कि ख़ुद प्रधानमंत्री की ओर से यह कहा गया है कि चार माह के अंदर कश्मीर के हालात सामान्य कर लिए जाएंगे।

जो लोग कश्मीर के मौजूदा हालात को बढ़ा-चढ़ाकर पेश करने में लगे हुए हैं और इस क्रम में दुष्प्रचार का भी सहारा ले रहे हैं उन्हें इसकी अनदेखी नहीं करनी चाहिए कि कश्मीर घाटी बीते लगभग तीन दशकों से अशांत है। इस अशांति का कारण कश्मीर में अलगाववादियों के साथ ऐसे तत्वों का उभार है जो न केवल पाकिस्तानपरस्त हैं, बल्कि आतंकियों के समर्थक भी हैं। ऐसे तत्वों पर लगाम लगाना अभी भी एक चुनौती है। यह चुनौती इसलिए और अधिक बढ़ गई है, क्योंकि पाकिस्तान इस ताक में है कि कश्मीर के हालात कैसे बिगाड़े जाएं? स्पष्ट है कि भारत सरकार को कश्मीर में सक्रिय अलगाववादियों और पाकिस्तानपरस्त तत्वों पर निर्णायक अंकुश लगाने के साथ ही पाकिस्तान पर भी दबाव बढ़ाना होगा। हालांकि पाकिस्तान अपने अंदरूनी हालात से बुरी तरह त्रस्त है, लेकिन उसका कश्मीर राग शांत होने का नाम नहीं ले रहा है। भारत को यह देखना ही होगा कि पाकिस्तान कश्मीर पर आंस् बहाना कैसे बंद करें ? इसी के साथ उसे इसके लिए भी सक्रिय होना होगा कि कश्मीर घाटी की अमन पसंद जनता अलगाववादियों और आतंकवादियों के खिलाफ मुखर हो। इससे ही घाटी का माहौल बदलेगा। बीते 70-72 दिनों का अनुभव यही बताता है कि माहौल बदलने का यह कार्य कठिन अवश्य है, लेकिन असंभव नहीं।

एक और गौरव

बंगाल में जन्मे एक और अर्थशास्त्री को नोबेल पदक मिला है। करीब 21 वर्ष पूर्व बंगाल में ही जन्मे अमर्त्य सेन को अर्थशास्त्र में वर्ष 1998 में नोबेल मिला था। यदि बात नोबेल जीतने वालों की करें तो बंगाल में जन्मे अब तक तीन लोगों को नोबेल पुरस्कार मिला है। सर्वप्रथम कवि गुरु रवींद्रनाथ टैगोर को साहित्य में और इसके बाद अमर्त्य सेन तथा अब अभिजीत बनर्जी को मिला है। यही नहीं बनर्जी की पत्नी एस्थर डुफ्लो भी को ग्लोबल गरीबी के लिए अपने प्रायोगिक दृष्टिकोण के लिए नोबेल पुरस्कार दिया गया है। अभिजीत का जन्म 21 फरवरी, 1961 को कोलकाता में हुआ था। उनकी शुरुआती शिक्षा कोलकाता के प्रेसिडेंसी कॉलेज में ही हुई जहां उन्होंने इकोनॉमिक्स में बीए की डिग्री ली। इसके बाद उन्होंने इसी विषय में जवाहर लाल नेहरू विश्वविद्यालय (जेएनयू) से पोस्टग्रेजुएशन की पढ़ाई की और इकोनॉमिक्स में ही पीएचडी के लिए 1988 में अमेरिका के हार्वड यूनिवर्सिटी चले गए। इसके बाद वहां की नागरिकता ले ली। असल में उनके खून में ही अर्थशास्त्र है, क्योंकि उनके पिता दीपक बनर्जी भी बड़े अर्थशास्त्री रहे हैं, उनकी मां निर्मला त्रनर्जी भी कोलकाता के सेंटर फॉर स्टडीज इन सोशल साइंसेज मे इकोनॉमिक्स की प्रोफेसर थीं। ऐसे में बेटा भी क्यों न अर्थशास्त्री बने और आज उन्होंने अपने माता-पिता के साथ-साथ पूरे भारत का नाम रोशन किया है और खासकर बंगाल के लिए बड़े ही गौरव की बात है। पिछले साल भी अभिजात नोबेल के लिए नामित हुए थे, परंतु पिछड़ गए। उन्होंने गरीबी उन्मुलन के लिए शोध किया और किताबें लिखीं। 2019 के कांग्रेस के घोषणापत्र में गरीबी उन्मूलन से जुड़ी योजनाओं का खाका तैयार करने में अहम भूमिका निभाई। अभिजीत की किताब जगरनॉट जल्द आने वाली है। अभिजीत फिलहाल अमेरिका में एक फाउंडेशन के साथ काम करते हुए वैश्विक गरीबी को दूर करने के उपायों पर काम कर रहे हैं। साथ ही वह फोर्ड फाउंडेशन के एक इंस्टीट्यूट में इकोनॉमिक्स प्रोफेसर के रूप में पढ़ा रहे हैं। उन्हें 2009 में इन्फोसिस प्राइज भी मिल चुका है। फिलहाल ईस्थर और अभिजीत उस अब्दुल लतीफ जमीर पॉवर्टी एक्शन लैब के को फाउंडर है जिसके लिए काम करते हुए उन्हें यह नोबेल प्राइज मिला है। वे भारत में जन्मे हुए हैं तो अपनी मातृ भूमि से भी गरीबी हटाने की दिशा में उन्हें कार्य करना चाहिए ताकि भारत के लिए उन्हें नोबेल मिलना सार्थक सिद्ध हो।

संघ के प्रयोगों का लाभ उढाती भाजपा



समय के साथ भाजपा की जो सियासी पैठ बढी है, उसमें राजनीति के साथ सांस्कृतिक एवं धार्मिक गतिविधियों को जोड़ने वाली हिंदुत्व की राजनीति ने बड़ी भूमिका निभाई है

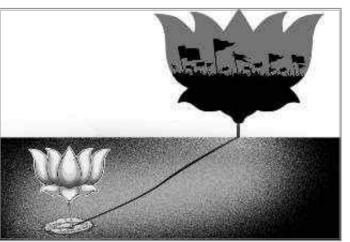
3 सम म गुवाहाटा क पास ब्रह्मपुत्र नपा के किनारे पहाड़ियों की तलहटी में बसे हरे-भरे धान का एक बेहद सुंदर इलाका है जिसका नाम है म्योंग। स्थानीय भाषा में म्योंग का अर्थ है-माया का लोक। म्योंग क्षेत्र में तमाम गांव बसे हैं। यहां अनेक हिंदू अपने नाम के साथ गिरि टाइटल या उपनाम लगाते हैं। वे नाथपंथी हैं यानी नाथपंथ में विश्वास करते हैं। कहते हैं कि नाथपंथ के प्रवर्तक गोरखनाथ जी के गुरु मच्छेंद्रनाथ ने यहां आकर इस पंथ का प्रसार किया था। इस क्षेत्र में बसे ये नाथपंथी हिंदू धर्म में विश्वास करते हैं। शिव के पूजक हैं और नाथपंथी हैं। इनमें से अधिकांश चुनावों में भारतीय जनता पार्टी यानी भाजपा को वोट देते हैं। राजनीतिक रूप से भाजपा के साथ इनका जुड़ाव कोई बहुत पुराना नहीं है। नाथ पंथ के योगी आदित्यनाथ को उत्तर प्रदेश का मुख्यमंत्री बनाए जाने के बाद इन नाथ पंथियों का ध्रुवीकरण भाजपा की ओर तेजी से बढ़ा है। इससे पहले ये भाजपा के प्रति इतने अधिक लामबंद नहीं थे।

सम में गुवाहाटी के पास ब्रह्मपुत्र नदी

ऐसे ही कर्नाटक, राजस्थान, मध्य प्रदेश और अरुणाचल प्रदेश जैसे कई राज्यों में नाथपंथी अब भाजपा की ओर उन्मुख हुए हैं। गोरखपुर के आसपास मुस्लिम नाथपंथी जोगी भी हैं। इन जोगियों की बस्ती में भाजपा के प्रति लगाव दिखता है। वहीं उत्तर प्रदेश के अनेक भागों में बसे सपेरे भी नाथपंथ में विश्वास करते हैं। इन सपेरे सामाजिक समूहों में से अधिकांश योगी आदित्यनाथ के उत्तर प्रदेश का मुख्यमंत्री बनने से गौरवान्वित महसूस करते हैं। भाजपा से उनके लगाव की एक वजह यह भी है।

यहां इसका उल्लेख मैं इसलिए कर रहा हूं ताकि स्पष्ट हो सके कि भाजपा ने किस प्रकार हिंदुओं के विभिन्न वर्गों, धड़ों और मतों को अपने साथ जोड़ा है। अभी तक जब भी भाजपा के पक्ष में राजनीतिक विश्लेषक हिंदू ध्रुवीकरण की बात करते हैं तो 'सांप्रदायिक ध्रुवीकरण' को इसका कारण मानते हैं। यह देखते हैं कि किस प्रकार हिंदुत्व की राजनीति ने हिंदू समाज की विभिन्न जातियों को जोड़ने के लिए राजनीतिक प्रतिनिधित्व की रणनीति का इस्तेमाल किया है। हम यह नहीं देखते कि किस प्रकार हिंदुत्व की राजनीति ने हिंदु धर्म में सिक्रय अनेक धार्मिक लोकप्रिय पंथों में निहित 'हेजेमोनी' या यूं कहें कि 'प्रभाव शक्ति' का उपयोग उनके समर्थकों को अपने साथ जोड़ने के लिए किया है। पूर्वोत्तर में शंकरदेव के भिक्त पंथ ने तो भाजपा को आधार प्रदान किया ही है। राष्ट्रीय स्वयंसेवक संघ ने हिंदू धर्म जागरण के अभियान के तहत न केवल सनातन पंथों को वरन् अनेक भिकत पंथों, छोटे-छोटे संप्रदायों और मठों को अपने साथ जोड़कर एक वृहत समग्र हिंदुत्व का वृत्त बनाने की कोशिश की है।

अनेक अखाड़ों, धार्मिक संगठनों की शक्ति का लाभ भारत में हिंदुत्व की राजनीतिक शक्ति को तो मिला ही है मठों, प्रवचन संघों



एवं अनेक धार्मिक सामाजिक संगठनों की बुनावट से भाजपा एवं हिंदुत्व की राजनीति को ताकत मिली है। धार्मिक लोकजगत जैसे कथा मंडलियों, राम कथा प्रवचक संत संगठनों, भागवत कथा आयोजक संघों एवं संतों तथा हिंदू धर्म की अनेक कीर्तन मंडलियों से निर्मित लोकजगत एक प्रकार से हिंदुत्व की विचारधारा के लोकजगत की शक्ति के रूप में काम करते हैं। तमाम संत, कथा वाचकों को भी समय-समय पर भाजपा स्वयं से जोडने के लिए संगठन एवं अपनी राजनीति में जगह देती रही है। उमा भारती, साध्वी प्रज्ञा, साध्वी ऋतंभरा और योगी आदित्यनाथ जैसे अनेक संत, कथा वाचक एवं धार्मिक आयोजकों को भाजपा ने अपनी राजनीति में जगह देकर उन्हें

अगर बौद्धिक रूप से देखें तो ये कीर्तन मंडलियां, कथा वाचन आयोजक संघ, धार्मिक संस्थाएं हिंदू धर्म की संस्कृति, मूल्यों की चर्चा तो करती ही हैं, राष्ट्र के ज्वलंत मुद्दों को लेकर भी समय-समय पर इनमें विमर्श होता रहता है।

एक राजनीतिक मंच उपलब्ध कराया।

अवधेश राजपूत ये ज्वलंत मुद्दे राष्ट्र एवं जनतंत्र की राजनीति से भी जुड़े होते हैं। राष्ट्रीय स्वयंसेवक संघ, विश्व हिंदु परिषद, संघ से संबद्ध संगठन-धर्म जागरण मंच, ऐसे सार्वजनिक लोकजगत को संयोजित संगठित एवं जोड़ने का काम करते रहते हैं। प्रायः राजनीतिक विश्लेषक ऐसे धार्मिक लोकजगत की विमर्श रचना एवं राजनीतिक झुकाव पैदा करने में विकसित हो रही इनकी प्रभावी भूमिका को समझ नहीं पाते।

भाजपा और संघ से संबंध न रखने वाले

लोग आज भी राजनीतिक आधारों के पारंपरिक अर्थ जाति एवं धार्मिक ध्रुवीकरण के सीमित दायरे में ही खोजते हैं। मीडिया कवरेज, राजनीतिक रैली एवं अन्य आयोजनों के अतिरिक्त ये अनौपचारिक रूप से राजनीतिक न होकर राजनीतिक मत सृजित करने वाले सामाजिक, सांस्कृतिक एवं धार्मिक लोकजगत उनकी निगाहों से छूट जाते हैं। किसी राजनीतिक तंत्र की तुलना में ये गैर राजनीतिक लोकजगत भारतीय समाज में राजनीतिक झुकाव पैदा करने में ज्यादा कारगर होते हैं।

से थोड़ा भिन्न भारतीय समाज के ये लोकजगत तर्क से ज्यादा विश्वास की डोर से बंधे होते हैं तर्क शक्ति से ज्यादा इन समूहों एवं संगठनो के विमर्शों में विश्वास की शक्ति प्रभावी होती है। हिंदू समाज का उच्च वर्ग एवं मध्य वर्ग का एक हिस्सा ऐसे लोकजगत से जुड़ा तो होता ही है। साथ ही कबीर पंथ, रविदास पंथी, शिवनारायण पंथ जैसे अनेक लोकप्रिय पंथों के अपने कार्यक्रमों से सृजित लोकजगत के माध्यम से दलित एवं पिछड़ी जातियों का एक बडा शिक्षित एवं गैर शिक्षित वर्ग भी इनसे प्रभावित होता है। यह ठीक है कि दलित पंथों से जुड़े पंथों के लोकजगत में हिंदुत्व का विमर्श पहुंचता ही है। साथ ही साथ बहुजन एवं दलित विमर्श में इनके विमर्शों का हिस्सा होता है। कई जगह ये दोनों प्रकार के विमर्श जुड़ जाते हैं तो कई जगह टकराते भी हैं।

दूरदराज और सीमा प्रांतों में भाजपा का प्रसार मात्र राजनीतिक गतिविधियों या सक्रियता से ही नहीं हुआ है। इन सामाजिक, सांस्कृतिक एवं धार्मिक पंथों एवं उनके द्वारा सृजित लोकजगत ने भी भारत में हिंदुत्व की राजनीति का सामाजिक आधार तैयार करने में महती भूमिका अदा की है। आज पूर्वोत्तर के राज्यों में भाजपा की जो पैठ बढ़ी है, उसमें राजनीति के साथ सांस्कृतिक एवं धार्मिक गतिविधियो को जोड़ने की हिंदुत्व की राजनीति ने बड़ी भूमिका निभाई है। अब राजनीति दिन-प्रतिदिन ज्यादा चुनौतीपूर्ण होती जा रही है। राजनीति के पारंपरिक अर्थ बदलते जा रहे हैं। जरूरत है राजनीतिक आबद्धीकरण के लिए हो रहे इन नए प्रयासों को समझने की। इनके माध्यम से भारतीय राजनीति के बदलते पक्षों को समझने की जरूरत भी दिन-प्रतिदिन बढ़ती जा रही है

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खेती को बड़े सहारे की दरकार

रियाणा, महाराष्ट्र एवं झारखंड विधानसभा चुनावों के मद्देनजर किसानों के बीच रबी फसलों के न्यूनतम समर्थन मूल्यों यानी एमएसपी में उत्साहजनक बढ़ोतरी को लेकर आस जगी थी, लेकिन कृषि मंत्रालय द्वारा रबी फसलों के लिए प्रस्तावित एमएसपी में पांच से सात फीसद तक की बढ़ोतरी किसानों की उम्मीदों पर पानी फेरने जैसा कदम है। दरअसल कृषि मंत्रालय द्वारा गेहूं, जौ, सरसों, मसूर तथा सूरजमुखी के एमएसपी में क्रमशः 4.61 फीसद, 5.9 फीसद, 5.35 फीसद, 7.26 फीसद और 5.4 फीसद की बढ़ोतरी की गई है। ज्ञात हो कि पिछले मौसम के दौरान इनका समर्थन मुल्य प्रति क्विंटल क्रमशः 1840 रुपये, 1440 रुपये 4200 रुपये, 4475 रुपये तथा 4945 रुपये था। गत वर्ष की कीमतों को आधार मानकर देखें तो निःसंदेह मंत्रालय ने इस वर्ष एमएसपी में औसतन चार से सात फीसद तक की बढ़ोतरी की है, लेकिन यह नाकाफी भी है और किसानों की आय दोगुनी किए जाने के प्रधानमंत्री के आश्वासन को धूमिल करती भी प्रतीत हो रही है।

वर्ष 2019-20 के लिए खरीफ फसल-धान, मूंग, उड़द तथा कपास के एमएसपी में भी प्रति क्विंटल क्रमशः 65, 75, 100 एवं 100 रुपये की बढ़ोतरी की गई है। खरीफ वर्ष 2018-19 के लिए साधारण धान के एमएसपी में 200 रुपये प्रति क्विंटल का इजाफा निःसंदेह उत्साहित करने वाला रहा था। लंबे अर्से के बाद इसकी कीमत 1750 रुपये प्रति क्विंटल निर्धारित की गई थी जो कि घोषित 1166 रुपये के लागत मूल्य से 50.09 फीसद अधिक थी। इससे पहले के वर्षों में एमएसपी में सिर्फ 50 से 60 रुपये प्रति क्विंटल जैसी सांकेतिक बढोतरी ही प्रचलन में रही थी। नई कीमतों में आंकड़ों के लिहाज से वृद्धि जरूर हुई है, लेकिन प्रति वर्ष लागत मूल्यों में हो रही बढ़ोतरी की तुलना में यह नाम मात्र ही है। प्रधानमंत्री ने 2022 तक किसानों की आमदनी दोगुनी करने का वादा किया है, लेकिन कृषि मंत्रालय के अब तक के प्रयासों में कोई ठोस पहल देखने को नहीं मिली है। फसलों का उचित मूल्य न मिल पाना और साथ ही लागत मूल्यों में निरंतर वृद्धि होते रहना उनकी आमदनी में दोगुनी वृद्धि का संकेत नहीं दे रहे हैं। एक रिपोर्ट के अनुसार अधिकांश दलहन एवं तिलहनों की थोक कीमत अपनी तीन वर्ष पूर्व की कीमत से लगभग 15 से 30 फीसद के निचले स्तर पर है। फसलों के लिए निर्धारित एमएसपी भी न मिल पाना किसानों के लिए लंबे समय से बड़ी समस्या बनी हुई



है। सिरिल की एक रिपोर्ट के अनुसार किसानों को धान, रागी, बाजरा, मूंग, उड़द, अरहर, सोयाबीन, सरसों आदि निर्धारित एमएसपी से कम कीमतों पर बेचना पड़ा है।

हालिया वर्षों में देश में फसल उत्पादन में भारी वृद्धि हुई है। इसके अनुरूप मांग में वृद्धि न होने के कारण कृषि उत्पादों की कीमतों में गिरावट भी देखी गई है। इसके साथ ही खेती में इस्तेमाल होने वाली सभी सामग्रियों की कीमतों में वृद्धि दर्ज हुई है। आरबीआइ की एक रिपोर्ट के अनुसार डीजल का थोक मूल्य सूचकांक यानी डब्ल्यूपीआइ वर्ष 2016 में 65 था जो अब बढ़कर 94 तक पहुंच गया है। कीटनाशकों का डब्ल्यपीआइ पिछले तीन वर्षों में 110 से 120 तक पहुंच गया है। इसी तरह पिछले तीन वर्षों के दौरान टैक्टर, बिजली, मवेशियों के चारे, मजदुरी आदि की दरों में भी प्रतिवर्ष लगभग पांच से 10 फीसद की बढ़ोतरी देखी गई है। गत वर्षों के दौरान कृषि मजदूरी में भी लगभग 15 फीसद की वृद्धि आंकी गई है। खासकर मजदुरी और खाद के मोर्चे पर बढ़ी महंगाई ने किसानों को सबसे ज्यादा परेशान किया है। इस सूरत में कृषि मूल्य एवं लागत आयोग को जमीनी सच्चाई को समझते हुए लागत मूल्य निर्धारण करने की आवश्यकता है।

मौजूदा सरकार ने फसलों की कीमत को डेढ़ गुना करने वाला अपना वादा निभाने का प्रयास भर किया है, लेकिन एमएस स्वामीनाथन आयोग की अनुशंसा अनुसार फसलों का एमएसपी तय करने से अब तक परहेज ही किया है। वर्तमान लागत मूल्य निर्धारण प्रक्रिया के तहत ए-2 एफ-एल को आधार बनाकर फसलों की लागत मूल्य के अनुपातिक एमएसपी बढ़ाया गया है, जबिक किसान संगठनों की मांग रही है कि सी-2 प्रणाली को आधार बनाकर लागत मुल्य निर्धारित किया जाए और इस पर 50 फीसद का अतिरिक्त लाभ दिया जाए। स्पष्ट है कि गतिरोध लागत मूल्य निर्धारण प्रक्रिया को लेकर ही है। प्रक्रिया ए-2 एफ-एल के तहत खेती में उपयोग होने वाली सभी वस्तुएं जैसे-बीज, उर्वरक, कीटनाशक, मजदूरी, मशीनों का किराया तथा पारिवारिक श्रम शामिल होती हैं जबिक सी-2 व्यवस्था में अन्य लागतों के साथ भूमि का किराया भी जोड़ा जाता है। इसके तहत लागत मुल्य निर्धारण से किसानों को मिलने वाले दाम और मौजूदा व्यवस्था के तहत मिलने वाले दाम में बड़ा अंतर है।

अपने यहां एक समस्या यह भी है कि किसान को हर हाल में घाटे का सामना करना पड़ता है। उत्पादन अच्छा हो तब भी और न हो तब भी। लगभग प्रत्येक वर्ष आलू, प्याज, टमाटर, हरी मिर्च और मौसमी सब्जियां आदि औने-पौने दामों पर बेच दी जाती हैं और जब वह दाम भी नहीं मिलता है तो रोष स्वरूप किसान उन्हें सडकों पर फेंक देते हैं। वहीं शांता कुमार कमेटी की रिपोर्ट में यह बात कही गई थी कि मात्र छह प्रतिशत किसान ही एमएसपी से लाभान्वित हो पाते हैं। वर्ष 2016-17 की एक रिपोर्ट के अनुसार देश भर में उत्पादित गेहूं एवं चावल का क्रमशः 23 एवं 35 फीसद हिस्सा ही सरकारी एजेंसियों द्वारा खरीदा गया था। इससे एमएसपी प्रणाली के क्रियान्वयन का अंदाजा लगाया जा सकता है। भंडारण क्षमता भी सवालों के घेरे में रही है। इनका प्रतिकूल असर यह है कि प्रतिवर्ष खेती का रकबा घट रहा है। किसान तेजी से मजदूर बन रहे हैं और गांवों से पलायन जोरों पर है। चूंकि वैश्विक मंदी के कारण शहर पहले से बेरोजगारी की मार झेलने को मजबूर हैं, ऐसे में एक बार फिर से खेती-बाड़ी में जान फूंकने जैसी कवायद ही ग्रामीण अर्थव्यवस्था को पुनः पटरी पर लाने में कामयाब हो सकती है जिससे पलायन पर भी काबू पाया जा सकेगा। कुल मिलाकर लाभकारी एमएसपी के निर्धारण एवं क्रियान्वयन, उचित मुआवजा, ऋण, कृषि सब्सिडी, किसान पेंशन आदि सुविधाएं इस दिशा में कारगर साबित हो सकती हैं।

> (लेखक जदयू के राष्ट्रीय प्रवक्ता हैं) response@jagran.com



मनुष्य और संसार

मनुष्य का जीवन ईश्वर प्रदत्त बहुमूल्य दुर्लभ उपहार है। जो जीवन की विशेषता को समझ जाते हैं, उनका इस संसार में आना सार्थक हो जाता है। मनुष्य सत्य को समझने की कोशिश नहीं करता है और असत्य मे आकंठ डूबा रहता है। सिर्फ नश्वर पदार्थों के उपार्जन में जीवन गुजार देता है। अंतिम समय में अंततः नेत्र बंद कर संसार से विदा हो जाता है। ईश्वर ने यह जीवन दिया है कि मनुष्य इस संसार में कुछ करके जाए। मगर वह कर्म और पुरुषार्थ की अनदेखी कर माया-मोह को ही असली संसार समझता रहता है। यह संसार किसी को कुछ देता नहीं है, सिर्फ लेता ही है। अतः आप संसार को अपने जीवन की सत्य पहचान दे करके अपनी कुछ निशानी छोड़ जाएं, ताकि संसार-वासी अपकी आरती उतारें, याद करें, आंसू बहाएं।

सबसे प्रेम-सहकार, सहयोग, परोपकार, सहानुभूति आत्मीयता का बर्ताव रखें। फिर आपकी दुनिया निरार्ल बन जाएगी। आप सबके चहेते बन जाएंगे। बुराइयो से दूर रहें। अपने जीवन का पल-पल सिर्फ सुजन मे लगाएं। समझें कि यह दुनिया नश्वर है, मनुष्य का जीवन भी नश्वर है। शाश्वत, सत्य उसका किया गया पुण्य कम है। आजीवन इसी की उपासना-आराधना में राम, कृष्ण महावीर, बुद्ध और विवेकानंद जैसे महापुरुषों की तरह लगे रहें। आवश्यकता है आज जीवन और संसार को समझने की। अगर इन्हें आप समझ जाएंगे तो आपका संसार सुंदर बन जाएगा, संवर जाएगा। कहा जाता है कि जैसा विचार वैसा ही संसार। जैसी दृष्टि वैसी ही सृष्टि। आप इस संसार में निर्विकल्प, निर्विकार, निर्दोष निरंहकार, निश्च्छल जीवन जीने की आदत बनाएं कुपरंपराओं ने जो आपके मन-मस्तिष्क को दूषित कर दिया है, जो दोष-दुर्गण भर दिया है, उनकी जड़ों को उखाड़ फेंकें। उन्हें सत्य नहीं मानें। सतत आत्मचिंतन आत्मा-मनन करते रहें। सत्य की प्रेरणा, सहयोग स्वयमेव आपको मिलते रहेंगे। फिर आपका जीवन सुखमय और गौरवशाली होगा। मनुष्य के शाश्वत कर्म की विजय अवश्य होती है।

भारी पड़ती सुरक्षा मानकों की अनदेखी

वास्तव में आज भी भूकंप की भविष्यवाणी कर पाने में हम नाकाम हैं। भूकंप को हम रोक नहीं सकते, लेकिन जापान जैसे देशों की तरह उससे बचने के प्रयास तो कर ही सकते हैं। जरूरी है कि हम उनसे जीने का तरीका सीखें। हमारे देश में सबसे बड़ी विडंबना यही है कि लोगों को भूकंप के बारे में बहुत कम जानकारी है। फिर हम भूकंप को दृष्टिगत रखते हुए विकास कार्य भी नहीं कर रहे हैं, बल्कि अंधाधुंध विकास की दौड़ में बेतहाशा भागे ही चले जा रहे हैं। दरअसल हमारे यहां सबसे अधिक संवेदनशील जोन में देश का हिमालयी क्षेत्र आता है। पूर्व में भुज, लातूर और उत्तरकाशी में आए भयावह भूकंप के बाद यह उम्मीद बंधी थी कि सरकार निर्माण कार्य में सुरक्षा मानकों को लागू करने की दिशा में कुछ ठोस कदम उठाएगी, लेकिन उससे नाउम्मीदी ही हाथ लगी? देश की राजधानी दिल्ली सहित सभी महानगरों में गगनचुंबी बहुमंजिली इमारतों, अट्टालिकाओं की शृंखला शुरू हुई जिसके चलते आज शहरों-महानगरों में आसमान छूती मीनारें दिखाई देती हैं। और यह सब बीते पंद्रह-बीस वर्षों के

हम भूकंप को दृष्टिगत रखते हुए निर्माण कार्य नहीं कर रहे, बल्कि अंधाधुंध विकास की दौड़ में भागे जा रहे हैं

ही विकास का नतीजा है। जाहिर सी बात है कि इनमें से दो प्रतिशत ही भूंकप रोधी तकनीक से बनाई गई हैं। यही बहुमंजिली आवासीय इमारतें आज भूकंप आने की स्थिति में हजारों मानवीय मौतों का कारण बनेंगी।

समूची दुनिया की तकरीबन 90 फीसद जनता आज भी भूकंप संभावित क्षेत्र में पुराने तरीके से बने मकानों में रहती है जिसकी वजह से भूकंप आने की दशा में सर्वाधिक जनधन की हानि होती है। इसलिए भूकंप से बचने की खातिर ऐसे मकानों की सुरक्षा सर्वोच्च प्राथमिकता होनी चाहिए। ऐसी स्थिति में भवन निर्माण से पहले लोग भूकंपरोधी निर्माण दिशा-निर्देशों का बारीकी से अध्ययन करें एवं भवन निर्माण उसके आधार पर करें। इसमें मात्र 5 फीसद ही अधिक धन खर्च होगा, अधिक नहीं। यह जान लें कि भूकंप नहीं मारता, मकान मारते

हैं। इसलिए यह करना जरूरी है।

दरअसल संकट के समय खतरों के बारे में जानना एवं उसके लिए तैयार रहना चाहिए। उसके लिए कुछ जरूरी वस्तुएं जैसे टार्च, मोमबत्तियां, माचिस, रेडियो, प्राथमिक उपचार की किट हमेशा तैयार रखें, खाद्य सामग्री एवं पीने के पानी का भंडार रखें तथा कांच की खिड़की और गिरने वाली सभी वस्तुओं से दूर रहें। भूकंप आने पर तुरंत खुले स्थान की ओर भागें, यदि न भाग सकें तो दरवाजे की चौखट के सहारे बीच में, पलंग, मेज के नीचे छुप जाएं, ताकि ऊपर से गिरने वाली वस्तु की चोट से बच सकें। यदि वाहन पर सवार हैं तो उसे सड़क किनारे खड़ाकर उससे तब तक दूर खड़े रहें जब तक आप आश्वस्त न हो जाएं कि अब खतरा टल गया है। इसमें दो राय नहीं कि भूकंप से हुए विध्वंस की भरपाई असंभव है। आज देशवासी मौत के मुहाने पर खड़े हैं। स्थिति की भयावहता को सरकार खुद स्वीकार भी कर चुकी है। निष्कर्ष यह है कि भूकंप से बचा जा सकता है, लेकिन इसके लिए समाज, सरकार, वैज्ञानिक और आम जनता सबको प्रयास करने होंगे।

(लेखिका स्वतंत्र टिप्पणीकार हैं)

ए-वी मॉडल कम करेगा आपदाओं का असर

आपदाओं का असर घटाने की पहल शीर्षक से लिखे अपने लेख में प्रधानमंत्री के प्रमुख सचिव पीके मिश्रा ने बुनियादी ढांचे के निर्माण पर बल दिया है। वास्तव में आपदा जोखिम में अकाल, सूखा और बाढ़ से निपटने के लिए और कुछ क्या किया जाना चाहिए इस पर और अधिक ध्यान देने की जरूरत है। मेरा मानना है कि आपदा रोधी एवं जलवायु रोधी अवसंरचना के लिए राष्ट्रव्यापी सिंचाई एवं जल निकासी नेटवर्क की आवश्यकता है, क्योंकि जलवायु परिवर्तन से आगामी वर्षों में जल प्रबंधन, जल उपलब्धता आदि बहुत कठिन हो जाएगी। सवाल है कि इसके समाधान के लिए कौन-सा मॉडल अपनाना चाहिए? मेरे विचार से इस मॉडल का एक प्रारूप प्रधानमंत्री नरेंद्र मोदी के एक कथन में समाहित है जिसमें उन्होंने कहा था कि भूमि मानव शरीर की तरह ही है। इस मॉडल को वैज्ञानिकों ने ए-वी मॉडल नाम दिया है। आर्टरी-वेन मॉडल में आर्टरी जलापूर्ति की लाइन है और वेन जल निकासी की लाइन है। मेरा विश्वास है कि यह मॉडल हमारे बुनियादी ढांचे को लंबा जीवन दे सकता है। इससे जल संकट का समाधान भी हो सकता है। राजनीतिक इच्छाशक्ति से देश में आपदा रोधी ढांचा बनाया जा सकता है। सरकार को इस मॉडल पर आगे कदम बढ़ाना चाहिए। प्रोफेसर मान सिंह, भारतीय कृषि अनुसंधान संस्थान, नई

दिल्ली में अपराध

दिल्ली में एक बार फिर अपराध चरम पर है। रोजाना हो रही झपटमारी और लूट की घटनाओं से इस शहर की पहचान बनती जा रही है। लुटेरों के हौसले इतने बुलंद हैं कि वह हाई प्रोफाइल लोगों को भी नहीं छोड़ रहे। चाहे दिन हो या

मेलबाक्स

रात लोगों में लूट का भय बना रहता है। ऐसे मामलों को अंजाम देते वक्त अक्सर अपराधी हथियार लेकर चलते हैं। विरोध एवं खतरा होने पर गोली चलाने से भी नहीं चूकते। अपराधियों के बढ़ते हौसलों के साथ-साथ आम नागरिकों में खौफ और भय बढ़ता जा रहा है। ऐसे मामलों में गिरफ्तार अपराधियों के साथ कोई नरमी नहीं बरती जानी चाहिए। raialokk97@gmail.com

अब आलू महगा

पहले प्याज, फिर टमाटर और अब आलू की मार। ना जाने प्रकृति भारत के आम लोगों को महंगाई की मार से कब तक रुलाएगी? सबसे सस्ता और आम लोगों के लिए जीवन यापन का मुख्य साधन माने जाने वाला आलू भारी बारिश के कारण देर से खेतों में रोपा जाएगा। इस कारण नए आलू को बाजार में आने में देर लग सकती है। किंतु इन सब के बीच सरकार की क्या रणनीति रहती है, यह देखना होगा। क्या सरकार इस आलू की कमी की भरपायी कर पाएगी ? इस भयानक मंदी के दौर में सरकार के आगे अनेक चुनौतियां हैं, किंतु आम जनता के हित के लिए सरकार को इस समस्या का हल खोजना ही होगा। उम्मीद है इस आलू के महंगाई के मुद्दे पर राजनीति नहीं होगी। दूसरी ओर सरकार से भी उम्मीद है कि वह इस चुनौती से निपटने के लिए कोई ठोस कदम अवश्य उठाएगी।

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खतरे की घंटी

दिल्ली में एक बार फिर वायु प्रदूषण का खतरा बढ़ गया है।

यह प्रदूषण पंजाब-हरियाणा में जलाई जा रही पराली के धुएं के आने से बढ़ा है। अभी दीपावली बाकी है, जब लोग पटाखे छोड़ेंगे। इससे और प्रदूषण बढ़ेगा। दिल्ली वालों को जहरीली आबोहवा में जीवन व्यापन करना होगा। सरकार को समय रहते इससे बचाव के उपाय करने चाहिए।

श्रीनिवास बिश्नोई, दिल्ली विवि

भाषा से देश की पहचान

कभी संस्कृत भाषा का ज्यादा प्रचलन था। धीरे-धीरे लोग हिंदी भाषा बोलने लगे और अब संस्कृत कुछ लोगों की भाषा बनकर रह गई है। आजकल जिस तरह माता-पिता अपने बच्चों को हिंदी को छोड़कर अंग्रेजी पढ़ने पर जोर दे रहे हैं, अगर यही स्थिति बनी रही तो एक दिन हिंदी को लोग भूल जाएंगे। भाषा को लेकर यह शुभ संकेत नहीं है हिंदी भारत में ही नहीं, बल्कि कई दूसरे देशों में भी बोली जाती है। किसी भी देश की पहचान उसकी भाषा से होती है, इसलिए अपनी भाषा को समृद्ध करने की जरूरत है। हर माता-पिता को अपने बच्चों को हिंदी जरूर पढ़ानी चाहिए। मो. जमील, नई दिल्ली

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

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

इन्स्

बिगड़ती हवा

जधानी दिल्ली की हवा फिर खराब हो रही है। हर साल की तरह यह चेतावनी मिलनी शुरू हो गई है। वायु प्रदूषण लंबे समय से दिल्ली की बड़ी समस्या बना हुआ है, लेकिन अंक्तूबर-नवंबर के महीने में यह समस्या उस वक्त ज्यादा गंभीर रूप धारण कर लेती है जब पंजाब, हरियाणा और उत्तर प्रदेश के खेतों में पराली जलाने से होने वाला धुआं दिल्ली के आसमान पर परत बन कर छा जाता है। यह हर साल की समस्या है। इससे दिल्ली की आबादी का बड़ा हिस्सा सांस और फेफड़े की बीमारियों का शिकार होता है और लोग अस्पतालों की ओर भागने को मजबूर होते हैं। लेकिन इतना सब कुछ होने और झेलने के बाद भी अगर पराली जलाने पर रोक नहीं लग पा रही है तो यह केंद्र और राज्य सरकारों की असफलता ही मानी जाएगी। पराली जलाने के मसले पर पिछले तीन साल में सुप्रीम कोर्ट तक ने कड़े निर्देश दिए, पर्यावरण मंत्रालय की निगरानी में टीमें बनाईं जो पराली जलाने के विकल्प खोजे और राज्य सरकारों को पराली जलाने वाले किसानों पर कड़ी कार्रवाई करने के निर्देश दिए, पर इन सबका कोई ठोस नतीजा अब तक सामने आया नहीं है।

चिंता की बात यह है कि इस बार पराली जलाने की घटनाएं कम होने के बजाय और बढ़ी हैं। हालांकि केंद्र और पंजाब सरकार की ओर से दावे किए जा रहे हैं कि पराली जलाने की घटनाओं में कमी आ रही है। लेकिन पंजाब सरकार के प्रदूषण नियंत्रण बोर्ड के मुताबिक इस बार बारह अक्तूबर तक पंजाब में पराली जलाने की छह सौ तीस घटनाएं दर्ज की गई हैं। जबिक पिछले साल इसी अविध में चार सौ पैंतीस मामले दर्ज हुए थे। हरियाणा में कई जगह पराली जलाई जा रही है। दरअसल, किसानों के सामने मजबूरी यह है कि पराली जलाएं नहीं तो करें क्या! किसानों को पराली नष्ट करने का विकल्प सुझाने में सरकारें नाकाम रही हैं। जबकि दावे तो ये किए जा रहे हैं कि कई जगहों पर पराली कटवा कर बिकवाई जा रही है, लेकिन अगर ऐसा है भी तो बहुत ही कम जगहों पर। ज्यादातर किसानों के समक्ष आज भी पराली जलाने के अलावा कोई और रास्ता नहीं है। पिछले साल पंजाब सरकार ने किसानों को पराली नष्ट करने की मशीनें देने की योजना बनाई थी, लेकिन ज्यादातर किसान गरीब हैं और वह योजना इनके लिए निरर्थक साबित हुई। ऐसे में पराली का किया क्या जाए, किसी को समझ नहीं आ रहा। देश में कृषि विशेषज्ञों की कमी नहीं है, कृषि विश्वविद्यालयों से लेकर भारतीय कृषि अनुसंधान परिषद जैसे बड़े वैज्ञानिक संस्थान हैं, लेकिन पराली का धुआं न निकले, इसका इलाज कोई नहीं कर पा रहा। यह पराली जलाने से ज्यादा चिंताजनक है।

हाल में अमेरिकी अंतरिक्ष एजंसी नासा ने पंजाब के खेतों में जलती पराली की तस्वीरें जारी की थीं। हालांकि पंजाब सरकार का तर्क है कि धुआं सिर्फ पराली का नहीं है, इसमें कचराघरों और श्मशानों से उठने वाला धुआं भी शामिल है। दिल्ली-एनसीआर में वायु प्रदूषण रोकने के लिए थोड़े-बहुत जो प्रयास हुए हैं उनका कुछ असर दिखा भी है। लेकिन व्यापक स्तर पर जिस कवायद की जरूरत है वह दिखाई नहीं देती। सबसे बड़ी समस्या सड़कों पर अभी भी पंद्रह साल से ज्यादा पुराने डीजल वाहनों का दौड़ना है। आज भी ऐसे वाहनों की संख्या लाखों में है। लेकिन सरकार ऐसे वाहनों पर रोक लगाने में पूरी तरह नाकाम साबित हुई है। इसके अलावा दिल्ली के कुछ खास इलाकों को छोड़ दें तो अनेक जगहों पर कचरा जलते देखा जा सकता है। सरकार अपने स्तर पर कदम तो उठा रही है, लेकिन लोगों को जागरूक करना ज्यादा बड़ी चुनौती साबित हो रही है।

कुर्दों पर हमले

उत्तर-पूर्वी सीरिया में कुर्द सैनिकों और तुर्की की सेना के बीच पिछले पांच दिन से चल रही लड़ाई ने इस क्षेत्र को गंभीर संकट में झोंक दिया है। तुर्की की सेना सीरिया के उत्तर-पूर्व में कुर्द बहुल इलाकों में ताबड़तोड़ हमले कर रही है और कुर्दों पर कहर बरपा रही है। बड़ी संख्या में लोगों के मारे जाने और जख्मी होने की खबरें हैं। लाखों बेघर हो गए हैं। इससे गंभीर मानवीय संकट खड़ा हो गया है। तुर्की की सेना ने सीरियाई शहर सुलूक पर कब्जा कर लिया है। पश्चिम एशिया का यह क्षेत्र युद्ध के नए अखाड़े में तब्दील हो गया है। मामला ज्यादा गंभीर रूप इसलिए ले चुका है कि इस संकट के मूल में अमेरिका है। उसके अपने हित हैं, ऐसे में इस समस्या के सुलझने के आसार दूर-दूर तक नहीं हैं।

अब यह साफ हो चुका है कि अगर अमेरिका सीरिया और तुर्की की सीमा से अपने सैनिकों को हटाने का फैसला नहीं करता तो आज हालात नहीं बिगड़ते। ट्रंप अगले राष्ट्रपति चुनाव की तैयारियों में जुटे हैं और उन्होंने अमेरिकी जनता से वादा किया है कि अफगानिस्तान और सीरिया जैसे देशों से अमेरिकी सैनिकों की वापसी होगी। अफगानिस्तान से तो यह संभव नहीं हो पाया है, लेकिन सीरिया में इस फैसले का असर तुर्की के हमले के रूप में आया है। अमेरिकी सैनिकों के हटते ही तुर्की ने कुर्दों के नियंत्रण वाले ठिकानों पर हमले शुरू कर दिए। तुर्की में बीस फीसद कुर्द आबादी है। तुर्की कुर्दों को आतंकवादी करार देता आया है। दरअसल, इराक, सीरिया और तुर्की के कुर्द बहुल क्षेत्र में रहने वाले कुर्द सुन्नी मुसलमान हैं और लंबे समय से अलग कुर्दिस्तान राष्ट्र के गठन के लिए लड़ रहे हैं। ऐसे में तुर्की को यह डर सता रहा है कि अगर अलग कुर्दिस्तान राष्ट्र बन गया तो उसके यहां की बीस फीसद कुर्द आबादी भी उसके लिए बड़ा संकट बन जाएगी।

ट्रंप ने कुर्दों की वफादारी पर सवाल उठाते हुए यहां तक कह डाला कि इस्लामिक स्टेट (आइएस) के साथ लड़ाई में कुर्दों ने अमेरिका का साथ नहीं दिया। जबिक इराक में सद्दाम हुसैन की सत्ता को उखाड़ फेंकने में अमेरिका का सबसे ज्यादा साथ तो कुर्द लड़ाकों ने ही दिया था। सीरिया में भी आइएस के लड़ाकों से मुकाबले में अमेरिका के साथ कुर्द ही कंधे से कंधा मिला कर खड़े रहे हैं। अब संकट यह भी है कि तुर्की के हमलों के इस इलाके में आइएस फिर से सिक्रय हो सकता है। कुर्द सैनिकों ने बड़ी संख्या में आइएस के लड़ाकों को स्थानीय जेलों और शिविरों में बंद कर रखा था। लेकिन हमले के बाद आइएस के ज्यादातर लड़ाके भाग निकले हैं। पश्चिमी देशों सिहत सऊदी अरब जैसे देश तुर्की की इस कार्रवाई के खिलाफ हैं, वहीं पाकिस्तान ने तुर्की के रुख का समर्थन किया है, क्योंकि कश्मीर के मुद्दे पर तुर्की पाकिस्तान के साथ खड़ा है। लेकिन भारत ने सीरियाई क्षेत्र की संप्रभुता की रक्षा पुरजोर वकालत करते हुए तुर्की के हमलों की कड़ी निंदा की है और इसे गंभीर मानवीय संकट बताया है। पर बड़ा सवाल यह है कि आतंकवाद के खिलाफ लड़ाई का झंडा उठाने वाला अमेरिका अपने स्वार्थ के लिए कब तक निर्दोष नागरिकों को युद्ध की आग में झोंकता रहेगा!

कल्पमधा

अपनी गलती स्वीकार कर लेने में लज्जा की कोई बात नहीं है। इससे दूसरे शब्दों में यही प्रमाणित होता है कि कल की अपेक्षा आज आप अधिक समझदार हैं। -अलेक्जेंडर पोप

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रिश्तों की कूटनीति में भारत का बाजार

संजीव पांडेय

इन दिनों चीन खुद अमेरिका के साथ व्यापार युद्ध में उलझा है। अमेरिकी राष्ट्रपति डोनाल्ड ट्रंप के व्यापार युद्ध ने चीन के उद्योगों और विकास दर को प्रभावित करना शुरू कर दिया है। चीनी निर्यात पर अमेरिका द्वारा बढ़ाए गए शुल्क का असर चीनी अर्थव्यवस्था पर तेजी से पड़ रहा है। इस स्थिति में भारत का विशाल बाजार चीन के लिए बड़ी ताकत बना हुआ है।

🎹 हाबलीपुरम में चीनी राष्ट्रपति शी जिनपिंग और प्रधानमंत्री नरेंद्र मोदी के बीच दोनों मुल्कों में आपसी रिश्तों को बेहतर बनाने के लिए बात हुई। इसी में आतंकवाद से लेकर कारोबार, सीमा विवाद आदि मुद्दे भी आए। दोनों पक्षों ने 'चेन्नई कनेक्ट' को भारत-चीन संबंधों में नए युग की शुरुआत बताया है। उम्मीद की जा रही है कि वुहान से आगे महाबलीपुरम में विश्वास और बढ़ा है। यह पूरे दक्षिण एशिया के विकास, क्षेत्रीय सहयोग और शांति के लिए जरूरी है। सहयोग और शांति के लिए संवाद ही महत्त्वपूर्ण उपाय है। हालांकि भारत-चीन के बीच तमाम विवादों का हल निकालने में चीन ने पिछले साठ सालों में कोई खास रुचि नहीं दिखाई है। लगभग साढ़े तीन हजार किलोमीटर लंबी भारत-चीन सीमा को लेकर दोनों देशों के बीच काफी लंबे समय से विवाद है। जम्मू-कश्मीर को लेकर चीन पूरी तरह से पाकिस्तान के साथ है। भारत-चीन के बीच होने वाले द्विपक्षीय व्यापार में व्यापार संतुलन चीन के पक्ष में है। व्यापार संतुलन चीन के पक्ष में होने के कारण भारत की अर्थव्यवस्था पर नकारात्मक असर पडा है। भारत के निर्यात घाटे का असर अर्थव्यवस्था पर पडा है। इसके अलावा चीन बंगाल की खाड़ी से लेकर अरब सागर और हिंद महासागर तक में भारत की घेरेबंदी कर रहा है और अपनी सामरिक स्थिति मजबूत कर रहा है।

लंबे समय तक तनाव के बाद राजीव गांधी की सरकार ने चीन के साथ संवाद शुरू किया था। उनके कार्यकाल में विदेश सचिव स्तर पर भारत और चीन की बातचीत शुरू हुई थी। इस परंपरा को अटल बिहारी वाजपेयी के कार्यकाल में जारी रखा गया। अब दोनों मुल्कों के मुखिया अनौपचारिक बैठक कर रहे हैं। समय की मांग यही है कि दोनों देशों के बीच संवाद से विश्वास कायम हो। इसी में दोनों देशों का हित है। पर इसके लिए जरूरी है कि संवाद यथार्थ के धरातल पर हो। हमें स्वीकार करना होगा कि चीनी

विदेश नीति चीन के हितों पर आधारित है। चीन भारत से बातचीत के दौरान कहीं भी अपने हितों का त्याग नहीं करेगा। चीन भारत का विशाल बाजार नहीं खो सकता। भारतीय बाजार में चीनी उत्पादों की भरमार ने सिर्फ भारत के व्यापार घाटे को नहीं बढाया है. बल्कि भारतीय कृषि और उद्योग जगत की कमर तोड़ दी है। इसे आंकड़ों से समझने की जरूरत है। 2018-19 में भारत का कुल व्यापार घाटा एक सौ तीन अरब डॉलर था। इसमें चीन की भागीदारी तिरपन अरब डॉलर की थी, आधे से भी ज्यादा। चीनी निर्यात ने भारतीय कृषि और उद्योग जगत को खासा नुकसान पहुंचाया है। वुहान और महाबलीपुरम दोनों ही बैठकों में व्यापार

इन दिनों चीन खुद अमेरिका के साथ व्यापार युद्ध में उलझा है। अमेरिकी राष्ट्रपति डोनाल्ड ट्रंप के व्यापार युद्ध ने चीन के उद्योगों और विकास दर को प्रभावित करना शुरू कर दिया है। चीनी निर्यात पर अमेरिका द्वारा बढ़ाए गए शुल्क का असर चीनी अर्थव्यवस्था पर तेजी से पढ़ रहा है। इस स्थिति में भारत का विशाल बाजार चीन के लिए बड़ी ताकत बना हुआ है। चीन जल्द से जल्द सोलह देशों के बीच प्रस्तावित मुक्त व्यापार संधि (क्षेत्रीय व्यापक आर्थिक साझेदारी) को लागु करवाने की कोशिश में है, क्योंकि इससे सबसे ज्यादा लाभ चीन को ही होना

है। भारत भी इस संधि में भागीदार बनने जा रहा है।

हालांकि भारतीय कृषि और उद्योग जगत ने इस संधि का कड़ा विरोध किया है। इस संधि में शामिल होने के बाद भारत के कृषि उत्पाद, वस्त्र, इस्पात सिंहत कई बड़े उद्योग प्रभावित होंगे। डेरी क्षेत्र को भी इससे नुकसान पहुंचेगा। इस संधि में भारत के शामिल होने के बाद चीनी सामान से भारतीय बाजार भर जाने की आशंका भी जताई जा रही है।

इस बात को पूरी दुनिया मान रही है कि चीन एक बहुत बड़ी आर्थिक ताकत है। चीन की अर्थव्यवस्था इस समय चौदह लाख करोड़ डॉलर की है। यह भारत की अर्थव्यवस्था से पांच गुनी बड़ी है। भारत की अर्थव्यवस्था पौने तीन लाख करोड डॉलर की है। आठवें दशक तक भारत की अर्थव्यवस्था का आकार चीन की अर्थव्यवस्था के बराबर था। चीन आज अपने रक्षा बजट पर ढाई सौ अरब डॉलर सालाना खर्च कर रहा है। उसने अमेरिका की तर्ज पर दुनिया के कई बंदरगाहों को विकसित कर



संतुलन पर बातचीत हुई, लेकिन इसका परिणाम क्या अपने सैन्य अड्डे विकसित करने की दिशा में तेजी होगा, इसका फिलहाल अंदाज लगा पाना मुश्किल है। से कदम बढ़ाए हैं। चीन के सार्वजनिक क्षेत्र से लेकर निजी क्षेत्र की कंपनियां तक पूरी दुनिया में निवेश कर रही हैं। जहां भारतीय कंपनियां विदेशों में पूंजी निवेश को लेकर सोचती हैं, वहीं चीन की कंपनियां विदेशों में दनादन पैसे लगा रही हैं।

> अफ्रीकी से लेकर एशियाई देश तक चीनी पूंजी के गिरफ्त में हैं। भारत के पड़ोसी देशों पाकिस्तान, बांग्लादेश, म्यांमा और नेपाल में चीन ने खासा निवेश किया है। पाकिस्तान में साठ अरब डॉलर और बांग्लादेश में अड़तीस अरब डॉलर के निवेश पर चीन ने काम शुरू कर रखा है। म्यांमा में चीन खासा निवेश कर चुका है। भारत का पड़ोसी नेपाल चीन की बेल्ट एंड रोड इनीशिएटिव परियोजना का भागीदार

बन चुका है। चीन-नेपाल के बीच बृहद हिमालयन रेल, रोड जोड़ योजना पर काम शुरू हो चुका है।

दरअसल जिनपिंग महाबलीपुरम से वापसी के वक्त नेपाल पहुंचे थे। दिलचस्प बात यह थी कि चीनी मीडिया ने जिनपिंग की महाबलीपुरम यात्रा से ज्यादा नेपाल यात्रा को महत्त्व दिया। इस सच्चाई से इंकार नहीं किया जा सकता है कि महाबलीपुरम की यात्रा से पहले जिनपिंग ने पाकिस्तानी प्रधानमंत्री इमरान खान से मुलाकात कर संकेत दिया था कि पाकिस्तान चीन के लिए काफी अहमियत रखता है। जिनपिंग की भारत यात्रा से ठीक पहले इमरान खान का चीन दौरा और महाबलीपुरम से लौटते हुए जिनपिंग का नेपाल जाना भारत के लिए सांकेतिक इशारा था कि भारत के दो पड़ोसी मुल्क चीन के लिए भारत से ज्यादा महत्त्वपूर्ण हैं। नेपाली प्रधानमंत्री केपी शर्मा ओली अपने भारत विरोध और चीन समर्थन के लिए खासे जाने जाते हैं।

> मोदी और जिनपिंग का संवाद अच्छे परिणाम लाएगा, इसकी पूरी उम्मीद है। लेकिन महाबलीपुरम में जिनपिंग ने कश्मीर को लेकर कोई बात नहीं की। शायद भारत यह मान कर चल रहा है कि कश्मीर पर चीन की नीति में कोई बदलाव नहीं आएगा। जम्मू-कश्मीर को लेकर चीन पाकिस्तान के साथ खड़ा होगा, यह भारतीय कुटनीति के निर्धारकों को पता है। गिलगित-बलतिस्तान, अक्साईचिन और पाक अधिकृत कश्मीर में चीन के आर्थिक हित हैं। यहां पर चीन ने अरबों डॉलर का पूंजी निवेश किया है। भारतीय कूटनीति की परीक्षा यहीं पर होगी। कश्मीर को लेकर चीन, मलेशिया और तुर्की पाकिस्तान के साथ खुल कर खड़े हैं। महाबलीपुरम वार्ता से पहले पाकिस्तान में

तैनात चीनी राजदूत ने कश्मीर को लेकर भारत के खिलाफ बयानबाजी की। चीनी विदेश मंत्री ने संयक्त राष्ट्र महासभा में भी कश्मीर को लेकर पाकिस्तान के पक्ष में मोर्चा खोला। लेकिन चीन से होने वाले भारी आयात पर भारत अभी तक चुप है। महाबलीपुरम में कश्मीर पर जिनपिंग ने कोई बातचीत ही नहीं की। हालांकि भारत के पास इस समय चीन से विरोध जताने के लिए काफी कुछ है। अमेरिका चीन को हांगकांग, तिब्बत और पश्चिमी चीन में मानवाधिकार दमन पर लगातार घेर रहा है। उइगुर मुसलमानों के दमन को आधार पर बना कर अमेरिका ने हाल में कुछ चीनी कंपनियों पर प्रतिबंध भी लगाया है। लेकिन भारत फिलहाल हांगकांग तिब्बत और उइगुर मुसलमानों के मानवाधिकारों को लेकर चुप है।

राह का कनेर

विवेक कुमार मिश्र

🔁 रियाली और रास्ता खींचते ही रहे हैं। खासकर ए तब जब बारिश के दिनों में कहीं जा रहे होते हैं। बारिश के साथ धरती खिल जाती है। धरती का खिल जाना, महकना और रंगों में डूब जाना ही एक तरह से बारिश में पृथ्वी का नहाना है। एक तरह से देखें तो पृथ्वी पर हर मौसम अपने रंग और जज्बे से अपनी ओर खींच ही लेता है, पर बारिश के दिन की बात ही अलग होती है। कोटा से जयपुर के रास्ते पर चलते-चलते सड़क, हरियाली और दूर-दूर तक पसरे खेत अपनी ओर बुलाते से लगते हैं। यहां जीवन जीने की हलचल अलग से दिखती है। जीवन के शांत और सौम्य परिवेश में ऐसा लगता है मानो बादलों से बातें करते हुए जा रहे हों। वे कब आकर बरस जाएंगे, कुछ कह नहीं सकते। बादलों की आवाजाही और धूपछाया के बीच हल्की फुहार और इन सबके साथ सड़क विभाजक यानी डिवाइडर पर खिली हरियाली जीवन का प्रतीक बन कर छाई हुई थी। इस हरियाली में जीवन खिला-खिला दिखता है। डिवाइडर पर मन को भाने वाले पौधे कनेर,

बोगनबेलिया, चंपा और ठिगने पौधे जो ज्यादा बढ़ते नहीं पर हरे-भरे बने रहते हैं, इनका हरा-भरा बने रहना राहगीरों को भाता है।

ये पौधे मन की चेतन अवस्था को प्रकट करते हैं। सड़क पर जीना आसान नहीं। यहां वही जी सकता है जो हर तरह के अभावों के बीच रहता आया हो। जीने की इच्छा इतनी प्रबल हो कि भूख-प्यास सब सह सके और इसके बाद खिलखिलाता

रहे। सड़क के पौधे तो खिलखिलाते ही रहते हैं और हर मौसम में खुश रहना जानते हैं। इन्हें इस बात से मतलब नहीं कि कोई इनकी फोटो ले रहा है कि नहीं। फोटो संस्कृति से बहुत दूर ये मगन रहते हैं। कनेर को मगन भाव से देखता हूं तो यही लगता है कि ये शायद सड़क मार्ग के लिए ही बने हैं। सड़क पर धुआं हो या

धुंध, ये सब सह लेते हैं, खिलखिलाते रहते हैं। कोई जरूरी नहीं कि सबको व्यवस्थित जगह ही मिले। होना तो यह चाहिए कि जो जगह मिल गई है, कोई वहीं पर मगन हो ले। खिलखिलाना ही मनुष्यता का उत्सव है। इस उत्सव को बारिश में पूरी तरह से खिलने का अवसर मिलता है। जब बारिश से पत्तियां धुल जाती हैं और जीवंत हो

जाती हैं तो लगता है कि हां, जीवन जी लिया। जीवन जीने का यही भाव कनेर की पत्तियों, फूल और हरियाली के साथ रास्ते को देख कर लगता है। राह के कनेर, बोगनवेलिया बरबस ही ध्यान खींच लेते हैं। कनेर हरे देह पर धारण किए रहते पीले-पीले फूल। ये मन में बस जाते हैं। इनकी जीवंत छवि, पीले फूल इस तरह सज जाते हैं कि पृछिए मत! मन खिल जाता है। वहीं आसपास

पुराने पड़ चुके पीले जर्जर

फूल भी पड़े रहते हैं। कनेर

भौतिकता के अथाह सागर में अपनी निर्लिप्तता के लिए जाना जाता है। इसे चकाचौंध छूकर भी नहीं आई। याद आता है कि गांव में भी कनेर कुएं के पास खड़ा है। वर्षों से इसी तरह खिला पड़ा रहता है। कोई देखभाल नहीं, कोई देखे न देखे, कनेर खिला रहता।

कनेर में खिलने की एक स्वाभाविक वृत्ति है। मौसम की मार को सहते हुए भी खिल जाता है। जब लोगबाग इसके पास आते हैं तो फुल और फल (कोइना) देने के लिए तत्पर हो जाता है। लोगबाग पूजा भाव से फूल तोड़ते हैं तो बच्चे खेल भाव से। कनेर पर कोई फर्क नहीं पड़ता। इसे किसी संग साथ की जरूरत महसूस नहीं

होती। भाव-अभाव, सबमें खिलना, बने रहना जानता है। कनेर एक प्रतीक है जीवन के इस भाव का कि जब आपको खिलना है, मगन रहना है तो किसी की परवाह न करें। यह मत सोचें कि कौन क्या सोचेगा, क्या कहेगा! अगर यह सोचेंगे तो कुछ कर ही नहीं सकते। कौन क्या सोचता है यह महत्त्वपूर्ण नहीं है, बल्कि आप क्या सोचते हैं, आपकी सोचने की प्रक्रिया क्या है, इस पर काम करें और अपनी गति को प्रारंभ करें।

यह मन की एक स्वाभाविक प्रक्रिया है। इसे दुसरों के आधार पर बनाना गलत होगा। यह तभी संभव होगा, जब आप किसी की भी परवाह किए बिना अपने मूल स्वभाव में जीते हैं। मूल स्वभाव में बने रहना और हर स्थिति के साथ जीना, साक्षात्कार करना और हर तरह की प्रतिकूलताओं को अपने भीतर जज्ब करने का भाव ही आपको बडा बनाता है। कनेर तो बस अपनी जगह पर बना रहता है। कोई आए तो ठीक, न आए तो ठीक। संसार में जीने से बढ़ कर कुछ नहीं है। राह के डिवाइडर पर तन कर बने रहने वाले ये फूल जीवट के प्रतीक भी कहे जा सकते हैं। यहां कोई देखने वाला है या नहीं है! यहां तो सख्त जान का पौधा और आदमी ही चल पाएगा।

दूरियों के बावजूद

🍞 क बात तो बिल्कुल सच्ची और बड़ी 🦴 दिलचस्प भी है कि जब पाकिस्तान का विरोध करने की धुकधुकी होने लगती है तो चाहे राजनीति वाले हों या तथाकथित देशभक्त और मीडिया के चैनल, सब में एक-दूसरे से आगे निकल जाने की होड़ लग जाती है। विपक्ष भी अन्यथा असहमत होने के बावजूद इस प्रसंग में हामी भरने की प्रतिबद्धता दिखाता है। एक सच्चे देशभक्त होने का सबसे बड़ा सबूत और सुकून ही जैसे यह हो चला है कि पाकिस्तान की जम कर धुनाई करो, खिल्ली उड़ाओ और सब तरफ लकीरें खींच कर उसे दुनिया के नक्शे पर 'अलग-थलग' करा देने का श्रेय लूटो। विचारों में तालमेल और कहीं हो या न हो, पर इस सियासी खेल में सभी शामिल हो जाते हैं। चलिए, कोई एक बिंदु तो है जहां आकर हमारे प्रमुख राजनीतिक दलों में 'मिले सुर मेरा-तुम्हारा' हो जाता है।

यह सोच कर थोड़ी तसल्ली होती है, क्योंकि पहले ऐसा नहीं होता था. या कम होता था। लेकिन अब तो स्थिति यह है कि पाकिस्तान को पड़ोसी की बजाय दुश्मन बताने पर सहमति वाली गर्दन हिलाना बेहतर माना जाता है। इस तरह देखें तो पाकिस्तान का शुक्रिया करना बनता है। पाकिस्तान को लेकर भारतीय जनता पार्टी के मिजाज थोड़े अलग हैं। लोकसभा चुनावों के दौरान भी पार्टी का प्रचार-राग पाकिस्तान ही रहा। बालाकोट, पुलवामा वगैरह इसी राग के वादी-संवादी स्वर थे।

लेकिन यह जरूरी नहीं है कि एक दल या उसके समर्थकों की सोच संपूर्ण देश के मन का वशीकरण कर ले। कश्मीर के संदर्भ अलग हैं। लेकिन बंटवारों के दंश झेलने वाला देश का छोटा-सा सूबा पंजाब,

जो इधर 'चढ़दा पंजाब' कहाता है, सात दशक बीत देश है जहां भूकम्प जैसी आपदा आम बात है, फिर चुकने के बाद भी अपनी देह के कटे हिस्से 'लैंहदा भी वह एक संपन्न राष्ट्र है। सजगता और विकसित पंजाब' को भीतर धड़कते हुए पाता है। यह स्थिति विनिर्माण विधि द्वारा जापान और उसके नागरिकों दोनों तरफ एक-सी है और ये अहसास हमेशा बने रहेंगे। महज इसलिए नहीं कि दोनों के पुरखों की राख दूसरी तरफ वाली मिट्टी में समाई हुई है। बल्कि इसलिए ज्यादा कि उनके लिए वह धरती बाबा नानक और अपने सूफियों, पीरों-फकीरों के नाम पर पूजनीय है। दहशतगर्दी की आंधियां सरहद के उस पार से उठें या इस पार से, चुनावी मंचों पर खड़े सियासतदान जंग की धमकियां दें या

ने इस चुनौती से लड़ना सीख लिया। हम व्यवस्था और प्रकृति को दोष न देकर यदि आज भी सजग हो जाएं तो बडी-से-बडी आपदाओं का सामना बिना व्यापक क्षति के कर सकते हैं। हर व्यक्ति जागरूक हो, व्यवस्था सजग हो।

• कर्मवीर साव, श्रीनगर, बेलहर, बांका, बिहार

वृद्धि की उम्मीद रिजर्वे बैंक द्वारा पेशेवर किसी भी मुद्दे या लेख पर अपनी राय हमें भेजें। हमारा पता है: ए-८, सेक्टर-7,

नोएडा २०१३०१, जिला : गौतमबुद्धनगर, उत्तर प्रदेश आप चाहें तो अपनी बात ईमेल के जरिए भी हम तक पहुंचा सकते हैं। आइडी है :

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• शोभना विज, पटियाला आपदा और सजगता

परमाणुओं की, पंजाब यह सब झेलते हुए भी दूरियां

मिट जाने की कल्पना से रोमांचित होता रहा है।

ऐसी कई प्राकृतिक या अप्राकृतिक घटनाएं होती हैं जिसके कई पक्ष होते हैं। पटना में बाढ़ जैसी प्राकृतिक आपदा को देखें तो यह घटना एक ओर जहां प्रकृति की मार है, वहीं दूसरी ओर व्यवस्था की विफलता। इसीलिए कह सकते हैं कि यह कोई नई आपदा नहीं है कि जिसके प्रति हम जागरूक नहीं रहें और हमारी व्यवस्था अनुकूल न रहे। यह तो आदिकाल से मानव जीवन ही नहीं वरन संपूर्ण जीव जगत के लिए संकट का विषय है। सर्वविदित है कि विश्व भर में जापान इकलौता

आकलनकर्ताओं के बीच कराए गए छमाही सर्वेक्षण में भी जीडीपी वृद्धि दर अनुमान 6.1 पर रहा। 2020-21 के लिए यह सात फीसद तक पहुंचा है। यह केंद्रीय बैंक के स्वयं के अनुमान के मुताबिक है। रिजर्व बैंक के गवर्नर शक्तिकांत दास ने बार-बार कहा है कि जब भी गुंजाइश होगी केंद्रीय बैंक व आयकर परिवर्तन संबंधी चिंताओं को दूर करने और अर्थव्यवस्था को उबारने में मदद करता रहेगा। अगस्त-सितंबर में निवेश और वृद्धि बढ़ाने के सरकार के आय, प्रत्यक्ष विदेशी निवेश नीति में सुधार, सरकारी बैंकों में पूंजी डालने और सरकारी बैंकों के विलय से जीडीपी वृद्धि दर की रफ्तार बढ़ाई जा सकती है। इसके अलावा कारपोरेट आयकर की दर में कमी, दबाव वाली परिसंपत्तियों के तेजी से

समाधान और रेपो दर में कटौती का लाभ नीचे तक पहुंचाने से वृद्धि बढ़ाने में मदद मिलेगी।

🎍 अजीत कुमार गौतम, गोरखपुर, उत्तर प्रदेश

बैको को भूमिका किसी देश के बैंकों पर उसकी अर्थव्यवस्था

का दारोमदार होता है। ऐसे में जब बैंकिंग व्यवस्था संकट से गुजरती है या उस पर संदेह गहराता है तो उससे अर्थव्यवस्था भी खासा प्रभावित होती है। भारत की अर्थव्यवस्था आज जिस स्थिति में है उसमें बैंकों की बड़ी भूमिका है।

यह सर्वविदित है कि बैंकिंग व्यवस्था वित्तीय लेन-देन से चलती है और विकास भी इसी से करती है। लेकिन तमाम घोटालों के बाद, मसलन-पंजाब नेशनल बैंक, पंजाब महाराष्ट्र को-ऑपरेटिव बैंक (पीएमसी बैंक)- लोग बैंकों पर ज्यादा भरोसा करने को तैयार नहीं हैं। सार्वजनिक क्षेत्र के बैंकों के सिमटने और बदनामियों के बाद ग्राहक वर्ग बैंकों की ओर बढ़ने से पहले एक बार सोच रहा है। ऐसे में जब नगदी बैंकों तक नहीं पहुंचेगी तो यह आने वाले समय में अर्थव्यवस्था के लिए और चुनौती भरा होगा।

दूसरी ओर अगर बैंकों के नजरिए से देखें तो गैर निष्पादित संपत्तियां उनके लिए गंभीर समस्या बनी हुई हैं। सरकार भी इन बैंकों की मदद करने के बजाय खुद इन पर निर्भर है। साथ ही बैंकों पर सरकारी योजनाओं को लेकर चलने का भी बोझ है। रेपो दर में लगातार कटौती रिजर्व बैंक की मजबूरी हो गई है मगर उसका कुछ खास असर नहीं हो रहा। अब इस स्थिति में सरकार को कोई ठोस और दूरदर्शी कदम उठाने होंगे ताकि बैंकों से लेकर ग्राहक तक को बल मिले और अर्थव्यवस्था को गति दी जा सके।

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