CHINESE WHISPERS

The lawyer defending Housing

promoters Rakesh and Sarang

return money to the bank and

Development and Infrastructure

Wadhawan, the accused in the Punjab

and Maharashtra Co-operative Bank

case, has borrowed lessons from the

case of Vijay Mallya (pictured), whom

too he represents. He told the court his

clients were ready to sell their assets to

requested the court not to attach their

assets because they would lose value.

He cited the instance of Mallva's ₹200-

crore jet, which depreciated in value to

₹2 crore because it was kept as attached

Depreciating assets

History of lithium-ion battery

The 2019 Nobel Prize for chemistry honours three men who contributed to the development of this ubiquitous power storage device



TECH-ENABLED

DEVANGSHU DATTA

♦ he lithium-ion (LI) battery is now such an integral part of modern life, we don't think about its history. Every mobile phone and laptop is powered by LI batteries. They are also used to power electric vehicles and store renewable power.

The 2019 Nobel Prize for chemistry honours three men who contributed to the development of this ubiquitous power storage device. They are Stanley Whittingham, (State University of New

York, Binghamton), John Goodenough (University of Texas, Austin), and Yoshino (Asahi Kasei Corporation, Tokyo).

Most people saw the Nobel announcement on some device powered by their "baby". LI batteries are lighter and more compact than previous batteries. Packs can be scaled up, to handle large power demands, and also scaled down, for micro-currents.

Batteries became common enough by the late 19th century when electric torches became common. The automobile industry (and ships) use batteries as well. The theory of circuitry was understood by mid-19th century.

Any circuit has two electrodes, a cathode and an anode. Electrons (negatively charged ions) and positively charged ions flow in opposite directions, with electrons going from anode to cathode, while positive ions move vice-versa. That sets up the current. Recharging involves reversing the current direction, storing electrons again. The electrodes are connected through a medium called an electrolyte (liquid or solid) to complete the circuit.

Early batteries used lead-acid combinations and were heavy and inefficient. Modern battery research was triggered by weapons developments in the Cold War, and by the Space Race. By the 1970s, fears of fossil fuel supply disruptions caused by the 1973 Yom Kippur War and the 1979 Iran Revolution, triggered interest in renewables. Environmental concerns also started to play their part.

One issue with earlier rechargeable batteries is that the electrodes are worn down, and every recharge causes deterioration. Lithium is the lightest metal and yields ions easily, meaning less deterioration. But lithium is very chemically active. It's never found in a free state since it explosively reacts with oxygen in the air at room temperatures. This is why there are issues with LI batteries occasionally exploding.

Whittingham (born researched superconductors. In the 1970s, he laid the basis for the material sciences that led to the discovery of materials now used in LI cathodes. The first material was titanium disulphide, a chemical with a crystalline structure containing lithium ions in spaces at molecular levels — this is intercalation. The anode was a lithium mix, which easily releases electrons. This battery was too explosive to be commercially viable though it delivered higher voltages than anything before it. His lab in Exxon suffered a succession of fires caused by failed experiments.

Goodenough (born 1922 and the oldest recipient of the Chemistry Nobel) is unusual even by the standards of Nobel winners. He was born dyslexic in an era when educational methods for people with reading difficulties didn't exist. He also made contributions to the development of Random Access Memory for computers. He still goes into the lab every day.

Goodenough found cathodes made out of metal oxides, instead of metal sulphides, had higher potential (pun intended). In 1980, he showed cobalt oxide with intercalated lithium ions is higher voltage and long-life.

Using Goodenough cathodes, Yoshino (born 1948) created the first commercially viable LI battery in 1985. He swapped out reactive lithium in the anode with petroleum coke, a carbonbased material that also intercalates LI.

One big advantage is that the intercalation happens at the electrodes and the ion move through the electrolyte without reactions. The Yoshino battery never uses metallic lithium, which makes them safer.

By 1991, commercial LI batteries were widely available. A modern LI battery stores about 150 watt-hours of electricity per kilogram. NiMH (nickel-metal hydride) batteries store a maximum of 100 watt-hours per Kg. Older lead-acid batteries store only 25 watthours/kg. LI holds charges much longer and they don't have "memory effects", which means complete discharge isn't required before recharge. However, LI batteries also deteriorate fast even if they aren't being used and they are heat-sensitive. And once in a while, they do explode.

They're also more expensive partly because battery packs can't be managed without smart chips to control power flows. The battery in a laptop for instance, is actually a pack of several batteries. It is controlled by an onboard chip that tracks temperature via sensors, and controls voltage and charge/recharge functions.

Nobels are handed out for all sorts of research, often after some practical application or another, has been discovered. But few Nobels will have this sort of instant resonance for everybody.

property without maintenance, he said.



The campaigning for state assembly elections in Maharashtra saw the use of many interesting means of outreach. During a rally addressed by Home Minister

Rajnath Singh (pictured), after the usual interaction with the audience, the minister asked those gathered to switch their phones' torchlights on something seen usually at sports stadiums and music concerts, when viewers keep these lights on as a show of support.



Friendly foray

At a recent investor summit in Indore, Madhya Pradesh, Chief Minister Kamal Nath narrated the backstory of India Cements' decision to foray into north India. He said, N Srinivasan, managing director of India Cements, was a good friend and that he would often urge the latter – albeit jokingly – to rename his firm South India Cements. The reason? The firm didn't have a presence in north India. Taking his complain seriously, Nath said, Srinivasan had decided to set up India Cements' first ever plant in north India, choosing to locate it in... you guessed it... Madhya Pradesh. Nath added that his "good friend" would invest ₹2,500 crore in the state over the next three years.

How to defuse the co-operative bomb

The minimum capital requirement for a co-operative bank is ₹1 lakh - an amount that has remained unchanged since 1949



BANKER'S TRUST

TAMAL BANDYOPADHYAY

he government is ready to bring in changes in the laws governing multi-state co-operative banks. A three-member committee is being set up to look into the issues and suggest legislative changes to prevent another Punjab and Maharashtra Co-operative (PMC) Bank-like scandal and empower the banking regulator. The changes in legislation could happen as early as during the winter session of Parliament. It's fashionable to talk about dual

control (by the central bank and the respective state governments) and political interference but the rot is deeper. Not legislative changes alone — the cooperative banking sector needs to be overhauled in every possible way. For instance, many community-based urban co-operative banks (UCBs) do not advertise staff vacancies but hire relatives of past and/or present directors and people from their own community. In other cases, the vacancies are not advertised widely and, even after adver-

tisements, community and political affiliations play a key role in the selection of staff. They are mostly chosen because of "connections" and/or recommendations from existing directors of the banks or local politicians. The prospective candidates are often encouraged to seek recommendations from the directors of the bank before appearing for an interview.

Once the "connected" employees are placed in key positions, it becomes easier for the bank management to have its way in sanctioning loans to the undeserving borrowers. Ideally, the UCBs should play the role of financial intermediaries in urban and semi-urban areas, catering to the needs of the non-agricultural sector, particularly small borrowers. In reality, the money borrowed from an UCB. in many cases, is used to repay a loan of another commercial bank till the UCB loan itself turns into a non-performing asset (NPA). The huge divergence in reported/audited figures of such banks and assessed figures of the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) is no secret and the possibility of auditors being hand in glove with the corrupt management cannot be entirely ruled out.

Huge exposures to borrowers whose financials do not warrant sanction of such loans by the board of directors is a recurring theme in most UCBs — large and small. There are several instances of large-scale diversion of funds among group companies and the so-called evergreening of NPAs by round-tripping of funds — within the co-operative banking sector and between the co-operative



banks and the commercial banks.

Restructuring of loans with retrospective effect and/or without assessment of the viability of the restructuring package to manage NPAs — an offshoot of "commission-based" lending — is also a concern. If the RBI decides to take a close look at the key lending decisions in some of the UCBs with politically affiliated management, the pattern is uniform. Typically, the UCBs follow a threestep approach. First, money is given to politically-affiliated borrowers at concessional rates, diluting risk management; then a benign stand is taken towards NPA identification and provisioning; and, finally, they are not too eager to recover the bad loans. unless they are exposed, a la PMC Bank.

Similarly, lending under a consortium arrangement is not based on independent, professional assessment but political affiliations even as loans are also given to trusts created by the directors and their relatives to circumvent regulations that ban loans to the directors. Loans are thrust upon the employees first and then diverted to such trusts. The staff accounts are often money mules — conduits to serve the interests of the corrupt management.

That's the story of HR and lending. It does not end here. The contracts/tenders for sourcing of products (stationery, furniture, fixtures, air conditioners etc) and services (AMC contracts, IT, security, etc.) are typically bagged by entities owned by relatives of the directors and/or politically connected entities. The same rule follows when these banks identify premises to open new branches.

How do we change the ways these banks work? Here are some unsolicited suggestions.

The minimum capital requirement for a co-operative bank is ₹1 lakh. The amount has remained unchanged since 1949. How can an UCB — spreading over many states or confined to one — operate with such a small capital base? Shouldn't it be raised many times more? For the first set of new private banks, the RBI licensing norms of 1993 had asked for ₹100 crore as minimum capital; by 2014, it was raised to ₹500 crore.

There must be a limit on the amount these banks can lend to a borrower and even deposits they can accept. Payments banks cannot take more than ₹1 lakh deposit from one person; small loans form three-fourths of the loan books of the small finance banks: microfinance entities need to give unsecured loans to 85 per cent of the borrowers. However, for UCBs, there is no norm. They are treated on a par with large commercial

banks. Often such banks are used to park black money. A cap on deposits will deal a blow to this

The link between the subservient staff and the shady management can be broken by creating a centralised recruitment platform which can be overseen by the Registrar of Co-operative Societies (RCS), representing the state governments, responsible for managing the UCBs, while the RBI can oversee regulations and supervision. The banking regulator should prescribe the minimum criteria for being a director and the socalled fit and proper norm must be applicable to key management personnel. The auditors should be appointed by the RCS or the RBI instead of allowing the banks to choose from a panel.

Of course, the entire crop of co-operative banks should not be painted with the same brush. Small and beautiful banks such as Shri Mahila Sewa Sahakari Bank Ltd in Ahmedabad and Mann Deshi Mahila Sahakari Bank Ltd at Mhaswad (Maharashtra) be nourished in niches, changing the lives of millions, but the big ones should be encouraged to become small finance banks or merge with commercial banks, and the bad ones should not be allowed to exist. A higher capital requirement will force consolidation.

Co-operation being a state subject, any reform in this area requires consultation with various stakeholders but since they are allowed to take public deposits, the onus is on the RBI to defuse the co-operative bomb.

The writer, a consulting editor with Business Standard, is an author and senior adviser to Jana Small Finance Bank Ltd. Twitter: @TamalBandyo

INSIGHT

The infrastructure of opportunity

A civilised society can't give up on government schools



MANISH SABHARWAL & ASHOK REDDY

riting from Jail in 1942 Jawaharlal Nehru asked, "If life opened its gates and offered them education, how many among the millions of Indians would be eminent scientists, educationists, technicians, industrialists, writers and artists, helping to build a new India and a new world?" Eight decades later, he would surely be disillusioned with India's government school enrolment of 55 per cent — on a trajectory to decline to 40 per cent — compared to 85 per cent in America, 90 per cent in England, and 95 per cent in Japan. This decline is hardly a case against private schools or a call for higher regulatory cholesterol for them; our social, economic and political progress of the last two decades is unimaginable without them. But it is surely a failure; if anything for our citizens should be free with quality, it should be school education. We'd like to make the case that the Diet Coke approach to reform — the taste without the calories — does not work and the multi-decade tinkering with class sizes, qualifications, salaries, resources, curriculum, and infrastructure is not sufficient to fix government schools. We must take on the difficult issues of government school governance and performance management.

India's 100 per cent school enrolment ratio masks many challenges; a 30 per cent dropout ratio, policy making that confuses school buildings with building schools, only 50 per cent children of grade 5 being able to read grade 2 text, and learning outcomes declining despite spending ₹1.2 lakh crore spent on Sarva Shiksha Abhiyaan between 2009 and 2014. Almost 400,000 of our 1.5 million schools have less than 50 students (70 per cent of schools in Rajasthan, Karnataka, Jammu and Kashmir, and Uttarakhand). We have too many schools; China has a similar number of students with 30 per cent of our school numbers. And school learning outcomes have become more important for India than they were in the past for three reasons; First, the new world of work has redefined employability to include strong foundations (3Rs of reading, writing and arithmetic) and soft skills (the fourth R of relationships). Second, these can't be taught in three months or three years but need 12 years. Finally, India's farm to non-farm transition is not happening to factories but to sales and customer services where the wage premium is directly dependent on 4R competen-

Recent government school reform reduced class sizes, higher teacher salaries, raised teacher qualifications, and increased spending — have helped but reached the point of diminishing returns. Government schools don't need more cooks in the kitchen but a different recipe vet education reform has often danced around the difficult issues of governance and performance management. Performance management is often equated with teacher attendance yet teachers need to be evaluated on outputs (skills and scores) and inputs (competence and classroom management).

Scores can be measured based on continous assessments or end of year exams. Skills and concepts are harder in a world where soft skills — curious, courageous, confident, risk taker, team player and communicator — are hard skills. Teacher competence needs judging on criteria like child interaction, knowledge, planning capacity, communication, feedback abilities, collaboration and drive towards excellence. Classroom management needs assessment by classroom observation of teaching and learning (teaching often happens without learning), classroom setup, instructional differentiation (for process, product and learning styles), and communication (clarity,

questioning, responsive). Governance in most schools revolves around control of resources. But school governance is about learning planning and design, responsiveness to students and parents, teacher mentoring and management, building community relationships, integrity, training identification and planning, feedback capability (formal and informal), role modelling, and fair decision-making. School policies and procedures play a very important part in learning outcomes but the current allocation of decision rights lets down learners. Any builder of institutions know that governance and performance management must combine to if they want to create a culture of excellence. A fair culture of fear of falling and hope of rising is today absent in our government schools.

Education figures on Lists I (Centre), II (State) and III (both) of India's Constitution, Socrates once said that a slave who has three masters is free: performance management and governance in government schools is sabotaged by this constitutional fragmentation. The annual central government allocation to primary education (about ₹53,000 crore)

is a fraction of the total state government spending yet Delhi exerts an influence disproportionate to their monetary contribution through legislation (for instance, RTE), National Boards (CBSE) and drafting for other work (election, census, etc). Delhi must dump the overly centralising Right to Education Act (similar to the replacement of the overly centralised No Child Left Behind Act of the US being replaced by the Every student succeeds Act). And state government must figure out how to consolidate schools (this will reduce the teacher shortage and multi-grade teaching), dump opaque transfer policies (in a system where tenure and compensation are off the table, location is a potent tool for performance management) and introduce budget flexibility.

The challenges of fixing our government schools are economic, ideological, and political but are not uniquely Indian nor uniquely current; Abraham Lincoln filled up an election form describing his education as "defective". The most dangerous lies are the lies we tell ourselves but it's time to take on vested interests that are stealing our future. Becoming a \$5 trillion economy depends on productive enterprises and workers. The skill of our workers greatly depends on the 12 years they spend in school because of a new world of education (Google knows everything), new world of organisations (employment has shifted from being a lifetime contract to a taxicab relationship), and a new world of capitalism without capital (intangible assets are more valuable than physical assets). India missed her tryst with destiny for many reasons but one of them was surely our weak government schools. She has now made a new appointment but meeting meeting this new appointment surely involves fixing the governance and performance management of our government schools because they are integral to our infrastructure of opportunity.

The writers are co-founders of Teamlease

LETTERS

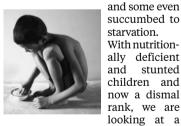
A rare politician

This refers to "Congress and Savarkaritis" (October 19). V D Savarkar has been a revered name in India as a patriot and freedom fighter for decades on account of which the honorific Veer (brave) was added to his name and recognised even by his political opponents. He is one of the rare politicians who enjoyed the respect even of those who were ideologically opposed to him. It is recognition of his sufferings and sacrifices for the nation. He was an accused in the Gandhi murder case but most people including his political opponents rejoiced when he was found not guilty. It was during the rule of the political party opposed to him that the government of the state of Bombay (now Maharashtra) named an important road in the city of Bombav (now Mumbai) on which important institutions are located Veer Savarkar Marg.

R C Mody Saket

Gloomy future

This refers to "The nutrition crisis' (October 17). It is shocking to read that India is slipping and ranked lower than our neighbours, and with sub-Saharan Africa in the Global Hunger Index. The public distribution system was one way of making food grains reach the poor but with Aadhaar being made mandatory, many might have missed out on receiving the benefits



gloomy future.

Paradoxically, India has the dubious rank as the third most obese nation in the world after the US and China. There is no shortage of food grain in India but there is an inability to conserve its food grains because of poor storage facilities. If one were to go by media reports, thousands of tonnes of rotten food grains have been burnt because of poor storage. Even our Supreme Court has commented on these losses. The estimated loss is over ₹60,000, crore. Instead of spending money on more fruitful and beneficial projects. India has gone into a frenzy of statue erection spending thousands of crores. This money could have been better spent on modern, hygienic and pest-free systems of storage to help the farmer, the poor, the needy and the hungry.

stunted

HNRamakrishna Bengaluru

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All letters must have a postal address and



Brexit's tangled webs

Parliament gives protection from a no-deal exit, but little else

third postponement and the spectacle of a prime minister declining to sign a letter requesting a legally binding deferment and sending Brussels a separate signed letter explaining why an extension was bad for both the UK and the European Union (EU), underline the increasingly tangled web that is the Brexit process. The British Parliament, meeting on a Saturday (October 19) for the first time in 37 years, has punctured hopes of settling the vexed issue of the terms of Britain's withdrawal from the EU. After the financial markets' hopeful euphoria last week, British MPs voted 322 to 306 to thwart the deal that Prime Minister Boris Johnson had negotiated with the EU. Saturday's vote, moved by an expelled Tory minister Oliver Letwin, stipulated that Parliament would withhold approval of the PM's deal until the Bill for implementing Brexit had been passed. The Letwin amendment sought to forestall the possibility of an approval of Mr Johnson's deal being followed by a failure to pass the Withdrawal Bill, which could have provided the PM with an opportunity to fulfil his openly stated wish to pull the UK out of Europe without a deal. Although the Benn Act of September mandated against that possibility, it says much for Parliament's lack of trust in Mr Johnson that it thought fit to pass more legislation to ensure this does not occur.

A good part of that distrust concerns the fine print of the deal Mr Johnson, an unelected PM heading a minority government, negotiated. As with his predecessor Theresa May's twice-rejected deal, it was the issue of a customs border between Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland (an EU member-state) the only land border between the UK and EU — that proved the sticking-point. Free access of people and goods though this border has been crucial in maintaining the peace of the Good Friday Agreement of 1998, which ended the Irish civil war. Ms May's withdrawal plan involved keeping the UK in the EU — with guarantees on citizens' rights, fishing rights, compensatory payments, and so on — while the new trade relationship was being discussed. The problem was the "Irish backstop", which would have continued the arrangement if the new trade agreement was not finalised by the 2020 deadline. Since the likelihood of a new trade deal being in place by then was low, this meant the UK would have to stay in the EU without any say on rules and regulations after 2020. Mr Johnson's deal sought to address this post-2020 anomaly by the device of keeping Northern Ireland de jure in the UK but de facto in the EU (a position Ms May had declined). A customs border would be drawn in the Irish Sea instead. This arrangement involved the UK collecting customs for the EU and requiring suppliers between the UK and Northern Ireland filling in fiendishly complex VAT (value-added tax) documents to ensure that goods shipped between the two territories would not be smuggled into the Irish Republic. Analysis suggests that the deal would have condemned Irish businesses (especially small ones) to the kind of procedural problems Indian businesses faced after the introduction of GST (goods and services tax), with VAT refunds contingent on companies providing proof that the goods shipped for domestic markets had not been exported, and so on. This week is expected to see the government attempt another vote on the deal. It is possible to confidently predict more turmoil.

The promoter pledge

Regulators must join hands to check misuse

ndia's financial and equity-market regulators are reportedly working in concert to review and tighten the framework for pledging shares. Tighter oversight and regulation of this common practice, along with better disclosure norms, would help improve a method of raising funds, which often leads to over-leverage and increases the risk of contagion across sectors because of linkages between financial entities.

The practice of promoters pledging equity as collateral to raise money has many downsides. It can cause steep losses in market value in the company concerned, which means loss of wealth for minority shareholders. If there is a default on the debt, the money is often unrecoverable by selling the pledged shares because the share price plummets. The loss to creditors can lead to broader contagion, which affects the entire market. This risk is heightened when the pledged shares are those of promoters in private banks and non-banking financial companies (NBFCs). NBFCs often have opaque holding structures, making it difficult to assess the cumulative exposure of the group. Banks are deposit-taking entities where a drop in the market value of the equity affects their ability to borrow or extend credit. This practice has certainly contributed to the issues plaguing the financial sector, including banks, debt mutual funds, and NBFCs.

There is also the question why promoters pledge shares. This is often to raise funds for personal purposes and it is usually a red flag about a company. A healthy listed business should not need to pledge shares to raise funds. A promoter who pledges shares is often looking to route the money back through a series of shell companies or use it to manipulate stock prices. Moreover, as the track record shows, there is little hesitation among promoters in defaulting to lenders. Disclosure norms are also often bypassed by using shell companies to avoid apprising investors about the existence of pledged positions.

The implications are wide-ranging enough to necessitate consultations between the Securities and Exchange Board of India (Sebi), Reserve Bank of India (RBI), Insurance Regulatory and Development Authority, and Pension Fund Regulatory and Development Authority to cover all the possible angles in terms of default and malpractice. There is a need to ensure that the debt exposure is adequately collateralised. This means that there should be a review that takes the outstanding debt of the group as well as individual promoters into consideration, rather than simply looking at single transactions. The RBI norm that the market value of shares should be at least twice the borrowed amount has often been flouted in practice and promoters routinely use complicated structures to understate the debt exposure. Moreover, the RBI norms apply only to banks and NBFCs and such deals often involve mutual funds as well.

Sebi has reportedly proposed that the collateral should be raised to four times the exposure and this is worth serious consideration. It is also necessary to examine the end uses of borrowed funds. Mutual funds should also have ceilings on their exposures to such transactions. In general terms, the pledging of company stock as collateral for a loan is not considered a responsible use of equity. Since this is common practice, it behoves regulators to tighten the framework governing such transactions.

ILLUSTRATION: AJAY MOHANTY



Common goods for health

Doing better on CGH is the essence of the Indian health policy challenge today

SNAKES & LADDERS

A nancient theme in health policy is the tension between prevention and cure. There is a need to do more on "Common goods for health" (CGH): The population-scale interven-

tions which reduce the disease burden. This reflects new threats such as pandemics and air quality, and also the unfinished agenda of traditional public health in India. Given the growing fiscal exposure of the government to health care expenses, there is now a direct fiscal impetus to do more on these populationscale interventions.

At the foundation of health

policy is the debate on prevention versus health. While the health care community focuses on curing people, there are important reasons in favour of prevention and not cure. From the viewpoint of any individual, it is better to not get sick as compared to getting

well, even assuming the best health care system. In recent years the World Health Organization (WHO) has launched a project titled "Common Goods for Health" (http://bit.ly/CGH-india) which aims to bring fresh energy back into the foundations, in population-scale public health. In the technical jargon of public economics, this covers market failure in the form of 'public goods' and 'externalities'. The phrase "Common Goods for Health" is a nice term that is more easily understood, and avoids the near-universal confusion associated with the terms 'public health', 'public good', and 'public health expenditure'

Consider the dangers of a global pandemic such as Ebola, the problems of air quality in India, or the health consequences of environmental degradation and climate change. Each of these is a very large prob-

lem that has adverse consequences for hundreds of millions of people. If we merely focused upon health care, this is an inefficient response. We should not merely think about public policy responses in the form of curing people in an Ebola epidemic, or curing the people who are harmed by air quality in North India, etc. We must go upstream, and combat these problems at the root.

the foundations of public health. As an example, the best defence against global pandemics lies in the public health infrastructure that deals with communicable disease, including disease monitoring systems, emergency response,

This calls for strengthening

disease monitoring systems, emergency response, and immunisation. The political and governance systems, the world over, prioritise the urgent over the important: So these foundations tend to get overlooked. Doctors, politicians, and victims see value in health care and attach inadequate value to the invisible public health work, through which fewer people get sick in the first place. It is in the nature of the governance process to creep away from public health towards health care.

In India a lot remains to be done on the old agenda of public health, from a hundred years ago, which includes water and sanitation, communicable disease surveillance, and the institutional capacity for

dealing with epidemics or natural disasters. A fresh look at the conditions prevalent today adds new elements to this public health agenda, including air quality, road safety, drug safety, food safety, water pollution, and antimicrobial resistance.

There is an interesting connection between CGH and public finance. Improvements in public health will reduce the extent to which people get sick, thus giving reduced health care expenditures, and thus reducing the fiscal burden associated with government programmes which pay for health care.

This justifies an enhanced focus upon CGH for governments worldwide, who have a worrying fiscal exposure to health care, even if the main consideration was public expenditure and not the happiness of the populace. Whether the government pays a health care provider, or the government pays an insurance company, ultimately the magnitude of these payments is linked to covered health care events. Doing better on CGH is a stepping stone for the financing and thus the feasibility of Universal Health Coverage (UHC).

While the Indian state was traditionally in the periphery when it came to the health care expenses, in the last decade, the fiscal exposure to health care expenses has risen sharply through the launch of many government-sponsored health insurance schemes or "GSHIS" (http://bit.ly/gshis-paper). There are concerns about the magnitude of the implicit debt associated with the health insurance promises made by the Indian state (http://bit.ly/implicit-debt). A fresh focus upon CGH will help reduce the expenditures and the fiscal risk associated with the promises that have been made about health care.

The CGH agenda cuts across many ministries and agencies of government. As an example, problems like air quality or road safety have a major impact upon health care expenses in India, and these problems lie outside the Ministry of Health. There is a need for coordination mechanisms that cut across various elements of the Indian state that have to discharge these responsibilities. This is similar to the problems of disaster risk resilience, which cut across many parts of the Indian state.

Suppose we lived in a world where health care worked perfectly well and it was entirely on the household balance sheet. Even in this world CGH is worth fighting for as people are happier if they never get sick in the first place.

In India we have many difficulties in health care. This amplifies the importance of CGH: It is better for a person to not get sick, as compared with going into a faulty health care system.

The Indian state is increasingly exposed to expenditures associated with health care. This amplifies the importance of CGH: To the extent that people do not get sick, the fiscal burden associated with a given set of promises made by the government will be smaller.

Global health policy is a supertanker and, of course, there will be no substantial change in the short run. The WHO's CGH project is, however, a push in the right direction, and is likely to slowly bring about a shift in health policy worldwide. It is particularly important in India, where the traditional public health agenda has obtained inadequate attention, and the disease burden is consequentially high.

The writer is a professor at National Institute of Public Finance and Policy, New Delhi

Blue skies and clear lungs

inter is nearly here and we in Delhi are waiting not to exhale because the cold, heavier air will settle and air pollution will choke us. But with a difference — there is outrage and there is action. There is even evidence that we have bent the pollution curve. Though not enough, it does suggest that action is beginning to have an impact. This is what we need. I say this because often, in our united anger, we forget to stay focused on the need to act, and in a way that we can see the difference, so that we can do more. This

is critical. Only when we remain focused on what we must do can we get our non-negotiable right to breathe.

So, what has happened? First, there is public information about the state of air quality and its link to our health. Some years ago, the government brought in the air quality index (AQI), by which we were told about the impact on our health at each level of pollution. Then, we have a large number of air qualitymonitoring stations providing

real-time informations providing real-time information. This knowledge, available on a breath-to-breath basis, is on our phones, in our face. We know when it is toxic to breathe. We know and we are angry. Let's also be clear, this network of stations does not exist in any other part of the country — most cities have one or two monitors, and so they don't know. But in Delhi, toxic air has become a political issue — almost a tug of war between different parties vying for credit. This is great.

Two, there is action. Over the past few years, much has been done — from the introduction of

the much cleaner BS VI fuel ahead of schedule to the closing of coal-based power plants to the fact that today all use of pet coke, furnace oil, and even coal in Delhi has been banned for industrial purposes. This is good, but not enough. Delhi needs a complete transition to clean fuel — gas or electricity.

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aware of the toxicity of this fuel. A few years ago, the Supreme Court put the first congestion charge to deter trucks spewing pollutants from traversing the city. This year this step will fructify. The Eastern and Western Expressways, designed for heavy-duty traffic to bypass the city, have been finally made operational. Then entry points into the city have been made cashless, using RFID technology, and this means deterrence will be effective.

The number of trucks entering will reduce, as will pollution. We now need to supplement this with public transport augmentation on a scale that will take us all out of private vehicles. Right now, this is not happening.

More has been done. But what is important is that these steps are showing up in numbers. My colleagues have analysed decadal air-quality data and they find the following. One, the duration of the smog period is getting shorter — it is starting later and ending earlier. Two, the data from air-quality

stations that have been operational for the past eight years or so, for which there is comparative data, shows a downward trend — close to 25 per cent decline in the past three years, as compared to the previous three-year period. This is corroborated by the data from all stations as well.

This is good news. Now the bad news: There is a decline, but it is not good enough. We need to reduce another 65 per cent to get air of the quality we deserve.

It also means that we have run out of small options — the first- and second-generation reforms are done. And, with all this over, we still have a huge distance to go. The transition to clean air requires a massive change in the way we burn fuel. All coal use must be banned or enforcing pollution norms for this dirty fuel should be stepped up in a big way. We must reduce the number of vehicles on the road by investing in buses, metros, cycling tracks, and safe pavements for walking. We must also replace the older vehicles with BS VI, at least the more polluting varieties.

But all this will not add up until we address local sources of pollution — simply burning garbage, dust and smoke from all cooking sources, and the rest. These are difficult to control unless we have effective, ground-level enforcement or alternatives that can be used. Plastic and other industrial and household garbage has to be segregated, collected, and processed so that it is not dumped and burnt. But local enforcement is the weakest link in the antipollution fight. But let's stay focused — engaged and outraged. We will win this battle for our blue skies and clear lungs.

The writer is at the Centre for Science and Environment sunita@cseindia.org Twitter: @sunitanar

Pursuing Harvey Weinstein



JENNIFER SZALAI

e live in polarised times, but one thing still seems to be shared across the political divide: Sexual misconduct. As Ronan Farrow documents in his absorbing new book, *Catch and Kill*, mistreating women is a bipartisan enterprise.

san enterprise.

This can make for some twisted alliances. Mr Farrow describes how he put together his explosive 2017 exposé of numerous sexual assault and harassment allegations against the Hollywood producer Harvey Weinstein, a long-time Democratic fund-raiser and "part of the brain trust

around Hillary Clinton."

Mr Farrow quotes gleeful emails between Weinstein and Dylan Howard, editor of *The National Enquirer*, whose parent company, American Media Inc (AMI), was run by David Pecker, a staunch supporter of Donald J Trump's. Mr Howard forwarded Weinstein some "dirt" on the actor Rose McGowan, who had tweeted the month before about "my rapit" whom she didn't name.

rapist," whom she didn't name.

Catch and Kill gets its title from a tabloid practice that AMI had honed over the years: purchasing a story in order to bury it. AMI's strategy is an essential part of this book's narrative, but what Mr Farrow suggests is that NBC News, which employed him at the time, did something with the Weinstein story that wasn't dissimilar. Instead of hush money, he says, NBC officials used the institutional levers at their disposal to shut down his work on Mr Weinstein — from intermittent discouragement to elaborate stonewalling to a legal review that turned

out to be both labyrinthine and absurd.

They even ordered Mr Farrow and his steadfast producer, Rich McHugh, to take the rather extraordinary step of halting their reporting; then, when his article ran in *The New Yorker*, NBC released a statement saying that the reporting NBC officials saw (and that Mr Farrow says they tried to impede) had not been up to snuff.

Mr Farrow documents the bafflement and frustration he felt as he and McHugh devised strategies to continue with their news gathering. Getting women to talk on the record about sexual trauma is exceedingly difficult, requiring delicate negotiations and an enormous amount of trust. When NBC ordered Mr Farrow to stop his interviews, he was put in the position of trying to reassure his nervous sources while his employer wasn't reassuring him at all.

In *Catch and Kill*, Mr Farrow talks candidly about his relationship with his adopted sister Dylan, who has long said that their father, Woody Allen, molested her when

she was a child. Making his way to a hardwon interview with McGowan, Ronan who feels guilty for asking Dylan years ago why she couldn't "move on" — asked his sister's advice for how to talk to someone who's "accusing a very powerful person of a very serious crime."

DOWN TO EARTH

SUNITA NARAIN

"Well, this is the worst part," Dylan told him. "The considering. The waiting for the story." She continued: "If you get this, don't let it go, OK?" He didn't let it go, though there were plenty of people who tried to pry him loose. In addition to the "all white, all male" chain of command at NBC, there was Mr Weinstein himself, waging a war on all fronts.

on all fronts.
Part of the book is about Black Cube, the mysterious Israeli firm that Mr Weinstein's team hired to conduct intelligence work, like compile dossiers on journalists. A Nissan Pathfinder Mr Farrow kept seeing in front of his home turned out to be a tail. He received multiple barrages of spam texts; he later learned that the texts were possibly connected to attempts to track his cellphone.

But Mr Weinstein also cultivated an inside line to NBC itself. At a *Time* magazine

gala, Mr Farrow learned that Noah Oppenheim, the president of NBC News, was sitting at a table with Mr Weinstein.

In the book, the warning signs about Mr Oppenheim start out small but ominous. Presented at one point with a considerable list of Mr Farrow's findings, including a recording of Mr Weinstein admitting to groping women against their will, Mr Oppenheim wasn't entirely convinced. "I don't know if that's, you know, a crime." he told Mr Farrow. "We've gotta decide if it's newsworthy."

It became clear to Mr Farrow that NBC's chain of command was nervous about the story for reasons other than an excess of journalistic caution. He learned that the network had brokered at least seven nondisclosure agreements with women who brought complaints of discrimination or harassment at NBC. Mr Weinstein might have known something about this too.

One of the biggest revelations in *Catch* and *Kill* is that a former NBC employee named Brooke Nevils says that the former NBC anchor Matt Lauer raped her, forcing her to have anal sex despite her repeated protestations that she didn't want to.

The behaviour documented in *Catch* and *Kill* is obviously and profoundly distressing but there are some hopeful threads, too. The first has to do, strangely enough, with the fury with which Mr Weinstein tried to stop the journalists following the story; his extreme measures indicated that he knew there were institutions with sufficient power to hold him to account.

The second has to do with how some of the people Mr Weinstein tried to enlist in his efforts turned into conscientious objectors. One of those turncoats was "Sleeper," who supplied Mr Farrow with incriminating documents about Mr Weinstein and Black Cube. Mr Farrow can't tell us much about this source, but he does tell us this: "She was a woman and she'd had enough."

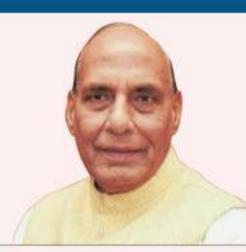
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CATCH AND KILL Lies, Spies, and a Conspiracy to Protect Predators Ronan Farrow

Brown & Company; \$30; 448 pages



MONDAY, OCTOBER 21, 2019



RIGHTS AND WRONGS Union defence minister Rajnath Singh

Ever since we abrogated Article 370, there has been nothing like human rights violation on the land of Jammu and Kashmir... But the Congress people do not understand this

RationalExpectations



What if JSW had paid ₹19,700 cr?

Had ED attached Bhushan Power's assets post-sale, how would JSW have got its money back? This is a big setback for the IBC

TIS CERTAINLY possible, as the Delhi High Court has held, that the Prevention of Money Laundering Act (PMLA) overrides other Acts like Sarfaesi and the Insolvency and Bankruptcy Code (IBC); in which case, the Enforcement Directorate (ED) is well within its rights to attach Bhushan Power & Steel's properties since, according to its investigations, they were part of a criminal act. You could argue that, even if this is true, the ED should take action against Bhushan's promoters, and not the company; indeed, if the company's assets are frozen, they could well become worthless in the one to two decades, or more, that it will take for the case to be finally settled in the country's various courts. The ED, on the other hand, will argue that, if it doesn't attach the proceeds of the crime, substantive justice will not have been served.

Right now, the ED, along with other agencies, was investigating various charges, including siphoning off of funds by the promoters of Bhushan Power. While it concluded that the charges were correct and attached some of Bhushan Power's assets, the problem is that, at the same time, Bhushan Powerwas also being sold by the banks it owed money to, using the IBC law. The case now revolves around whether the company can be sold when the ED is taking action against it since it is clear the prospective new owner (JSW Steel) cannot be asked to pay good money—in this case, ₹19,700 crore—without having a cast-iron guarantee that neither will any assets be seized nor action taken against the company (Bhushan Power) that it is now taking over. As luck would have it, the sale process got inordinately delayed. Even though JSW

empowered to

attach property.

But, this was always

known, and since

many IBC cases

involve allegations

of funds-siphoning,

why were these

even sold via the

IBC? This is how

governments cause

investor distrust

had emerged as the likely winner a long time ago, as in the case of Essar Steel, Bhushan's promoters tried to regain control by offering to pay the banks all the money If there is a crime, that was owed to them; this was to be done by converting the authorities are the debt to cumulative redeemable preference shares.

By September, however, all of these challenges had been

dealt with, and JSW was declared the winner of the auc-

tion process; its bid gave bankers around 40% of their

outstanding loans to Bhushan. The question that now arises is what would have happened if JSW had made the payments for Bhushan Power and, after that, the ED attached the latter's assets. Would the government have ensured JSW got its money back from the banks, or would it tell the firm to approach the courts for justice; and possibly that, since JSW knew Bhushan's promoters were being probed, it should have factored this in its calculations.

It is obviously true that, at the time the IBC was being formulated, it wasn't possible for the government to anticipate each legal challenge that would arise, the interpretation various courts of law would give, or the 👤

various ways in which defaulter-promoters would try and retain control of their companies even though the law was quite explicit in not allowing this. But, surely, when a challenge of the sort that has come up in the JSW-Bhushan case arises, the government needs to respond by changing the law, and issuing necessary clarifications? It is always possible that JSW may eventually win the case and, when it approaches

the Supreme Court on the issue, the SC may agree that once a company has been sold, its assets can't be attached, and that certain types of prosecution will have to be halted. But, when such a big challenge arises, this is not something the government should leave to the vagaries of the court. Indeed, given that it is investigating siphoning off of funds and other promoter misdemeanors in so many of the firms being sold in the insolvency courts, you'd think the government would be working overtime trying to fix this. Alternately, it should have ruled that wherever there is an investigation taking place, the company will not be sold, either through IBC or any other process.

The immediate consequence of this incident is likely to be that bidders are going to be more cautious when it comes to bidding for IBC firms, at least till such time as there is more clarity on whether or not assets can be attached and criminal/other proceedings can go on after a firm is bought. This is ironic since, at a time when investment levels in the country continue to plunge, the IBC process was seen as a sure-shot way to get investments back. For one, fairly good quality assets were available at 50-60% discount levels; two, since the concerns being sold had already set up large capacities, a buyer wouldn't have to waste years trying to get all manner of permissions,

including environmental ones, to set up similar capacities.

Several people will cite the JSW-Bhushan case to argue that, as in the case of 2G and various mining licences that were cancelled, the courts are derailing the growth process. Nothing could be farther from the truth. For one, when there is a corruption case, what else were the courts to do but cancel the licences? Nor is it true that this affected investment in the sector since, as it happens, the bulk of telecom investment, in 3G and 4G networks, took place after the licences were cancelled. Two, once the 2G licences were cancelled, they were quickly reauctioned and, in some cases, bought back by the companies themselves—companies like Telenor had, by then, disassociated themselves from the 2G accused like Sanjay Chandra of Unitech; meanwhile, the criminal cases continued against people like Chandra, and no action was taken against the companies. In the case of the coal and iron ore mines, similarly, there would have been no problem if, after the illegal mines were cancelled, the government quickly auctioned them and gave all clearances. It can't be that difficult for the government to apply the same principle: the criminal cases against individuals will continue, but no case can be initiated against new promoters or the firms themselves.

NannySTATE

UP's mobile ban in colleges/universities is ill-advised and does more harm than good

TUDENTS AND TEACHERS in Uttar Pradesh's universities are no longer allowed to carry mobile phones inside the premises of colleges/universities. The directorate of higher education of the Yogi Adityanath-led government, as per an IANS report carried by The Hindustan Times, has said that the ban will foster a "better teaching environment for students". It is difficult to see the basis of the belief, and, indeed, any merit in the government's decree. The Uttar Pradesh government had earlier banned mobile phones in the chief minister's official meetings, including Cabinet meetings, on the grounds that messaging apps were posing a distraction. The fact that messaging apps, and other internet enabled functions serve the core needs of many government functions, from maintenance of law & order to mounting disaster relief, seems to have been lost on the state leadership.

What the UP government seems to forget is that, in the digital world, connectedness has distinct gains for education, just as it has for governance. Internet offers students access to supplementary educational material that can bridge the deficits plaguing classroom teaching, especially in a state like UP. Indeed, the Kerala High Court recently ruled that the right to access internet is core to the right of persons to education. Invalidating the expulsion of a student from a girls hostel for violating a mobile phone ban, the Kerala HC stated that "the usage of mobile phones in order to enable the students to have access to internet will only enhance the opportunities of students to acquire knowledge from all available sources based on which they can achieve excellence and enhance quality and standard of education." More important, it is rather ironic that adults who may be trusted to exercise the right to vote, and choose able leadership can't be trusted to use phones in a judicious manner.

ENCRYPTING REBELLION

REAL-WORLD REVOLUTIONS NEED NON-COMMERCIAL TECH TOOLS. PROTESTERS EITHER DESIGN THEIR OWN OR FALL BACK ON OPEN-SOURCE APPS

There will be no more Facebook revolutions

LEONID

BERSHIDSKY

WITTER REVOLUTION, **FACEBOOK** revolution these terms became widespread during the Arab Spring rebellions at the beginning of this decade. They are outdated now: For today's protesters in Hong Kong and Barcelona, or for Extinction Rebellion activists in capitals around the world, the social networks and even messenger applications run by big US corporations are becoming a secondary tool, and one not used for organisational purposes. After protesters in Egypt forced president Hosni Mubarak to resign in February 2011, one of the revolution's public faces, Google executive Wael Ghonim, went on CNN to be interviewed by anchors Anderson Cooper and Wolf Blitzer.When Blitzerasked him what was going to happen next, the following exchange ensued: Ghonim: Ask Facebook.

Blitzer: Askwhat? Ghonim: Facebook. Cooper: Facebook. Blitzer: Facebook. You're giving Facebook a lot of credit for this?

Ghonim: Yes, for sure. I want to meet Mark Zuckerberg one day and thank him, actually. This revolution started online. This revolution started on Facebook.

That was so 2011. If there is any one app today's protesters would want to credit, it is Telegram. But not even this itinerant messenger, whose team was based in St Petersburg, Berlin, London and Singapore before ending up in Dubai, plays the same kind of outsize role that Facebook and Twitter took on in previous protests, up to and including Hong Kong's Umbrella Movement of 2014.

With its powerful group messaging functionality and "channel" feature which allows users to broadcast information, Telegram is the central media platform for the Hong Kong protesters of today, who are now pushing for greater democracy for the former British colony. It is also the go-to tool for pro-indepen-



Telegram bot to collect data for an app it

created to map protest activities and

street clashes.

For its part, Extinction Rebellion has been moving from Facebook-owned WhatsApp to Telegram because it allows bigger group chats, and because it has a voting tool that allows independent-minded rebels to decide what they want to do. (This tool is also used in Hong Kong).

Signal, the encrypted messenger, and Mattermost, an open-source alternative to the enterprise messenger Slack, also are popular among activists.

Direct file transfers, encrypted messengers and specially created apps have become essential for spreading all kinds of material that might land its distributors in trouble—such as the fake boarding passes Democratic Tsunami sent out so protesters could get into the Barcelona airport on October 14, causing more than 100 flights to be cancelled.

Of course, today's activists still use social media platforms run by big US corporations. But when they do, it is mainly for outward communication such as with the media, not with people actively involved in the protests. Since the Arab Spring, governments have mastered use of the big commercial social media networks themselves. Since the Hong Kong protests began, both Facebook and Twitter have complained about China's attempts to use them for disinformation and counterpropaganda. Besides, many protesters believe their anonymity isn't well protected on the social networks, Malek Dudakov of the Moscow-based think tank Center for the Study of New Communications wrote in a recent report about the use of the technology by the Hong Kong protest movement.

Telegram, run by a nonprofit founded by Russian libertarian Pavel Durov, has a reputation for resisting government attempts at censorship and infiltration. Russia has attempted to block the messenger for refusing to hand over encryption keys to domestic intelligence, but Telegram has fought back and is still

accessible in most of Russia. Mainland $China \, has \, had \, more \, success \, in \, cutting \, off \,$ access to it. But even on Telegram, the risk of losing one's anonymity is a potential problem. One protest group moderator in Hong Kong was arrested in June. Durov has accused China of trying to take his service down in Hong Kong with distributed denial of service attacks.

Those efforts contrast with concerns that big US companies are more likely to cooperate with the authorities.

Earlier this month, Apple Inc. approved a smartphone map app that Hong Kong protesters have been using for distribution in its App Store after an initial ban. But then it swiftly took HKmap.live down again. Apple Chief

Executive Officer Tim Cook explained that the Hong Kong cybersecurity authority had told the company that the app was being used by criminals to "target individual officers for violence and to victimise individuals and property where no police are present."This episode prompted the Democratic Tsunami in Catalonia to release its own app for Android only—and not through the Google Play Store, in which most Android users get their apps.

Even though its services are blocked in mainland China, Google has also behaved in a way some protesters, and even some of its employees, find suspicious. Citing an internal rule against the monetisation of current events, the Play Store banned a game called "The Revolution of Our Times" that

Facebook and

Twitter are where

propaganda

battles rage and

insults fly, not

where action is

coordinated

allowed players to act out the role of Hong Kong protesters. The game's developers had promised to give 80% of their proceeds to charity. Big Tech's role, even if

unwitting, in unrest has always looked like an aberration. Where the profit motive is involved, cooperating with governments makes more sense than facilitating those

who fight them. Now, the dust is settling on the tech revolution, and real-world revolutions need non-commercial tech tools. So protesters either design their own or fall back on open-source apps or those developed by nonprofits. Facebook and Twitter are where propaganda battles rage and insults fly, not where action is coordinated—and that is a natural consequence of their evolution as big businesses that attract way too much government attention.

So, if you're wondering what comes next for all the modern-day protest movements, don't ask Facebook.

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Nobel lessons for Indian research

One hopes that decision-makers in the Indian government will make administrative data readily available to researchers from all nations for its own development

THIS YEAR'S NOBEL prize in Econom-

NIRVIKAR SINGH

There is much to be

learned from

administrative data

despite the

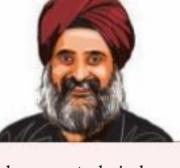
challenges in

identifying clear

causality between

policy and outcome

Professor of Economics, UC Santa Cruz Views are personal



ics was particularly noteworthy for several reasons. For the world as a whole, the fact that one of the winners, Esther Duflo, was only the second woman and, at 46, by far the youngest ever— Economics winner stood out. Duflo has been vocal in pointing out the deficiencies of the profession in terms of making women feel welcome and valued. Her prize will help accelerate a corrective process already underway. The prize, of course, was based not on

gender, but the work done, and it was noteworthy also for recognising a methodological approach that has sought to understand the causes of poverty by doing field experiments, or randomised controlled trials. Duflo's cowinners, Michael Kremer and Abhijit Banerjee, while a decade or so older, are still relatively young prize winners, which adds to the statement being made about the value of this kind of research. The benefit, of course, is precision with respect to causes—if one is interested in whether A causes X (and how much is the impact), controlling for other factors, applying the 'treatment' A, and having a benchmark, or 'control' ('not A'), to further isolate the impact of A on X is much more reliable than using data that was collected for other purposes. In the latter case, one might pick up correlations and confuse them with causality, or be unable to control for other factors, and end up with misleading estimates of impacts. I will return to the methodology shortly.

Kremer was cited for pioneering experimental work in East Africa (interesting fact: my colleague, Jonathan Robinson, once co-authored an important paper with Duflo and Kremer, explaining seeming puzzles in the use of fertiliser by Kenyan farmers, and he has gone on to become an important practitioner in this academic area), but Banerjee and Duflo have mainly worked in India. Indeed, Banerjee and Duflo are husband and wife, and the supreme aca-

demic power couple. Their story, and the fact that they have also been producing non-technical books that explain the relevance of their work (Poor Economics, published in 2011, and *Good Economics* for Hard Times, being published next month), has been dominating the headlines, overshadowing their co-winner to some extent.

Of course, the fact that Banerjee is of Indian origin, and has been commenting and advising on Indian economic policy, has been extremely important for a nation that has been somewhat starved of good news in recent months. There are certain ironies in his academic pedigrees from India—Presidency

College and Jawaharlal Nehru University—in terms of the state of higher education in India, as well as national and state politics. For the moment, everyone is celebrating his prize, and he is "fully Indian," something that Raghuram Rajan was once accused of not being. Coincidentally, Banerjee and Rajan wrote and spoke together

exactly on the day the prize was announced; Banerjee's recommendations included prescriptions for fiscal and monetary policy in the short and medium terms, as well as the suggestions that might most appeal to the government—'pray' in the short run, and 'pray more' in the longer run. Banerjee and Rajan were two of over a dozen coauthors of a report on India's economic strategy, which I commented on in these columns at the beginning of 2019.

Baneriee and Duflo, and many others, have made working on the Indian economy more mainstream, and respected in the economic profession in the US—a welcome outcome of their passion for doing relevant economic research. I have previously highlighted the portal, Ideas

for India, where non-technical accounts of much of this work can be found. Alook at the range of that research reminds us that there is much to be learned from socalled administrative data (such as household surveys) as well, despite the challenges in identifying clear causal relationships between policy'A' and outcome 'X.' Diane Coffey and Dean Spears used different kinds of data—and not just field experiments—to make the case for paying more attention to sanitation and access to toilets, with visible impacts on policy and politics. In other cases, such as the status of household savings in India, the only useful data may be from

large-scale surveys, and not smallish field experiments.

One hopes, therefore, that after the immediate glow of the prize has passed, decision-makers in the Indian government—both politicians and bureaucrats—at the state and national levels will be more and more open to making administrative data readily available to researchers from all nations, and giving freedom to researchers to

conduct field experiments. It must be noted, university researchers are already subject to strict standards for how they deal with human's ubjects' by their home institutions. A corollary of this openness is being willing to allow NGOs or nonprofits the flexibility to fund, and collaborate on these studies since they can often bring in local, ground-level expertise that makes the research more reliable, or make it possible to do the 'trials' at scales that are more informative, and policy-relevant. One should also rememberthat bureaucrats can be an important source of information for asking the right questions, and designing the right policies to test-strengthening that avenue of interaction could also reap rewards for India's economy.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Malnutrition issue Figures in both Global Hunger Index

(GHI) and UNICEF's 'State of the World's Children' starkly show that the incidence of malnutrition is alarmingly high in India. They underline the enormous task before the National Nutrition Mission (NNM) launched last year to make India free from malnutrition. India's position at 102 out of 117 countries is a reality check for us. Being a country with the largest number of malnourished people in the world is a dubious honour. It is scandalous that over 90% of children between six months and two years in India are not fed a 'minimally acceptable diet'. UNICEF data put the stunting rate among India's under-fives at 37.9%. The stunted lives of children deprived of nourishing food are no great advertisement to an 'emerging economic powerhouse'. It is a proven fact that the diet during the first 1,000 days after conception lays the foundation for a child's physical growth and mental development. Quality food in sufficient quantity is vital for a child's immunity and cognitive development. Malnutrition leaves children vulnerable to life-threatening diseases. Poverty, poor sanitation, unhygienic living conditions, lack of access to clean water and ignorance conspire to cause malnutrition. It follows that the economic malaise afflicting the 'Suffering India' has to be fought to make a success of the fight against 'serious levels of hunger'. It is a paradox that granaries overflow and still people go hungry. The caste angle to the problem of malnutrition is often left unstated. Most of those who suffer from malnutrition belong to the lower castes and most of the upper castes turn a blind eye to their anaemic compatriots. The Modi government can pass the patriotism test and make India strong with strong human capital by making earnest efforts to meet the nutritional needs of the country's impoverished multitudes. — G David Milton, Maruthancode

Write to us at feletters@expressindia.com

R.N.I. Reg. No. 6188/61 Printed for the proprietors, The Indian Express (P) Ltd by Vaidehi Chintaman Thakar at The Indian Express (P) Ltd Press, Plot No. EL-208, TTC Industrial Area, Mahape, Navi Mumbai-400 021. Phone: 22022627/67440000. Fax: 022-22856323.

FINANCIAL EXPRESS



ILLUSTRATION: ROHNIT PHORE



DIGITALLY READY

Fears of digital

There is a need to address the risk of "something going wrong" for those on the fences to join the digital bandwagon

HERE IS OFTEN ANGUISH, on why adoption of digital payments is slow. One of the reasons, some claim, is that we have an overly ambitious "less cash" vision, and in trying to cover theentire 700million+ transacting population, in the digital payment revolution, we are ignoring what the customers want. Considering the level of poverty and consumption patterns, the practical approach would be to aim 500 million bank/wallet customers. For the other 200 million customers, who are still struggling for a decent living, our standard of digital inclusion should be different, at least, for some time. Subsidy/ pension/ grants being credited into their bank accounts through the Aadhaar Payments Bridge—a digital platform operated by NPCI—and easy access to AePS for cash withdrawal at citizen service centres or bank branches should be good enough. For these users, cash is the most comfortable payment instrument.

This target group of 500 million customers is not homogenous. They fall in three categories

a) active users/early adopters (100

b) casual users/early majority (250 million), who are sitting on the fence to turn into active users; and

c) "cash meets all my needs" users/late majority (150 million), who require some form of mandate like its been done for GST/income tax payment beyond a cap or what is being contemplated for toll gate payment on national highway from December 1, 2019.

Immediate focus, therefore, should be on the second group of 250 million casual users. Though these have smart phones, debit cards, and hail from an economic strata that demands regular payments for various utility bills and other household needs, the fear of "something going wrong and not knowing how to resolve" makes them reluctant. They understand the likely benefits of digital payments, but use the digital channel only when necessary. They do not invest adequate time in understanding how to secure transactions or use grievance redressal

mechanisms. One unhappy experience is good enough to turn them off. Living with cash is considered more comfortable than inviting risk. Instances of insensitiveness of some Payments Service Providers (PSPs) while rolling out products, without completing the rigours of thorough testing just to meet the time-to-market deadlines, goes against the very principle of digital transactions. Neither the simplicity of UPI nor cashbacks attract these users.

The fear of account being debited without generating a charge slip while using the debit card at a restaurant or a shop makes many nervous. Many, also opt for Cash-on-Delivery (COD) optio while conducting e-commerce transactions, knowing very well that a cashback of 2-5 % is available on digital mediums—cards, UPI, wallets and internet banking. A few also opt COD to check the quality or quantity before payment. Most e-commerce firms accept return within a week and also have simple process for refunds. But anecdotal evidence of technical glitches, privacy violation, wrong or delayed credit, deter them from such transactions. Mostly, debit cards are used for cash withdrawal from ATMs.

RBI has been responding positively by issuing guidelines/circulars/notification to ensure such customers of safety and security of transacting online. The Payment System Board—a committee of the central board of RBI reviews its position periodically, and issues strategic directions to the regulatory departments for framing policy. The policy measures cover two primary areas.

a) transactional security & data privacy; and

b) grievance redressal.

Transactional Security and Data

Privacy To protect the customers from unauthorised transactions or unauthorised sharing of data with third party, and to ensure that service is available to the customers as promised, RBI has

mandated that a) payment cards conform to EMV

standards b) EMV enablement of all card

acceptance points c) multi factor authentication—first in Card Not Present (CNP) transactions and subsequently for Card Present (CP) transactions, and then other digital channels

d) Mobile alerts by core banking system (CBS) to customers for every debit and credit transactions

d) To provide the customer with the option of transaction cap and mode of transaction

e) PA-DSS and PCI-DSS compliance of payment system infrastructure at all service providers in the value chain

f) need for certification of acceptance terminals—Cards and Aadhaar g) periodic information security

audit

h)creating facility for monitoring of transaction velocity and frequency i) data localisation, etc.

Use of Aadhaar for payment transactions has also seen regulatory changes. Certain categories of banks such as cooperative banks require license to offer mobile banking to their customers over the fear that over-enthusiasm, without corresponding security infra, may land the customers into difficulties. RBI has also mandated certain issues of payments service offering to be placed before the Board for deliberation. One may recall, that way back in 2011 when RBI introduced two-factor authentication for CNP transactions, it was accused of "killing e-commerce". Transactions have increased multi-fold since. It is a clear case study that transactional security helps growth of digital payments. India was a clear leader in twofactor authentication in e-commerce, and recently many countries world over are migrating to this practice.

Grievance Redressal

The second set of measures initiated by RBI refer to Grievance Redressal Mechanisms. They constitute the hygiene factor and bedrock for migrating to a less-cash society in due course. Many of the regulatory measures are a direct response to customer complaints, of gaps in the machinery and crying need for attention. Measures implemented so far are

a) zero liability of customers in unauthorised digital transactions

b) stringent Turn Around Time (TAT) for resolving the complaints, failing which a penalty is imposed on the service provider (India's TAT requirements for digital payment system is much better than many developed countries)

c) complaint position to be placed before the Board

d) Scheme of Ombudsman for digital transactions

e) extending the period of service availability

f)customer consent before onboarding onto digital channel and the option to fix amount cap or withdrawal d) contact details for customer com-

plaints to be prominently displayed e) availability of 24x7 call centre or

service centre in case of 24x7 services. In addition, all customer service measures including transparency in

service charges are equally applicable for digital payments.

We have a long way to go before we can claim ourselves to be a less cash society. Our ecosystem is evolving and we need to be patient. Payment innovations like UPI are taking place at the right pace, but UPI volumes alone should not be the benchmark to fix targets for banks and payment authorities. The qualitative indicator like the level of customer complaints should be the primary parameter for monitoring. Since RBI is planning to publish payment system data on a monthly basis, in a granular manner, bank-wise data on customer complaints and security breaches needs to be included. The Payment Gateways, Collection Aggregators and other non-bank players in the value chain are now processing millions of digital payments every day; but there are hardly any regulations on them. They must be regulated and supervised by RBI, before an explosion takes us by surprise. For digital payments to covers all sections of society and less cash vision to be realised early, care and caution is as much necessary as speed.

> (This is the last piece of the article series on digital payments.)

TEACHING RIGHT

A silent revolution

VRINDA **SARUP**

Former Secretary School Education and Literacy, Government of India. Views are personal

Harayana, in association with Language and Learning Foundation, is using a new model to redefine primary education

RITICALTO A good foundation is a grip on the language. This is less complicated when the local language is the medium of instruction. It is for this reason that the draft New Educational Policy lays a strong case for early foundational learning in language and maths. This is well recognised amongst educationists, academia and practitioners. Numerous methods exist for achieving this objective, both in the government and private-run schools. Yet, there is no mandated common comprehensive design or methodology to ensure a strong foundation in language and mathematics by Class 3. This situation exists across all government schools. The National Achievement Studies of the NCERT or ASER shows poor performance of children in language learning and simple mathematics. This is alarming, as the bulk of enrolments (70-75%) are in government-run schools.

A government primary school in Mirzapur village of district Kurukshetra, Haryana seems to be following a different approach. Five-seven year olds in Class 1 and Class 2 can read stories from their textbooks and story books with fluency (in their dialect, which is a form of Hindi). These children are from deprived backgrounds and are first-generation learners. There are taught by young teachers, who are earmarked teachers for Class1 and 2, and have been intensively trained by the Language and Learning Foundation

Haryana seems to have demonstrated a resolve to tackle the quality learning challenge by going to its very root ensuring sound language learning at the base

(LLF), an NGO working closely with the government of Haryana to build a strong foundation of language and learning in seven districts of the state. The Haryana Education

Department appears committed to sustain the methodology that has emerged, to ensure that language learning foundation of Class 1 to 3 students is strong. The local education administrators are confident that by the time of the next National Achievement Studies, ASER or the state's own assessment of student learning, their

Class 3 children will scorebetter. To ensure better results, educational administrators have themselves gone through training and have developed a sense of understanding to use this methodology.

The LLF instructional design seems to have brought a complete transformation in the teachers' approach towards teaching local language, which is Hindi in this case. The teachers gradually and progressively help children develop an understanding of Hindi words, sentences, followed by stories, poems and writing skills. The workbooks are wellcrafted and are used by the children to develop writing skills. These can also be used as colouring books or material for augmenting motor skills. There is compatibility between the prescribed class textbook, Jhilmil, and a comprehensive Teacher Guide, which reminds the teacher of the scope and variety of classroom transactions that she has been trained for, including the way in which she can move forward.

The block level supervisors and the LLF support staff are regular visitors to the school. They hold periodic reviews to reinforce the teaching methodology as well as to assess learning outcomes.

Haryana seems to have demonstrated a resolve to tackle the quality learning challenge by going to its very root ensuring sound language learning at the base of schooling. They have also, unhesitatingly, invested in the best expertise to build a system of teacher training and supervisory management, which will help attain this objective. If the Mirzapur village primary school is anything to go by, then both the government of Haryana and LLF are showing a way forward to a new young India.

COLD RUSH

NDIA, AS WE know, is not an Arctic nation, or even a 'near-Arctic' one, but China has designated itself to be one. India seems to have little business interest in the resource-rich area, and the proposed sea and land routes that are strategically emerging in the region with the melting of the sea ice, are not exciting enough to elicit a resounding response. Attending the Reykjavik annual Arctic Circle Assembly from October 9-12, the question that recurrently arose was—are we needed in this region, and, if yes, what should be the nature of our business?

The Arctic Circle, established in 2013, is a quasi-government body that works with the Icelandic government to create the largest, unique and open Arctic platform. It is a meeting place for over 2,000 delegates from 60 odd countries. The Assembly does not uphold any specific embodied mandates, but is key in setting the trends and priorities for the increasingly challenging future in all the eight Arctic nations—Russia, Canada, the Kingdom of Denmark (including Greenland and the Faroe Islands), Finland, Iceland, Norway, Sweden and the United States,

plus the countries that border them. An analysis of the varied interests in

press.com

the four day Assembly with around 170

Icy challenge Distrust towards Chinese interference in

Arctic is an opportunity for India



small and large parallel sessions and plenaries, reveals that apart from representations from Iceland, the USA followed by Norway, Canada, Russia and the UK had the highest number of attendees. Interestingly, though China's presence was substantive in the sessions, it was the outlook of the other countries towards China that was worth noting. Greenland (Denmark) for instance expressed deep distrust towards China's investment in its aviation sector. Also observable, was the keen interest of multi-nation academia in discussing China's leading role in

the establishment of new routes in the region—notably the Polar-Silk route and the Belt and Road Initiative.

Four delegates from India's nodal institute—National Centre for Polar and Ocean Research, Goa, working on Polar science presented the nation's scientific stronghold in the Arctic.

India has had a vibrant Arctic scientific programme since 2008. It has been posturing for scientific leadership for many decades now—the commencement of the Antarctic programme, way back in 1982, was a significant step towards this. India's



dedicated competence in scientific research, perhaps, helped the nation gain the Antarctic Treaty Consultative Meeting membership, and, thereon, the Arctic Council observer status in 2013. This has been renewed again in 2019. This competence also beckons collaborative international research augmentation and enhanced expertise in global science.

The Reykjavik's Assembly had a mere 10 purely scientific, and about 40 academic sessions, out of a total of 170. The rest ranged from policy and governance to infrastructure, industry and concerns of

the indigenous populace. Notwithstanding India's scientific advancement, posturing for further involvement calls for an active interest from ministerial bodies. Although, India has been partnering with Russia for oil and gas in the high Arctic, the Reykjavik Assembly saw no participation from the sector. The Arctic Council, the intergovernmental forum established by the eight Arctic nations that concerns itself with all issues (except military security), interestingly does not prohibit commercial exploitation of resources in the Arc-

tic. It simply mandates sustainability, "without harming the interests of local populations and in conformity with the local environment". The Arctic Circle Assembly meeting at Reykjavik was a reflection of this very pulse.

The Arctic needs a new direction—scientific expertise, investment in oil and gas sector, infrastructure investment, new fishery technologies and skilled human capital are all being urgently sought. Is India capable of helping with expertise, manpower and investment? Maybe, yes. India's various policy bodies and industry federations need to strategise and devise a new and challenging roadmap for interventions in the region Antarctica, as we know, is not likely to open up for exploration for many years but the Arctic discourse is different and mandates an aggressive and need-based directive. A noted professor on Arctic Politics, Lassi Heininen, during a plenary, in fact, warned nations—to be more specific, one nation—that claim to be an Arctic stakeholder that the Arctic belonged to its 'right-holders'. With a quiet acceptance of India in the global fora and increasing distrust towards Chinese investments, it is an opportune time for India to show its indelible Arctic leadership to the world.

#ExpressExplained

RBI SLASHES, BANKS NOT MUCH

reporate slashed by 110 bps, or 1.1

(Between Feb & Sept 2019,

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

TELLING NUMBERS

93% milk samples found safe, 41% had quality issues: survey

from Kerala.

two from Madhya Pradesh and one

residues of aflatoxin M1 (a type of mycotoxin that can cause disease and

death) beyond permissible levels. This

was the first time milk in India was

tested for aflatoxin M1, which comes

into contact with milk through feed

and fodder, not regulated in the coun-

try at present. States with the highest

levels of residues of this contaminant

were Tamil Nadu (88 of 551 samples),

followed by Delhi (38 of 262) and

Kerala (37 of 187). Most of the residues

non-compliant for antibiotics, most

were taken from Madhya Pradesh

(23), followed by Maharashtra (9) and

Out of 77 samples found to be

were found in processed milk.

Uttar Pradesh (8).

In 368 samples, the survey found

ON FRIDAY, the Food Safety and Standards Authority of India (FSSAI) released the National Milk Safety and Quality Survey 2018. It recorded data from 6,432 samples of milk, out of which 40.5% were processed samples and 59.5% were raw milk samples, taken from towns with populations of 50,000-plus. The samples were analysed for fat and SNF (solids not fat), 13 adulterants and three contaminants.

Overall, above 93% of the samples (5,976 of 6,432) were found safe for human consumption. However, about 41% of the samples, though safe, fell short of one quality parameter or another. Among the samples found unsafe,

12 were adulterated (6 with hydrogen peroxide, 3 with detergents, 2 with urea, 1 with neutralisers). Nine of the samples were taken from Telangana,

CRITERIA	TOTAL SAMPLES	PROCESSED	RAW	%
Survey total	6,432	2,607	3,825	-
Safety issues	456	271	185	7.1
(I) CONTAMINANTS				
Aflatoxin-M1	368	227	141	5.7
Antibiotics	77	40	37	1.2
Pesticides	1	0	1	<0.1
(II) ADULTERANTS				
Urea	2	0	2	<0
Detergents	3	1	2	<0.1
Hydrogen peroxide	6	3	3	0.1
Neutralisers	1	1	0	<0.1
Percentages are based on the total 6,432 samples in the survey. The sum of individual				

failures will not add up to 456 because some samples failed on more than one parameter Source: National Milk Safety and Quality Survey 2018, FSSAI

THIS WORD MEANS

THYLACINE, OR TASMANIAN TIGER

Considered extinct, yet 'sightings' continue

INTEREST IN an animal considered extinct has been freshly revived, with Tasmania's Department of Primary Industries, Parks, Water and Environment releasing a document that mentions possible sightings between September 2016 and September 2019. Called thylacine, or Tasmanian tiger, the animal is actually a marsupial, believed extinct since 1936, when the last one known, Benjamin, died in captivity in Tasmania's Hobart Zoo.

It was a carnivorous animal that looked like a large dog, with a a band of stripes at the rear. Present in mainland Australia over 2000 years ago, it was limited to Tasmania in later years before it disappeared from there too, mainly because of hunting by humans, diseases and competition from the dingo, a wild dog.

Over the decades, there have been many claims about sightings but most of them have turned out to be wrong identification. The James Cook University in



Thylacine specimen. Australian Museum

2017, in fact, launched a search in 2017 following possible sightings. In 1980, a study of 320 sightings, which had been reported over 1934-80, found that roughly under half of these could be considered "good sightings". Now, the Tasmanian government has released eight recent records of people having encountered the animal.

SIMPLY PUT QUESTION & ANSWER

Why interest rates aren't falling

Since February, RBI has cut its interest rate by 135 basis points. Yet, bank lending rates for new loans have not fallen by much while interest rates on many existing loans have actually gone up. What explains this?

UDIT MISRA

NEW DELHI, OCTOBER 20

SINCE FEBRUARY, the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) has aggressively cut the repo rate. This is the interest rate that the RBI charges the banks when it lends them money. By cutting the reporate, the RBI has been sending a signal to the rest of the banking system that the lending rates in the system — the interest rates that banks charge from you and me when we take a loan — should come down. This process of repo rate cuts leading to interest rate cuts across the banking system is called "monetary policy transmission".

The trouble is, in India, this process is rather inefficient. For example, between February and August, the RBI cut reporate by 110 basis points — 100 basis points make a percentage point – from 6.5% to 5.4%. But, the interest rate charged by banks on fresh loans that they extended during this period fell by just 29 basis points — that is just 27% of the amount by which the reporate came down.

Frustrated by the sluggish transmission, the RBI decided to cut the repo rate by another 25 basis points in October and urged banks to link their lending rates to the repo rate. Yet, for the most part, the banking system has ignored the signalling and only some banks have reduced lending rates on new loans by 10 basis points.

In essence, while the RBI has cut its lendingrate to the banks by 135 basis points (or 1.35 percentage points) in the nine months since February, the interest rates being charged to the common consumer this Diwali have come down by only about 40-odd basis points.

Indeed, even though it is counter-intuitive, interest rates on existing loans (not new loans) have actually gone up by 7 basis points.

Why does RBI want lower interest rates?

Since February, India's economic growth momentum has rapidly decelerated. Projections of GDP growth rate have come down from roughly 7.2%-7.5% in February to 5.8%-6.0%.

There are two key problems in the economy and a lower interest rate regime is expected to help in resolving both.

The main issue is that people are not consuming at a high enough rate. On paper, the argument is that if banks reduce their lend-

percentage points) Deposit rate* **LENDING RATES vs** Lending rate on existing loans** **REPO RATE** Lending rate on fresh loans** All figures in basis points (1 bp = 100 percentage points) FOREIGN BANKS MOST RESPONSIVE (Feb-Aug 2019; reporate cut by 110 bps) **Private** Scheduled Rate **Public Foreign** commercial sector banks sector banks banks banks -8 -55 Deposit rate* -1 -23 **Lending rate** 14 on existing loans** -25 Lending rate -48 -66 on fresh loans** *Weighted average domestic term deposit rate **Weighted average lending rate Source: Monetary Policy Report, October 2019

ing rates, they would also have to reduce their deposit rates (the interest rate banks pay when we park our money with them in a savings bank deposits or a fixed deposit). This, in turn, will incentivise people to save less and spend more.

The other problem in the economy at present is that businesses are not investing in existing or new facilities. Part of the reason is that they have unsold inventories because people are not buying as much; as such, they argue, what is the point of borrowing money and investing. But part of the reason is also that the interest rate charged on loans is quite high. If banks reduce the interest rates on loans, more businesses are likely to be enthused to borrow new loans for investment. This is particularly so as the government has recently cut corporate tax rates in the hope that it will boost the corporate sector's profitability and get it thinking of investing more.

No matter which way one looks at it, RBI's decision to cut reporates was a justified move, especially since overall retail inflation has been well within the RBI's comfort zone of 4%.

So, why aren't interest rates coming

Simply put: Because reporates have little impact on a bank's overall cost of funds, and reducing lending rates just because the repo has been cut is not feasible for banks.

Here's why. For any bank to be viable, there must be a clear difference between the interest rate it charges from borrowers on loans it provides and the interest rate it gives to consumers on deposits it accepts. The difference between these two sets of interest rates has to be not only positive but also big enough for the bank to make profits.

To attract deposits, banks pay a high deposit rate. Such deposits make up almost 80% of all banks' funds from which they then lend to borrowers. Banks borrow a minuscule fraction under the repo. So even sharply reducing the reporate doesn't change the overall cost of funds. Unless banks reduce their deposit rates, they will not be able to reduce lending rates.

Why are banks not reducing their deposit rates?

That's because if a bank were to reduce its deposit rates, depositors would shift to a rival bank that pays better interest rates or park more and more of their savings in small saving instruments such as public provident fund, Sukanya Samriddhi Yojana etc that pay much higher interest rates.

There is another aspect. Even if banks wanted to reduce their deposit rates, they can't always reduce them immediately. Miren Lodha, Director, CRISIL Research, said 65% of total deposits are "term" deposits (fixed for a certain duration) and take, on an average, up to two years to get repriced at fresh rates. "Therefore, banks generally go slow on reducing the interest rates on advances as deposits take longer to get repriced."

But why are interest rates going up on existing loans?

This, too, has to do with the banks trying to manage their finances. If they are under pressure to reduce the interest rate they charge on new loans, then one of the things they could do is to push up the interest rates on old loans that allow for such flexibility. It also has to do with the financial health of a bank; weaker banks would be forced to raise rates to cover for past losses, explained Suvodeep Rakshit of Kotak Institutional Equities.

What hasn't linking the lending rate to the repo rate worked?

Because it is not a viable solution. The banks cannot link their lending to the repo rate because repo doesn't determine their cost of funds. For a repo-linked regime to work, the whole banking system would have to shift to that — in other words, along with banks' lending rates, their deposit rates too must go up and down with the repo. But if such a regime were in place, depositors would have earned 1.10 percentage points less interest rate on their savings account.

Longer version on www.indianexpress.com

Uterine transplant: how it's done, risks, debate A uterine transplant, like that for other

ANURADHA MASCARENHAS

PUNE, OCTOBER 20

IT IS now one year since India's first baby was born to a mother with a transplanted uterus (The Indian Express, October 18). Such cases are rare across the world — Radha, whose parents have just celebrated her first birthday, is the 12th such baby worldwide. Now demand has risen, especially at Pune's Galaxy Care Hospital, where the transplant had been done on Radha's mother Meenakshi Valan of Gujarat on May 19, 2017. Since them the hospital has got over 1,000 applications.

The reasons, the results

Approximately 1 in 500 women are estimated to have uterine factor infertility according to the September issue of the British Medical Bulletin. In India, about 17% of all women face issues relating to infertility, and the reason is related to the uterus in 20% of these. For women whose uterus is not healthy, or who do not have one, a transplant is the newest form of infertility treatment.

Valan had a scarred uterus due to multiple abortions and cases of stillbirth. Her mother donated the uterus. Usually, women related to the recipient are potential donors. The donor may be either living or deceased, and is chosen from among women up to the age of 50 years.

Dr Shailesh Puntambekar, laparoscopic surgeon and Director of Galaxy Care Hospital, said worldwide there have been 30 uterine transplants and 15 babies born. Among the babies, one was born after a cadaveric uterus was transplanted. The transplanted uterus is generally intended to be removed after the woman has undergone one or two childbirths.

Normal reproduction is not possible with a transplanted uterus — a transplant makes sense only with in vitro fertilisation (outside the body). The first successful transplant was performed in Saudi Arabia in 2002 but did not result in pregnancy. In Turkey, pregnancy following a 2011 transplant lasted only eight weeks. The first birth after a transplant, in 2014, happened in Sweden.

Is it the future?

Uterine transplants are still extremely rare, complicated and expensive. In the case of Meenakshi — and Shivamma, a woman who had undergone a transplant the day before Valan underwent hers — the entire process (up to the birth of Valan's child) was made free because these were the first two such cases in India.

In the earliest cases, doctors took almost 13 hours to retrieve the uterus, because they performed open surgery. With laparoscopic intervention, the time has now come down to about six hours, Dr Puntambekar said. While the donor should ideally be a cadaver, it is difficult in practice — the donor has to be less than age 50, her uterus should have produced children, and the risk of organ rejection is higher when it is from a dead person. Minimally invasive surgery (robotic surgery) has become the standard procedure and in the future, it is likely that the recipient of the uterine transplant has to undergo only one surgery as vessels can also be sutured laparoscopically, Dr Puntambekar said.

organs, requires clearances at several levels. Now the cost is going down as patients are being discharged on the 14th day following the transplant.

Ethical considerations

There has been debate whether uterus transplants are ethically justified. There is vast literature on this debate, covering psychological and physical risks as well as complications arising out of immunosuppressive therapy. According to the British Medical Bulletin's September issue, concerns have been raised about the welfare of living donors who may end up regretting their choice to donate. Experts suggest that a living donation is justified only after informed consent by the donor, and this after counselling by physicians and psychologists.

Dr Puntambekar said that in the last two years, they have done eight transplants and kept several on hold as they wanted the couples and family members to be extremely sure and committed about a transplant.

Telangana transport strike: what unions want, why govt is unyielding

SREENIVAS JANYALA HYDERABAD, OCTOBER 20

SINCE OCTOBER 5, some 47,000 employees of the Telangana State Road Transport Corporation (TSRTC) have gone on strike, with no resolution in sight two weeks later.

Their demands

TSRTC employees have listed 26 demands. These include merger of the TSRTC with the state government, which would make them eligible to a number of perks and benefits; reimbursement of government dues to TSRTC; and an allocation of 1% of the state Budget to TSRTC. Other demands include job security for drivers and conductors; and immediate reimbursement of a salary hike due since April 1, 2017.

TSRTC union leader Ashwathama Reddy said employees called for the strike also because they felt the government was preparing to privatise the corporation. Reddy said employees fear that Chief Minister K Chandrashekar Rao would hand over the corporation to PV Krishna Reddy, managing director of Megha Engineering and

Infrastructure Ltd (MEIL), which is executing some major works under the Kaleswaram irrigation project in Telangana. These apprehensions started after MEIL acquired last August a controlling stake in Olectra Greentech, which makes electric vehicles. Olectra at present runs 40 electric buses in Hyderabad to the Rajiv Gandhi International Airport; TSRTC unions fear that more routes would be privatised and given to MEIL.

Government acts tough

Chief Minister K Chandrashekar Rao. who was supported by TSRTC unions during the statehood movement, has dug in his heels saying he will not negotiate with the unions over their demands.

Transport Minister P Ajay Kumar said: "The Telangana Rashtra Samiti never promised or assured that TSRTC would be merged with the state government. It was not a poll promise either. Salary hike is due but it will be done at an appropriate time, and there was no need for the TSRTC unions to go on strike urgently during Dussehra, which caused immense hardship to people."

Dussehra is Telangana's most important festival, with lakhs travelling to their homes



A commuter carries his luggage at a bus terminal in Hyderabad on Saturday. AP

in the state. Although the unions had issued their strike notice 10 days ahead of Dussehra, the government had ignored it saying it would not be blackmailed. "The CM saw no immediate need for the TSRTC

staff to go on strike especially before the festival," a CMO official said. As a warning to the strike proposal, the state government did not deposit the September salaries of TSRTC employees.

In the absence of TSRTC drivers and conductors, the government has hired temporary drivers, offering them Rs 2,000 for eight hours of duty. Many drivers of garbage trucks of the Greater Hyderabad Municipal Corporation have apparently gone on leave, and were found driving TSRTC buses. But these buses are running only on certain routes, and for short distances. The government also extended Dussehra holidays until October 19, and has impounded school buses to run them along some routes. Striking staff are not allowing buses to leave depots by squatting in front of the gates.

Suicides, then and now

Srinivas Reddy, a TSRTC driver at Khammam depot, immolated himself, allegedly because he did not receive his salary and could not pay his EMI or afford household expenses. He died at a hospital in Hyderabad last week. A day later, Surender Goud, 50, a conductor, hanged himself at his Hyderabad home.

During the statehood movement between 2009 and 2013, the TRS had attributed every suicide and immolation bid to the movement. Now, it is silent on the sui-

cides of the two TSRTC employees, and a suicide attempt by another one.

To remind the TRS and KCR how they had thrown in their might behind the statehood agitation, TSRTC employees are organising 'vanta varpu' cooking on the roads — which they had done several times during the Telangana agitation — to bring transport to a halt once again.

No looking back

While the Congress and the BIP have piled on the pressure, analysts say KCR cannot turn back after taking such a tough stand. There is a byelection on Monday in Huzurnagar Assembly seat. The TRS hopes to wrest the seat from the Congress and leaders believe the TRS's position will be weakened if it softens its stand on the strike.

Although KCR has said the 47,000-odd staff of TSRTC cease to be employees after they failed to rejoin duty before 6 pm of October 3, the government has not sent out suspension or dismissal notices. At a review meeting, KCR told officials they are deemed as dismissed and cease to be employees. TSRTC unions are preparing to approach courts if the government recruits staff in their place.

THE INDIAN EXPRESS, MONDAY, OCTOBER 21, 2019

THE EDITORIAL PAGE

WORDLY WISE

Brexit means that something is wrong in EUROPE. BUT IT MEANS ALSO THAT SOMETHING

WAS WRONG IN BRITAIN. — JEAN-CLAUDE JUNCKER

The Indian EXPRESS

S FOUNDED BY S

✓ RAMNATH GOENKA

BECAUSE THE TRUTH INVOLVES US ALL

THE SCREWS TIGHTEN

Islamabad evades FATF blacklist, but Delhi's campaign has put the spotlight on Pakistan's support for cross-border terrorism

AKISTAN'S ESCAPE, AT least for the moment, from the so-called black list of the global Financial Action Task Force (FATF) that acts against terror financing in the world has surely disappointed Delhi. It also seems to reinforce Delhi's critics, who believe Pakistan can't be "isolated" even if its army brazenly violates its international legal commitments on fighting terrorism. Disappointment and criticism arise from the fact that the government of Narendra Modi had mounted a sustained campaign in the last few years to apply the existing international norms against money laundering and terror financing on Pakistan. The grey list is about putting countries on notice and seek time-bound compliance with a range of FATF benchmarks. If countries fail to comply, they get on to a black list that calls on nations to take additional measures against financial transactions involving Pakistan's jurisdiction. At the moment, only two countries are on the black list — Iran and North Korea.

Pakistan was first put on the grey list in 2012 but got off it in 2015. That was when the FATF and its procedures caught Delhi's serious political interest. Once the Foreign Office put it at the top of its diplomatic priorities, the FATF became part of the public discourse on Pakistan. The intense Indian effort resulted in Pakistan being put on the grey list again in 2018. There is a good case for tempering India's disappointment at the international community's reluctance to put additional pressure on Pakistan's support for terrorism, despite the FATF's acknowledgement that Pakistan is in full compliance with only five of the 27 benchmarks Islamabad had to address.

The FATF has certainly issued a stern warning to Pakistan that it could get to the black list if there was no progress by February 2020. There is no guarantee, of course, that Pakistan will pay the price four months down the road. For the FATF, in the end, is a multilateral mechanism, where bilateral political considerations do impact on the outcomes. Pakistan can thank China, Turkey and Malaysia, whose support helped it escape the black list. There is nothing to suggest that the Pakistan policies of the three countries might change any time soon. Is "isolating Pakistan", then, a "fool's errand"? No, not by any measure. Although Delhi can't bet on complete success in its FATF campaign, the effort has generated unprecedented international pressure on Pakistan Army's support to crossborder terrorism. Sustaining the international mobilisation also turns harsh light on Islamabad's allies — especially China — that talk the talk on opposing terrorism and improving ties with India but refuse to walk the walk.

PM-CM PUSH

The BJP campaign in Maharashtra and Haryana was an endorsement of the leadership of its chief ministers

HE BJP CAMPAIGN in Maharashtra and Haryana, the two states that vote today, was led by Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Union Home Minister and BJP chief Amit Shah. PM Modi addressed nine rallies in Maharashtra and seven in Haryana whereas Shah spoke at 18 meetings in Maharashtra and seven in Haryana. This wasn't unexpected since the two leaders had won a second term for the party with an enhanced majority in the Lok Sabha just a few months ago. But what stood out in the assembly election campaign was the big endorsement the BJP national leadership gave to the outgoing chief ministers in the two states: Modi and Shah, in fact, were seeking the mandate for Devendra Fadnavis in Maharashtra and Manohar Lal Khattar in Haryana.

At his rallies in Maharashtra, PM gave the slogan, "Dilli mein Narendra, Mumbai mein Devendra" (Narendra in Delhi, Devendra in Mumbai). He said the Narendra-Devendra formula has been a super-hit for the last five years and "when Narendra and Devendra stand together, 1+1 is not 2 but becomes 11". Similar was his appreciation for Khattar, who was handpicked by Modi and Shah in 2014 to head the government in Haryana though he had no previous experience as a legislator or in government. The BJP campaign in Maharashtra and Haryana, of course, bet high on the issue of nationalism, especially the Centre's actions in Jammu and Kashmir. But the party also championed the record of the chief ministers in office, which it claimed was superior to their predecessors. The party also leveraged the fact that Fadnavis and Khattar were from non-dominant castes and projected them as leaders who stood above sectarian interests. This has been an interesting strategy since dominant castes such as Marathas and Jats have had a disproportionate influence on electoral politics in Maharashtra and Haryana respectively for a long time. Of course, the BJP's claims went uncontested also because of the lacklustre campaign run by the opposition parties, which seem to have failed to regroup after the general election drubbing.

The rise of Fadnavis and Khattar is in some ways a throwback to the 2000s, when the BJP under Atal Bihari Vajpayee and L K Advani encouraged relatively young parliamentarians such as Shivraj Singh Chauhan, Raman Singh and Vasundhara Raje, to establish themselves as state leaders. The rise of these leaders and the free hand the party allowed them in running governments helped the BJP to expand its vote base and become the dominant electoral force it has now.

FREEZE FRAME

EPUNNY



It's about benchmarks



The decision of a judge to recuse is about due process, respecting people's trust in judiciary

JUSTICE ARUN KUMAR Mishra is in the news, again. This time for his refusal to recuse himself from the Constitution Bench that has to re-examine a controversial judgment that he delivered last year. The repeated use of the word "impartial" by the parties seeking his recusal has naturally "hurt" Justice Mishra. Taking exception to the campaign on social media against him, Mishra asked: "Is maligning a judge on social media not akin to maligning the integrity of the court?"

"I may be criticised for my view, I may not be a hero and I may be a blemished person but if I am satisfied that my conscience is clear, my integrity is clear before God, I will not budge. If I think I will be influenced by any extraneous factor, I will be first to recuse," the SC judge asserted. He added "the question is can we not sit in the constitution bench though it is us who referred the matter to the larger bench. It is not the appeal against the verdict in which I was the party. I may change or correct my view, if persuaded". Justice Mishra has a valid point. However, the case in question is not a routine referring back of a SC verdict to the Chief Justice. It pertains to an exhaustive verdict which was challenged days after it was deliv-

In 2014, a three-judge bench led by the then CJI R M Lodha unanimously held, in the Pune Municipal Corporation case, that compensation under the Land Acquisition Act had to be deposited in the Court. It ruled that a mere deposit of money in the government treasury cannot be regarded as payment made to landowners and the acquisition would lapse. But on February 8, 2018, another three-judge bench of Justice Mishra, Justice Adarsh Kumar Goel and Justice Mohan M Shantanagoudar overruled this verdict in the Indore Development Authority case. Justice Shantanagoudar differed with the majority verdict.

But the 2:1 verdict in the Indore Development Authority case did not satisfy the apex court's criteria for setting aside a

larger strength. On February 20, 2018, another case on land acquisition compensation came up before a SC bench. Justice Madan Lokur, who headed this bench, put a stay on all such cases till the anomalies in the *Indore* Development Authority case were referred to the CJI. The next day, Justice Mishra referred the matter to the CJI and asked him to constitute a larger bench. Since the CJI was aware of the circumstances of referral and Justice Mishra's "predisposition" towards a particular interpretation, he should not have placed Mishra on this bench. Assuming that his in-A judge should ideally recuse clusion is appropriate, why was from a proceeding in which Shantanagoudar not included in this larger his impartiality might bench? There have been other recusal refusals. reasonably be questioned On May 2, CJI Gogoi refused to recuse himdue to the possibility of personal bias or prejudice or if he has been a lawyer or

verdict. In the *Dawoodi Bohra Community*

case in 2005, the court had said that a ver-

dict can be overruled only by a bench of

self in the Assam Detention Centre case. He observed that, "Do not even remotely think that we will recuse. We will not allow anyone to browbeat the institution. Recusal will be destructive for the institution." Like Mishra, he went on to add that "the inability, difficulty or handicap of a judge to hear a particular matter is to be perceived by the judge himself and no one else." But the law on recusal is slightly different. It was laid down by Justice M N Venkatachaliah in Ranjit *Thakur* (1987), where he observed that, "The proper approach for the judge is not to look at his own mind and ask himself, however honestly, 'am I biased'; but to look to the mind of party before him".

A judge should ideally recuse from a proceeding in which his impartiality might reasonably be questioned due to the possibility of personal bias or prejudice or if he has been a lawyer or judge in the matter at some stage. We do trust our judges and that's why no one sought the recusal of judges in the Babri Masjid case on the ground that judges who believe in the divinity of Lord Ram cannot decide a case in which Lord Ram himself is a party.

Justice Mishra is absolutely right that the decision of recusal should be made by the judge as per the dictates of his conscience. But ideally, when a judge recuses himself, as in the Gautam Navlakha case, he should state the reasons for his decision. A recusal should not become a convenient method to get rid of a judge. Bench hunting must not be permitted through recusal requests and such requests should not be used to intimidate a judge. In the R K Anand case (2009), the Supreme Court rightly that "a motivated application for recusal, therefore, needs to be dealt with sternly and should be viewed as interference in the due course of justice leading to penal consequences".

The country's judicial system should consider changing the system of hearing recusal requests. Ideally, such a request should not be heard by the bench but only by the judge concerned. In the Jewell Ridge Coal Corporation case (1945), the US Supreme Court held that it is the responsibility of the judge in question to hear such a request. In 2014, Justice Antonin Scalia of the US Supreme Court heard the requests for his recusal in in a case to pertaining to the country's Vice President Dick Cheney. In the Hanrahan case in 1980, Justice Rehnquist of the US Supreme Court observed: "Since generally the court as an institution leaves such motions (recusal), even though they be addressed to it, to the decision of the individual judges to whom they refer, I shall treat the motion as addressed to me individually.'

The Justice Mishra-led bench will now pronounce its verdict on the recusal on October 23. One hopes it will bear in mind that procedural fairness is an integral part of due process, especially after Maneka Gandhi (1978). Propriety, not legality, is in question here. Justice, after all, is rooted in the people's confidence.

> The writer is vice-chancellor, NALSAR University of Law, Hyderabad. Views are personal

CONTESTED TERRAIN

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Savarkar, father of Hindu rashtravad, also represents a tradition of social reformers

GIRISH KUBER

WE ARE living in times when finding the middle ground is becoming increasingly difficult. The latest case in point is the BJP's call for Bhart Ratna for Vinayak Damodar Savarkar aka Swatantryaveer Savarkar. The Maharashtra BJP incorporated this demand as part of its manifesto along with asking for a similar honour for Mahatma Phule. Soon after, Prime Minister Narendra Modi and party president Amit Shah joined the chorus, clearly in an effort to paint Savarkar critics as "anti-BJP", and hence, anti-Hindu.

First, why did the BJP, which has been ruling the state and the Centre for the last five years, think it prudent to demand the highest civilian honour for Savarkar even while it failed or ignored the same all these years? The answer lies in the state BJP's recent political manoeuvres aimed at winning over the Maratha and other caste groups either by offering them reservations or engineering defections. Most of the imported breed of leaders are either from the Congress or its off-shoot, the NCP, and therefore, clearly lack the Hindutva pedigree. This accommodation by the BJP undoubtedly antagonised its traditional vote base of Brahmins and upper castes. Having faced severe criticism for open and unabashed defections, how can it convey to its traditional vote base that it is not deviating much from its core agenda? By making a demand to honour Savarkar with the Bharat Ratna.

This is the BJP's new-found way of outreach to various communities, even while keeping its core in good humour. By doing so,

"selective appropriation" of icons representing divergent ideologies. Savarkar is more known as the father of Hindu rashtravad (Hindu nationalism), but at the same time he also represents Maharashtra's glorious tradition of social and religious reformers. The BIP doesn't seem to be interested in Savarkar's reformist side.

it has exposed itself yet again to criticism of its

Unfortunately, in the current highly vitiated political atmosphere, one has to be critical of Savarkar to gain membership of the country's liberal elite. On the other hand, mere proclamation of one's affection for Savarkar opens the doors of the country's now-privileged Hindutvawadi groups. But, notwithstanding the danger of being labelled "rightist" or being accused of peddling "soft-Hindutva", there is a need to bring out certain positive aspects of Savarkar's other-than-Hindutva ideology.

Not many are aware that traditional Hindutvawadis despised Savarkar for his modern approach to life. He bluntly wrote how "India is 200 years behind Europe" and has to give up its religious discourse if it wants to catch up with the modern world. Unlike conventional Hindu leaders, Savarkar openly embraced an "era of machines" and appealed to others to give up their narrow vision of religion. New-Hindutvawadis will certainly find themselves at odds with Savarkar, who openly asked them to give up vegetarianism. His criticism of those who call cow "gau mata" is fairly known. What is relatively unrevealed is his comparison of the cow with donkey and pigs. "If Hindu puranas have talked about a cow, they also have talked about pigs in the form of (Lord Vishnu's) Varah Avtaar. Then why not set up pig-protection groups on the lines of gau rakshaks," he asks in one of his essays. He bravely ridiculed the idea of 33 crore gods living in a cow. Some of his criticism of Hindu traditions is so harsh and direct that it can be found "unprintable". In an another essay, he came down heavily on the Hindu caste system and questioned "upper caste" Hindus who won't mind consuming cow-urine and cow-dung but at the same time refuse to accept a glass of water from the hands of the supremely intellectual Ambedkar. Savarkar even questioned Hindu gods. He also led an agitation demanding untouchables' entry into Hindu temples.

Much of this, unfortunately, has been forgotten in a country witnessing a Hindu resurgence. Isn't it ironic that the political party that likes to portray itself as "Hindutvawadi" is trying to appropriate Savarkar at a time when the country is witnessing growing incidences of mob lynching over protecting the cow? For the BJP, Savarkar is a mere Hindutva icon who can help garner (or polarise?) more votes and whose call for scientific temper can easily be ignored. By its politically opportune approach to Savarkar, the BJP may get few more votes, but it will further narrow the intellectual middle path. Neither "Hindutvawadi nor anti-Hindu" approach will take us anywhere.

The writer is editor, Loksatta

OCTOBER 20, 1979, FORTY YEARS AGO



BAHUGUNA RESIGNS H N BAHUGUNA has resigned from office at the prime minister's asking. Charan Singh's letter demanding the resignation of the finance minister reached his residence at 4.35 pm and Bahuguna wrote his resignation by hand before sending it to the PM within 10 minutes. Bahuguna was, however, surprised at Singh's action. Bahuguna's exit from the government may affect the fortunes of the Banarasi Das Government in UP. The support of the 28-member CFD group to the government is crucial.

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FLEEING POONCH FEAR-STRICKEN PEOPLE FROM occupied Poonch area are trying to cross over to the

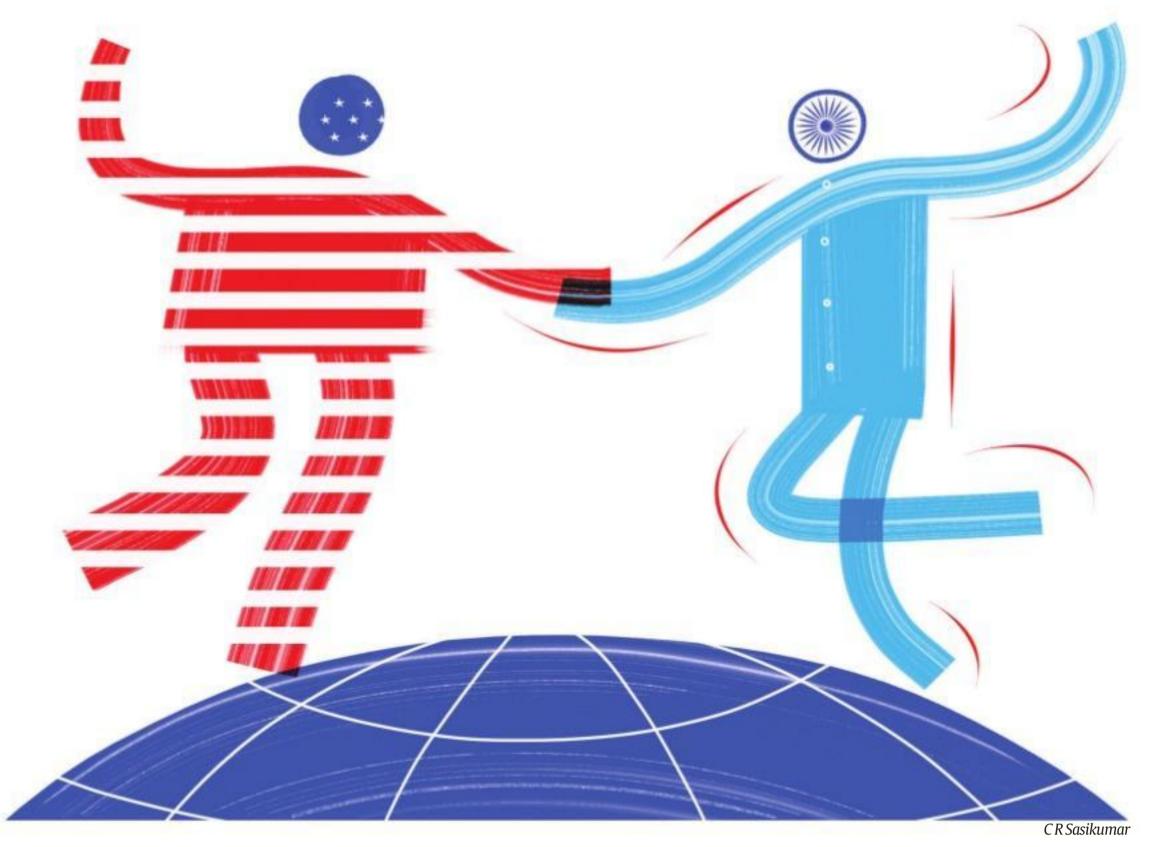
Indian side, according to official sources. However, the Indian Border Security Force manning the Actual Line of Control is not allowing them to sneak in. Over 400 people have been seen coming near the Pakistan side of the border in Poonch. Youths are reportedly taking out anti-martial law processions in various parts of occupied Kashmir, but troops have chased them away.

TN COPS STRIKE

WHILE CLAIMING A general improvement in the situation resulting from the four-dayold strike by the constabulary in Tamil Nadu, the state director-general of police, E L Stracey, charged that some public figures were urging the men of his force to continue their agitation. He said "appropriate action" was being taken against the persons concerned under Section 3 of the Incitement of Disaffection Act. He, however, declined to identify them. Asked whether any political party was involved, he said the public figures concerned did not belong to any particular party. Stracey reported a "steady and welcome change in the attitude of the striking policemen". He said: "While quite a number of them are returning to duty, some others are expressing themselves openly against the strike."

The above was published in the October 20, 1979 issue. There was no edition on October 21 on account of Diwali.

THE IDEAS PAGE



Tap dancing lessons

There are many issues between the India and US that will require some deft diplomatic manoeuvering from External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar



"I am reasonably convinced of the powers of my persuasion." — External Affairs Minister, Subrahmanyam Jaishankar.

THE MINISTER WAS speaking to an audience at the Centre for Strategic and International Studies, in Washington, on India's decision to purchase the S-400 air defence missile system from Russia, and his efforts to avoid getting hit with American penalties. Ordinarily, countries doing business with Russia run the risk of sanctions from US Congress under the 2017 Countering America's Adversaries Through Sanctions Act (CAATSA).

Methinks, the honourable minister claims too much credit. An essential attribute of any good diplomat is self-confidence. While I hold Jaishankar in high regard — and yes, yes, I know he has sold his soul trying to justify the Article 370 abrogation, but putting lipstick on a pig is his day job — somehow I am not as persuaded as he is about his powers of persuasion. The truth of the matter is that there is a loophole in CAATSA: The US president can waive the sanctions if it is in the national security interests of the US and the president can determine that the errant country is otherwise cooperating with the US on matters critical to US interests.

Now, this is where Jaishankar caught a break. The US president himself is possibly the biggest threat to US security interests. In addition, he seems to have a fascination with Russia and deep fondness for its leader. America is gearing up for an upcoming election — and given that Donald Trump was only too happy to accept help from the Russians in winning the last election — it may not be entirely coincidental that he is not too keen on stymying one of Russia's most important arms deals. After all, Russia continues to be a lynchpin in the misinformation campaigns that will inundate the US in coming months. In other words, minister Jaishankar,

with all due respect, should cede all credit directly to the US president. Jaishankar's powers of persuasion, while amazing in other circumstances, may not be the pivotal force here. Dealing with Russia was a reasonable bet for India to take — and, for now, the gamble has paid off even at the price of American democracy being undermined.

Now that I have got that off my chest, here are some substantive issue areas where it would be appropriate for Jaishankar to be putting his plenipotentiary powers of persuasion to the test.

To get things rolling, let's talk trade. Earlier in the year, after India imposed higher tariffs on some US goods, Washington withdrew a key trade privilege for India. Trump complains that India's taxes on imports are too high. He has described India as the "king of tariffs". The reality is that, for a change, he is right. India's average tariff rate in 2018 was 17.1 per cent. The tariffs on Harley-Davidsons

— a product that Trump is particularly fussed about – used to be 100 per cent. And let's not even mention American walnuts — with a whopping 120 per cent tariff. In comparison, the US, Japan and the EU had average tariff rates between 3.4 per cent and 5.2 per cent. India's rates are high even in comparison with other emerging market nations, Brazil, China and South Africa, all averaging between 8 per cent and 14 per cent.

In a pre-election season when Trump is motivated to trumpet his toughness on unfair trade relationships, the state of Indo-US trade ties remain particularly vulnerable.

Separately, it seems that the US and China are in talks to resolve their longer and more contentious trade dispute. In the latest round of trade talks, the US said it would suspend a tariff hike on Chinese goods and Trump announced that China had agreed to a "very substantial phase one deal". India, in the meantime, has done little to take advantage of the US-China trade tensions to further its own interests. Nevertheless, here is a persuasive persuasion opportunity for Jaishankar to make up for that lapse. What can he and his team do to help reach a trade truce with Trump that meets India's objectives, make Trump look like a hero to his base and put China on the spot?

Next, let's consider a different thorny issue. This one has to do with the thousands of Indian IT professionals and students who face an uncertain future in the US. The Trump administration has vacillated about its posiJaishankar might want to

closely monitor the topsyturvy direction of American politics as it unfolds over the coming year. Given the uncertainties of the impeachment inquiry against Trump that is unfolding and the fiercely divisive elections ahead in 2020, it will be a major feat of tap dancing that will be required to build relationships with the Democrats, from Nancy Pelosi to the candidates lining up to take on Trump. Of course, all this must be done while continuing to extract concessions from

tion on H1B visas. In June, there were plans to cap the visas and then two weeks later, the officials presiding over it walked away from such plans. However, the administration has consistently presented itself as the keepers of American jobs who seek to limit immigration to the US across the board. Many Indian professionals who have been in the US for years and have made a home in the country live with the uncertainty that they might have to pack up and leave. Can Jaishankar persuade the US authorities to recognise that skilled immigration restrictions may not help Americans get jobs. Instead, such shortsighted measures may drive firms to relocate their operations outside the US causing losses of jobs and revenues overall? A study by Britta Glennon of the Wharton School helps make that point.

To pick a third area, Jaishankar might want to closely monitor the topsy-turvy direction of American politics as it unfolds over the coming year. Given the uncertainties of the impeachment inquiry against Trump that is unfolding and the fiercely divisive elections ahead in 2020, it will be a major feat of tap dancing that will be required to build relationships with the Democrats, from Nancy Pelosi to the candidates lining up to take on Trump. Of course, all this must be done while continuing to extract concessions from Trump in parallel. Cozying up to Trump's sworn enemies, the Democrats, is bound to invite his wrath.

If self-confidence, as I have noted earlier, is an essential attribute of a good diplomat, tap dancing skills are even more essential. I think the best advice to Jaishankar is probably from Trump himself: "Don't be a tough guy. Don't be a fool!" (Yes, he actually wrote that in his letter to Turkey's Recep Erdogan.) Perched in a school that has probably produced more diplomats than any other, I can confidently suggest that this is about the best lesson any diplomat can take away. India's top diplomat, surely, has his work cut out for him and quite a few ways in which he can test his power to persuade. And I am sorry, he doesn't have much time for lessons in tap dancing.

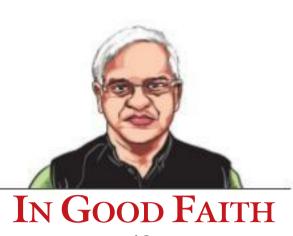
The writer is Dean of Global Business at The Fletcher School at Tufts University, founding executive director of Fletcher's Institute for Business in the Global Context and a nonresident senior fellow of Brookings India

WHAT THE OTHERS SAY

"There are now proposals, backed by the UN, for a global Green New Deal. It would be a good thing all round — for the world economy, for the planet and for their own long-term prospects — if the IMF and World Bank chose to back the idea." - THE GUARDIAN

The spectacle of tragedy

The function of the tragic in art is what it does to, and for, the audience



VIJAY TANKHA

GREEK TRAGEDY was a spectacle, performed seasonally in great festivals dedicated to gods, in huge amphitheatres ("spectators-all- around") before thousands of people. Much of the performance, accompanied by music and dance, was sung, making it more like opera than proscenium theatre today. The action was all in the words. It was truly the media of the millennium, whose life was both precious and brief, and whose death was not, as Nietzsche thought, caused by Socrates, coinciding rather with the demise of the democratic state it spoke to.

By convention, if not fiat, tragedy could only deal with mythical themes (though The Persians details the victory at Salamis), the result perhaps of a ban on staging contemporary events, in consequence, it was said, of a performance of Phrynichus' *The* Sack of Miletus, which so moved its audience to tears that the poet was fined, "for reminding them of familiar misfortunes".

Though they dealt with myths or elaborated incidents from the epics, the poets could modify them and even invent alternatives ("Probable impossibilities are preferable to improbable possibilities" advises Aristotle, sagely). Myths in any case were stories which varied with each telling, often serving conflicting aims: The homogeneity and multifarious forms of worship in polytheistic cults made for both competing and complementary narratives.

The remote past really provided a template for articulating present concerns, albeit obliquely. Tragic drama addressed the city through its citizens. Sophocles' Oedipus (staged a year after a plague struck Athens in 430 BCE) opens with a crowd petitioning the king because of a miasma afflicting the city. *The Trojan Women*, produced during the ongoing conflict between Athens and Sparta, dwelt on the suffering of women and children, acted out before the ruins of Troy. Jean-Paul Sartre made an adaptation of it during the Algerian war as a lesson for the French.

Tragic drama grappled mainly with moral conflict, articulating the struggle between tradition and new modes of thinking; seeking to confront expediency with justice, revenge with the rule of law; dramatising if not always resolving the collision of rational with irrational forces. Conflict or opposition was the central torque around which both the language and literature of the Greeks was constructed: The lynch pin of their legacy to world thought. Competing voices were a constant on the Attic stage.

Dealing with myths meant having a varied cast of gods, heroes and men. Zeus, a tyrant in Prometheus Bound uses, like all tyrants, Force and Violence as his henchmen. Apollo, the god of prophecy, becomes a bounder and liar in *Hippolytus*. Heroes

don't fare any better. Odysseus was regularly cast as a unscrupulous scoundrel, a shifty politician; Hercules, a comic drunk, and so on. The justice and injustice of the gods was both affirmed and denied.

The state and its politics were directly addressed, as in The Persians of Aeschylus, where the action takes place before the tomb of Darius, arch enemy of the Greeks. In Euripides' Helen (produced in the later half of the 27-year-long Peloponnesian war), the entire Trojan war is shown to have been fought for nothing, since Helen was never taken to Troy, an airy phantom going in her place. Imperial pride and valour were thus emptied of point and purpose; the honour of the thousands killed as shadowy as the simulacra on whose behalf they died. Not surprisingly, Euripides lived out his last years in self-imposed exile, though he was much venerated (some Athenian sailors captured in Sicily were released when they recited verses from his works).

The tragic spectacle, on Aristotle's account, was premised on a flaw (hamartia) which reversed the fortunes of a great man. The tragic flaw as it came to be known, insisted on a character trait leading to the downfall of the protagonist. But hamartia can also mean a missing of the mark, a mistake in judgement, leading with tragic logic, to suffering or death. Often there was no mistake, just bad luck, the unfolding of events outside human control. Phaedra's illicit desire for Hippolytus was also a conflict between impersonal, cosmic forces. While each strove for mastery, humans suffered, (she hangs herself while he is killed by his father's curse). But ultimately only individuals act, and there are many inhuman acts in these tragedies, done by those in power, tyrants or their clones. Death and misery loom large: Women are sacrificed, children killed, madness and suicide abound, the wicked often prosper while innocents suffer. Suffering is the human condition and the gods alone, if there are any, or an obscure impersonal necessity, drives

the destinies of men. Greek thought privileges purpose. Every artefact has a function or use that explains its nature. The function of the tragic is what it does to the audience. Plato thought tragic poetry exacerbated the emotions it aroused (and so was bad for civic order), Aristotle that it released them (and so was good). Our reactions to violence or sex in the cinema are broadly similar.

But Aristotle also specified the nature of the emotions tragedy relieved us of: Fear and pity. Pity for the fate of the tragic hero, whose very vulnerability is responsible for her undeserved suffering, and fear that such suffering could be one's own. This reversal or metabasis from good to bad fortune is the essence of the tragic condition, which often finds expression in the plays: "Some god destroys you now, exacting in your suffering the cost for having once been happy." (Euripides, *Hecuba*)

This is what universalises the particularities of the tragic plot, it is not something that happens to someone, somewhere, distant in time, but what happens now (so arousing pity). If it can happen here, to anyone, it can happen to you, to me, at anytime, for no reason, other than an inimical god or malign fate, and that is why it arouses fear.

> The writer taught philosophy at Delhi University

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

RTI'S BANE

THIS REFERS TO the editorial, 'Chipping away RTI' (IE, October 18). Downgrading the office of CIC and ICs is bound to have a debilitating effect on RTI. The government shows reluctance in giving information, since that makes it answerable to the people.

Vijai Pant, Hempur

THIS REFERS TO the editorial, 'Chipping away RTI' (IE, October 18). This is not chipping but clipping away RTI. This is part of the government's design to weaken constitutional institutions. The RTI Act, 2005 is one of independent India's most empowering laws. Home Minister Amit Shah is reported to have said there is no no need for this Act as his government is very much transparent. This is far from the truth.

HS Upadhyay, Thane

OLD FOLLY

THIS REFERS TO the report, 'Singh signals a Cong shift on 370, Savarkar' (IE, October 18). The Congress has yet again fallen into the BJP's trap of shifting the election narrative from the economy to nationalism. Voters are not interested in Congress' views on Article 370, Savarkar and the NRC. They want the government to be questioned on issues concerning their daily lives, the faltering economy and the non-fulfilment of the

LETTER OF THE WEEK AWARD

To encourage quality reader

intervention, The Indian **Express offers the Letter of** the Week award. The letter adjudged the best for the week is published every Saturday. Letters may be e-mailed to editpage@expressindia.com

or sent to The Indian Express, B-1/B, Sector 10, Noida-UP 201301.

crore jobs, doubling farmer incomes etc. **S B Bhalerao**, Mumbai

utopia promised in the form of one

SANGRUR EXAMPLE

THIS REFERS TO the report, 'Why Sangrur is the best in Punjab for providing public services within set timelines' (IE, Oct 14). The provision of citizencentric public services is the most important function of a government. Sangrur is an example in this respect. A responsive administration is the key to the success of policy initiatives.

Urvashi Pareek, Ahmedabad

VIEW FROM THE **N**EIGHBOURHOOD



A weekly look at the public conversations shaping ideas beyond borders — in the Subcontinent. Curated by Aakash Joshi

Trump in parallel.

Understanding India

HUMRA NIAZI TRIES in an article in *The* Express Tribune on October 20, "to read the Indian mindset" vis a vis Kashmir. Like many other columnists writing in Pakistan's print media, Niazi sees designs of demographic change, even ethnic cleansing, on the part of the Indian state — equated without caveats to the current government — in Jammu and Kashmir. The "adversary" appears to be both India and the "RSS mindset", and the sheer diversity of opinion and debate over Kashmir in this country is given short shrift.

After lamenting the lockdown in the Valley, and the alleged violation of human rights there, Niazi outlines what she believes is the plan of the RSS: "The RSS game could well be 'distraction'. This could be very unwise. The Indian Army Chief, Rawat, recently stated that 500 infiltrators are waiting to infiltrate into India. Pakistan's Foreign Office strongly rejected this fake news."

Then, the article asks, "why is there no such concern reflected about the danger of a nuclear war in this part of the world?" It then seems to talk to the world community of the dangers of an "unstable India": "The present government in India has an extremist mindset — something that should not be a characteristic of a nuclear country."

The article also calls for the international community to take "positive action" against India's "atrocities" in Jammu and Kashmir.

PAKISTAN FOR PEACE

Last week, Pakistan Prime Minister Imran Khan visited Tehran and met with President Hassan Rouhani and Ayatollah Ali Khameini, before going on to visit Saudi Arabia. Dawn's editorial on October 16, taking off from the visit, argues for Pakistan to play a greater role in mediating the conflict between the two West Asian powers. The argument is not so outlandish, given that historically, there was a time when Pakistan did enjoy a certain clout in the Islamic world as well as the fact that "Pakistan is in a unique position" to act as a bridge between the two countries: Both Shias and Sunnis call the country home and it shares a border with Iran and has close ties to Saudi Arabia.

"On the other hand, should things go awry, Pakistan will be among the first victims of instability. The religious factor means that sectarian passions will be inflamed, while violence in the Gulf, not far from this country's waters, will have a debilitating effect on the national economy, as will the spiralling oil prices," according to the editorial.

ABRAR'S DEATH

The brutal torture and killing of Abrar Fahad, a second-year student at the Bangladesh University of Engineering and Technology, by the Chhatra League, the students' wing of the ruling Awami League, has the country

deal between India and Pakistan during Sheikh Hasina's four-day visit last month. In an article in *The Daily Star*, Sudipta Saha and Yamen Hoque, Bangladeshi scholars in the US, ask questions of the country's polity and society, and are forceful in their argu-

mortified. Abrar was killed allegedly because

of a Facebook post in which he criticised the

ments: "Over the last few years, Bangladesh has witnessed a number of murders of bloggers, writers and activists. They were specifically targeted because of their progressive, liberal and free-thinking beliefs — beliefs that they were not scared of sharing with others and engaging in the sort of dialogue that a majority of people in Bangladesh are uncomfortable with."

The apathy towards the killing of dissenting, liberal voices bothers the writers: "Let Abrar's death not be in vain, and not just for reforming the role of student politics in our country. Let it also provide light to the dark corners of our mind-set."

बिज़नेस स्टैंडर्ड वर्ष 12 अंक 210

गिरवी शेयरों का गणित

देश के वित्तीय और शेयर बाजार नियामक तरह का संबंध रहता है गिरवी शेयरों से जुड़े ढांचे की समीक्षा करने और उसे सख्त बनाने पर काम कर रहे हैं। सख्त निगरानी और नियमन तथा खुलासों के बेहतर मानक होने से फंड जुटाने के तरीकों में सुधार होगा। फिलहाल इस क्षेत्र में अक्सर संक्रमण का खतरा रहता है क्योंकि विभिन्न वित्तीय संस्थानों में आपस में किसी न किसी

प्रवर्तकों के गिरवी शेयरों को धनराशि जुटाने के लिए जरिया मानने की इस प्रवित्त की कई किमयां हैं। इससे संबंधित कंपनी के बाजार मूल्य में भारी कमी आ सकती है। इससे अल्पांश हिस्सेदार को मौद्रिक नुकसान हो सकता है। अगर कर्ज पर डिफॉल्ट की घटना होती है तो अक्सर गिरवी शेयरों की बिक्री करके भी पैसा

वापस नहीं पाया जा सकता है क्योंकि शेयरों की कीमत गिर चुकी होती है। कर्जदाताओं को होने वाला नुकसान कहीं अधिक व्यापक संक्रमण का माध्यम बन सकता है जो पूरे बाजार को प्रभावित कर सकता है। अगर गिरवी रखे शेयर निजी बैंकों या गैर बैंकिंग वित्तीय कंपनियों के प्रवर्तकों के हुए तो जोखिम और अधिक बढ़ जाता है। इन कंपनियों की होल्डिंग का ढांचा अक्सर अस्पष्ट रहता है जो समूह के कुल जोखिम के आकलन को मुश्किल बनाता है। बैंक जमा लेने वाले संस्थान होते हैं और शेयरों के बाजार मूल्य में आई गिरावट उनकी कर्ज देने या उधारी करने की क्षमता को प्रभावित करती है। इस व्यवहार ने वित्तीय क्षेत्र को प्रभावित किया है। इनमें बैंक, डेट म्युचुअल फंड और गैर बैंकिंग वित्तीय कंपनियां सभी

एक सवाल यह भी है कि प्रवर्तक शेयर गिरवी रखते क्यों हैं ? ऐसा अक्सर व्यक्तिगत जरूरतों के लिए धन जुटाने के क्रम में किया जाता है और यह कंपनी के लिए अच्छा संकेत नहीं होता। एक स्वस्थ सूचीबद्ध कारोबार को धन जुटाने के लिए शेयर गिरवी रखने की आवश्यकता नहीं पड़ती। एक प्रवर्तक जो शेयर गिरवी रखता है, वह अक्सर प्राय: छद्म कंपनियों की सहायता से या शेयर कीमतों में छेड़छाड़ करके पैसे को वापस लाने की जुगत में रहता है। इतना ही नहीं, जैसा कि ट्रैक रिकॉर्ड बताता है, प्रवर्तकों के मन में डिफॉल्ट कर जाने को लेकर भी कोई खास हिचक नहीं रहती। खुलासे के मानकों को अक्सर छद्म कंपनियों का इस्तेमाल करके किनारे लगा दिया जाता है।

इसके व्यापक निहितार्थ हैं जिसके चलते भारतीय प्रतिभृति एवं विनिमय बोर्ड, रिजर्व बैंक, बीमा नियामक तथा पेंशन फंड नियामक एवं विकास प्राधिकार को साथ मिलकर इसमें कदाचार तथा डिफॉल्ट के तमाम पहलुओं पर विचार करना चाहिए। यह सुनिश्चित करने की आवश्यकता है कि समूचे ऋण जोखिम को पर्याप्त ढंग से संतुलित किया जाए। यानी इस बात की समीक्षा की जानी चाहिए कि समूह का कुल बकाया ऋण कितना है और व्यक्तिगत रूप से प्रवर्तकों की क्या स्थिति है। इस मामले में एकल लेनदेन पर ध्यान देने से बात नहीं बनेगी। आरबीआई का मानक है कि शेयरों का बाजार मूल्य उधार ली गई राशि से कम से कम दोगुना होना चाहिए। व्यवहार में इस मानक की अक्सर अनदेखी होती है और प्रवर्तक ऋण

जोखिम कम बताने की तरकीब भिडाते हैं। इतना ही नहीं आरबीआई के मानक केवल बैंकों और एनबीएफसी पर लागू होते हैं जबकि ऐसे सौदों में प्राय: म्युचुअल फंड शामिल होते हैं। जानकारी के मुताबिक सेबी ने यह प्रस्ताव रखा है कि गिरवी मानक को बढ़ाकर कुल जोखिम का चार गुना किया जाना चाहिए। इस पर गंभीरतापूर्वक विचार किया जाना चाहिए। उधार लिए गए फंड का क्या उपयोग हो रहा है इस पर भी ध्यान होना चाहिए। म्युचुअल फंड को ऐसे लेनदेन में अपने जोखिम की सीमा तय करनी चाहिए। सामान्य तौर किसी कंपनी द्वारा ऋण के समक्ष गिरवी रखे गए शेयरों का जवाबदेही भरा इस्तेमाल नहीं माना जाता। चुंकि यह सामान्य व्यवहार है इसलिए जरूरी है कि नियामक ऐसे लेनदेन के ढांचे को सख्त बनाएं।



सावरकर पर कांग्रेस की दुविधा

वीर सावरकर को लेकर कांग्रेस की दुविधा ने एक बार फिर राष्ट्रवाद को लेकर उसकी भामक समझ को उजागर किया है।

वरकर को भारत रत्न देने की मांग से जुड़े ताजा विवाद में माग स जुङ् जाना । सबसे दिलचस्प है कांग्रेस पार्टी की बदहवासी। कांग्रेस द्वारा सावरकर को नाजी बताने, घृणास्पद धर्मांध करार देने से लेकर गांधी हत्या का वह षडयंत्रकारी तक कहा गया जो तकनीकी आधार पर बरी हो गया। दूसरी ओर मनमोहन सिंह ने कहा,'हम सावरकर जी का सम्मान करते हैं लेकिन उनकी विचारधारा से सहमत नहीं हैं।' यानी कांग्रेस को पता ही नहीं है कि इस संवेदनशील मुद्दे पर उसकी पार्टी लाइन क्या होनी चाहिए। खासतौर पर ऐसे समय जब महाराष्ट्र विधानसभा चुनाव का प्रचार अभियान चल रहा है। मनमोहन सिंह की सतर्क लेकिन समझदारी भरी टिप्पणी के एक दिन बाद ही पार्टी ने खुद को इससे दूर करने का प्रयास किया। इस काम के लिए प्रवक्ता रणदीप सिंह सुरजेवाला को नियुक्त किया गया लेकिन वह हताश और दयनीय नजर आए। ऐसा इसलिए क्योंकि सिंह का बयान एकदम स्पष्ट था। उन्होंने जो कुछ कहा, उनकी पार्टी शुरुआत से ऐसा मत रख सकती थी। तब उसे इस तरह आत्मघाती आगा-पीछा नहीं करना पडता। खासतौर पर तब जबकि सावरकर के समर्थक इंदिरा गांधी द्वारा सन 1970 में सावरकर के सम्मान में जारी डाक टिकट और बोले गए (जो सतर्कतापूर्वक चुने गए) और लिखे गए वाक्य सामने रख रहे हैं। यह भी कहा जा रहा है कि गांधी ने सावरकर के जीवन पर वृत्तचित्र बनवाया था और उनकी स्मृति में बने कोष को उस समय 11,000 रुपये दिए थे जो अब 5 लाख रुपये के बराबर हैं। प्रश्न यह है कि कांग्रेस अपने मौजदा रुख का तालमेल इंदिरा गांधी के रुख से कैसे मिलाती है?

इंदिरा गांधी पीवी नरसिंह राव नहीं थीं जिन्हें कांग्रेस ने उनकी नरम धर्मनिरपेक्षता के कारण किनारे कर दिया और भुला दिया। कांग्रेस के भीतर पुरानी कट्टर धर्मनिरपेक्षता की वापसी की मांग अवश्य उठी। इंदिरा गांधी अलग हैं। कांग्रेस में कोई उनकी धर्मनिरपेक्षता पर हिंदुत्व को लेकर नरमी या किसी अन्य प्रकार का इल्जाम नहीं लगा सकता। उनकी सख्ती के उदाहरण हमारे इतिहास और भूगोल में देखे जा सकते हैं। आपातकाल और बांग्लादेश का गठन इसकी बानगी हैं। यह बात सभी जानते हैं लेकिन मौजूदा संदर्भ में इसे दोहराना आवश्यक है कि आपातकाल में उन्होंने जिन

लोगों को पकडा था उनमें से 60 से 70 प्रतिशत आरएसएस और जनसंघ से थे। इंदिरा गांधी के हृदय में इनके लिए कोई नरमी नहीं थी।

सच तो यह है कि इंदिरा गांधी अपने वारिसों की तुलना में वैचारिक से अधिक राजनीतिक थीं। इतिहासकार सावरकर के मामले में उनके रुख को समझने के लिए और प्रमाण चाहेंगे लेकिन मैं यह अनुमान लगाता हूं कि चूंकि वह आरएसएस और जनसंघ को बिल्कुल नापसंद करती थीं, इसलिए नहीं चाहती थीं कि आजादी की लडाई में किसी तरह का योगदान करने वाले व्यक्ति को वे अपने पाले में ले जा सकें। वह हमेशा आरएसएस पर यह आरोप लगाती थीं कि उसने आजादी की लड़ाई में कोई योगदान नहीं दिया और वह अंग्रेजों के साथ मिला रहा। सावरकर आरएसएस के करीबी ऐसे व्यक्ति थे जो तमाम किमयों के बावजूद स्वतंत्रता आंदोलन में भूमिका रखते थे। इंदिरा गांधी उन्हें आरएसएस के पाले में नहीं जाने देना चाहती थी। उनकी सोच को बेहतर ढंग से समझने के लिए यह देखना होगा कि मोदी और शाह की भाजपा कांग्रेस की पुरानी विभृतियों को लेकर कैसा रुख अपना रही है। इससे पहले हम इसी स्तंभ में चर्चा कर चुके हैं कि कैसे आरएसएस और भाजपा के पास स्वतंत्रता संग्राम के अपने नायक नहीं हैं। बल्कि उसके पास भगत सिंह और सुभाष



राष्ट्र की बात शेखर गुप्ता

नायक भी नहीं हैं। यही कारण है उसे कांग्रेस से नेताओं का 'आयात' करना पड़ रहा है। गांधी-नेहरू परिवार के

> अलावा (हालांकि मेनका और वरुण गांधी उनके पास हैं) वे हर किसी को अपने साथ करने को आतुर हैं। सरदार पटेल को तो बहुत पहले अपना लिया गया था लेकिन यह सरकार उन्हें भारतीय गणराज्य के संस्थापक के रूप में नेहरू से

चंद्र बोस जैसे गैर कांग्रेसी

बडा कद देने का प्रयास कर रही है। यह बात अलग है कि पटेल आरएसएस को पसंद नहीं करते थे और महात्मा गांधी की हत्या के बाद उन्होंने इस पर प्रतिबंध भी लगाया था। आरएसएस के बारे में उनके विचार नकारात्मक थे लेकिन चूंकि नेहरू के साथ उनके मतभेद गहरे थे इसलिए भाजपा ने कांग्रेस से उन्हें छीन लिया। अंगला नंबर लाल बहादुर शास्त्री का था। अन्य पुराने कांग्रेसियों में मदन मोहन मालवीय जैसे नेताओं के कट्टर हिंदु होने के कारण उनका चयन आसान था। यह सब बीते तीन दशक में यानी इंदिरा के बाद के दौर में हुआ है। ये तीन दशक एक अन्य रुझान के लिए चर्चित रहे। कांग्रेस ने तेजी से वाम वैचारिकी को अपनाया है। यह सही है कि पार्टी हमेशा से वाम मध्यमार्गी सोच की रही है। इंदिरा गांधी ने समाजवाद का इस्तेमाल राजनीतिक हथियार के रूप में किया, भले ही वह अर्थव्यवस्था के लिए नुकसानदेह था।

उन्होंने लोकलुभावन समाजवादी आर्थिक विचारों का प्रयोग किया लेकिन उन्हें कभी अपनी राजनीति पर हावी नहीं होने दिया। उन्होंने अपनी हिंदू पहचान को कभी नहीं त्यागा और न ही रुद्राक्ष की माला, पूजा, साधुओं और तांत्रिकों जैसे धार्मिक प्रतीकों से दूरी बनाई। किसी क्रांतिकारी दरबारी ने इस पर सवाल नहीं उठाया। यह आज की

तरह नहीं है जब राजनीतिक–बौद्धिक वाम नेता राहुल गांधी की मंदिर यात्राओं पर सवाल उठाते हैं और सावरकर पर मनमोहन के नजरिये को नरम हिंदुत्व के समक्ष हथियार डालना कहते हैं। उन्हें इस कडवी सच्चाई को मानना चाहिए कि इंदिरा गांधी ने सावरकर को शत्रु या आतंकी नहीं माना। उन्हें राजनीति की समझ थी। वह किसी स्वतंत्रता सेनानी को आरएसएस के पाले में नहीं जाने देना चाहती थीं।

आरएसएस के बौद्धिक और ऑर्गनाइजर के पूर्व संपादक शेषाद्रि चारी के मृताबिक इंदिरा गांधी ने कभी जनसंघ या भाजपा को हिंदू दल नहीं कहा। वह देश की बहुसंख्यक आस्था को अपने सबसे बड़े प्रतिद्वंद्वी के हवाले नहीं करना चाहती थीं। वह इसे एक 'बनिया' पार्टी कहकर खारिज करती रहीं।

इस अंतर को समझिए। अगर आप उन्हें हिंदू कहते हैं तो एक बड़ा राजनीतिक वर्ग इसमें शामिल है जबिक बनिया एक छोटा और चुनावी रूप से हाशिये पर रखने जैसा समूह है। चूंकि वह अमीरों, मुनाफा कमाने वालों और महाजनों का प्रतिनिधित्व करता है, इसलिए खासतौर पर ग्रामीण इलाकों में ज्यादा लोग उनसे जुड़ाव महसूस नहीं करते। चारी के मुताबिक सोनिया गांधी के नेतृत्व में कांग्रेस ने इसे बनियों के बजाय हिंदुत्व से लड़ाई में बदल दिया। इंदिरा गांधी के पहले और बाद की कांग्रेस में यही अंतर है। उन्होंने वाम बौद्धिकों को अपना दरबारी बनाए रखा और उनके विचारों को अपनी राजनीति में प्रयोग किया। सोनिया गांधी के बाद कांग्रेस ने उन वाम बौद्धिकों को अपनी राजनीति पर हावी हो जाने दिया।

आपको प्रमाण चाहिए: पार्टी का 2019

का घोषणा पत्र देखिए जिसमें राजद्रोह का कानून हटाने, सशस्त्र बल विशेष अधिकार अधिनियम को हटाने और कश्मीर में सैनिक कम करने का जिक्र है। अगर कोई इंदिरा को ये सुझाव देता तो वह तुरंत से खारिज कर देतीं। या शायद वह पूछतीं कि चुनाव भारत में हो रहे हैं या जेएनयू में। नेहरू समाजवादी थे और उनकी अपनी बौद्धिक छवि थी। उन्हें किसी की मदद नहीं चाहिए थी। दरअसल स्वर्गीय जयपाल रेड्डी अक्सर कहते थे कि यदि महात्मा गांधी का प्रभाव न होता तो नेहरू एक हद तक मार्क्सवादी होते। इंदिरा में बौद्धिकता नहीं थी इसलिए उन्हें अपनी लोकप्रियता के लिए बाहरी लोगों की आवश्यकता पड़ी। परंतु उनकी राजनीति परी तरह उनकी थी। उन्होंने राष्ट्रवाद और समाजवाद का घातक मिश्रण तैयार किया। इसे कोई बनिया पार्टी नहीं हरा सकती थी। अब यह गणित उलट चुका है। उनके वारिसों का सामना मोदी-शाह की भाजपा से है जिसके पास राष्ट्रवाद, धर्म और समाजवाद का कहीं अधिक घातक राजनीतिक त्रिशुल है। सोनिया-राहुल की कांग्रेस क्या प्रतिक्रिया देगी इसे सबरीमला, तीन तलाक और अयोध्या मामले पर पार्टी की दुविधाग्रस्त प्रतिक्रिया से समझा जा सकता है। अगर वे वाम समाजवाद पर जोर देते रहे और राष्ट्रवाद और धर्म-संस्कृति का मुद्दा भाजपा में हाथ में रहा तो उन्हें लोकसभा में 52 सीट मिलना भी सौभाग्य माना जाना चाहिए। डॉ. मनमोहन सिंह जैसा गैर पेशेवर राजनेता ही इसे समझता है लेकिन उनकी पार्टी उनकी बात सुनती ही नहीं।

देसी भारतीय गाय का दूध विदेशी गायों से बेहतर

क्या स्वदेशी भारतीय गायों का दूध विदेशी नस्ल वाली गायों से बेहतर है ? अगर दूध की गुणवत्ता और उसमें निहित प्रोटीन तत्त्वों के संयोजन की बात करें तो इसका जवाब 'हां' है। उभरता वैश्विक रुझान दूध को उसके बीटा-केसीन की प्रकृति के आधार पर ए1 और ए2 श्रेणियों में वर्गीकरण का है। कुल दुग्ध प्रोटीन में बीटा-केसीन की मात्रा 30–35 फीसदी होती है। ए2 दूध को आम तौर पर ए1 पर वरीयता दी जाती है क्योंकि यह मां के दूध से मेल खाता है। भारतीय नस्ल वाली गाय का दूध भी इसी श्रेणी से संबंधित है।

बीटा-केसीन में ए1 और ए2 दुधों में समान रूप से पाए जाने वाले 209 अमिनो अम्लों की एक शृंखला होती है। लेकिन 67वें स्थान पर स्थित अमिनो अम्ल दो मामलों में अलग होता है। जहां ए2 बीटा-केसीन का इंसानी दूध की तरह इस स्थिति में उपयोगी प्रोलाइन होता है वहीं ए1 में हिस्टीडाइन होता है जो पाचन के दौरान अस्वास्थ्यकर पेप्टाइड बीसीएम-7 में टूटने की प्रवृत्ति रखता है। आम तौर पर 'दूध का शैतान' कहा जाने वाला यह पेप्टाइड मॉर्फीन से समानता रखता है जो कि मस्तिष्क के लिए बेहद नुकसानदायक है।

भारत समेत अधिकांश एशियाई एवं अफ्रीकी देशों में विकसित पशु नस्लों से निकलने वाला दुध मूल रूप से ए2 किस्म का ही है। इसके उलट यूरोपीय (फ्रांस को छोड़कर), ऑस्ट्रेलिया, न्यूजीलैंड और अमेरिका में विकसित नस्लों के मवेशी सामान्य तौर पर ए1 दुध ही पैदा करते हैं। कुछ मामलों में उनके दूध में ए1 और ए2 बीटा-केसीन का मिश्रण होता है लेकिन मोटे तौर पर यह ए1 श्रेणी वाला

दूध ही होता है। कुछ अध्ययनों से पता चला है कि बचपन में ए1 दूध के सेवन का संबंध टाइप-1 डायबिटीज, दिल की बीमारी, पाचन अनियमितता और ऑटिज्म जैसी बीमारियों से जुड़ा हो सकता है। ऑटिज्म एक मानसिक अवस्था है जिसमें लोग सामाजिक गतिविधियों का हिस्सा होने से बचते हैं और बार-बार एक ही आचरण दोहराते रहते हैं। लेकिन ए2 श्रेणी वाले दुध के सेवन से इस तरह की बीमारियां होने का कोई नाता सामने नहीं आया है।



खेती-बाड़ी सुरिंदर सूद

एनएएएस के रणनीतिक पत्र में कहा गया है कि ए२ दूध के उत्पादन में भारत को यूरोप के दुग्ध उत्पादक देशों की तुलना में बढ़त हासिल है। ऐसी स्थिति में भारत ए2 दूध को लेकर दुनिया भर में बढ़ती मांग को आसानी से पूरा कर सकता है।

सामान्य दुध को लेकर असहज लोग भी ए2 दूध का सेवन कर

असल में. गाय ए2 दध का अकेला जरिया नहीं है। भैंस, बकरी, भेड, याक और ऊंट जैसे दूसरे दुधारू पशुओं से भी ए2 दूध मिलता है। यही वजह है कि इन मवेशियों के दूध को बाजार में खास स्थान मिलता है। कबड वाले कुछ पशुओं, मसलन ऊंटनी से निकले ए2 दूध की कुछ किस्में ऑटिज्म पर काबू पाने और उसके लक्षणों को पूरी तरह दूर करने के लिए भी मुफीद मानी जाती हैं। इस मान्यता के कारण भारत समेत कई देशों में ऊंटनी के दुध की मांग एवं मूल्य दोनों में काफी तेजी आई है। लेकिन इनमें से अधिकांश दावों की पुष्टि के लिए

अभी और अध्ययन किए जाने की जरूरत है।

हालांकि यह सच है कि देसी गाय का दुध ए2 किस्म वाला होने के दावे को वैज्ञानिक तौर पर पृष्ट किया जा चुका है। राष्ट्रीय कृषि विज्ञान अकादमी (एनएएएस) ने हाल ही में जारी रणनीति पत्र में इसे स्वीकार भी किया है। 'भारत में ए1 एवं ए2 दूध की पूर्ण क्षमता का दोहन' शीर्षक पत्र कहता है कि भारत में देसी गायों के साथ विदेशी सांडों के मेल से विकसित संकर नस्ल की गाय में भी विशुद्ध ए2 बीटा-केसीन के गुण पाए जाते हैं। संकर किस्म की गायों में ए1 प्रोटीन की मौजूदगी दुर्लभ होने के साथ ही नदारद रहती है।

एनएएएस का रणनीति पत्र 1,500 पशुओं के तुलनात्मक विश्लेषण के नतीजों पर आधारित है। करनाल स्थित नैशनल ब्यूरो ऑफ एनिमल जेनेटिक रिसोर्सेज ने इस अध्ययन के दौरान संकर किस्म की गायों को भी शामिल किया था। अध्ययन से पता चला कि भारत के 91 फीसदी देसी मवेशियों के दूध में केवल ए2 बीटा-केसीन ही होता है। बमुश्किल 0.09 फीसदी नमूनों में ही ए1 बीटा-केसीन के नाममात्र के निशान पाए गए। खास बात यह है कि किसी भी भारतीय मवेशी का दूध ए1 किस्म का नहीं था।

गुण एवं दोष के बारे में जागरूकता बढ़ रही है। न्यूजीलैंड, ऑस्ट्रेलिया एवं अमेरिका जैसे बड़े दुग्ध उत्पादक देशों में भी लोग ए1 दूध को लेकर फिक्रमंद हो रहे हैं। न्यूज़ीलैंड ने तो प्रजनन में इस्तेमाल होने वाले सांडों को ए1 एवं ए2 के तौर पर चिह्नित करना शरू कर दिया है ताकि ए2 दध देने वाली गायों को बढावा मिले। ए2 कॉर्पोरेशन लिमिटेड नाम का एक कारोबारी घराना ए2 किस्म की गायों की पहचान एवं उनके दध की बिक्री के लिए आगे आया है। उसने 'ए2' और 'ए2 मिल्क' को अपने ट्रेडमार्क के तौर पर पंजीकृत करा लिया है।

ए1 एवं ए2 किस्म के दूध के

बहरहाल एनएएएस का यह रणनीतिक पत्र कहता है कि ए2 दूध के उत्पादन में भारत को यूरोप के दुग्ध उत्पादक देशों की तुलना में बढ़त हासिल है। ऐसी स्थिति में भारत ए2 दूध को लेकर दुनिया भर में बढ़ती मांग को आसानी से पूरा कर सकता है।

5 लाख 10 रुपये हो जाए तो उस

पर ढाई लाख रुपये के हिसाब से

आयकर की गणना होगी। यह

बड़ा अजीब सा नियम बना।

अगर देश की आर्थिक स्थिति

कानाफूसी

बदलाव का वक्त

यह मौसम बदलाव का मौसम प्रतीत हो रहा है। गत जुलाई में एक विधेयक पर मत विभाजन के दौरान कांग्रेस के पक्ष में मतदान करने वाले मध्य प्रदेश के भाजपा विधायक नारायण त्रिपाठी दोबारा भाजपा के साथ हो गए हैं। उनका कहना है कि उन्होंने कभी पार्टी छोड़ी ही नहीं। पूर्व

मुख्यमंत्री शिवराज सिंह चौहान की गैरमौजुदगी में घर वापसी करने वाले त्रिपाठी ने कांग्रेस का साथ देते वक्त चौहान की जमकर आलोचना की थी। अब वह प्रदेश अध्यक्ष राकेश सिंह के नेतृत्व में वापस आ गए हैं। सिंह ने भी कहा है कि त्रिपाठी ने गलती से कांग्रेस के पक्ष में मतदान कर दिया था। और वह हमेशा से भाजपा में बने रहे। त्रिपाठी की बात करें तो बीते 15 वर्षों में वह पांच बार पार्टी बदल चुके हैं। सन 2003 में वह समाजवादी पार्टी के टिकट पर मैहर विधानसभा चुनाव जीते थे। 2013 में वह कांग्रेस में आ गए और लगातार दो बार विधायक बने। नवंबर 2018 में हुए चुनाव के ऐन पहले वह भाजपा में चले गए और चुनाव जीतने के बाद एक विधेयक पर कांग्रेस के पक्ष में वोट डाल दिया। अब कह रहे हैं कि वह औपचारिक रूप से पार्टी में वापस आ गए हैं। उधर, राजस्थान में भी कांग्रेस के एक विधायक भरत सिंह ने अपनी ही सरकार पर रिश्वतखोरी का आरोप लगाते हुए विधायक पद त्याग दिया। अनुमान लगाया जा रहा है कि वह पार्टी बदल सकते हैं।

आपका पक्ष

मुक्त अर्थव्यवस्था और निजीकरण

आजादी के बाद सरकार ने मिश्रित अर्थव्यवस्था को स्वीकार किया था ताकि देश में आर्थिक एवं सामाजिक विषमता को कम किया जा सके। उसने औद्योगिक नीतियों के तहत उद्योगों का स्वामित्व अपने पास ही रखा। लेकिन वर्ष 1991 तक सरकारी औद्योगिक इकाइयां व्यवस्थापन एवं अकार्यक्षमता से घाटे में आ गई। इस वजह से नई औद्योगिक नीति 1991 के तहत सरकार ने कई उद्योगों का निजीकरण कर दिया। वर्ष 1991 के बाद से ही देश की अर्थव्यवस्था मुक्त अर्थव्यवस्था की ओर अग्रसर है। इंडेक्स ऑफ इकनॉमिक फ्रीडम 2018 में भारत को 184 देशों के बीच 130वां स्थान मिला है जो वर्ष 2017 में 143 था। देश को वर्ष 2018 में 100 अंक में से 54.5 अंक मिले जो यह दर्शाता है कि भारतीय अर्थव्यवस्था बाजार अर्थव्यवथा की ओर अग्रसर है। भविष्य में

देश की रैंकिंग और ऊपर जाएगी



क्योंकि वर्तमान सरकार ने अपने कई उद्योगों का निजीकरण करने का फैसला किया है। सरकार के इस फैसले का स्वागत किया गया है लेकिन इसकी आलोचना भी हो रही है। अगर सरकार धीरे-धीरे अपने सभी उद्योगों का निजीकरण कर देगी तो उन वस्तुओं की कीमतें बाजार की मांग एवं पूर्ति के हिसाब

ः सरकारी कंपनियों को घाटे से उबारने के लिए निजीकरण के अलावा अन्य विकल्प भी हों

में गिरावट तथा बढ़ोतरी होती रहेगी। इसका विपरीत असर मध्यम और निम्न वर्ग के लोगों पर पड़ेगा। विशेषज्ञों के अनुसार से तय होंगी जिससे वस्तु के दाम ! विकासशील देशों में उदारीकरण

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।

जबिक आर्थिक एवं सामजिक विषमता की गणना करने वाली ऑक्सफेम इंडेक्स में देश को वर्ष 2018 में 157 देशों के बीच 147वां स्थान मिला था। सरकार का राजकोषीय घाटा काफी अधिक है। इस दबाव के चलते सरकार ने निजीकरण का फैसला किया है। जो सरकारी कंपनियां घाटे में हैं उन्हें बंद करने या निजीकरण के अलावा कोई चारा भी नहीं बचता है।

लगातार अमीरी गरीबी की खाई

की समस्या बढ़ती जा रही है

और मुक्त बाजार के दौर में 🗄 खत्म कर दिया लेकिन अगर आय

निशांत महेश त्रिपाठी, नागपुर

आयकर दरों में बदलाव जरूरी

नरेंद्र मोदी सरकार के पहले कार्यकाल में सरकार ने 5 लाख रुपये तक की आय पर आयकर

ठीक करनी है तो कर योग्य आय और आयकर दरों को तर्कसंगत बनाने की आवश्यकता है। इसके अलावा चीन के उत्पादों पर पूरी तरह से रोक लगाने की जरूरत है। आयकर दरों में सुधार के लिए कर मुक्त आय की सीमा 4 लाख रुपये करनी चाहिए। इसके अलावा 6 लाख रुपये तक की आय में 5 प्रतिशत आयकर लगाना चाहिए। इसके बाद 10 लाख रुपये तक की आय में 10 प्रतिशत, 20 लाख रुपये तक की आय में 20 प्रतिशत तथा इसके बाद 25 से 30 प्रतिशत आयकर की दर निर्धारित करनी चाहिए। इसके साथ ही धारा 80 सी के तहत 2 लाख रुपये तक की जमा करने की छूट हो। इस प्रकार लोगों के पास खर्च करने के लिए पैसा होगा।

सुदर्शन गुप्ता, अलीगढ़



विचार कर्म का आधार है

पाकिस्तान का उपचार

पाकिस्तानी सेना की ओर से आतंकियों की घुसपैठ कराने के लिए संघर्ष विराम का उल्लंघन किए जाने से उकताई भारतीय सेना ने जो कठोर कार्रवाई की उससे पाकिस्तान जरूरी सबक सीखते हुए दिखना चाहिए। वास्तव में अब यह सुनिश्चित किया ही जाना चाहिए कि पाकिस्तान रह-रह कर संघर्ष विराम का उल्लंघन करने से बाज आए। यह अच्छी बात है कि भारतीय सेना ने पाकिस्तानी सेना को मुंहतोड़ जवाब देते हुए सीमा पार के आतंकी ठिकानों को भी निशाना बनाया, लेकिन अगर बालाकोट में की गई एयर स्ट्राइक के बाद गुलाम कश्मीर से हटाए गए आतंकी शिविर फिर से वहां कायम हो गए हैं तो इसका मतलब है कि पाकिस्तान की जिहादी सोच ने नए सिरे से सिर उठा लिया है। इसकी एक बड़ी वजह जम्मू-कश्मीर को अनुच्छेद 370 से मुक्त करने का भारत सरकार का फैसला हो सकता है। भारत के इस साहसिक फैसले के बाद पाकिस्तान की बौखलाहट बढ़ी है। वह घरेलू मंचों के साथ-साथ अंतरराष्ट्रीय मंचों पर भी भारत के खिलाफ जहर उगल रहा है। इसका कोई उपचार नहीं नजर आता, लेकिन कम से कम अब तो ऐसे उपाय किए ही जाने चाहिए कि पाकिस्तान संघर्ष विराम का उल्लंघन कर भारत को नुकसान पहुंचाने

इसकी अनदेखी नहीं की जानी चाहिए कि सीमा पर पाकिस्तानी सेना की ओर से की जाने वाली गोलाबारी से कभी हमारे जवान खेत रहते हैं तो कभी सीमावर्ती इलाकों में रह रहे आम नागरिक। गत दिवस ही तंगधार सेक्टर में पाकिस्तानी सेना की ओर से की गई उकसावे वाली गोलाबारी में हमारी सेना के साथ नागरिक आबादी को क्षति उठानी पड़ी। आखिर यह सिलसिला कब थमेगा? यह वह सवाल है जिस पर सेना के साथ-साथ सरकार को भी गंभीरतापूर्वक विचार करना होगा। इस सवाल पर विचार करना इसलिए आवश्यक हो गया है, क्योंकि फिलहाल इसकी सुरत नहीं नजर आती कि पाकिस्तान भारत को नीचा दिखाने की अपनी कृत्सित सोच का परित्याग करेगा। पाकिस्तान आतंकी संगठनों के सहारे भारत के खिलाफ छेड़े गए छद्म युद्ध को जरूरत से ज्यादा लंबा खींच रहा है। जब दुनिया भर के देश अपने बुनियादी ढांचे पर निवेश करने में लगे हुए है तब पाकिस्तान एक ऐसा देश है जो आतंकी ढांचे पर निवेश करने में लगा हुआ है। वह शायद ऐसा तब तक करता रहेगा जब तक उसे इसकी कीमत नहीं चुकानी पड़ती। भारत की किसी सैन्य कार्रवाई में अपने आतंकियों के मारे जाने से पाकिस्तान की सेहत पर असर इसलिए नहीं पड़ता, क्योंकि उसकी धरती पर उन्हें तैयार करने वाले मदरसे बढ़ते ही जा रहे है। स्पष्ट है कि भारत को यह देखना ही होगा कि पाकिस्तान उसकी कार्रवाई से हमेशा के लिए सबक सीखे।

डेंगू की दहशत

बिहार में बाढ़ और जलजमाव से लोग अभी पूरी तरह उबर भी नहीं सके हैं कि डेंगू के प्रकोप ने दहशत में डाल दिया है। राज्य के विभिन्न हिस्सों में मरीजों की संख्या बढ़ती जा रही है। इससे निपटने के त्वरित उपाय करने होंगे, अन्यथा स्थिति और विकट हो सकती है। राज्य के स्वास्थ्य मंत्री का दावा है कि बिहार में डेंगू का असर देश के अन्य राज्यों से कम है। यह अच्छी बात है, पर प्रयास पूर्ण नियंत्रण का होना चाहिए। अभी सरकारी अस्पतालों से लेकर निजी क्लिनिकों तक में डेंगू के मरीज भरे पड़े हैं। जिस तादाद में मरीज हैं, उस अनुरूप बेड भी उपलब्ध नहीं हो पा रहे हैं। संख्या बढ़ती ही जा रही है। इसका प्रभाव शहरी क्षेत्रों से लेकर गांवों तक है। जो बाढ़ पीड़ित हैं, उनकी परेशानी और भी बढ़ गई है, क्योंकि विस्थापित होकर जहां-तहां खुले में रह रहे हैं। डेंगू पर नियंत्रण के लिए टास्क फोर्स बनाकर अभियान चलाए जाने की जरूरत है। जलजमाव वाले क्षेत्रों को तत्काल जलमक्त करना होगा। नगर निकायों को सफाई अभियान में और तेजी लानी होगी। गली-मोहल्लो में पर्याप्त फॉगिंग भी नहीं हो रही है। पटना और भागलपुर में इसका प्रकोप सर्वाधिक है। पर्णिया में भी डेंग के मरीज चिह्नित किए गए हैं। अन्य जिलों में भी कमोबेश स्थिति ऐसी ही है। इस पर तत्काल कदम उठाए जाने की जरूरत है। डेंगू पर नियंत्रण के लिए नगर निकाय और स्वास्थ्य विभाग को समन्वय स्थापित कर काम करना होगा। एक सच यह भी है कि अधिकारी इस ओर से बेफिक्र हैं। जब हाईकोर्ट के जस्टिस की शिकायत पर भी नालों की सफाई नहीं हो तो आमलोगों की बात कितनी सुनी जाती होगी, यह बताने की जरूरत नहीं है। सरकार लगातार निर्देश दे रही है, कार्रवाई भी की जा रही है। इसके बाद भी अधिकारी निश्चिंत भाव से बैठकर सिर्फ आंकड़ों की फाइलें तैयार कर हकीकत को नजरअंदाज कर दें तो यह और गंभीर मसला है। ऐसे अधिकारियों-कर्मियों पर सख्त से सख्त कार्रवाई की जरूरत है, ताकि स्पष्ट संदेश जाए। उन्हें यह समझना होगा कि आम जनता किन परेशानियों से जुझ रही है। उनके दर्द को महसूस करना होगा। इसकी समीक्षा की जानी चाहिए कि डेंगू की दस्तक के साथ ही इससे बचाव और पीड़ितों को राहत दिए जाने के लिए स्थानीय स्तर पर कौन-कौन से कदम उठाए गए। जहां संसाधनों की कमी है, वहां जरूरी संसाधन भी मुहैया कराए जाएं।

जख्मों पर लगे नागरिकता का मरहम



एम नागेश्वर राव

नागरिकता संशोधन अधिनियम की खामियां सुधार कर नया कानून बनाया जाए ताकि विदेश में धार्मिक उत्पीडन के शिकार हिंदुओं को राहत मिल सके

मारे संविधान निर्माताओं ने संविधान के पहले अनुच्छेद में 'इंडिया' के साथ ही 'भारत' नाम भी जोड़ा तो कुछ तथ्यों को लेकर उनका दृष्टिकोण एकदम स्पष्ट था। एक तो यही कि इंडिया एकदम नया नाम था जबिक भारत सदियों पुरानी ऐसी सभ्यता थी जिसने हिंदू, जैन, बौद्ध और सिख जैसे दुनिया के चार प्रमुख धर्मों को जन्म दिया। इन्हें हम इंडिक धर्म भी कहते हैं। साथ ही भारत नाम हमारी प्राचीन सभ्यता और संस्कृति के मूल्यों को दर्शाता है। दूसरा यही कि भारतीय राज्य हमारी प्राचीन सभ्यता की विरासत का प्रतिनिधि एवं संरक्षक है। तीसरा यही कि प्रस्तावना में 'राष्ट्र की एकता एवं अखंडता' को लेकर जो प्रोत्साहन दिया गया है उसका सभ्यतागत निहितार्थ युगों-युगों से हमारी पीढ़ियों में हस्तांतरित होता रहा है। उनकी दृष्टि में भारत की सभ्यतागत पहचान बहुत पुरानी है जिसकी एकता एवं अखंडता संविधान के आकार लेने के बहुत पहले से ही सनातन धर्म से प्रेरित होती आई है। ऐसे में संविधान की नैतिक बाध्यता यही थी कि वह व्यापक रूप से हमारी प्राचीन सभ्यता को पोषित कर उसके मल्यों को हमारे राष्ट्र एवं उसके नागरिकों में रोपित करे। यदि ऐसा न हो तो भारत वैसा नहीं रहेगा, क्योंकि महज भौगोलिक भूखंडों से ही राष्ट्र नहीं बनते।

भले ही हिंदुओं की एक अरब से ज्यादा आबादी हो, लेकिन दुनिया में कोई हिंदू राष्ट्र नहीं है। अगर छोटे से नेपाल को अपवाद छोड़

दिया जाए तो केवल भारत ही हिंदू बहुसंख्यक देश है। साथ ही भारतीय भूमि पर जन्में धर्मों में से बौद्धों को छोड़कर अन्य धर्मों के अनुयायियों की आश्रयस्थली भी है। उनके प्रति भी भारत की सभ्यतागत जिम्मेदारी है। अनुच्छेद 25 के परिशिष्ट-2 के तहत हिंदुओं के साथ ही बौद्ध, जैन और सिखों को भी श्रेणीबद्ध किया है। यह भी दुर्भाग्यपूर्ण हकीकत है कि इन सभी को कुछ देशों में धार्मिक उत्पीड़न का शिकार होना पड़ता है। चूंकि बौद्धों के अलावा शेष को शरण लेने के लिए कोई और देश नहीं सूझता तो वे भारत का ही रुख करते हैं। मगर जो लोग काफी लंबा अर्सा पहले अपनी जमीन छोड़कर भारत आ गए हैं, वे एक गरिमापुर्ण जीवन जीने के लिए जरूरी भारतीय नागरिकता चाहते हैं।

ट्रिप्स समझौते के तहत संसद ने भौगोलिक संकेतक (पंजीकरण एवं संरक्षण) अधिनियम, 1999 पारित किया था। अगर भौतिक वस्तुओं को लेकर इतनी संजीदगी दिखाई गई तो क्या हमें इतनी ही गंभीरता उन प्रताड़ितों के प्रति नहीं दिखानी चाहिए जो उन धार्मिक परंपराओं के वाहक हैं जिनका जन्म भारत में हुआ और जो सदियों से हमारी प्राचीन सभ्यता के प्रतिनिधि हैं। संविधान में नैतिकता हमारे सभ्यतागत आचार-विचारों से जुड़ी है, ऐसे में भारत भूमि पर जन्मे धर्मों के अनुयायियों की बेहतरी सुनिश्चित करना भले ही भारत की संवैधानिक बाध्यता न हो, लेकिन सभ्यतागत दायित्व अवश्य है।

भाजपा ने वर्ष 2014 के चुनावी घोषणापत्र



में वादा किया था कि 'भारत उत्पीडित हिंदुओं के लिए स्वाभाविक आश्रयस्थल बना रहेगा और उन्हें यहां शरण दी जाएगी।' इसी प्रयोजन से नागरिकता संशोधन विधेयक (कैब), 2016 संसद में पेश किया गया जो तबसे लंबित ही पड़ा हुआ है। चूंकि असम में एनआरसी की अंतिम सूची के लिहाज से तमाम लोगों की नागरिकता अधर में पड़ गई है तो कैब को पारित कराने की प्रासंगिकता और बढ़ गई है। इस परिप्रेक्ष्य में 2016 के स्वरूप वाले कैब की खामियों पर विचार करना जरूरी है ताकि उससे सबक लेकर ऐसा नया कानून बनाया जा सके जो कानूनी पचड़ों में न फंसे और लंबे समय से उत्पीड़न की तिपश झेल रहे लोगों को नागरिकता मिल जाए।

कैब, 2016 की पहली खामी तो यही है कि इसमें धार्मिक उत्पीडन को केवल तीन देशों अफगानिस्तान, बांग्लादेश और पाकिस्तान तक ही सीमित खा गया है। यह दावे के साथ नहीं कहा जा सकता कि इंडिक धर्मों के अनुयायियों का केवल इन तीन देशों में ही उत्पीड़न होता है। यहां हिंदू अमेरिकन फाउंडेशन की रिपोर्ट का उल्लेख समीचीन होगा जिसमें कहा यह गया कि, 'हिंदु अमेरिकी छात्रों को लगातार निशाना के चलते वे सामाजिक रूप से बहिष्कृत महसूस करते हैं।' ऐसे में नए कानून में सभी देशों को शामिल किया जाना चाहिए।

दुसरा यही कि कैब, 2016 में इन तीन देशों के सभी अल्पसंख्यकों को शामिल किया गया है। यह बिल्कुल तार्किक नहीं लगता। भारत के लिए गैर-इंडिक धर्मों के लोगों के लिए ऐसी कोई सभ्यतागत बाध्यता नहीं है। हमने यहूदियों और पारिसयों जैसे धर्मों के लोगों के प्रति भी समुचित सदाशयता दिखाई है जिन्हें अपनी भूमि से बेदखल कर दिया गया और उनके पास आश्रय लेने के लिए कोई और स्थान नहीं था। मगर ईसाई और मुस्लिमों पर यह बात लागु नहीं होती जो किसी भी ईसाई बहुल या मुस्लिम बहुल देश में शरण ले सकते हैं। यही बात यहदियों के बारे में कही जा सकती है जिनके पास इजरायल के रूप में अब अपना एक अलग देश है। पहले से ही आबादी के बोझ तले दबे जा रहे अपने देश पर हम और अनावश्यक भार नहीं बढ़ा सकते। माननीय प्रधानमंत्री जी ने इस साल स्वतंत्रता दिवस के अवसर पर लालकिले से दिए अपने भाषण में जनसंख्या विस्फोट की समस्या

पर उचित ही ध्यान आकृष्ट किया है। ऐसे में भारतीय नागरिकता को केवल इंडिक धर्मों के अनुयायियों और पारसियों तक सीमित रखना उचित होगा। तीसरा पहलू यही है कि विशेषज्ञ कैब, 2016 की संवैधानिक वैधता को लेकर सवाल खड़े कर चुके हैं। ऐसे में भले ही नया विधेयक कानून का रूप अख्तियार कर ले लेकिन उसे अदालतों में चुनौती दी जा सकती है। इससे हिंदुओं और अन्य धर्मों के प्रताड़ित लोगों को शायद ही कोई राहत मिल पाएगी जो अर्से से मदद की बाट जोह रहे हैं। इस तरह देखें तो नागरिकता अधिनियम में संशोधन से पहले संविधान संशोधन अनिवार्य हो गया है।

अब चौथे पहलू पर चर्चा हो जाए। चूंकि धार्मिक उत्पीड़न के आधार पर ही नागरिकता का प्रावधान होगा तब इसके लिए धर्मांतरण की आड़ भी ली जा सकती है। हालांकि कोई भारत में आने के बजाय अपने देश में ही धर्मांतरण करके रहने को भी तरजीह दे सकता है। वही इस आशंका से भी इन्कार नहीं किया जा सकता कि भारतीय नागरिकता के लिए कोई धर्म बदल ले और नागरिकता के बाद वापस अपनी मूल धार्मिक पहचान हासिल कर ले। ऐसे में कड़े प्रावधानों के अभाव में यह आबादी में घुसपैट का कानूनी जरिया बन जाएगा। कैब, 2016 ने इसका भी संज्ञान नहीं लिया।

इसे देखते हुए संविधान में संशोधन कर 11ए के रूप में नया अनुच्छेद जोड़ना अनिवार्य होगा। फिर नागरिकता अधिनियम में संशोधन के जरिये किसी भी देश में प्रताड़ित हिंदुओं बौद्धों, जैनों, सिखों और पारसियों के लिए नागरिकता का प्रावधान करना होगा। हालांकि इसके लिए कुछ सख्त प्रावधान भी करने होंगे मसलन इसके दुरुपयोग पर न केवल नागरिकत से हाथ धोना पड़े, बल्कि उसकी संपत्ति भी जब्त कर ली जाए।

(लेखक भारतीय पुलिस सेवा के अधिकारी हैं) response@jagran.com

दस्तावेज सरीखी अदालती बहस

च्चतम न्यायालय 40 दिनों की सुनवाई के बाद अब फैसला देने की ओर बढ़ गया है। फैसला जो भी हो, लेकिन इस दौरान हिंदू और मुस्लिम दोनों पक्षों की ओर से जिस तरह की गंभीर बहस हुई और जो साक्ष्य दिए गए वह न्यायालय के इतिहास का महत्वुपर्ण अध्याय बन गया है। इतिहास, पुरातत्व, धार्मिक पुस्तकों यात्रियों के विवरणों, पूर्व के मुकदमों में दिए गए गवाहों के विवरण इस बात के सुबूत हैं कि दोनों पक्षों ने काफी परिश्रम किया है। फैसला आ जाने के बाद रामजन्म भूमि बाबरी विवाद ही नहीं, भारत के प्राचीन और मध्यकालीन इतिहास तथा धार्मिक और सांस्कृतिक स्थिति पर अध्ययन की प्रचुर सामग्री एक ही जगह मिल जाएगी। आइए दोनों पक्षों की ओर से दी गई दलीलों के कुछ अंशों को देखें।

हिंदू पक्षों ने तर्क दिया कि भगवान राम की जन्मस्थली अपने आप में देवता है और मुस्लिम 2.77 एकड़ विवादित जमीन पर अधिकार होने का दावा नहीं कर सकते, क्योंकि संपत्ति को बांटना ईश्वर को नष्ट करने और उसका भंजन करने के समान होगा। वकील सीएस वैद्यनाथन ने कहा कि अकबर और जहांगीर के समय में भारत आने वालों में विलियम फिंच और विलियम हॉकिंस ने अपने लेखों में अयोध्या का भी जिक्र किया है। उन्होंने दलील दी कि पुराण और अलग-अलग समय के ब्रिटिश रिकॉर्ड राम और अयोध्या के बीच संबंधों की पुष्टि करते हैं और यह भी बताते हैं कि मंदिर को तोड़कर मस्जिद बनाई गई। ब्रिटिश सर्वेयर एम. मार्टिन और जोसेफ टिफेंथलर ने भी कहा था कि लोगों का विश्वास था कि अयोध्या राम की जन्मस्थली है। हिंदू पक्ष ने भारतीय पुरातत्व सर्वेक्षण की रिपोर्ट के हवाले से कहा कि जिस जगह मस्जिद बनाई गई थी उसके नीचे मंदिर का बहुत बड़ा ढांचा था। उसमें कई पिलर और स्तंभ हैं जो ईसा पूर्व 200 साल पहले के हैं। खोदाई में जो खंभे मिले थे उसमें राम के बाल स्वरूप, शिव तांडव और भगवान कृष्ण की भी तस्वीरें हैं। कहा गया कि मौके से 12वीं शताब्दी के शिलापट्ट और शिलालेख मिले हैं, उनके मुताबिक वहां भगवान विष्णु का विशाल मंदिर था। मस्जिद बनाए जाने के बाद भी हिंदु वहां पूजा करते थे।

निर्मोही अखाड़ा के वकील सुशील कुमार जैन ने 1934 के गवाह राजा राम पांडेय का बयान पढ़ा जिसमें उन्होंने रामलला और उनके लकड़ी के सिंहासन को देखने की बात कही थी। सरकार ने जब 1990 में धार्मिक स्थान की पहचान की थी तब अयोध्या के जन्मस्थान पर बना



में सामने आया था जब एक दंगा भड़का था। जिसके बाद समय पश्चात हिंदओं का कब्जा हो गया। अधिवक्ता के. परासरन ने कहा कि सभी मस्जिद बराबर मानी जाती हैं। अयोध्या में 55-60 मस्जिदें हैं। मुस्लिम किसी भी मस्जिद में नमाज पढ़ सकते हैं, लेकिन हिंदुओं के लिए राम का जन्मस्थान एक ही है। सड़कों पर भी नमाज पढ़ी जाती है, इसका मतलब यह नहीं है कि वे मस्जिद हो जाएंगी और

उनको मालिकाना हक मिल जाएगा। अखिल भारतीय श्री राम जन्मभूमि पुनरुद्धार समिति की ओर से वकील पीएन मिश्रा ने कहा कि बाबर कभी अयोध्या नहीं आया और उसने मस्जिद का निर्माण नहीं कराया। मीर बकी नाम का भी कोई शख्स नहीं था। दरअसल औरंगजेब ने मंदिर तोड़कर मस्जिद बनवाई। आईन-ए-अकबरी में अबुल फजल ने रामकोट का जिक्र किया है। हुमायुंनामा में भी किसी मस्जिद का वहां जिक्र नहीं है। तुजुक-ए-जहांगीरी में भी कोई मस्जिद का जिक्र नहीं है। उन्होंने कहा कि जब भारतीय पुरातत्व सर्वेक्षण (एएसआइ) ने उस जगह पर खोदाई कार्य की तो स्तंभों की सात पंक्तियां दिखाई दीं और हिंदू परंपराओं के अनुसार कुल 85 स्तंभ (पिलर) वहां थे।

अब आएं मुस्लिम पक्ष की ओर। सुन्नी वक्फ बोर्ड के वकील राजीव धवन ने कहा कि वैधानिक बेंच को दो पहलुओं को देखना है। पहला, विवादित स्थान पर मालिकाना हक किसका बनता है? और दूसरा कि क्या गलत कानून जारी रखा जा सकता है? बाबरी के अंदर देवी-देवताओं की प्रतिमा का प्रकट होना चमत्कार नहीं था। 22-23 दिसंबर, 1949 की रात सुनियोजित तरीके से हमला किया गया, गुंबद के नीचे मूर्ति रख दी गई। फैजाबाद के तत्कालीन उपायुक्त केके नायर ने स्पष्ट निर्देश के बावजूद मूर्तियों को हटाने की इजाजत नहीं दी। जन्मस्थान की दलील विश्वास और आस्था पर आधारित है और अगर इस दलील को स्वीकार कर लिया गया तो

सभी मुस्लिम पक्षकारों की ओर से दलील दी गई कि 1934 के बाद भी बाबरी में नमाज पढ़ी गई थी। 1934 में मस्जिद पर हमले के बाद पीडब्ल्युडी दस्तावेज में इस बात के साक्ष्य मौजूद हैं कि मस्जिद की मरम्मत की गई थी। अभिलेखों से साफ है कि मस्जिद बाबर ने बनवाई थी। जफरयाब जिलानी ने दलील दी कि 1855 से पहले वहां कुछ नहीं था। उनकी दलील थी कि मंदिर तोड़कर मस्जिद नहीं बनवाई गई, बल्कि खाली जगह पर बनवाई गई। संविधान पीठ ने कहा कि लोहे की ग्रिल लगाने का मकसद बाहरी बरामदे से भीतरी बरामदे को अलग करना था। राजीव धवन ने कहा कि 1949 के केस के बाद किसी गवाह के बयान से जाहिर नहीं होता कि रेलिंग के पास लोग पूजा के लिए क्यों जाते थे? निर्मोही अखाड़ा के दावे पर कि वह बाहरी आंगन में राम चबूतरे पर 1855 से पूजा करता था धवन ने कहा कि राम चबूतरे पर पूजा और पूजा के अधिकार को हमने कभी मना नहीं किया, लेकिन वहां का मालिकाना हक कभी निर्मोही अखाड़ा के पास नहीं था. बल्कि हमारे पास था। हिंदओं ने 1934 में बाबरी मस्जिद पर हमला किया। फिर 1949 में अवैध घुसपैठ की और 1992 में इसे तोड़ दिया। अब कह रहे हैं कि संबंधित जमीन पर उनके अधिकार की रक्षा की जानी चाहिए। कानुनी मामलों में ऐतिहासिक बातों और तथ्यों पर पूरी तरह भरोसा नहीं किया जा सकता। कुल मिलाकर अब देखना है कि सुप्रीम कोर्ट किस पक्ष की दलीलों को सही मान फैसला सुनाता है। देश की नजरें सर्वोच्च न्यायालय की ओर लगी हुई हैं।

> (लेखक राजनीतिक विश्लेषक हैं) response@jagran.com



गुरु-शिष्य

सदियों से भारतवर्ष की पावन धरा पर गुरु और शिष्य का स्नेहिल संबंध रहा है। सनातन परंपरा में गुरु अपनी सदाशयता, सद्भावना और आत्मीयता के विलक्षण स्वरूप से हर एक मानव मन में चरित्र निर्माण, आपसी प्रेम और भाईचारे का बीज बोता रहा है। सशरीर होते हुए भी गुरु तत्व है। संसार की सबसे पवित्र ईश्वरीय देन है वह मनुष्य के जन्म-जन्मांतर के अंध तमस को दूर कर उसे दिव्य प्रकाश देता है। गुरु के बिना मनुष्य का जीवन बिना पतवार की नौका के समान होता है। गुरु के बिना ज्ञान मिलना कठिन है। गुरु के बिना मोक्ष नहीं मिलता गुरु के बिना सत्य को पहचानना असंभव है। गुरु बिना मन के विकारों का मिटना मुश्किल है।

गुरु शिष्य की हर उलझी हुई समस्या का समाधान करता है। महाभारत में श्रीकृष्ण ने अर्जुन को न सिर्फ उपदेश दिया, बल्कि हर उस वक्त उन्हें उचित निर्देश दिया जब-जब वे दिग्भ्रमित नजर आए। गुरु के मुख से निकला हर शब्द ब्रह्म होता है जो सत्य की गहरा से निकलता है। अपनी महत्ता के कारण गुरु को ईश्वर से भी ऊंचा पद दिया गया है। शास्त्रों में गुरु को ईश्वर के विभिन्न रूपों-ब्रह्मा, विष्णु एवं महेश्वर के रूप मे स्वीकार किया गया है। गुरु को ब्रह्मा कहा गया, क्योंकि वह शिष्य को नया जन्म देते हैं। गुरु विष्णु भी हैं, क्योंकि वह शिष्य की रक्षा करते हैं। गुरु साक्षात महेश्वर भी हैं क्योंकि वह शिष्य के सभी दोषों का संहार करते हैं।

उपनिषदों में कहा गया है कि गुरु के प्राण शिष्यों में और शिष्यों के प्राण गुरु में बसते हैं। गुरु मानव चेतना के विकास के हर एक पहलू को जागृत करता है। शिष्य को जीवन जीने की कला सिखाता है। एक संबुद्ध गुरु को यदि एक चेतनावान शिष्य मिल जाए तो वह अपने परम संबोधि के विस्फोट से नए युग का निर्माण कर सकता है। शिष्य के सदा के बंद द्वार खोल सकता है। उसके जीवन में एक नया संगीत भर सकता है। आज के समय में एक बार पुनः गुरु-शिष्य परंपरा की अनंत श्रृंखला को कायम रखने की महती आवश्यकता है। यदि सही गुरु मिल जाए तो जीवन की दिशा सुधारी जा सकती है।

चीन पर दबाव आवश्यक

हर साल अक्टूबर और नवंबर माह में पंजाब, हरियाणा, राजस्थान और पश्चिमी उत्तर प्रदेश में किसानों द्वारा धान की फसल की कटाई के बाद उसके अवशेषों (पराली) को जलाने का सिलसिला शुरू हो जाता है। नई फसल की जल्द बुआई करने के चक्कर में किसान पराली को अपने खेतों में ही जला देते हैं। हमारे किसान इस बात से अंजान रहते हैं कि इस आग से एक ओर जहां पर्यावरण में जहर घुल रहा होता है, वहीं खेतों में मौजूद भूमिगत कृषि-मित्र कीट तथा सूक्ष्म जीव मर जाते हैं, जिससे मृदा की उर्वरता घटती है और अनाजोत्पादन प्रभावित होता है। पराली जलाने से वातावरण में कार्बन डाईऑक्साइड, कार्बन मोनोऑक्साइड और मिथेन जैसी विषैली गैसों की मात्रा भी बहुत अधिक बढ़ जाती है। पराली का बहुतायत में जलाया जाना दिल्ली एवं आसपास के क्षेत्रों में प्रदूषण बढ़ने की प्रमुख वजह है। राष्ट्रीय हरित प्राधिकरण ने जहां पंजाब, हरियाणा और उत्तर प्रदेश सरकार को पराली जलाने की समस्या से निपटने में नाकाम रहने पर फटकार लगाई है, वहीं बिहार सरकार ने इस समस्या पर

पर्यावरण संरक्षण के लिए देश में अनेक स्तरों पर मुहिम चलाने तथा धरातल पर कोशिश करने की जरूरत है

जनजीवन को प्रभावित करता प्रदूषण

अंकुश लगाने के लिए कड़ा फैसला लेते हुए कहा है कि पराली जलाने वाले किसानों को सरकारी योजना का फायदा नहीं मिलेगा!

आंकड़े बताते हैं कि पिछले तीन दशक में कार्बन डाईऑक्साइड और ग्रीनहाउस गैसों की वजह से ग्लोबल वार्मिंग में 40 फीसद का इजाफा हुआ है। यूनिसेफ की एक रिपोर्ट बताती है कि दुनिया में तीस करोड़ बच्चे ऐसे इलाके में रहते हैं, जहां प्रदूषण का स्तर तय मानकों से छह गुणा अधिक है। भारत में हर साल केवल प्रदूषण से पांच लाख बच्चों की मौत हो जाती है। पर्यावरण प्रदूषण की वजह से लोगों में कैंसर, अस्थमा तथा सांस संबंधी अन्य शिकायतें बढ़ती जा रही हैं। प्रदूषण का यह जानलेवा स्वरूप अंधाधुंध विकास और मानव के पर्यावरण-प्रतिकूल कारस्तानियों का ही गौण उत्पाद है। प्रदूषण की वजह से इंसान

असामान्य जीवन गुजारने को लाचार है। पर्यावरण में चमत्कारिक रूप से विद्यमान

वायु आज प्रदूषित होकर जीवन के लिए खतरनाक साबित हो रही है। विडंबना है कि पर्यावरण से निरंतर छेड़छाड़ तथा विकास की अनियंत्रित भूख ने आज इंसान को शुद्ध एवं स्वच्छ पर्यावरण से भी दुर कर दिया है। जीवन-प्रत्याशा के घटने और अस्वस्थ होने की यह एक बड़ी वजह बन चुकी है। मौजूदा समय में पर्यावरण के समक्ष ग्लोबल वार्मिंग, ओजोन परत क्षय एवं सभी प्रकार के प्रदूषणों (जल, वायु, भूमि और ध्वनि) से उबरने की चुनौती है। दरअसल प्राकृतिक नियमों को अनदेखा कर लूट की बुनियाद पर किया गया औद्योगिक विकास विनाश के जनन के लिए उत्तरदायी होता है। दुर्भाग्य है कि सबकुछ जानने-समझने के बावजूद हम अपनी गतिविधियों से पर्यावरण को नुकसान पहुंचा रहे हैं! पर्यावरण संरक्षण के लिए देश में अनेक स्तरों पर मुहिम चलाने तथा धरातल पर कोशिश करने की जरूरत है, अन्यथा 'औद्योगिक आतंकवाद' का यह स्वरूप धीरे-धीरे पूरी मानव जाति को ही लील लेगा!

(लेखक बीएचयू में अध्येता हैं)

'भरोसे की कमी से जूझते भारत-चीन' शीर्षक से लिखे अपने लेख में सुधींद्र कुलकर्णी ने जिस तरह भारतीय प्रधानमंत्री नरेंद्र मोदी और चीनी राष्ट्रपति शी चिनिफंग के बीच मामल्लपुरम में हुई वार्ता एवं उसकी आगामी उपलब्धियों का जिक्र किया है वह सभी दृष्टिकोण से नरेंद्र मोदी की कूटनीतिक प्रतिभा एवं बुद्धिमता का परिचायक है। विडंबना यह है कि इस वार्ता के संदर्भ में विश्वास का आभाव देखा गया। हालांकि भारत-चीन रिश्ते में अविश्वास का सबसे बड़ा कारण है तमाम भारतीयों में यह धारणा का होना कि पाकिस्तान का करीबी राष्ट्र हमारा दोस्त नहीं हो सकता और ऐसे राष्ट्र से हमारे रिश्ते मजबूत नहीं हो सकते एवं ऐसे राष्ट्र दोस्ती की आड़ में हमें नुकसान भी पहुंचा सकते हैं। हालांकि इस तरह की धारणा का उत्पन्न होना भी स्वाभाविक हो जाता है, क्योंकि अतीत में कई बार चीन द्वारा भारत की छवि खराब करने की कोशिश की गई है। बहरहाल विश्वास के इस अभाव के बावजूद भी यह वार्ता अपने मुकाम तक पहुंचने में सक्षम होगी और इस बात का अंदाजा शी चिनिफंग के इस मनोभाव से लगाया जा सकता है कि इस अनौपचारिक वार्ता में वे पाकिस्तान की अपेक्षा भारत के साथ ज्यादा सहज एवं दोस्ताना तरीके से पेश आए। इस वार्ता से भारत-चीन साहयोग में एक नए दौर की शुरुआत हो सकती है। हालांकि यह तभी संभव है जब चीन पाकिस्तान जैसे राष्ट्र को आतंकवाद एवं अन्य सभी कुरीतियों के वास्ते बढ़ावा देना छोड़ेगा।

आरके आशुतोष, सारण

बहुप्रतीक्षित फैसला

अयोध्या राम जन्मभूमि पर सुप्रीम कोर्ट का फैसला शीघ्र ही

मेलबाक्स

आने वाला है। यह एक ऐतिहासिक फैसला होगा। अब इस विवाद का पटाक्षेप होना ही चाहिए। इस विवाद पर देश की बहुत ऊर्जा खर्च हो चुकी है। फैसला चाहे किसी के पक्ष में हो दोनों को एक दूसरे के प्रति सौहार्दपूर्ण रवैया रखकर प्रेम एवं भाईचारे के साथ स्वीकार करना चाहिए। यही देश के हित में है।

anandchetri621@gmail.com सड़कों पर सीसीटीवी

देश में विभिन्न तरह के अपराधों में बढ़ोतरी हो रही है। बहुत से अपराध रात में ही होते हैं। इसका एक कारण सड़कों पर अंधेरा रहना भी होता है। सड़कों पर बिजली के खंभे होते ही हैं। यदि इन पर हाई पावर के एलईडी बल्ब के साथ सीसीटीवी कैमरे भी लगवा दिए जाएं तो न केवल गली, मुहल्ले, सड़कें रोशनी से गुलजार होंगी, बल्कि अपराध पर भी अंकुश लगेगा। आम आदमी को तो राहत मिलेगी ही, पुलिस प्रशासन के लिए भी अपराधियों को पकड़ना आसान होगा। गलत करने वाले सशंकित अवश्य रहेंगे। कैमरों की निगहबानी में स्वस्थ सामाजिक वातावरण का निर्माण होगा।

mkumarbaluachak@rediffmail.com

प्रदूषण के खिलाफ जंग

दिल्ली में बढ़ता प्रदूषण अब दमघोंटू होता जा रहा है। स्थिति दिन पर दिन बिगड़ती जा रही है। वहीं धुएं की चादर बिछने लगी है। दिल्ली में अब सांस लेना चुनौती हो गया है। ग्रेडेड रिस्पांस एक्शन प्लान भी फेल होता नजर आ रहा है। वहीं निमाणकार्य का काम धड़ल्ले से चल रहा है जो प्रदूषण

का एक बहुत बड़ा कारण है। इसके अलावा खुले में कूड़ा भी जलाया जा रहा है। इससे न सिर्फ बुजुर्गों को दिक्कत हो रही है, बल्कि बच्चों को भी सांस लेने में तकलीफ हो रही है। सारा दोष हम पराली को नहीं दे सकते। दिल्ली के अंदर न जाने कितने अवैध कारखाने चल रहे हैं जिन्हें बंद करवाना आवश्यक है। वायु प्रदूषण सबके लिए हानिकारक है, इसलिए सबको मिलकर इससे निपटना होगा।

उज्ज्वला योजना

मोदी सरकार ने मार्च 2020 तक आठ करोड़ लोगों को उज्ज्वला योजना के तहत रसोई गैस सिलेंडर वितरण की योजना बनाई थी। इसको सरकार ने 7 महीने पहले ही लक्ष्य प्राप्त कर लिया। जहां सरकारी योजनाएं अपनी लेट-लतीफी के लिए अभिशप्त हैं, वहां पर समय से पहले लक्ष्य को प्राप्त करना एक उपलब्धि मानी जा सकती है। देश में कोई भी जनकल्याणकारी योजना तभी सफल नहीं हो पाती है, जब राजनीतिक इच्छाशक्ति का अभाव एवं भ्रष्टाचार हो।

जय किशोर तिवारी, शिक्षक, 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

उनस्ता

सख्त चेतावनी

रतीय सेना ने पाकिस्तान को एक बार फिर सख्त चेतावनी दी है। पाकिस्तान अधिकृत कश्मीर में कम से कम चार ऐसे ठिकानों को नष्ट कर दिया गया है, जहां से आतंकियों को भारतीय सीमा में घुसपैठ कराया जाता था। आर्टिलरी गन का इस्तेमाल करते हुए भारतीय सेना ने यह हमला किया। इसमें पाकिस्तान के चार से पांच सैनिकों के भी मारे जाने की खबर है। गौरतलब है कि पाकिस्तानी सेना लगातार संघर्ष विराम का उल्लंघन कर रही थी। उड़ी, बारामूला और तंगधार आदि इलाकों में वह लगातार गोलीबारी कर रही थी। इस तरह उसकी इन हरकतों के चलते पिछले हफ्ते भारतीय सेना के दो जवान और एक नागरिक मारे गए थे। इसकी जवाबी कार्रवाई में भारतीय सेना ने यह हमला किया। भारतीय सेना लगातार चेतावनी देती रही है कि पाकिस्तानी सेना उसे उकसाने का प्रयास न करे। उसकी हरकतों का सख्त जवाब दिया जाएगा, मगर वह इसे समझने को तैयार नहीं। पिछले एक साल में पाकिस्तानी सेना ने जितनी बार संघर्ष विराम का उल्लंघन किया, उतना शायद ही कभी हुआ होगा। इसके बावजूद पाकिस्तानी हुकूमत दुनिया भर में यही साबित करने का प्रयास करती रही है कि भारत ही उसे परेशान कर रहा है।

मगर अब पाकिस्तान की इन दलीलों का अंतरराष्ट्रीय मंचों पर कोई असर नहीं होता। जबसे कश्मीर में अनुच्छेद तीन सौ सत्तर हटाया गया है, पाकिस्तान की खीज लगातार बढ़ती गई है। वह अंतरराष्ट्रीय बिरादरी में घूम-घूम कर बताता रहा है कि भारत ने कश्मीरी लोगों के साथ अन्याय किया है। मगर हर जगह से उसे मुंह की खानी पड़ी है। कोई भी देश उसके समर्थन में खुल कर सामने नहीं आया है। जो दबी जुबान उसका साथ देते दिख रहे हैं, वे भी उसे कोई बल प्रदान करने वाले नहीं हैं। इससे पाकिस्तान की खीज और बढ़ गई है। इसी का नतीजा है कि वह कश्मीर में अस्थिरता बनाए रख कर भारतीय सुरक्षा-व्यवस्था को चुनौती देने का प्रयास कर रहा है। करीब ढाई महीने तक जब घाटी में कर्फ्यू था और संचार सेवाएं बंद थीं, तब उसकी हरकतें भी बंद थीं। पर अब जनजीवन सामान्य बनाने के इरादे से जब कर्फ्यू हटा लिया गया है, संचार सेवाएं आंशिक रूप से खोल दी गई हैं, उसने चरमपंथी संगठनों को सक्रिय कर दिया है। छिपी बात नहीं है कि पाकिस्तानी सेना संघर्षविराम का उल्लंघन या बिना उकसावे के गोलीबारी इसलिए करती है कि सीमा पार पनाह पाए आतंकियों की भारतीय सीमा में घुसपैठ करा सके।

पाकिस्तान की समस्या यह है कि वहां कोई एक निजाम नहीं है। वहां की सरकार अपने ढंग से काम करना चाहती है, मगर उस पर सेना और खुफिया एजंसी आइएसआइ का शिकंजा रहता है। सेना अपना प्रभुत्व बनाए रखने के लिए भारतीय सीमा पर अस्थिरता बनाए रखना चाहती है। वह युद्ध की धमकी देती तो रहती है, लेकिन उसे यह हकीकत भी अच्छी तरह पता है कि भारतीय सेना के सामने वह टिक नहीं सकती। सर्जिकल स्ट्राइक और बालाकोट में हमले करके जिस तरह भारतीय सेना ने आतंकी ठिकानों को निशाना बनाया, उससे पहले ही उसे अंदाजा हो गया था। अब तंगधार के उस पार वाले इलाके में आर्टिलरी गन से निशाना बना कर भारतीय सेना ने एक नई रणनीति का परिचय दिया है। पर पाकिस्तान इससे भी कितना सबक सीखेगा, कहना मुश्किल है। संघर्ष विराम और आतंकी घुसंपैठ आदि के जरिए वह अपना ही ओछापन जाहिर करता है।

संकल्प और चुनौती

पेदिक (टीबी) जैसे संक्रामक रोग के खात्में के लिए भारत ने कमर तो कसी है, लेकिन अभी भी लाखों लोग ऐसे हैं जो इस बीमारी से निपटने के लिए सरकार की ओर से चलाए जा रहे अभियान में शामिल नहीं हो पाते। जाहिर है, ऐसे टीबी रोगियों के बारे में पता नहीं चलता और उनका समुचित रूप से इलाज नहीं हो पाता। इसका परिणाम टीबी के मरीजों की बढ़ती संख्या के रूप में सामने आता है। भारत में टीबी के मरीजों की तादाद का मोटा अनुमान सिर्फ अस्पतालों में होने वाले पंजीकरण से ही लग पाता है। ऐसे में जो लोग अस्पताल नहीं जाते हैं और इधर-उधर इलाज कराने को मजबूर होते हैं, वे इस गिनती से बाहर रह जाते हैं। हाल में विश्व स्वास्थ्य संगठन ने अपनी रिपोर्ट में बताया है कि भारत में पिछले साल टीबी के करीब साढ़े पांच लाख मामले दर्ज होने से रह गए। हालांकि सुकून देने वाली बात यह है कि देश में साल 2018 में टीबी के मरीजों की संख्या में पचास हजार की कमी आई है।

भारत में टीबी आज भी एक बड़ी समस्या बनी हुई है। हर साल लाखों लोग इस बीमारी से मर जाते हैं। इससे भी बड़ी संख्या उन लोगों की है जो हर साल इस बीमारी की जद में आते जा रहे हैं। ऐसे में यह सवाल उठना स्वाभाविक है कि आजादी के बहत्तर साल बाद भी आखिरकार भारत टीबी से मुक्ति पाने में कामयाब क्यों नहीं हो पाया। टीबी जैसी बीमारी का सीधा संबंध स्वच्छता और स्वास्थ्य से जुड़ा है और दुख की बात यह है कि इन दोनों ही मोर्चों पर भारत की स्थिति दयनीय है। विश्व स्वास्थ्य संगठन ने दुनिया को 2025 तक टीबी मुक्त करने का लक्ष्य रखा है, जबिक भारत ने इससे दो साल पहले यानी 2023 तक इसके खात्मे का संकल्प किया है। यह एक बड़ी चुनौती इसलिए है कि जितना बड़ा काम है, उसकी तुलना में वक्त और जरूरी संसाधन बहुत कम हैं। दुनिया के सत्ताईस फीसद टीबी मरीज भारत में हैं। समस्या गंभीर इसलिए है कि टीबी के ज्यादातर मामले शुरू में सामने नहीं आ पाते। बीमारी अंदर पनपती रहती है, लेकिन मरीज को कोई ऐसा लक्षण नजर नहीं आता कि उसे जांच कराने की जरूरत महसूस हो। ऐसे में बीमारी बढ़ती चली जाती है। दूसरी बड़ी समस्या यह है कि इस बीमारी के प्रति लोगों में आज भी जागरूकता का अभाव है। शहरी इलाकों में तो फिर लोग अस्पताल चले जाते हैं, लेकिन ग्रामीण क्षेत्रों में लोग इलाज के प्रति सजग भी नहीं है। जाहिर है, टीबी उन्मूलन कोई आसान काम नहीं है।

टीबी कोई ऐसी लाइलाज बीमारी नहीं है जिस पर काबू न पाया जा सके। जब पोलियो, चेचक जैसी महामारियों तक का सफाया हो सकता है, श्रीलंका जैसा देश मलेरिया का नामोनिशान मिटा सकता है तो हम टीबी को जड़ से क्यों नहीं खत्म कर सकते? हमारे यहां बड़ी और गंभीर समस्या गंदगी और प्रदूषण की है जिससे निपटने में ज्यादातर सरकारें नाकाम साबित हुई हैं। शहरों और महानगरों में कूड़ों के पहाड़ इस बीमारी को फैला रहे हैं। देश के ज्यादातर शहरों में बढ़ता वायु प्रदूषण इस बीमारी के प्रमुख कारणों में एक है। सरकार के साथ लोगों को भी साफ-सफाई के प्रति जागरूक होने की जरूरत है। टीबी से संक्रमित एक मरीज से छह लोगों में संक्रमण फैलने का खतरा रहता है। अगर टीबी को मिटाने का संकल्प पूरा करना है तो घर-घर जाकर लोगों को जागरूक करना होगा, तभी भारत अगले चार साल में टीबी मुक्त हो पाएगा।

कल्पमेधा

अहंकारी व्यक्ति केवल अपने महान कार्यों का वर्णन करता है, और दूसरों के सिर्फ कुकर्मों का। – स्पिनोजा

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फिर सच साबित हुए आइंस्टीन

निरंकार सिंह

ब्लैक होल में हर पल अनिगनत पिंड समा रहे होते हैं। इस प्रक्रिया में उसके चारों ओर प्रकाश और तरंगों का का एक चक्र बन जाता है, जिससे छत्ते जैसी आकृति बनती है। वैज्ञानिकों ने ऐसी ही छत्ते की तस्वीर खींची है। उन तरंगों के बीच दिख रहा काला हिस्सा ही ब्लैक होल है। वैज्ञानिकों के अनुसार इससे मानवीय कल्पना को अपनी ओर खींचने वाले स्पेस टाइम फैब्रिक के रहस्य का खुलासा हो सकता है।

परिकल्पना सबसे पहले सन 1915 में अल्बर्ट आइंस्टीन ने की थी। आइंस्टीन के सापेक्षवाद के सिद्धांत के अनुसार ब्लैक होल ऐसे खगोलीय पिंड हैं जिनका गुरुत्वाकर्षण क्षेत्र इतना शिक्तशाली होता है कि प्रकाश सिहत कुछ भी इनके खिंचाव से बच नहीं सकता। ये पिंड ब्लैक होल इसिलए कहलाते हैं क्योंकि ये अपने पर पड़ने वाले सारे प्रकाश को सोख लेते हैं और कुछ भी परावर्तित नहीं करते। आइंस्टीन के सिद्ध—ांत से ब्लैक होल के बारे में दुनिया को जानकारी मिली थी। नासा द्वारा जारी की 'सैगिटेरियस ए' नामक ब्लैक होल की तस्वीरों से एक बार उनके सिद्धांत और उनकी परिकल्पना की पुष्टि हुई है। खगोलिवदों ने ब्लैक होल के बारे में बड़ी उपलिब्ध हासिल की है।

पहली बार नासा के शोधकर्ताओं ने सूर्य से साठ लाख गुना वजनी ब्लैक होल द्वारा ब्रह्मांडीय उथल-पुथल के तहत एक तारे को टूटते हुए देखा है। इस प्रक्रिया को ज्वारीय विघटन भी कहते हैं। इस विनाशकारी खगोलीय घटना को ग्रहों की खोज के लिए भेजे गए नासा के उपग्रह ट्रांजिटिंग एक्सोप्लैनेट सर्वे सैटेलाइट (टीईएसएस), नील गेहरेल्स स्विफ्ट वेधशाला और अन्य उपकरणों की मदद से पहली बार बारीकी से देखा गया। नासा ने बताया कि ब्रह्मांड में ज्वारीय विघटन बहुत ही दुर्लभ घटना है और प्रत्येक दस हजार से एक लाख साल में हमारी आकाशगंगा के बराबर के तारों के पुंज या आकाशगंगा में एक बार यह घटना होती है। अब तक केवल चालीस ऐसी घटना देखी गई हैं।

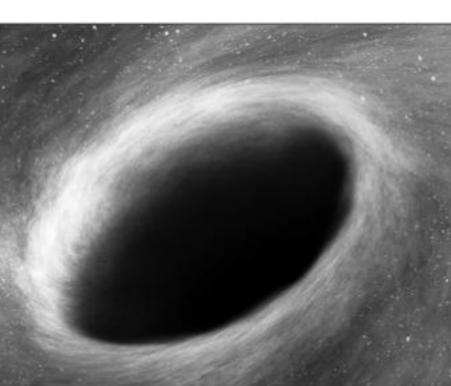
कैलिफोर्निया स्थित कार्नेजी वेधशाला में इस विषय पर काम कर रहे खगोल भौतिकविद् थॉमस होलोइन के अनुसार टीईएसएस की मदद से यह देखने में मदद मिली कि ब्रह्मांड में घटना वास्तव में कब शुरू हुई जिसे हम पहले कभी नहीं देख सके थे। ज्वारीय विघटन की जल्द ही पहचान धरती पर स्थित ऑल स्काई ऑटोमेटेड सर्वे फॉर सुपरनोवा

(एएसएस-एसएन) से की गई और इस वजह से वे शुरुआती कुछ दिन में बहु-तरंग दैर्ध्य को सिक्रय करके अवलोकन में सफल हुए। इस खगोलीय घटना के समझने के लिए शुरुआती आंकड़े बहुत महत्त्वपूर्ण होंगे। एस्ट्रोफिजिकल जर्नल में प्रकाशित शोध के मुताबिक यह ब्लैक होल आकाशगंगा के बीच में है। यह वोलंस तारामंडल से करीब सैंतीस करोड़ पचास लाख प्रकाश वर्ष दूर है। कटे हुए तारे का आकार हमारे सूर्य के बराबर हो सकता है। नासा के मुताबिक इस ब्रह्मांडीय घटना की खोज इस साल 29 जनवरी को विश्व भर में फैले बीस रोबोटिक दूरबीनों वाले एएसएएस-एसएन नेटवर्क की मदद से की गई।

जब होलोइन को नेटवर्क के दक्षिण अफ्रीका में स्थित उपकरण से घटना की जानकारी मिली तब उन्होंने तुरंत चिली के लास कैंपनास स्थित उपकरण से घटना की वास्तविक स्थान का पता लगाने के काम पर लगाया और सटीक नजर रखने के लिए अन्य एजेंसियों की भी मदद ली। टीईएसएस ने पहली बार इस ज्वारीय विघटन को 21 जनवरी को रिकार्ड किया था। इस शोध के सह-लेखक और नेशनल साइंस फाउंडेशन में स्नातक शोधकर्ता पैट्रिक वॉलेली ने कहा कि इस घटना की चमक बहुत स्पष्ट थी, जिसकी वजह से इस घटना की ज्वारीय विघटन के रूप में पहचान करने में मदद मिली। होलोइन की टीम ने बताया कि दूरबीन की मदद से जिस पराबेंगनी रोशनी का पता चला, उसका तापमान महज कुछ दिनों में चालीस हजार डिग्री सेल्सियस से गिर कर बीस हजार

डिग्री सेल्सियस पर पहुंच गया। पहली बार ज्वारीय विघटन के दौरान इतने कम समय में तापमान गिरावट देखी गई है। हालांकि सैद्धांतिक रूप से पहले इसकी जानकारी थी।

अमेरिका स्थित नेशनल साइंस फाउंडेशन ने पिछले महीने वाशिंगटन में इवेंट हॉरिजन टेलीस्कोप (ईएचटी) प्रोजेक्ट के नतीजों का एलान किया था। ईएचटी को ब्लैकहोल की तस्वीर उतारने के लिए ही डिजाइन किया गया था। ब्रसेल्स, टोकियो, सैंटियागो, शंघाई और ताइपे में ब्लैक होल की तस्वीर जारी की गई। अप्रैल 2017 में हवाई, एरिजोना, स्पेन, मैक्सिको, चिली और दक्षिणी गोलार्द्ध में आठ रेडियो टेलीस्कोप स्थापित किए गए थे। इनकी मदद से ब्रह्मांड के दो अलग–अलग ब्लैक होल के आंकड़े जुटाए गए। एक ब्लैक हमारी गैलेक्सी 'मिल्की वे' के मध्य में स्थित है। 'सैगिटेरियस ए' नामक यह ब्लैक होल 4.4 करोड़ किलोमीटर में फैला



जानकारी मिली तब उन्होंने तुरंत चिली के लास कैंपनास हुआ है। इसका भार सूर्य से चालीस लाख गुना अधिक स्थित उपकरण से घटना की वास्तविक स्थान का पता लगाने के काम पर लगाया और सटीक नजर रखने के मेलेक्सी में स्थित है। माना जा रहा है कि यह सैगिटेरियस तोरे से चला था) जब बृहस्पित के पास गुजर रहा था, लिए अन्य एजेंसियों की भी मदद ली। टीईएसएस ने पहली बार इस ज्वारीय विघटन को 21 जनवरी को सैगिटेरियस ए ब्लैक होल की तस्वीरें 11 अप्रैल 2019 एक ही है। इसलिए जब कोई किरण किसी ग्रह के पास

करीब पचास साल पहले वैज्ञानिकों ने हमारी आकाशगंगा के बीच एक चमकीले क्षेत्र का पता लगाया था। साठ के दशक में अमेरिकी वैज्ञानिक जॉन आर्कवाल्ड व्हीलर ने उसे 'ब्लैकहोल' का नाम दिया। स्टीफन हाकिंग ने भी ब्लैक होल का व्यापक अध्ययन किया था। उन्होंने ब्लैक होल से निकलने वाले हाकिंग रेडिएशन की परिकल्पना की थी। वैज्ञानिकों के प्रयास से दुनिया ने पहली बार ब्लैक होल की तस्वीर देखी। असल में किसी भी ब्लैक होल की तस्वीर लेना असंभव है। ब्लैक होल ऐसी संरचना है, जिससे प्रकाश भी वापस नहीं आता। ब्लैक होल की एक सीमा होती है, जिसमें पहुंचते ही कोई भी पिंड घूमते हुए धीरे-धीरे उसके केंद्र में समा जाता है। ब्लैक होल में हर पल अनिगनत पिंड समा रहे होते हैं। इस प्रक्रिया में उसके चारों ओर प्रकाश और तरंगों का का एक चक्र बन जाता है, जिससे छत्ते जैसी आकृति बनती है। वैज्ञानिकों ने ऐसी ही छत्ते की तस्वीर खींची है। उन तरंगों के बीच दिख रहा काला हिस्सा ही ब्लैक होल है। वैज्ञानिकों के अनुसार इससे मानवीय कल्पना को अपनी ओर खींचने वाले स्पेस टाइम फैब्रिक के रहस्य का खुलासा हो सकता है।

इस साल भौतिकी का नोबल ब्रह्मांड की संरचना और इतिहास पर नए सिद्धांत रखने के लिए जेम्स पीबल्स (अमेरिका) और सौरमंडल से बाहर एक और

> ग्रह खोजने के लिए मेयर व क्वालेज (स्विटजरलैंड) को संयुक्त रूप से दिया गया है। जेम्स पीबल्स ने 1960 के दशक में बिग बैंग, डार्क मैटर और डार्क एनर्जी पर जो काम किया था, उसे आधुनिक ब्रह्मांड विज्ञान का आधार माना जाता है। इस खोज से हमें पता चला कि ब्रह्मांड के महज पांच प्रतिशत पदार्थ के बारे में ही हम जान पाए हैं। ये वे पदार्थ हैं जिनसे तारे, ग्रह, पेड़-पौधे और हमारा निर्माण हुआ है। बाकी पनचानवे प्रतिशत हिस्सा अज्ञात डार्क मैटर और डार्क एनर्जी है। आइंस्टीन के सिद्धांतों में भी 'डार्क एनर्जी' की जगह थी, हालांकि वे खुद इसके बारे में संशकित थे। वह इसे अपनी एक 'भूल' मानते थे। कुछ वर्ष पहले उनके सिद्धांत की पुष्टि के लिए अमेरिका की 'नेशनल रेडियो स्ट्रोनामिकल आब्जर्वेटरी' ने बृहस्पति ग्रह से

पृथ्वी की ओर आती एक प्रकाश किरण की गति और उसके मार्ग की नाप जोख की थी। यह देखा गया कि यह प्रकाश (जो लाखों प्रकाश वर्ष दूर स्थित एक तारे से चला था) जब बृहस्पति के पास गुजर रहा था, तो उसने अपनी दिशा बदल दी और पृथ्वी की ओर मुड़ गया। आइंस्टीन ने कहा था कि पदार्थ और ऊर्जा दोनों एक ही है। इसलिए जब कोई किरण किसी ग्रह के पास से गुजरती है तो ग्रह के गुरुत्वाकर्षण बल के कारण उसकी दिशा बदल जाती है। इस प्रयोग से उनकी यह बात सिद्ध हो गई है। 'डार्क एनर्जी' ऐसी अनजानी ऊर्जा है जिसकी वजह से ब्रह्मांड तेजी से फैल रहा है और आकाशीय पिंड एक-दूसरे से दूर जा रहे हैं। वैज्ञानिक मानते हैं कि हमारे ब्रह्मांड का सत्तर फीसद इसी से बना है, हालांकि यह ऊर्जा क्या है, किसी को नहीं पता।

संस्कृति बनाम बच्चे

आलोक कुमार मिश्रा

हैरानी और आश्चर्य से उसका मुंह खुला रह गया। खबर के मुताबिक स्पेन में अदालत ने एक व्यक्ति को दो साल की कैद और दो लाख से अधिक का जुर्माना भरने की सजा सुनाई है। उसका जुर्म यह था कि उसने अपने बेटे का खत खोल कर पढ़ लिया था, जिसे उसकी मौसी ने भेजा था। माना गया कि यह बच्चे की निजता के अधिकार का उल्लंघन है। मेरी मां का कहना था कि 'भला इसमें क्या बड़ी बात थी! अपने बच्चे के नाम आए खत को मां–बाप क्यों नहीं पढ़ सकते? वह भी जब बच्चा दस वर्ष, छोटी और अपरिपक्व आयु का हो। माता–पिता को अपने बच्चों से जुड़ी बातें जानने और उनके अच्छे–बुरे के बारे में सोचने का हक तो है ही।'

वास्तव में मां की यह टिप्पणी हमारे अपने समाज और संस्कृति की समझ को दर्शा रही थी। मुझे याद है कि कुछ वर्ष पहले भी इससे मिलती-जुलती खबर ने हम भारतीयों को काफी उद्देलित किया था। तब नार्वे में एक भारतीय दंपत्ति से उनकी बेटी को इसलिए अलग कर दिया गया था कि उन पर आरोप था कि वे अपनी बच्ची को अपने हाथों से खाना खिलाते हैं, साथ ही बिस्तर पर सुलाते हैं जो कि वहां के कानून के अनुसार क्रूरता थी।

बच्चों के अधिकारों से जुड़ी ये खबरें हमें अटपटी इसलिए लगीं कि हम एक बिल्कुल अलग सांस्कृतिक धरातल पर खड़े होकर इन्हें पढ़ और देख-सुन रहे थे। लेकिन नार्वे की घटना यह बताती है कि वहां हमारे तौर-तरीके भी नापसंद किए गए। दरअसल, पश्चिमी

देशों में बच्चों के अधिकारों और उनकी निजता को लेकर अतिवादी समझ काम करती दिखती है। लोकतांत्रिक अधिकारों के नाम पर बच्चों को बड़ों द्वारा अच्छे-बुरे की सीख देने, आपस में भावनात्मक रूप से जुड़ कर सीखने-सिखाने के अवसरों को कुंद कर दिया जाता है। जबिक बच्चों को उनकी शारीरिक-मानसिक परिपक्वता प्राप्त करने में बड़ों के सान्निध्य और सहयोग की जरूरत होती है। इस प्रक्रिया में कुछ गलितयां हो सकती हैं, जिन्हें एहसास होने पर सुधारा जा सकता है। पर निजता के कठोर कानून इसकी छूट नहीं देते। ऐसी कठोरता के कारण अभिभावक भी बच्चों को गलत करने पर रोकने-टोकने या उन पर नजर रखने से बचते होंगे। शायद अमेरिका

बेरोकटोक बंदूक ले जाने, आवेश में आकर गोली चला देने जैसी घटनाएं इसलिए भी दिखती हैं।

पश्चिमी समाजों की तरह यहां अलगाव, विखंडन और अकेलेपन की समस्या उतनी गंभीर नहीं है और बच्चों या अभिभावकों के बीच इस तरह का कठोर अधिकार विभाजन नहीं दिखता है तो इसके नकारात्मक पक्ष भी हैं। पश्चिमी समाजों में व्याप्त अति लोकतांत्रिकता के मुकाबले हमारे समाजों में बच्चों को निर्भर-निरीह बना कर रखने

और उन पर अभिभावकों का

संपूर्ण अधिकार मानने-समझने की चरम स्थिति है। यह बच्चों को एक स्वायत्त और सचेत नागरिक के रूप में विकसित और बड़े होने में बाधा पहुंचाती है। एक ऐसा नागरिक जो समाज में अपनी जिम्मेदारियों और अधिकारों के प्रति सजग होते हुए दूसरों की भिन्नताओं और जीवन दृष्टि के प्रति सम्मान की भावना रखे। लेकिन जब समाजीकरण की प्रक्रिया में ही नियंत्रित रखने और छोटे-बड़े के बीच गैर बराबरी की इतनी सशक्त उपस्थिति हो तो भला बड़े होने पर लोकतांत्रिक चेतना से युक्त व्यक्तित्व कैसे विकसित होगा।

हाल ही में जब हमारे देश की एक राज्य सरकार ने सुरक्षा के नाम पर स्कूली कक्षाओं के अंदर कैमरे लगाने

शहरीकरण और पर्यावरण

शहरों की आबादी अस्सी करोड़ का आंकड़ा पार कर

जाएगी। यानी, उस समय की देश की कुल आबादी

के पचास प्रतिशत से अधिक हो जाएगी और भारत

एक शहरी देश के तौर पर उभर कर सामने आ

जाएगा। आज 2011 की जनगणना के आंकड़ों के

अनुसार, भारत में तिरपन ऐसे शहर हैं जिनकी

आबादी दस लाख से अधिक है। कई

अनुसंधानों से यह साबित हो चुका

एक अनुमान के अनुसार देश में वर्ष 2050 तक

की नीति पर अमल करने की बात कही तो इसका कई आधारों पर समर्थन या विरोध किया गया। पर तर्क देने वालों में अधिकतर प्रशासनिक दृष्टिकोण या शिक्षकों के नजिए से ही अपनी बात कह रहे थे। इनमें से बहुत कम ने बच्चों की निजता के उल्लंघन का मुद्दा उठाया। हमारे जैसे सामंती मनोवृत्ति वाले समाजों में जहां बच्चों को वैसे ही अधिकार विहीन, निर्भर और पूरी तरह अपरिपक्व समझा जाता है, उन पर हमेशा नजर बनाए रखने को अच्छे अभिभावक होने की निशानी माना जाता हो, वहां कैमरे नियंत्रण का हथियार ही बनेंगे।

कहने का आशय यही है कि बच्चों और उनके जीवन को लेकर प्रचलित पश्चिमी और भारतीय समाजों की समझ दो विपरीत चरम को दिखाते हैं। संतुलित और सम्यक बचपन के लिए जहां पश्चिमी समाजों से हमें बच्चों को एक नागरिक के रूप में देखे जाने, उनकी निजता और अधिकार को सम्मान दिए जाने की सीख लेनी होगी, वहीं ऐसा करते हुए अभिभावकों की उचित जिम्मेदारी, मार्गदर्शन, देखभाल करने की प्रेमपूर्ण प्रवृत्ति और अभिव्यक्ति को महत्त्व देना होगा। ऐसा करके हम अकेलेपन, विखंडन और अलगाव की समस्या को दूर कर पाएंगे और साथ ही निर्भर बनाए रखने, नियंत्रण और वर्चस्व की मनोवृत्ति पैदा करने वाले समाजीकरण के चक्र का खात्मा भी कर पाएंगे।

असली मुद्दे गायब

ह्मरियाणा और महाराष्ट्र विधानसभा चुनावों में इस बार सत्तारूढ़ दल ने जिस तरह से राष्ट्रीय मुद्दों को उठाया है, उसमें चरम राष्ट्रवाद के प्रदर्शन की झलक मिलती है। इन दोनों राज्यों के गांव, गरीब, किसानों की समस्याओं और बेरोजगारी का कश्मीर और अनुच्छेद 370 से कोई सीधा सरोकार नहीं है। इसके बावजूद इन मुद्दों को उठाना आमजन की समस्याओं से मुंह मोड़ने जैसा है। ऐसे में चुन कर आने वाले जनप्रतिनिधि क्षेत्रीय और स्थानीय समस्याओं को लेकर कितने संवेदनशील और उत्तरदायी होंगे, इसमें सन्देह है। चुनाव बाद जनता भी अपनी समस्याओं को जनप्रतिनिधियों के समक्ष उठाने से इसलिए कतराएगी कि उसकी समस्याएं कभी चुनावी मुद्दा ही नहीं बन पाईं। इससे मूल लोकतांत्रिक उद्देश्यों की प्राप्ति दुष्कर हो जाएगी। इसमें कोई संदेह नहीं कि अनुच्छेद 370 हटाया जाना एक ऐतिहासिक उपलब्धि है, लेकिन विधानसभा चुनावों में यह मुद्दा गरीब, भुखमरी की शिकार, बेरोजगारी से बेहाल जनता के लिए अप्रासंगिक है।

• महेंद्र नाथ चौरसिया, सिद्धार्थनगर स्वागतयोग्य कदम

साल 2021 से देश के अट्ठाईस सैनिक स्कूलों में अब लड़िकयां भी दाखिला ले सकेंगी। उन्हें बीस फीसद तक आरक्षण देने का प्रावधान किया गया है। रक्षा मंत्रालय की इस घोषणा का स्वागत किया जाना चाहिए। अभी उन्नीस और सैनिक स्कूल खोलने पर काम चल रहा है। पहला सैनिक स्कूल आज से अट्ठावन साल पहले सतारा (महाराष्ट्र) में खोला गया था। तबसे से लेकर आज तक इसमें लड़िकयां भी शिक्षा हासिल कर सकेंगी। आज बेटियां फौज से लेकर

अंतिरक्ष तक अपनी कामयाबी का परचम लहरा रही हैं तो फिर सैनिक स्कूलों से उन्हें दूर रखने का कोई औचित्य नहीं बनता। प्रायोगिक परियोजना के तहत मिजोरम में पिछले वर्ष ही लड़िकयों को छठी कक्षा में दाखिला दिया जा चुका है। उम्मीद की जानी चाहिए कि पढ़ाई के मामले में यहां भी बेटियां अव्वल रहेंगी। • जंग बहादुर सिंह, जमशेदपुर

जैसे देशों में कभी-कभी बच्चों द्वारा स्कूलों में

इनका भी रखना है ध्यान

आजकल ऑनलाइन खरीद का चलन बढ़ता जा रहा है। अब तो त्योहारों पर ज्यादातर खरीदारी

है कि देश में बढ़ते शहरीकरण से किसी भी मुद्दे या लेख पर अपनी राय हमें भेजें। हमारा पता है : ए-८, सेक्टर-७, नोएडा २०१३०१, जिला : गौतमबुद्धनगर, उत्तर प्रदेश

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

ऑनलाइन होने लगी है। जूते, कपड़े, ज्वेलरी, इलेक्ट्रॉनिक गैजेट और सजावट का सामान लोग ऑनलाइन ठिकानों से ही करते हैं। कई ऑनलाइन कंपनियां तो मिट्टी के कलात्मक पात्र, दीये तक बेच रही हैं। इससे देश के छोटे-छोटे कारीगरों की रोजी-रोटी पर बुरा असर पड़ा है। एक छोटा-सा दीपक बनाने में कुम्हार को काफी अथक परिश्रम करना पड़ता है, तब जाकर वह बाजार में बिकने आता है। अच्छा हो, हम सब इन छोटे स्थानीय कलाकारों, कुंभकारों का भी ध्यान रखते हुए मिट्टी के दीये, मूर्तियां और अन्य सामान इनसे खरीदें, ताकि उनकी कला की भी कद्र हो और वे भी आनंद और उल्लास के साथ दीपावली का त्योहार मना सकें।

• संजय डागा, हातोद

आर्थिक विकास की दर तेज होती है और रोजगार के नए अवसर भी गांवों की अपेक्षा शहरों में अधिक बनते हैं। आज भारत में भी देश के सकल घरेलू उत्पाद में शहरी क्षेत्र का योगदान पैंसठ प्रतिशत का है, जिसे बढ़ा कर 75 प्रतिशत तक ले जाना है। बढ़ते शहरीकरण से विभिन्न स्तरों पर सरकारों की जिम्मेदारी भी बढ़ती है, क्योंकि साफ हवा, पीने का साफ पानी, साफ ऊर्जा इन शहरों को उपलब्ध कराना सरकारों की जिम्मेदारी है। शहरों का विकास शुरू में ही यदि उचित तरीके से नहीं किया जाए तो पर्यावरण से संबंधित समस्याएं खड़ी हो जाती हैं, जैसे कि भारत के कई शहरों में आज देखने को मिल रहा है। सर्दियों के मौसम में शुद्ध हवा का अभाव हो जाता है, शहरों की में स्वच्छ पेयजल का अभाव है। देश में पर्यावरण

की स्थिति में सुधार आज वक्त की जरूरत है। लगभग पच्चीस प्रतिशत प्रदूषण वाहनों के अत्यधिक उपयोग के कारण उत्पन्न होता है। हर घर में पौधे लगाने आवश्यक कर देना चाहिए, तािक वातावरण में कार्बन डाई आक्साइड गैस कम हो और ऑक्सीजन गैस की मात्रा बढ़े। देश में प्रति व्यक्ति प्राकृतिक संसाधनों का उपयोग अन्य देशों की तुलना में आज बहुत कम है। जबिक देश में और अधिक शहरीकरण होने के चलते प्राकृतिक संसाधनों का उपयोग अभी तो और आगे बढ़ेगा। अतः उपलब्ध संसाधनों की दक्षता को भी बढ़ाना होगा। क्यम हो सके।

• प्रहलाद सबनानी, ग्वालियर

पर सड़कें भी तो सुधारें

सड़क परिवहन एवं राज्यमंत्री नितिन गडकरी ने 'वन नेशन वन फास्ट टैग' योजना की शुरुआत की है। यह योजना इस साल एक दिसंबर से संपूर्ण देश में लागू हो जाएगी। इससे लोगों के समय की बचत हो सकेगी। योजना का उद्देश्य टोल के संग्रह को डिजिटल रूप से एकीकृत करना और संपूर्ण भारत में वाहनों की निर्बाध आवाजाही सुनिश्चित करना है। संपूर्ण देश में राष्ट्रीय और राज्य राजमार्गों पर रेडियो फ्रीक्वेंसी आइडेंटिफिकेशन टैग वाली नई कारों में इस तकनीक के माध्यम से लाभ उठाया जा सकता है। इसके माध्यम से टोल प्लाजा पर लगने वाले जाम की समस्या से भी मुक्ति मिल सकेगी। इस व्यवस्था के बाद परिवहन मंत्री को राष्ट्रीय राजमार्गों की बदतर स्थिति पर भी ध्यान देना चाहिए, जिसकी वजह से सडक हादसों में रोजाना सैकड़ों लोग मारे जा रहे हैं। अब समय की मांग है कि राष्ट्रीय राजमार्गों पर स्वास्थ्य सुविधाओं की गुणवत्ता में भी सुधार किया जाए, ताकि सड़क हादसे में होने वाली मौतों का आंकड़ा कम किया जा सके।

• अमिता सिंह, अंबेडकरनगर (उप्र)

नई दिल्ली