Time to review whistleblower policy

The greater the ambiguity in the law on how one would be treated, the lesser is the ease of doing business



WITHOUT CONTEMPT

SOMASEKHAR SUNDARESAN

et another whistleblower complaint has been reported against yet another listed company. Yet another flurry of activity around handling the fallout will follow. Something or nothing may come of it. However, there is one abiding requirement that policy-makers must attend to: A legal framework to deal with whistleblower policy that deals with all facets of the phenomenon.

The law and practice around handling complaints from whistleblowers has evolved organically, and not by a push from a law. Company law and securities regulations simply require the need for a whistleblower policy within the corporation. Yet, whistleblowing and handling whistleblowers is a tricky area. Handled poorly, it could either lead to a witch-hunt in organisations that is fertile soil for yes-men; or lead to even bona fide decisions and entire organisational systems being held to ransom.

There was a time when the government of India had a stated policy on ignoring anonymous and pseudonymous complaints. Unless a complaint was backed by a real name, vigilance probes would not be initiated. In public office, every hour of the working day can involve taking decisions that would disappoint someone or cause heartburn. Therefore, unless one affords protection from the exercise of judgement being judged, and the wisdom of a decision

being substituted by another's wisdom, an organisation would be incapable of being governed. Yet, in reality, there is no dearth of serious action being triggered by letters and complaints that are anonymous, and what is now par for the course, pseudonymous complaints. The more grave the contents of the complaints, the more difficult it is to ignore it on the ground of the complaint being anonymous or pseudonymous.

With corporate boards, complaints of this nature are even more rampant. One must not forget that light from any source can be illuminating. Therefore, when a complaint is anonymous or pseudonymous, the board of directors should consider the personality of the CEO and the work environment in the organisation. The "stronger" (read, more autocratic and overbearing) a CEO, the greater the need for a complainant to mask her identity. The more inclusive and accommodative a CEO is of the diverse views within the work space, the more circumspect and stringent the

board of directors should be towards anonymous and pseudonymous complaints. This is easier said than done.

Invariably, embedded into the probe into a complaint is a deep desire to know who the complainant is. The more ironfisted the leadership, the greater the risk to the whistleblower's safety and security. Whistleblower protection, and an organisation's attitude towards it, can tell a story about how autocratic and "statist" the organisation is. One man's patriot reformist is another man's traitor.

The United States, whose policies for the corporate world led the thinking around the world on how to make use of whistleblowers' concerns to reform corruption in corporate America, is the most authoritarian when it comes to handling whistleblowing of the government's own wrongdoing. See the plight of Edward Snowden (physically in danger and marooned outside his country) and numerous others who are like-minded and are languishing in jail. The current US President likens probes into credible complaints by whistleblowers in his office to "lynching" (indeed an American term in this context).

Today, companies that have nothing

to do with the government too need to handle whistleblower complaints and in fact enable a framework where complainants can come in without fear of being identified. From a phase of not taking a non-transparent complaint seriously, market reality has moved to treating as illegal the very demand to know the identity of the whistleblower. A disgruntled owner of an opinion that is in conflict with the ultimate collective decision in an organisation can wreak havoc if his views are overridden.

It is time for a comprehensive empirical review of how whistleblower policies have been used, abused, and organisationally handled in corporate India. Some indication of an ideal approach to handling whistleblower complaints, and how organisations would be treated by the law in relation to handling of these complaints, would be an important nudge to the development of the law. Today, boards of directors too are exposed to being accused of mishandling of such complaints - either of taking frivolous complaints too seriously or of taking important complaints lightly. The greater the ambiguity in the law on how one would be treated, the lesser is the ease of doing business (the much tired phrase) in India.

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CHINESE WHISPERS

Congress constitutes think tank



With the Congress finding itself at an ideological crossroads on issues such as Article 370, the role of V D Savarkar in the national movement, and the Regional Comprehensive

Economic Partnership, party president Sonia Gandhi (pictured) has constituted a "think tank" to discuss these issues internally. This 17-member think tank will have its first meeting on Friday, a day after the Harvana and Maharashtra Assembly poll results are announced, and will take stock of the results. Apart from Sonia and her son, Rahul Gandhi, other members of this think tank include Manmohan Singh, A K Antony, Ghulam Nabi Azad, Ahmed Patel, Jairam Ramesh, Kapil Sibal, Anand Sharma, Rajeev Gowda, Randeep Surjewala, KC Venugopal, Adhir Ranjan Chowdhury, Rajeev Satav and Sushmita Dev. Congress General Secretary Priyanka Gandhi Vadra is not part of the think tank.

Singh vs Singh



A day after Congress MLA Lakshman Singh protested outside his elder brother and party veteran Digvijaya Singh's (pictured) legislator met

former Madhya Pradesh chief minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan in Bhopal, fuelling speculation in political circles. Chouhan and the MLA termed the meeting a "courtesy call". The legislator's demand was that the senior Congress leader set a date for a function to announce the creation of Chachoda district. After the meeting, Chouhan also told reporters that "it was a courtesy meeting. We meet occasionally... We also support the demand that Chachoda be made a district". Chachoda is Lakshman Singh's constituency and the MLA said Chief Minister Kamal Nath had announced in July this year that it would be given the status of district.

Taking a filmy route

Losing the golden touch

As the industry protests deep discounts, the test of Zomato's Gold membership plan will be in renewals next year

ANALYSIS BEHIND THE HEADLINES

KARAN CHOUDHURY

t was on a WhatsApp chat group in early August that the murmurs of dissent against Zomato Gold, the food discovery and delivery aggregator's premium membership plan, first began. This group that hundreds of restaurants as well founders of food aggregator firms are part of, was incidentally set up in 2017 when sale of liquor along highways was banned. A handful of restaurants, all part of

the WhatsApp group, had a common concerns- that their eateries had become hunting grounds for dealseekers, instead of valued repeat customers. What followed next was widespread protest against Zomato Gold, a paid membership programme for restaurants that encouraged deep discounts. 'We were all discussing

the fallout of joining Gold.

None of us were getting the returns that were promised. Instead we were just dishing out free food and drinks to deal hunters. Finally, during the discussions one of the restaurants said they were logging out of Gold. That is how it became known as #Logout," said Vishal Anand, founder of Saints and Sinners, a pub in Gurgaon, and partner Farzi

Anand has not only logged out of

Gold, he is not listing his restaurants on the portal anymore.

Things just snowballed from there on. As the number of restaurants logging out of Zomato Gold piled up, National Restaurants Association of India (NRAI) and the Federation of Hotel & Restaurant Associations of India (FHRAI) decided to hold talks with not only Zomato but all the other players in the ecosystem, including Swiggy, Dineout, UberEats, Foodpanda. among others, to tell them to rethink

> their business practice and move away from discount-

> But the matter appears far from settled. The NRAI and FHRAI claim that close to 3,000 premium restaurants throughout the country are out of Gold, but Zomato claims post #Logout, the restaurant count on its platform has, in fact, increased to 6,500.

Over the past few weeks. many restaurants and premium joints at five-star hotels have logged out of Zomato Gold. An NRAI source says among them are Social, Farzi Café, SodaBottleOpenerWala, Monkey Bar and Kylin Experience.

The restaurant associations have ioined hands and sent an advisory to all members to log out of Gold. "Everything we are reading of late about Gold seems to be addressed to



its investors. Close to 3,000 members are still logged out. We have only communicated to our members about the ills of Gold, no one has been forced to stop using Gold," said Anurag Katriar, president, NRAI.

This doesn't bode well for Zomato. Industry insiders say that if a chunk of premium restaurants stay logged out, then getting customers to renew Gold might become difficult for Zomato next year. "Gold membership has been marketed as a means to dine out at premium restaurants. If highend restaurants stop being part of the plan, people would lose interest in the membership programme. Convincing people to renew it would become that much more difficult," said a source close to company.

At Zomato there has been some rethink since the #Logout campaign, but it continues to defend Gold. "At the

ON THE MENU

ZOMATO'S REACH

1.4 mn 124 65 mn No of cities users everstaurants covered month users every

150,000 food delivery partners

SERVICES PROVIDED

Food delivery | Table reservations

B2B food ingredient supply for restaurants. Zomato Piggybank technology to connect restaurant businesses and customers

start of the #Logout campaign, we had 6,100 restaurants in India on Zomato Gold for dining out. As of today, we have 6.300 restaurants in India on Gold. In addition, we have 10.000 restaurants participating in the recently launched Zomato Gold for delivery. The number of restaurants participating in Gold outside of India stands at 6,500," Zomato said in a report earlier this month.

Things have certainly not been easy for Zomato in recent years. Swiggy, its nearest competitor, has not only raised over a billion dollars in the last one year and rapidly expanding in the food delivery space, it is also treading further into grocery delivery, concierge service as well as into the mobility space.

Amazon India, too, has decided to get into the food delivery space, and given its huge user base in e-commerce, its entry could be potentially

disruptive for everyone in food tech. Then, tech giant Google too is planning to enter the restaurant listing space. These are two of the main verticals that Zomato plays in and earns its revenues from. To avert the threat from new

entrants, Zomato is looking at niche areas to expand, where there are still only a few players. It recently marked its foray into the entertainment space. It will be launching video content on its platform with as many as 18 original shows. These short format videos that would be launched over a period of three months will have shows based around food, and celebrity chef Sanjeev Kapoor would be part of some of the programmes.

This ties well with Zomato's advertisement content business for restaurants. It has been trying hard to sell its video advertisements to restaurants, cloud kitchens and other clients on the platform and now along with entertainment content, many believe, it would be easier to do so.

"The plan is to weave in content with the advertisements. Something what YouTube does on its platform. A video advertisement of a restaurant might play before or in-between the starting of the show," said a source close to the company. Having content would encourage restaurants to place video ads as the probability of them getting watched by people would be higher.

It is still too early to say whether all this will help Zomato spice up its offering and stand out in a crowded market. The proof of the pudding perhaps will be in a fresh round of funding that Zomato is currently trying to raise.

Encouraged by the growing tourist

traffic in Chanderi (a small town more famous for its saris), the Madhya Pradesh government is planning to bring in a film policy to promote tourism in the region. The idea was born when government officials noticed that after the movie Stree was shot in the town, tourist footfalls crossed 50,000 this year, a big jump over last year. The government is planning to appoint a coordinator who will take care of film units' needs and suggest to them locations for their shoot.

INSIGHT

As safe as the banks?



DHIRAJ NAYYAR

leven Octobers ago, the global economy suffered its most calamitous financial crisis since the Great Crash of 1929 which triggered the Great Depression. The epicentre of the two crises was the United States, which has, in both intellectual and practical terms, been the home of free markets for most of the last 100 years.

Therefore, it is easy to arrive at a definitive conclusion about the excesses of markets, particularly in the financial sector, and to bat for an alternative, highly regulated vision not just for the financial sector but for economies at large. It is distant memory now, but in the months after October 15, 2008, there was much self-congratulation in the policymaking and regulatory communities in India on how their abundant caution had saved India from the worst in the aftermath of the collapse of Lehman Brothers. How ironic it is that a decade on, it is India's supposedly well-regulated and tightly-controlled banking sector that is in a complete mess, paralysed even as the once excess-ridden banks of the West have got their mojo back.

The truth is the fitness of the Indian banking system was never tested. After all, the mettle of a ship cannot be tested while it is in harbor. Now, it is fairly well-accepted that the worst excesses of India's banking happened in the

boom period between 2005 and 2012. In fact, if India's regulators and policymakers had begun a process of deregulation and privatisation circa 2008, some of the malpractices might have been arrested at an early stage. But, at the time, the winning argument was in favour of the conservative approach where the banking system was dominated by government-owned entities, where competition from private sector banks was limited, and product innovation unheard of. The Indian economy is paying a long-term price.

It cannot be denied that left to themselves free markets can overextend and lead to crisis outcomes. It has happened countless times in the economic history of the last century and a half. Karl Marx and his followers believed capitalism would be a failed system because of this. What is often under-emphasised is the ability of markets to correct themselves. Of course. on occasion this requires the intervention of the state like it did in 2008 to enable the correction to happen faster while limiting the negative fallout. It is important to note that in the end, the long-term fallout of the 2008 crisis was limited to a handful of countries, mostly in Southern Europe which lacked the structural flexibility to bounce back quickly, largely because of excessive state intervention and egregious state spending across sectors.

In contrast, how does a closed system dominated by the state -- like India's banking sector -- correct its crisis-like problems? The best way would be to give it a dose of the markets. If the excesses of the market need state intervention, the excesses of the state need market intervention. But the market cannot intervene without the state willing it on. And the state often does not back away. In extreme cases, like in the case of the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe in 1989-1991, the complete inability to correct economic problems led to a collapse of the political system. It was only after that that the market entered the scenario to deliver shock therapy which had its own adverse side effects.

The government of Prime Minister Narendra Modi is well-positioned to administer just the right dose of medicine to the ailing banking sector. Continuously recapitalising public sector banks is a placebo. It may make the government feel better but it won't cure the causes of the disease. Similarly, consolidating public sector banks may make the problem seem more manageable but the underlying cause, those related to state control over banking, will not go away. The government must go one step further by bringing its stake below 50 per cent, preferably down to 26 per cent, in at least two of the consolidated banks. The shares need not be sold to any rival bank, Indian or foreign. They need not be sold to established industrialists. They should be offloaded to the public at large. The banks will get an independent board and professional management. It is only then that they will begin a genuine recovery. The government need only to look back at the ICICI experience in

Equally significantly, the government should bite the bullet on regulatory overhaul. The Reserve Bank of India, in its capacity as regulator of banks and NBFCs, has failed in its task of maintaining a stable and healthy financial system. It is possible to separate the task of regulation from the central bank. Some countries have done it. If it is to remain with the RBI, a complete mindset change — from control and regulation to competition and transparency — is required.

India cannot aspire to be a doubledigit growth economy with a dysfunctional financial system. State failure needs to be taken as seriously as market

The author is chief economist, Vedanta

LETTERS

Accounting jugglery

This refers to your editorial "The pension deficit" (October 23). The observation -"the government tends to postpone expenditure to the extent possible and this is not restricted to one particular area. This practice must end because it doesn't help achieve anything" — is a revealing statement that needs immediate attention of everyone who has anything to do with financial accounting in India. The introduction of the National Pension System or NPS (originally New Pension Scheme, December 2003) itself has an accounting jugglery background. When the government pension schemes were following a "pay as you go" accounting practice and unfunded liability of such schemes rose to crores of rupees, which attracted criticism, the government of India (GOI) discontinued defined benefit pension scheme for its employees (except defence personnel) prospectively and introduced NPS.

For decades now, the Centre and state governments have been manipulating fiscal deficit figures with immunity by postponing payment of dues and receiving advance payments from organisations like the Reserve Bank of India. Diverting funds under direction from institutions like Life Insurance Corporation of India and delaying payments to statutory bodies and public sector undertakings have become the order of the day. The GOI and the state governments need to think of a one-time cleansing of the national balance sheet by obtaining legislative approval for a higher fiscal deficit. Transparency in accounting will boost institutional morale leading to a rise in public trust in the government and the financial system. A welcome byproduct will be the rise in domestic/household savings and their mainstreaming. The negative impact of a higher fiscal deficit can be got over by preparing and publishing a national balance sheet accounting for the total amount of domestic assets and liabilities held with the government, corporates, individuals and all organisations.

M G Warrier Mumbai

Follow the lead

This refers to "Competition Act to have clause on settlement" (October 21). The government's move to introduce a commitment and settlement clause in the Competition Act shows its intent to provide an opportunity to companies found on the wrong side of the competition law to resolve the dispute without going in for a legal battle. This would hopefully save time and resources on both sides. Also, the government is right in its assertion that the insertion of a settlement clause in the Competition Act would further improve the ease of doing business. Given the opportunity. companies would like to settle disputes to escape action by the regulator and avoid legal recourse. Another issue that would inspire a company to go for a settlement is the uncertain outcome of judicial proceedings. Business entities would prefer to amicably settle the issue

raised by the regulator. To my mind, the incorporation of a commitment and settlement clause is worth emulating in the regulation of other sectors as well. The telecom sector is currently witnessing a plethora of legal battles. Parties aggrieved by the decisions of the Telecom Regulatory Authority of India (Trai), the sector regulator, invariably approach the appellate tribunal, the Telecom Disputes Settlement and Appellate Tribunal. These cases often land up at the doors of the Supreme Court, after the appellate authority pronounces its judgement. Quite a few cases can be resolved early, if a clause similar to what is being incorporated in the Competition Act finds its way in the regulation by Trai. This would act as an enabler for the telecom sector to grow and expand, keeping the legal wrangles to the minimum.

Sanjeev Kumar Singh Jabalpur

A caged parrot

After 61 days in jail, the Supreme Court's (SC) bench said the findings of the Delhi High Court that had denied former finance minister Chidambaram bail on the ground that the likelihood of him influencing witnesses cannot be ruled out, is not substantiated by any material evidence and is only a generalised apprehension.

The UN International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights clearly states one is innocent until proven guilty. India is not exceptional to this. One wonders why the Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) is unable to produce a charge-sheet even after three years. How can one forget the way in which Chidambaram was arrested by the CBI? Why then is the investigating authority unable to produce a proper charge-sheet in the case even after two months?

There is nothing wrong if the aam aadmi sees the CBI as a caged parrot. Why can it not maintain its authority? Why does it have to bow down to the political bosses?

Bidyut Chatterjee Faridabad

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Another 'revival plan'

BSNL and MTNL should be privatised

nion Telecommunications Minister Ravi Shankar Prasad told reporters on Tuesday that the Union Cabinet had come to a decision on what would be done to the two state-owned telecom firms, Bharat Sanchar Nigam Limited (BSNL) and Mahanagar Telephone Nigam Limited (MTNL). The two companies would be merged, he said, with MTNL, which operates in Delhi and Mumbai, serving as a subsidiary of BSNL till then. The two companies were, according to the Union Budget for 2019-20, supposed to raise over ₹15,000 crore through internal and extra budgetary resources. This money will be raised through the issue of bonds that will be serviced by the state-owned firms but, of course, guaranteed by the Union government. This is a drop in the ocean of what BSNL alone has lost up to this moment. The unlisted PSU lost almost ₹14,000 crore in financial year 2018-19, which took its accumulated losses to over ₹90,000 crore at that point. MTNL has about ₹20,000 crore of debt on its balance sheet.

The question is if the government genuinely believes that these entities can be turned around into useful contributors to the sector. On the "pro" side of the ledger, the assets, especially land, on which the PSUs are sitting could perhaps be worth ₹70,000 crore or more. Set against that is a slew of negatives, beginning with the companies' inflated salary bill. The almost 200,000 employees in MTNL and BSNL together take up the lion's share of the outgo — in BSNL's case, 77 per cent of what it spends is on salaries. The revival plan agreed upon by the Cabinet hopes that an attractive voluntary retirement package will tempt a good number of these workers to retire in the next five to seven years. BSNL has also asked for an equity infusion from the government equivalent to the administered price of 4G spectrum — since it is of the opinion that a lack of 4G spectrum has rendered it uncompetitive against private sector 4G players.

The telecom sector is notoriously nimble — even incumbent private sector players have struggled to deal with the most recent entrant, Reliance Jio. Much depends upon pricing and the quality of service. The sector is less a large-scale $network\,infrastructure\,business\,and\,more\,a\,service\,provision\,game\,now\,--\,and$ in this contest, the public sector will always lose to private sector players that are inherently more responsive to consumers. It is also deeply unfair to legacy players who took on enormous amounts of debt to buy spectrum and retain competitiveness in the sector to have to face a public sector major with access to spectrum at administered prices, and that faces a soft budget constraint since it can borrow against the word of the sovereign. Constant backing to Air India led to a distorted aviation market that has now killed not one but two full-price airlines. Is this what the government wishes to do to the telecom sector? It must face facts: BSNL and MTNL cannot be turned around without taxpayers shelling out a substantial amount. And even if they could, the effort would distort the market and drive private players out, causing overall social losses. These firms need to be privatised, not revived.

The Infosys test

Credibility of the Indian IT sector is at stake

n Tuesday, Infosys shares fell over 16 per cent over the day of trade, marking the sharpest such drop in six years. Clearly, investors are spooked by news of fresh trouble at the top of India's iconic software company. Whistleblowers, in a letter dated last month and now made public following publication in the Deccan Herald, complained that Infosys Chief Executive Officer (CEO) Salil Parekh, with the knowledge of Chief Financial Officer (CFO) Nilanjan Roy, was concealing crucial facts from the board committees, under-reporting costs to artificially inflate reported profits, and ordering employees to misrepresent the returns on certain business deals. Mr Parekh was even accused of misusing his travel privileges. While the whistleblowers claimed to have emails and voice recordings to back up their allegations, Infosys chairman — and one of the company's founders — Nandan Nilekani said in a letter that none of this evidence had so far been made available to the company's board.

While the charges are just that, as they have not been proved as yet, the problem is that given the whistleblower letter was dated September 20, the company seemed to have taken too long to take action and this counts as a bad sign. There are disquieting parallels being drawn to the bruising battle two years ago, when former CEO Vishal Sikka was removed following a whistleblower complaint about a \$200-million acquisition in Israel and the controversial intervention by another founder, NR Narayana Murthy. Mr Nilekani, in the letter, which he is obliged to write to the public exchanges in India and the United States, said the complaints have been laid before the audit committee and non-executive members of the board, and the CEO and the CFO have been recused from the discussion. Auditors EY, as well as the legal firm of Shardul Amarchand Mangaldas, are to conduct an independent investigation. In today's fraught and politicised atmosphere, the whistleblowers' allegation that Mr Parekh made derogatory remarks about some board members' ethnicities may further raise concerns, and certainly spark even wider public interest in the investigation. Unfortunately, Infosys hasn't given any timeline for completion of the investigation. It is vital that Infosys' board recognises the importance of timely action, and that it must make an extra effort to restore market confidence.

The plain fact is that Infosys, which faces an increasingly challenging environment in its core business, cannot afford to waste time dealing with problems caused by corporate governance. It is already trading at a discount to its larger rival TCS, and is nowhere near the 2020 revenue targets set under Mr Sikka. It must also recognise that allegations of impropriety of this sort are particularly dangerous at a time when the United States administration is actively looking for reasons to demonise Indian IT services companies like Infosys. It would not be an exaggeration to say that the entire IT story depends now upon how Infosys demonstrates responsiveness and transparency to this complaint. Given the company's visibility on NASDAQ as well as the Indian stock exchanges, it is fair to say that the effectiveness and reliability of Indian markets themselves are also on trial. Only speedy action that takes the public and investors into confidence will ensure that the company, sector, and markets

III IISTRATION: BINAY SINHA



A reputational crisis for the RBI

Unable to change with the times, the regulator today no longer inspires absolute confidence

or most Indians, including this writer, the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) until a few years ago stood for prudence, success, and responsibility. It was an institution that Indians were proud of. Its policies and strong regulation insulated India from the 2008 financial crisis. The way it managed balance of payments and currency rates was certainly fit to be used as case studies in leading management institutes. However, of late, unfortunately, RBI does not instil the same confidence.

The sheen from RBI's unquestionable reputation has worn off. A series of events in the last couple of years tell a story of colossal failure of the institution - unable to change with the times and living off its

84-year legacy. For the first time, the RBI's name was dragged into a chargesheet filed by the Serious Frauds Investigation Office in cases related to IL&FS. The Supreme Court of India struck down its circular and also threatened it with contempt. Not only that, questions are being raised all around on various regulatory and supervisory failures of the RBI. The case of the Punjab and Maharashtra Co-operative Bank has

Clearly, these are testing times for an institution, which has 84 years of nearly unblemished track record. While diehard supporters of the institution would brush aside present criticism, the fact is that such overconfidence that the RBI can do no wrong or fail in its duties is the cause behind its recent failures. When an institution believes that its knowledge and capability is superior to everyone, that it is omniscient, it behaves like a frog in the well. And this is precisely the cause for the mess. Unlike other regulators, it doesn't believe in consultation with stakeholders, disclosures and transparency. It doesn't like to be questioned.

Regulated entities have no option but to say "ves sir". The RBI's success in managing monetary policy as well as the exchange rates is in contrast to its failure in regulating and supervising banks and other financial institutions, including NBFCs and co-operative banks, where it has failed miserably.

The RBI may pin the blame on a host of reasons for all the mess, but can't give itself a clean chit. It seems that the RBI can't see any wrong within itself and, therefore, it fails to see wrong elsewhere as well. Failures results in irreparable damage. Postmortem is good only to fix responsibility and avoid future problems.

The NPA mess: The monster of NPA, threatened the

entire banking sector, derailed the economy and caused widespread losses to investors. Thankfully, depositors did not suffer, courtesy government's support to public sec tor banks, as no government can ever survive sitting over a bank failure. The question is: Did the monster grew overnight? If not, why the RBI did not stem the problem in the initial stage itself? The reason is simple Although the RBI has many laws and procedures and tons and tons of reporting requirement, unfortunate-

ly, data without adequate processing is of no use. The banks may have had commercial reasons or motivation to hide the NPA problem or carry out imprudent lending, but what stopped the RBI in nipping the problem in the bud? How companies were supported by banks with unmanageable debt-equity ratios and weak financials? The conclusion is that there was weak supervision and lack of effective tools to supervise.

Assets liability mismatch: While the present crisis in the NBFC sector can be partly attributed to management issues, the bigger villain is asset liability

travel back three decades, when most of the projects financed by banks and NBFCs had payback period of 7-10 years at the most. Banks and lending institutions were mostly allowed to lend for a maximum seven years, with initial grace period and some leeway. Correspondingly, banks could raise deposits for up to 10 years. Thus, there was scope as well as discipline to manage ALM. However, no economy can be standing still. Over a period of time, profile of projects and players changed. It was no longer a monopoly of the government to own and operate infrastructure projects and project life cycle leapfrogged from 7-10 years to 15-50 years. With no corresponding major change in supply side maturity profile, with no scope to manage ALM, discipline was confined to dictionary and banking prudence was no more in fashion. When the RBI did not raise red flags on ALM profile, the maturity profile of liability side became shorter and shorter. Lenders managed liquidity by frequent roll-overs. Loan arrangers were a new class of intermediaries, who managed ALM by mastering the art of roll-over, so much so that long-term infra projects were financed by even three- to six-month commercial paper. The NBFC industry was in great motion and believed in the first part of Newton's First Law of Motion, which states, "An object continues to be under the state of uniform motion.... This was a potential time bomb and any trigger in the form of a credit event, would have forced rollover opportunities to shrink. The IL&FS case had a contagion effect across the NBFC sector, bringing in play the second part of Newton's first law, " ... unless an external force acts on it". The problem became acute as most of the lenders were mutual funds and insurance companies, which had to follow numerous prudential investment norms to protect the interest of investors.

maturity (ALM) profile mismatch. One needs to

Cash credit: India has been following a cash credit-based system of lending. The beauty (or the ugly part) of cash credit system is that, although technically payable on demand, the loan never gets paid back and it keeps increasing. It is a golden pot which keeps on flowing and continues to meet both personal and business needs of borrowers. It is an ideal system to hide and prolong detection of any problem, unless the supervision is very strong. Given the compulsions and culture, banks had no incentive to change — in this competitive world who wants to lose business? While the world moved away from cash credit-based financing to cash flow-based financing, Indian banks continued with archaic system. Cash credit system was acceptable when the economy was mainly brick-and-mortar. With businesses becoming global, things really became difficult. The RBI failed to transform the system in time.

The writer is the founder and managing director of Stakeholders Empowerment Services. This is the first



J N GUPTA

Climate change will cost more than we think

Tor some time now it has been clear that the effects of climate change are appearing faster than scientists anticipated. Now it turns out that there is another form of underestimation as bad or worse than the scientific one: The underestimating by economists of the costs

The result of this failure by economists is that world leaders understand neither the magnitude of the risks to lives and livelihoods, nor the urgency of action. How and why this has occurred is explained in a recent report by scientists and economists at the London School of Economics and Political Science, the Potsdam Institute for Climate Impact Research and the Earth Institute at Columbia University.

One reason is obvious: Since climate scientists have been underestimating the rate of climate change and the severity of its effects, then economists will necessarily underestimate their costs.

But it's worse than that. A set of assumptions and practices in economics has led economists both to underestimate the economic impact of many climate risks and to miss some of them entirely. That is a problem because, as the report notes, these "missing risks" could have "drastic and potentially catastrophic impacts on citizens, communities and

One problem involves the nature of risk in a climate-altered world. Right now, carbon dioxide is at its highest concentration in the atmosphere in three million years (and still climbing). The last time levels were this high, the world was about five degrees Fahrenheit warmer and sea level 32 to 65 feet higher. Humans have no experience weathering sustained conditions of this type.

Typically, our estimates of the value or cost of something, whether it is a pair of shoes, a loaf of bread or the impact of a hurricane, are based on experience. Statisticians call this "stationarity." But when conditions change so much that experience is no longer a reliable guide to the future — when stationarity no longer applies — then estimates become more and more uncertain.

Hydrologists have recognised for some time that climate change has undermined stationarity in water management — indeed, they have declared that stationarity is dead. But economists have by and large not recognised that this applies to climate effects across the board. They approach climate damages as minor perturbations around an underlying path of economic growth, and take little account of the fundamental destruction that we might be facing because it is so outside human-

ity's experience.

A second difficulty involves parameters that scientists do not feel they can adequately quantify, like the value of biodiversity or the costs of ocean acidification. Research shows that when scientists lack good data for a variable, even if they know it to be salient, they are loath to assign a value out of a fear that they would be "making it up."

Therefore, in many cases, they simply omit it from the model. assessment or discussion. In economic assessments of climate

change, some of the largest factors, like thresholds in the climate system, when a tiny change could tip the system catastrophically, and possible limits to the human capacity to adapt, are omitted for this reason. In effect, economists have assigned them a value of zero, when the risks are decidedly not. One example from the report: The melting of Himalavan glaciers and snow will both flood and profoundly affect the water supply of communities in which hundreds of millions of people live, yet this is absent from most economic assessments.

A third and terrifying problem involves cascading effects. One reason the harms of climate change are hard to fathom is that they will not occur in isolation, but will reinforce one another in damaging ways. In some cases, they may produce a sequence of serious, and perhaps irreversible, damage.

For example, a sudden rapid loss of Greenland or West Antarctic land ice could lead to much higher sea levels and storm surges, which would contaminate water supplies, destroy coastal cities, force out their residents, and cause turmoil and conflict.

Another example: Increased heat decreases food production, which leads to widespread malnutrition, which diminishes the capacity of people to withstand heat and disease and makes it effectively impossible for them to adapt to cli mate change. Sustained extreme heat may also decrease industrial productivity, bringing about economic depressions.

In a worst-case scenario, climate impacts could set off a feedback loop in which climate change leads to economic losses, which lead to social and political disruption, which undermines both democracy and our capacity to prevent further climate damage. These sorts of cascading effects are rarely captured in economic models of climate impacts. And this set of known omissions does not, of course, include additional risks that we may have failed to have identified.

The urgency and potential irreversibility of climate effects mean we cannot wait for the results of research to deepen our understanding and reduce the uncertainty about these risks. This is particularly so because the study suggests that if we are missing something in our assessments, it is likely something that makes the problem worse.

This is yet another reason it's urgent to pursue a new, greener economic path for growth and development. If we do that, a happy ending is still possible. But if we wait to be more certain, the only certainty is that we will regret it.

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Questions without answers



SUBHOMOY BHATTACHARJEE

ourav Ganguly's controversy-ridden ascension as BCCI President and the appointment of dynasts and politically connected people to other key positions in the sports body means Indian cricket administration is back to where it was in 2013, when the Supreme Court had stepped in and appointed a Committee of Administrators headed by Vinod Rai. It is possible to ask: What did the interregnum

under Mr Rai achieve? A disclaimer first: Mr Rai wrote the

Foreword to my book India's Coal Story. It is an incisive piece, he had carried forward those arguments in his own book Not Just an Accountant. He argued that the auditor had the right to question how policy should be implemented. Mr Rai's Rethinking Good Governance expands that theme to other regulatory institutions including cricket and, more broadly, sports administration. "Nation building through good governance has to (include) the building of institutions empowered to question and monitor every action of the government organisations and persons in authority".

Mr Rai is right, but he doesn't offer any alternatives. For instance, while he set up a CEO and a professional management structure in BCCI, the connection between political dynasties and cricket has been comprehensively re-established. How would such an institution, even if professionally managed, be able to criticise "persons in authority". Democracy doesn't always offer much space for a separation of politics and administration, much as courts and often the public may bay for it.

It is a theme that often assails one reading his book since he stops short of exploring this issue. He does make some candid observations, however, About the role of the Election Commission of India (ECI), he makes clear that the recent controversy among the Election Commissioners on "complaints of violation of the Model Code of Conduct against the PM and the BJP President" in the 2019 general elections has not helped. "Admittedly while the ECI aspires for unanimous decisions, it rules provide for majority ruling...these conventions need to be respected. Notings (sic) exchanged within the ECI, and among the commissioners, are well documented. Having such a record maintains the credibility of the institution".

Mr Rai is obviously well placed to conduct this survey of the regulatory bodies including the Reserve Bank of India, the Comptroller and Auditor General (CAG), Central Bureau of Investigation and the Central Vigilance Commission, besides Parliament and the Supreme Court. He has worked with many of these institutions as secretary, department of financial services in the union finance ministry, capping it with a term as the most famous Comptroller and Auditor General of India. He has seen them all from extremely close quarters and this gives him a unique

NAOMI ORESKES &

NICHOLAS STERN

For instance, Mr Rai was the secretary, department of financial services when Y V Reddy was the Governor of RBI and had ringside view of the relations between Dr Reddy and finance minister P Chidambaram. He says the government planned to allow foreign direct investment private banks in 2004. Mr Chidambaram told Dr Reddy "decisions could not be altered based on the personal convictions of successive governors...Not

being in agreement [about FDI in banks] Reddy called up the then secretary, Department of Economic Affairs, Dr Rakesh Mohan, and offered to get himself admitted to a hospital under the pretext of ill health and subsequently quit the post to facilitate the appointment of a new governor by the government". The former CAG notes that the compromise came after the Budget 2005 announced the measure, and "the road map was planned by Reddy in such a way that by the time it would be implemented, he would have retired from the post of governor"

He also notes that the rapid exit of Governors Raghuram Rajan and Urjit Patel in recent years "are not beneficial to the economy as the consistency of policy formulation takes on a short-term approach". He suggests a five-vear term for the governor would be an evidence of a balanced approach but stops short of criticising the government for not ensuring it. "We have seen that governors have expressed their concern.. and yet have remained effective in their posts...the top (political) leadership

has been found to be receptive to such concerns, except on a few occasions when political considerations might have overridden such advice".

But there are few examples of these in other regulatory bodies. Rai has recounted in detail each flashpoint between the different bodies and the political executive but has often stopped short of taking a clear position on who is to blame, as in the case of BCCI drama. In the analysis of the Supreme Court, he examines the complaints about corruption in the judiciary; but does not prescribe solutions beyond the truism "Trust cannot be commanded. It has to be earned."

RETHINKING GOOD GOVER-NANCE: HOLDING TO ACCOUNT INDIA'S PUBLIC INSTITUTIONS

Vinod Rai **Rupa Publications** Page 272, ₹595

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DIALLING IT UPUnion law minister Ravi Shankar Prasad

Neither MTNL or BSNL are being closed, nor being disinvested, nor is being hired to any third party. The Union Cabinet has approved revival plan of BSNL and MTNL and in-principle merger of the two

Court order will hit phone tapping by taxman etc

Bombay High Court reiterates SC ruling that taps are justified only if public safety is endangered or in a public emergency

TATIME when governments—at the Centre and the states—are looking at tracking even social media messages, the Bombay High Court has done well to reiterate an individual's right to privacy and to rule that even tapping of phones that has been signed off by government officials is unlawful if it doesn't meet certain criterion. The case involves a south Mumbai businessman whom the CBI believed was bribing bank officials to get some favours in connection with a loan. The agency decided to tap his phone and, in fact, three such orders were issued; in October 2009, December 2009 and then again in February 2010. The businessman, however, approached the court to get the records destroyed since, he argued, the tapping was illegal.

The court has concurred with this and cited various rulings, starting with the famous PUCL one, to support its contention. "But the right to hold a telephone conversation in the privacy of one's home", the Supreme Court had ruled, "or office without interference can certainly be claimed as 'right to privacy'". Tapping of phones, the SC had ruled, violated a citizen's rights under Article 21 "unless it is permitted under the procedure established by law". This procedure involves the setting up of a review committee comprising the Cabinet/Law/Telecom secretary at the central government level—it is headed by the chief secretary at the state level—which was to, within two months, review the tapping order and see whether this passes the conditions laid down under Section 5(2) of the Telegraph Act. Section 5(2), in turn, talks of how there has to be either a "public emergency" or the tapping has to be "in the interest of public safety". In the case of the Mumbai businessman, the tapping orders were issued with "public safety" as the objective.

The Bombay High Court has pointed out that while there are several SC judgments that do not think tapping of telephone conversations violates privacy—which is a fundamental right—a 9-judge bench in KS Puttaswamy had accepted this principle in 2017, and this overruled earlier Constitution Bench judgments. Any infringement of the right to privacy, the court said, would have to meet certain tests; it had to be sanctioned by law, it must be necessary, it must be proportionate to the need for it and there must be procedural guarantees against the abuse of such powers. In this particular case, the Bombay High Court said, the tapping orders were not referred to the review committee which could ascertain whether they met the prescribed standards. The government officials, the court added, were not able to show that there was any risk to "the people at large", nor could they show that the move was in the "interest of the public safety". While not following proper procedure in this case was enough reason for the court to quash the tapping orders and to order that the transcripts be destroyed, it is not clear if the future benchmark for tapping is going to be just 'public emergency' and 'public safety'; if it is, the taxman or the Enforcement Directorate may find it difficult to get permission to tap phones in future. With the Supreme Court now hearing cases about whether social media messages should be traceable, and whether lawful intercepts should be allowed, the issue of the right to privacy—and how absolute it is—will come up again; in which case, there will be some more clarity on the issue.

Missing numbers

Not releasing lynching data hurts the govt's image

TIS UNCLEAR why the data on lynching and murder committed because of religious reasons, apart from those on khap-panchayat-ordered killings and murder by influential people, have been kept out of the Crime in India 2017 report, the National Crime Records Bureau's (NCRB's) latest compilation of crime data. Odder still, it is not as if the data for lynching weren't collected; as per The Indian Express, the NCRB undertook a massive data revamp exercise under former director Ish Mishra, as a part of which the sub-heads of lynching and murder for religious reasons were added to the murder classification. To be sure, an unnamed source in a news report claimed that the data weren't published because of the quality of data submitted by the states being unreliable. However, in such a case, it is hard to see why the rest of the data submitted by the states were considered to be of sound quality. Given how lynching incidents—for a host of reasons, from suspected theft, child lifting, cattle smuggling/slaughter or communal reasons—have dominated headlines, and both the Centre and the states have been blamed for failing to crack down in a manner that deters such crime, data on lynching is seen by criminology experts to be a key part of what should inform government policies on tackling such crimes better. The fact is that there have been private attempts at recording the rise in lynch-

ings, often led by media houses, but such attempts have come under criticism for a host of shortcomings, from allegedly being biased against one community or the other in recording these incidents to ascribing the wrong reasons for incidents, and even failing to record incidents covered in regional language media given the reliance on English media reportage for sourcing data. That said, the need to dissect lynching to proactively prevent incidents couldn't have been more urgent than it is now. It is in the best interest of the government to publish the data, even if it eventually spins an inconvenient narrative for one or the other political ideology, given how not publishing is going to bolster the notion that the government is deliberately hiding the data. With leaders of the ruling party and of its ideological fount, the RSS, having either failed to criticise lynching in concrete terms or having even come out in support of the accused, the government can ill afford to have another controversy over data, quite in the manner of the one over the unemployment data that raged at the time of the general elections. More so, given the data shows a marked increase in number of crimes against the state, including sedition, a charge that the authorities have slapped against individuals in a trigger happy manner. At the very least, the government must spell out the reasons why the lynching and other data have not been released, and commit to an early date of publishing of the same.

MILLIANT TERS

FSSAI milk study shows contaminants a key concern, management must begin early in the value-chain

HE FOOD SAFETY and Standards Authority of India's (FSSAI's) national survey to test for adulteration and contamination in milk has thrown up some significant findings. Of the 6,432 samples collected last year between May and October from 1,100 cities, 93% were found to be safe for consumption. The samples were tested for 13 adulterants and three contaminants (antibiotics, aflatoxin M1, and pesticides). The FSSAI had noted that contamination was a bigger problem than adulteration when consuming milk—processed or raw. The survey found antibiotics above the prescribed norms in 77 samples. But, the biggest concern has been the presence of aflatoxin M1 in some samples.

Aflatoxin M1 is a deadly carcinogen whose consumption—of about one mg/kg or higher—can lead to aflatoxicosis, eventually causing death. The survey noted that out of the 6,432 samples, 368 (5.7%) had aflatoxin beyond the permissible limits. The highest concentration of aflatoxin was found in samples from Delhi, Kerala and Tamil Nadu. FSSAI notes that the presence of aflatoxin can be attributed to the cattle-feed and fodder. Aflatoxins are produced by certain fungi present in crops like maize, cotton seeds, etc. Improper storage, in humid and warm conditions, lead to the creation of aflatoxin in the harvest, which then passes on from the fodder to cattle, and from cattle to milk. Given milk is a staple for children, the regulatory framework must ensure that contamination from toxic cattle feed is prevented. Farmers and warehouse personnel need to be trained in safe storage practices. The problem of contaminants is compounded given their presence in milk products is yet to be studied. The government also needs to crack down on antibiotic abuse in agriculture to ensure that antibiotics levels don't shoot up in milk and other food.

IMMIGRATION ECONOMY

AT A TIME WHEN US PRODUCTIVITY GROWTH AND NEW BUSINESS FORMATION ARE LOW, ADMITTING MORE H-1B WORKERS SEEMS LIKE AN OBVIOUS MOVE

A case for more H1-B visas for Indians

Bloomberg

N THE TEMPESTUOUS debates about immigration policy, the humble H-1B temporary visa tends to be overlooked. Streams of desperate Central Americans marching toward the border tend to evoke strong emotions on all sides, while tech professionals from India working in Silicon Valley elicit fewer objections. But H-1B workers are important to national prosperity, and the program is under threat from the Donald Trump administration.

Though these visas normally expire after six years, the H-1B effectively functions as a trial period for high-skilled immigrants. Often, it gives a worker a chance to become established and apply for permanent residence, while it gives their employer the ability to try them out.Without it, fewer skilled immigrants would be able to work in the US.

H-1B workers contribute a lot to innovation and economic dynamism.A 2010 study by economists William Kerr and William Lincoln, for example, found that when H-1B admissions were increased in the 1990s, patents attributable to people with Chinese and Indian surnames increased, while patents by people with Anglo-Saxon names didn't fall. And a recent paper by economists Stephen Dimmock, Jiekun Huang and Scott Weisbenner found that companies that win the H-1B visa

Stuck since 2004

lottery—which is held in years when applications exceed the number of visas—tend to receive more venturecapital funding, tend to be more suc-

cessful and produce more patents.

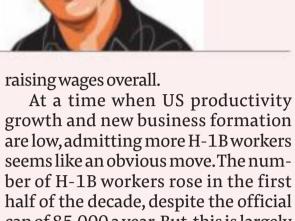
Furthermore, H-1Bs help nativeborn workers. Studies by economists Giovanni Peri, Kevin Shih and Chad Sparber, comparing across cities, have found that allowing in more H-1B workers raises wages for native-born high-skilled US workers, and doesn't hurt their employment levels.

The reason is what economists call clustering effects. The more H-1B workers move to a city, the more tech companies want to locate their offices, factories and research facilities in that city. When tech companies cluster together in a city, it raises local productivity, and it also prevents high-value jobs from being offshored to India or China. Ironically, even if individual companies want H-1B workers in order to hold down wages, the presence of lots of H-1B workers ends up

growth and new business formation are low, admitting more H-1B workers seems like an obvious move. The number of H-1B workers rose in the first half of the decade, despite the official cap of 85,000 a year. But, this is largely because of hiring at institutions that are exempt from the cap, such as universities and non-profits. Companies, in turn, are being starved of the foreign talent they need to expand and grow. The official cap on H-1B visas, which constrains the number of workers private businesses can hire, was allowed to fall by more than half in 2004, and hasn't been raised since.

Now, the Trump administration has launched a new attack on H-1B workers. Denial rates for H-1B applications have soared.

US Citizenship and Immigration Services reports show that the reduction is intentional. For now, the effort hasn't



reputation, race may have something to do with it; about three-quarters of H-1B petitions are for Indian workers, and China and India together represent more than 85% of the total. There is also a longstanding concern that many of the visas are being taken by outsourcing companies that add little to American innovation and dynamism. But unfounded worry over wage

done much to lower the number of H

1Bs; many of the denials are overruled

and the number of applications hasn't

dropped by much, meaning that the cap

is still being hit every year. But Trump

and his administration are clearly trying

to reduce the inflow of skilled workers.

especially when opinion polls show

overwhelming support for skilled immi-

gration? Given Trump's rhetoric and

Why the hostility toward H-1Bs,

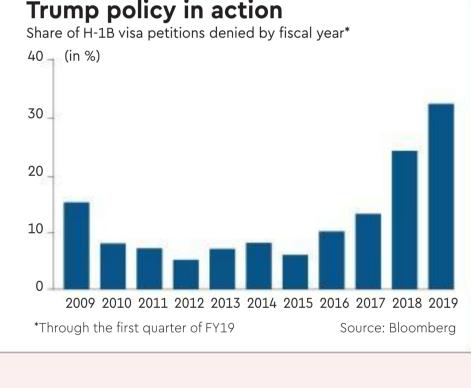
competition is surely a big reason for antipathy toward H-1Bs. H-1B workers in the technology industry tend to be paid less than their native-born counterparts, suggesting that employers use foreign workers to try and hold down pay. And many H-1B opponents think they know the reason; visa holders, they allege, are tethered to a single employer, unable to change jobs for fear of being forced to leave the country. A worker who can't switch companies probably will accept less in compensation. For this reason, some commentators have likened the H-1B program to indentured servitude.

This criticism is vastly overblown. A law passed in 2000 made H-1B visas much more portable. An H-1B holder can now switch employers and start working before the paperwork is approved. Even if an H-1B worker is laid off, he or she can stay in the country for 60 days to find a new job.

Although the H-1B program does have its flaws, it is a good program, and it should be expanded. More skilled foreign workers aren't going to hurt native-born Americans; they are here to help.

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

H-1B visa cap, including extra quota for masters degree holders 150 100 '11 '13 '15 '17 2019 Source: Redbus/Bloomberg



India's EoDB rank no cheer for MSMEs

The Sinha Committee recommendation for an impersonal, digital Information Utility is our best bet to improve the payments culture, not additional compliances

WILLINDIA GET a Diwali gift later today by breaking into the ranks of the top 50 in Ease of Doing Business (EoDB)? India has made a significant rise in the global ranking from 142 to 77 over the past six years, thanks to concerted efforts from the government, and the answer will be known today. Unfortunately, a significantly higher rank now may get a lukewarm response from businesses in general, and MSMEs in particular. There are two reasons for this. The first is technical—reform is a continuous process, and the Doing Business ranking is an annual exercise for the World Bank. Consequently, all the recent changes that the government has introduced, since June 2019, will only be accounted for in the World Bank's report next year. Meanwhile, Indian businesses have already discounted the gains from last year and are focused on today's pain.

The second reason is that, all said and done, the World Bank study has its limitations for Indian entrepreneurs. As a global study, the ranking is based on 41 indicators across 10 categories to arrive at the performance of a country relative to the best performing country. But a small firm in India is grappling with regulatory cholesterol that goes way beyond those 41 indicators. With 58,000+compliances, 3,000+ filings and 2,500+ updates, the compliance burden is complex and fluid. MSMEs are, for the most part, run by single entrepreneurs, and they bear a disproportionate compliance burden, compared to large companies. Handling the existing paperwork and staying updated with frequent legal changes drains their productivity and curbs their capacity to grow. To make matters worse, additional

compliances are the bureaucracy's answer to most problems. For instance, in conversations with Pune-based MSMEs on EoDB, we found that the World Bank ranking is far from their minds. The single biggest hurdle they face is the strain on working capital. Not

only are they severely strapped for cash, thanks to delayed payments from big buyers, they have been further burdened this year with an additional compliance in the form of a half yearly return on outstanding dues to micro and small enterprises (MSME Form 1).

That delayed payments are the bane

of an MSME entrepreneur's life is a welldocumented problem for decades that has been resistant to all regulatory moves so far. In 2006, the government mandated that payments to MSMEs cannot be delayed beyond 45 days, stiff penalties were instituted. This had little impact, given the low bargaining power of MSMEs. In 2012, companies with audited accounts were instructed to make disclosures on outstanding dues to MSMEs in their annual reports. The problem persisted. In 2015, a redress mechanism was set up, through an online portal (MSME SAMADHAAN— Delayed Payment Monitoring System). Yet, given the fear of reprisal, small firms are loathe to complain in open. So far, just 27,455 applications have been filed by MSMEs on the portal for outstanding dues worth ₹7,161 crore. In other words, less than half a percent of the 7.7 million units with Udyog Aadhaar have filed complaints on the portal. Ironically, the government itself comes through with a poor payments and redressal culture more than 60% of the 2,861 applications pending against central and state governments, and departments have been unaddressed for more than 90 days. The finance minister recently urged large companies to clear the ₹40,000 crore dues owed to MSMEs the amount owed by large companies is close to 9% of the outstanding loans from banks to MSMEs. This record of delayed payments, of delayed redressal, despite strict laws and open redressal

In June, the UK Sinha committee on MSMEs put out an excellent recommen-

ease of doing business.

system, does not, in any way, make for

company). Views are personal dation to set up an Information Utility (IU) to identify defaulters. To tackle the issue of asymmetry of power, an amendment of the MSME Act, 2006 has been sought such that all MSMEs mandato-

SUMITA KALE

Economist, Avantis Regtech (a TeamLease

rily upload all their invoices above a specified amount (the committee suggested ₹1 crore, but it could be lower) on the IU portal. A designated authority would then act as an intermediary, use the data on unpaid bills and then write to the defaulters to clear the bill within the next month. By automatically generating the details of defaulters online, there would be transparency to lenders, rating agencies and other MSMEs. While this solution needs more discussion with industry associations to iron out any concerns, the method of naming and shaming, through a third party, without initiation by the MSME could work to encourage an honest payments culture. A digital, impersonal, transparent solution should have a better impact

than a compliance driven one. In any case, the government should do away with the MSME Form 1, which is the half yearly return with the Registrar of Companies on outstanding payments to micro or small enterprises. Instituted early this year, this form asks all companies, including MSMEs, to give details on outstanding dues to micro and small companies, and reasons for those. This halfyearly return has increased the compliance burden on MSMEs and more pertinently, the additional paperwork has had no impact on improving the culture of payments. As a starting point, the MCA can consider mandating this return only for large companies, with turnover more than ₹250 crore.

A \$5 trillion economy may seem far on the horizon for now, but faster growth cannot be achieved without greater productivity. Even if India breaks into the top 50 later today, our MSMEs will cheer only when they see an overhaul of the regulatory sludge that is sapping their energy today.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Time for one election

While multiple and long-drawn polls are a compulsion on account of security reasons, it is crucial to optimise the process, reduce the cost towards futile campaigns and expedite the pace of developmentprojects across states. It is time to work towards phased-consolidation of the polling process and progressive-efforts must be carried out to achieve higher productivity/cost-effectiveness, by spacing-out the polls. In a federal structure with a multi-party system, the larger public-interest demands, a collaborative work-relation among political-entities, to boost growth and solidarity. Irrespective of the timing/frequency, elections ought to be envisioned as a mechanism to address the civic, state and national issues—and not as a platform to allege or derogate counterparts. One-Election is therefore expected to be a viable and perhaps the only option in near-future, to fulfill the key socio-economic goals over vested interests. Sovereign-goodwill demands stability and a unified leadership over the entire-term, to attain consensus on matters of national-importance and attract/sustain public-cheer in the long-run. That said, a one-time nationwide poll is challenging to implement on account of machine/manpower needs, besides difficulties in synchronising tenures among governments at states and the Centre. Also, the poll-process ought to address local as well as national issues equitably and overcome the rare scenario of an unstable government being elected/voted to power for the entire-term. Availability of resources in a vast geography and increased acceptance towards a representative-style of democracy, are must-have to accomplish the seamless transition and attain the desired economies-of-scale. — Girish Lalwani, Delhi

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FINANCIAL EXPRESS

HIMANSHU GUPTA

The author, an IAS, is secretary, Planning, Arunachal Pradesh. Views are personal

States must become engines of growth, with the Centre facilitating them

HE GDP GROWTH rate for the first quarter showed that the Indian economy grew at its slowest pace in over six years. It became a point of debate as to who is responsible for this slowdown. Majority of the people targeted the Centre and its policies in the recent past for this sharp deceleration. However, problems in the economy are structural in nature that require a change in thinking by both the Centre and states.

If we look at the Budget 2019 and 14th Finance Commission Report, we find 42% of the divisible pool of taxes are given to states. Many states are demanding to the 15th Finance Commission that this vertical devolution should further increase. These untied grants to states are over and above the funds provided under central sector and centrallysponsored schemes by the Union government. While central sector schemes are 100% financed by the Centre, centrally-sponsored schemes are partly financed by the Centre and state governments in the ratio varying from 90:10 (in the case of Northeast states) to 50:50 in other states.

Some important schemes in key sectors running in states are Integrated Samagra Shiksha Yojana (education), National Health Mission (health), National Rural Drinking Water Program (water), Saubhagya and Integrated Power Development Scheme (power), Pradhan Mantri Gram Sadak Yojana (rural roads), Pradhan Mantri Krishi Sinchayee Yojana (agriculture), National Programme for Dairy Development (animal husbandry), etc. In fact, all the key flagship schemes running in states are centrally-sponsored schemes.

If we wish to become a \$5-trillion economy by 2024, we need to improve the capability of states to drive as engines of growth. A paradigm shift is required while doling out funds to states. Each scheme must have a component of performance-linked funds so that states compete for improving their performance. Funds must be linked with conditionalities so that states bring reforms. As an example, under the Integrated Samagra Shiksha Yojana, some states have improved their school results effectively. But there are also others where learning outcomes have not improved despite huge funding. The primary reason is shoddy recruitment process followed in states and thereafter unionisation of such teachers to get regularised. There are also instances of teachers putting political pressures to stay in headquarters, thereby making the student-teacher ratio skewed in remote schools. Thus, there is a need of invoking conditionalities like recruitment of teachers through independent service board/commission, maintaining ideal pupil-teacher ratio in schools, etc, before releasing funds to states.

GST is an important step towards cooperative federalism where states and the Centre come together to form common policies and adopt uniform tax rates. In the short term, this may lead to some slowdown, but it is an important coursecorrection legislation that will bring structural reforms in the economy in the times to come.

To improve productivity in agriculture and allied sector, we must change our approach of giving piecemeal funds to cover maximum beneficiaries. The Centre should guide states to identify progressive farmers, give them comprehensive training, technology and enhanced financial outlays so that the income of progressive farmers increases considerably, thereby motivating others to replicate. Investment in value-chain addition should be increased by forming cooperatives and incentivising state governments to set up primary and secondary processing units and provide seamless logistical support for realising the optimum cost of produce. Waiving off agriculture loans or increasing the limits for priority sector lending alone will not boost agriculture. Till the time states are forced to bring reforms and invest in this sector, we cannot double farmers' incomes by 2022.

To increase industrial output, we need to create enabling infrastructure for industries. It requires a coordinated effort of both the Centre and states. Majority of the enabling infrastructure like reliable power supply, external utilities, law and order, etc, is the responsibility of state governments.

We often find short-term solutions and give instant relief to the problems that crop up. However, it will be prudent to identify structural issues that our federal set-up is facing and bring reforms so that our economy comes on track in the long term, with states becoming engines of growth and the Centre facilitating them.

ILLUSTRATION: ROHNIT PHORE



What drives long-term economic growth?

The challenge before India is to sustain both economic and social development simultaneously. There are areas where India has done well. Quality of business environment has improved, investments in physical infrastructure continue in earnest, Poshan Abhiyaan has been launched. These are productivity-enhancing measures that will support growth over the next decade

ECENTLY, THE TERM 'middle-income trap' has made a comeback in the Indian context as fears that the country may find itself caught in this trap loom large. Conceptually, the 'middle-income trap' refers to the phenomenon where countries attain certain 'middle-income' levels after which growth stagnates. Can this trap be avoided? What explains rapid growth in countries and then slowdowns?

Economists have explained rapid growth in low-income countries through the idea of convergence (or catch-up growth). The idea is simple—the larger the gap between the 'leader' and the 'follower', the faster the catch-up growth. However, once income levels begin to converge with that of the leader, i.e. the gap becomes smaller, growth slows down as well. This implies that there is a certain 'advantage to backwardness'.

However, renowned economist Lant Pritchett notes that a feature of modern economic history is that of divergence in the productivity levels and living standards of economies. Of course, there have

been exceptions—consider Japan and other East Asian Countries as examples. These countries were successfully transitioned from low-income to high-income countries in the span of a few decades.

He demonstrates that being technologically behind is not enough to sustain 'catch-up' growth, implying that convergence may be conditional. Pritchett leaves us with four important questions to ponder over when considering the dynamics of India's growth story:

First, what accounts for continued per-capita growth and technological progress of those countries leading the frontier? Second, what accounts for the few countries that are able to initiate and sustain catch-up growth? Third, what accounts for why some countries lose growth momentum? Fourth, what accounts for why countries remain in low growth for a long period?

Pritchett's second and third questions are relevant to India's growth story, going forward. To answer the second question, I look at what the economic growth theory says. Broadly speaking, the literature on economic growth can be divided into

two strands: exogenous growth and endogenous growth.

Central to the exogenous growth theory is the idea of 'total factor productivity' (TFP), popularly known as the Solow Residual. According to the Solow-Swan Model, factor accumulation (capital, labour) and TFP determine output. Given the underlying assumption of diminishing marginal returns to capital, technological change is the driving force behind growth in this model. However, the model stops short of telling us what the determinants of TFP growth are, assuming it to be exogenous. In essence, this theory implies that growth is fuelled by technological progress, independent or 'exogenous' of economic forces. This assumption of exogenous technological change led to the development of endogenous growth theory, popularised by Nobel Prize winning economists such as Robert Lucas Jr. and Paul Romer.

Endogenous growth models also see technology as the driver of long-run growth, but also hypothesise that technological progress is dependent on the decisions of economic agents, in contradiction to exogenous growth theory. So, growth in this model comes as a result of our usual factors of production (land and labour), but also knowledge accumulation.

However, both of these models (along with their various extensions) have been unable to fully explain the large differences in cross-country

incomes. The conditional convergence hypothesis implies that being behind on the technological frontier is not enough to kickstart catch-up growth. The Solow-Swan Model implies that differences in capital account for little of crosscountry income differences. Endogenous growth models further imply that technology is non-rival,

therefore differences in technology are unlikely to explain cross-country income differences.

Despite different approaches in accounting for growth, the primacy of productivity is clear. This leads us to answer Pritchett's third question—why countries lose growth momentum? Could cross-country income differences potentially be explained by how well countries are able to utilise the given level of technology?

A World Bank working paper titled 'Avoiding Middle Income Traps' demonstrates that 85% of the slowdown in growth is explained through declining TFP growth. The hypothesis here is that the factors that generated growth at low-income levels tend to lose relevance as a country moves up income levels. This implies that the factors that support growth must evolve along with growth to take advantage of the new

opportunities on offer. We need to dig deeper to understand these differences. Social infrastructure, or social capability, has been identified as a key determinant. Here, the hypothesis is that social capability defines the ability of a country to absorb and exploit new technologies. It can also be thought of as the institutions and policies that align private and social returns to activities. In essence, social capability and infrastructure can be thought of as national competitiveness à la Michael Porter.

How does one go about estimating productivity? In a recent World Bank working paper, Kim & Loayza (2019) estimate the determinants of TFP through a panel of countries. Education emerges as a key driver of productivity in developing countries, supported by infrastructure, institutions, market efficiency and innovation. Missing, however, from their analysis is the role of health and nutrition.

The recently released Global Competitiveness Index (GCI) by the World Economic Forum (WEF) measures competitiveness or productivity through 12 pillars: institutions, infrastructure, ICT adoption, macroeconomic stability, health, skills, product market efficiency, labour markets, financial systems, market size, business dynamism and innovation capability. Both approaches include similar indicators to measure competitiveness or productivity.

The challenge before India is to sustain both economic and social development simultaneously. There are several areas where India has done well. Quality of the business environment has improved substantially, as evidenced by our perfor-

India must increase

its social capability

to enhance our

ability to absorb

and exploit current

technologies

mance on the Ease of Doing Business. Whilst macroeconomic stability has been achieved, the current growth slowdown has spurred reforms in key areas, such as the reduction in corporate tax rates. Investments in physical infrastructure continue in earnest, with the current regime committing ₹100 lakh crore worth of invest-

ments in infrastructure. Poshan Abhiyaan has been launched to improve nutritional outcomes. These are all productivityenhancing measures that will support

growth over the next decade. A key takeaway from the GCI 2019 is that a balance needs to be struck between technology integration and human capital investments. Growth-enhancing structural reforms need to be complemented with investments in human capital. In terms of education, a focus on outcomes, along with raising public investments, emerge as macro-level goals. The focus on primary health and nutrition must continue. For example, as per World Bank data, India's current expenditure on health (as a percentage of GDP) stood at 3.7% in 2016. In comparison, upper-middle income countries spent 5.9% of GDP on current health expenditures. China spent close to 5% in 2016 as well.

India must increase its social capability to enhance our ability to absorb and exploit current technologies. Only then will we witness sustained productivity growth that will drive our growth story.

ROM MEDIA REPORTS, it is observed that the Delhi government, the National Green Tribunal (NGT), the Central Pollution Control Board (CPCB), the Supreme Court-appointed EPCA (Environment Pollution Control Authority), governments of adjoining states (Punjab, Haryana and Uttar Pradesh, and their pollution control boards) are all showing alertness in fighting air pollution in the Capital well in time. Now, the real test lies in coordinating their actions for implementation of various measures. The chal-

experience of last many years. Air pollution in Delhi is contributed by the presence of PM 2.5 and PM 10 particles, carbon dioxide, carbon monoxide, nitrogen oxides, sulphur dioxide, garbage dumps and landfills containing plastics, etc. The main sources of all this are (1) transport system, (2) construction/demolition activities, (3) road sweeping, (4) coalfired power plants and brick-kilns, and (5) most importantly, rice stubble burning in the bordering states in the months of October and November every year.

lenges are already known based on our

Let me first discuss the existing scenario of stubble burning this winter, as it is a major contributor to air pollution as usual. According to scientists at NASA, there may be spikes in farm fires this winter. It is because their satellite images suggest that crop harvest in Punjab and Haryana this year may be at the historical highs because of monsoon staying longer and some local factors. Consequently, much more paddy straw—about 200 lakh metric tonnes—is likely to be generated,

Will air pollution in Delhi abate?

We must execute the Graded Response Action Plan of the EPCA in letter and spirit



increasing farm fires. Here, it may be noted that 1 tonne of stubble releases 2 kg of sulphur dioxide, 3 kg of particulate matter, 60 kg of carbon monoxide, 1,460 kg of carbon dioxide and 199 kg of ash. Just imagine the havoc burning 200 lakh tonnes will do. NASA has found this in advance by calculating what is called the normalised difference vegetation index (NDVI)—a measure devised for greenness that can indicate crop or vegetation cover. Further, NASA data shows that between 2002 and 2018, the most number of stubble burning cases reported were in 2016, at 18,000. This year, we expect the figure may be 16,000 or so, but fearing detection by satellites, farmers may light fire in small pockets not caught by satellites.

According to a recent CPCB report, the

annual average of PM 2.5 levels during 2016-18 (at 115 micrograms per cubic metre, which is three times the safe limit prescribed by the WHO) is 25% lower than the average during 2012-14. However, Delhi's average level needs to be lower by 65% to meet the standards under the National Clean Air Programme (NCAP), which is a long way to go.

The government of Delhi has introduced a number of measures during the last few years but without any real respite from air pollution. In view of this, it is necessary to review the various steps taken by the government to increase their effectiveness. The main ones are as under:

▶ There are certain guidelines for agencies while carrying out construction work, for avoiding and controlling dust, but these are not being strictly followed.

Using mechanical road sweeping machines is a must to bring down dust. It is observed that four civic bodies (having, among them, 56 such machines) are not effectively utilising their machines primarily because of poor maintenance due to non-availability of spare parts. The average road length swept currently is 38 km per shift of 8-10 hours, instead of the road length of 80-100 km per day according to a study by TERI. Dumping of dust collected by machines (a machine collects 1.13 to 4.1 tonnes per shift) is another problem that needs to be fixed soon.

▶ Reduce stubble burning sufficiently in adjoining states by increasing awareness amongst farmers and providing happy seeders for sowing and other necessary mechanical devices through necessary financial incentives.

• Measures like staggered office timings, banning diesel gensets and shutting down of industrial units based on coal and biomass and brick-kilns during winter is not being resorted to.

Besides the above, it is suggested that the following long-term measures to combat the menace of air pollution, which, in course of time, may engulf many more cities in India, be taken:

Planting of saplings should be done in very large numbers to compensate for highly reduced green cover over a period, and don't cut trees in the future. These are our greatest carbon sinks, along with water

bodies and soil. Increase the number of public trans-

port buses drastically. In fact, during the last 10 years, the number of buses has gone down to 5,500 from 6,329, while we need 11,000 buses to meet the demand and also increase dependence on public transport to reduce air pollution.

▶ Cloud seeding and artificial rainfall can play an important part in bringing down air pollution. It is heartening that IIT Kanpur has been awarded a project by the CPCB in this area.

▶ Install gigantic air purifiers, and it is now learnt that the National Environmental Engineering Research Institute (NEERI) is working on a variant of WAYU that caters to 500 sq-m.

▶ Introduce congestion pricing. This means that vehicle owners need to pay extra to enter the busiest and most congested parts of the city, and we have already identified 12 such hotspots in Delhi. Singapore, Stockholm and London are doing this. The recent RFID system (introduced by the School of Planning and Architecture) for commercial vehicles entering Delhi is an example of congestion pricing that has worked.

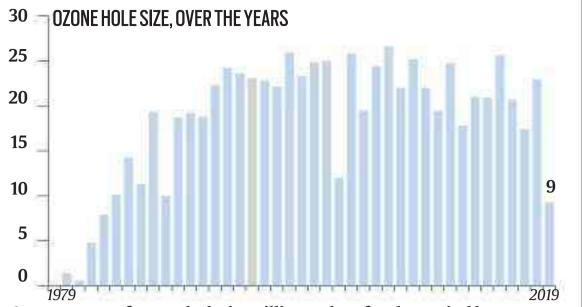
▶ Innovative ideas like creating vertical gardens on all public buildings/spaces (like in Singapore) to replace the greenery lost on the ground, and providing water sprinklers behind all two-wheelers are being suggested and the feasibility of these may

be examined sincerely. To conclude, intensive ground monitoring and the implementation of the above measures is key to combating air pollution in Delhi NCR. We should be fully ready to execute the Graded Response Action Plan of the EPCA in letter and spirit.

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TELLING NUMBERS

Smallest ozone hole in decades: how it happened, why it matters



Average area of ozone hole, in million sq km, for the period between September 7 and October 13. No data for the 1995 season. Source: NASA

DURING SEPTEMBER and October, the ozone hole over the Antarctic has been the smallest observed since 1982, NASA and US National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) scientists have reported. The annual ozone hole reached its peak extent of 16. 4 million sq km on September 8, then shrank to less than 10 million sq km for the remainder of September and October, satellite measurements show. NASA has described it as great news for the Southern Hemisphere.

WHAT IS OZONE HOLE: Ozone, made up of three oxygen atoms, occurs naturally in small amounts. Roughly 10 km to 40 km up in the atmosphere (the layer called the stratosphere), the ozone layer is a sunscreen, shielding Earth from harmful ultraviolet radiation. On the other hand, close to the surface, ozone created as a byproduct

of pollution can trigger health problems such as asthma and bronchitis.

Manufactured chemicals deplete the ozone layer. Each spring over Antarctica (it is now spring there), atmospheric ozone is destroyed by chemical processes. This creates the ozone hole, which occurs because of special meteorological and chemical conditions that exist in that region.

WHY IT'S SMALL THIS YEAR: There have been abnormal weather patterns in the atmosphere over Antarctica. In warmer temperatures like this year, fewer polar stratospheric clouds form and they don't persist as long, limiting the ozone-depletion process. While it is good news, NASA has cautioned it is important to recognise that what we are seeing this year is not a sign that atmospheric ozone is suddenly on a fast track to recovery. Source: NOAA

THIS WORD MEANS

AYE-AYE

A strange little primate, which has revealed a new secret: a 'pseudo-thumb' to do what its fingers can't

IN THE island of Madagascar there lives an unusual little animal. Now, the world's weirdest little primate has just got even weirder, the North Carolina State University has announced.

Called the aye-aye, it is a primate that is unlike most other primates. A type of omnivorous and nocturnal lemur, the aye-aye has a tail longer than its body, incisors that are constantly growing, a third eyelid that moistens the eye and protects it from debris when the aye-aye gnaws on wood, females that produce ova throughout their lifetime — and strange hands. The aye-aye has highly specialised fingers, including elongated middle fingers, with which they locate and fish out insect larvae. "Their fingers have evolved to be extremely specialised — so specialised, in fact, that they aren't much help when it comes to moving through trees," researcher Adam Hartstone-Rose said in a statement released by the North Carolina State University. In these already strange hands, researchers have now discovered a sixth digit — a "pseudothumb". Among other mammals, the giant panda has a similar sixth digit.

In the aye-aye, researchers believe



that the pseudo-thumb might have developed to compensate for the highly specialised fingers, helping it grip better since the pseudo-thumbs are able to move in space and exert an amount of force equivalent to half its body weight. The pseudo-thumb has a bone, a cartilaginous extension and three distinct muscles that give it movement in three directions.

"It's amazing that it's been there the whole time, in this strangest of all primates, but no one has noticed it until now," Hartstone-Rose said. The research is published in the American Journal of Physical Anthropology.

SIMPLY PUT

Reading Cabinet's decisions

What is the government trying to achieve by its Wednesday decisions on the telecom, farm and petroleum sectors? What is the context of the announcements, and how should they be understood?

UDIT MISRA

NEW DELHI, OCTOBER 23

ON WEDNESDAY, the Union Cabinet announced some key economic policy decisions. The first was a merger and revival package for two loss-making public sector telecom firms — Bharat Sanchar Nigam Ltd (BSNL) and Mahanagar Telephone Nigam Ltd (MTNL). The second was an increase in Minimum Support Prices (MSP) for rabi crops. The third was liberalising the regime for marketing petrol and diesel.

MTNL-BSNL merger

CONTEXT: It has been argued for some time now that the government should move out of the telecom sector because its firms — BSNL and MTNL — have been steadily losing ground to the private sector, and making heavy losses in the process. In the last four years, MTNL and BSNL revenues have fallen by 30% and 40% respectively. In the last financial year (2018-19), the two companies reported annual losses of Rs 14,000 crore and Rs 3,388 crore respectively. Cumulative losses are much higher. These losses are essentially a burden on taxpayers.

The companies' large staff strengths (BSNL has round 1.7 lakh employees) have made them all the more unviable in the face of losses. So, the government has decided to merge the two firms and introduce a voluntary retirement scheme (VRS) for employees above 50 years of age. The VRS is expected to cost over Rs 17,000 crore.

The government has also decided to raise funds by monetising the existing assets of BSNL and MTNL, and expects to raise Rs 38,000 crore by this route. The merged entity will float bonds (that is, sell bonds and get money in return) that will have the government's guarantee — Rs 15,000 crore is expected by this route.

The fresh money will be used to reduce the debts of the merged entity, and get it 4G spectrum so that it can compete with players in the rest of the sector on a better footing.

ANALYSIS: The move to treat BSNL and MTNL as strategic assets and the bid to revive them should be seen in the context of the ongoing distress in the telecom sector where the bulk of the private players – such as Tata Teleservices, RCom, Aircel, Telenor and Videocon — have shut shop in recent years. In essence, there are now just three companies — all private — that survive. But over the past few years, these too, have seen their revenues plummet sharply while their debts have risen into lakhs of crores.

Whether the merged entity will be able to better take on the reduced and weaker competition, thanks to the government's back-



Ministers Ravi Shankar Prasad, Prakash Javadekar and Hardeep S Puri at the press conference in Delhi Wednesday. Anil Sharma

ing, or whether it will struggle to take off in a time that is challenging for even more efficient private companies, will depend largely on how it is managed hereon.

Increase in rabi MSP

CONTEXT: One of the key successes of the Narendra Modi government since it came to power in 2014 has been its ability to control the general inflation rate that had reached double-digit highs at the end of 2013. While several factors were responsible for this decline — such as the collapse of crude oil prices in 2014 and 2015 — the policy decision taken by the government to not increase Minimum Support Prices by a large amount in any year, was quite significant. MSPs are one of the most important determinants of cropping patterns and overall production in India, as they signal the benchmark for farm prices across several commodities.

The latest increase is of Rs 85 per quintal for wheat, which is the main *rabi* crop, taking the MSP to Rs 1,925 per quintal. This is roughly in line (in fact, a little lower) with annual MSP increases in wheat since 2014 (when it was Rs 1,450 per quintal).

ANALYSIS: Seen from the consumer's point of view, a modest increase in MSPs would be a welcome sign. That is because, according to the latest data, retail food inflation in September jumped from 3% to 4.7%. Since food items account for over 54% of retail inflation, the headline inflation too shot up to a 14-month high. So, modest MSP increases suggest that food prices will perhaps not rise too high. However, the farmer's point of view is

very different. Modest increases have been

blamed for the stagnation in farm wages and an overall decline in rural demand. The most recent criticism on this count came from 2019 Economics Nobel winner Abhiiit Banerjee, who pointed to low MSPs as a reason for depressed rural demand. Should the government have increased

the MSPs by a bigger quantum to boost rural incomes and demand is an open question - especially because doing so would entail the risk of heightened inflationary pressures, which can then force the RBI to reverse the cycle of cutting interest rates.

Liberalising fuel retail

CONTEXT: The retail sale of transportation fuels such as diesel and petrol is almost entirely dominated by public sector oil marketing companies such as Indian Oil Corporation Ltd (IOCL), Hindustan Petroleum Corporation Ltd (HPCL), and Bharat Petroleum Corporation Ltd (BPCL). There are some private players as well Reliance, Essar and Shell — but as of May 2019, fewer than 7,000 of the 64,703 retail outlets in the country belonged to them.

The government has now decided to liberalise this regime by tweaking the "guidelines for granting authorisation to market transportation fuels", something that has not been done since 2002. In essence, the new rules lower the entry barriers for private (including foreign) players to enter the market for fuel retailing. For instance, new entrants will require a minimum net worth of just Rs 250 crore as against the current requirement of Rs 2,000 crore. Non-oil companies too, can invest now. This "major reform" will give a fillip to the "Ease of Doing Business", the government says.

ANALYSIS: For an economy like India. which is trying to grow fast and create more jobs, a move that lowers entry barriers should be welcome. The increased presence of the private sector, including foreign companies, is likely to boost job creation and improve consumer satisfaction with more retail outlets, better technology use, and more competition.

An interesting aspect of the new norms is that besides conventional fuels, the authorised entities will be required to install facilities for marketing at least one new-generation alternative fuel such as CNG, LNG biofuels, electric charging, etc., within three years of operationalising their retail outlets a nod to concerns over the harm done to the environment by conventional fuels.

Trends project extreme El Niño more often

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE

NEW DELHI, OCTOBER 23

THE EL NIÑO is a widely discussed phenomenon, particularly in India where it can impact the southwest monsoon. In fact, El Niño events cause serious shifts in weather patterns across the globe. While El Niño is a naturally occurring phenomenon, a key question that scientists frequently ask is: In a continuously warming planet, how will climate change affect the creation of strong El Niño events?

In a new study, researchers have found that because of climate change, extreme El Niño events are likely to become more frequent. The study was done by a team of international climate researchers led by Bin Wang of the University of Hawaii at Manoa International Pacific Research Center (IPRC).

It has been published in the journal Proceedings of the National Academy of Science.

What El Niño means

El Niño is a climate phenomenon that takes place over the equatorial Pacific. It is one phase of an alternating cycle known as El Niño Southern Oscillation (ENSO). When there is a warming of the sea surface temperature in the eastern and central equatorial Pacific Ocean, it is known as El Niño. When the opposite cooling phase takes place, it is known as La Niña.

ENSO can cause extreme weather events in many regions of the world, and therefore has very important implications for seasonal climate predictions, including the monsoon in India. While El Niño causes warmer temperatures over the equatorial Pacific, these are known to suppress monsoon rainfall.

When La Niña happens, it has been found to be helpful in bringing good rainfall.

The new study

The researchers examined details of 33 El Niño events from 1901 to 2017. For each event, they evaluated the onset location of the warming, its evolution and its ultimate strength. Based on such parameters, the team identified four types of El Niño, each with distinct onset and strengthening patterns.

They found a shift in El Niño behaviour since the late 1970s. All events beginning in the eastern Pacific occurred prior to that time, while all events originating in the western-central Pacific happened since then. The researchers suggested, therefore, that climate change effects have shifted the El Niño onset location from the eastern Pacific to the western Pacific, and caused more frequent extreme El Niño events.

What the findings imply

The team focused on the factors that seemed to be controlling these shifts, including increased surface temperatures in the western Pacific warm pool, and easterly winds in the central Pacific. They found that with continued global warming, those factors may lead to a continued increase in frequency in extreme El Niño events.

"Simulations with global climate models suggest that if the observed background changes continue under future anthropogenic forcing, more frequent extreme E Niño events will induce profound socioeconomic consequences," Wang said in a statement released by his university.

The classification system in this study provides a tool for climate modelling of El Niño and La Niña. The university said the team plans to explore further how this work may help improve predictions of future El Niño events.

What makes today's J&K block elections unique, who are in the fray

ADIL AKHZER

SRINAGAR, OCTOBER 23

ON THURSDAY, Jammu & Kashmir, as well as Ladakh, will witness their first elections since August 5, when the state of Jammu & Kashmir lost its special status and was bifurcated into two Union Territories. The elections to 310 posts of Block Development Council (BDC) chairperson are being held amid a continued shutdown in the Valley. with three of the major parties out of the fray and their top leadership under detention.

What are these elections?

Block chairpersons are elected at the second tier of the Panchayati Raj system, between the election of panches and sarpanches by the people, and of the election of chairpersons of the District Planning and Development Boards. In a state that has had only four panchayat elections so far

(1978, 2001, 2011, 2018), block chairpersons' elections are being held for the first time. Under the Jammu and Kashmir Panchayati Raj Act, it is the panches and sarpanches, elected at the first tier, who subsequently vote for the BDCs in their respective blocks. The elections are being held for 310 of the 316 blocks in J&K and Ladakh.

What is unusual about the elections?

Apart from being the first ever BDC chairperson elections in Jammu and Kashmir, they are being held in unique circumstances. These are the first elections since the August 5 move, and are being held in the backdrop of the detention of Kashmir's entire mainstream leadership, including that of three former chief ministers (Farooq Abdullah, Omar Abdullah and Mehbooba Mufti) and a sitting MP. For that reason, their parties the National Conference and the People's Democratic Party — have boycotted the elections. So has the Congress.



Panches and sarpanches photographed in Srinagar last week. Shuaib Masoodi

With the leadership of all parties barring the BJP behind bars, questions have been raised over the credibility of the process in the Valley. Chief Electoral Officer Shailendra

Kumar, however, said: "Parties can't claim that since we are boycotting elections or we are not participating directly, therefore these elections are going to be sham. It is not the correct kind of argument."

Who are in the fray?

The State Election Commission said 1,092 candidates are in the fray for the 310 posts. Among them, 853 are independent candidates and 218 are of the BJP, together making up 1,071. Twenty-seven of the candidates have been elected unopposed, leaving 1,065 candidates for the remaining seats.

Any panch or sarpanch can stand for the post of BDC chairman. In a first, the government has reserved 33% seats for women.

Who are the voters?

The strength of the electorate is 26,628 panches and sarpanches. These are from among the 23,376 panches and 3,847 sarpanches who were elected in undivided Jammu and Kashmir in November-December last year.

Those panchayat elections, held over nine phases, had a very poor response. Within

Kashmir, a huge number of seats remain vacant —11,264 of 18,833 panch seats (61 per cent) and 1,311 of 2,375 sarpanch seats (34) per cent). Of the 7,596 panches in Kashmir, more than half were elected unopposed.

The State Election Commission said only 1% of the seats in Ladakh division and 2% in Jammu are vacant. Chief Electoral Officer Kumar said the vacant positions will be filled within one year, and if needed the BDC elections for those seats will be conducted separately.

What after the BDC elections?

The government's thrust will be on establishing the third tier of District Planning and Development Boards. The Board of a district will comprise all BDC chairpersons, urban local body chairpersons or presidents, the local MLA and the MP. District Planning Board members and the chairperson would oversee all developmental activities taking place in their area.

WORDLY WISE

FREEDOM MEANS THE SUPREMACY OF HUMAN RIGHTS EVERYWHERE.

— FRANKLIN D ROOSEVELT

The Indian EXPRESS

∽ FOUNDED BY ∽ RAMNATH GOENKA

BECAUSE THE TRUTH INVOLVES US ALL

SHADOW IN THE MIRROR

Questions about the lockdown in Kashmir raised at home, and abroad, need to be addressed, not managed

N WEDNESDAY, THE world's largest democracy was put under a lens by the world's oldest democracy, and India did not come out looking good. At a US congressional hearing on "Human Rights in South Asia", the discussion was mainly on the situation in Kashmir. That India figured in such a hearing is embarrassing in itself. The focus was not so much on the validity of the central government's decision to revoke Jammu & Kashmir's special status, as on the manner in which it has been done. Congresswomen and men asked the questions and raised the concerns that many, including Kashmiris, have done in India — over the prolonged detention of politicians, businessmen and others, the cutting off of phone lines and blocking of access to the internet in the Valley. Over the nearly three months that these restrictions have been in place, India's justification has been that such steps were necessary to secure the Valley from "Pakistan sponsored" terrorism. The members on the panel were appreciative of India's concern, and acknowledged Pakistan's reputation on this front, but were still unconvinced that these required the draconian measures implemented in the Valley.

The Assistant Secretary of State for South Asia, who represented the Trump Administration at the hearing, was factual in her efforts to present an unbiased picture of India's actions and the ground situation, but was constrained to say "a humanitarian crisis" was unfolding in the Valley. She underlined that Delhi had not allowed US diplomats to visit Kashmir. But the government has not allowed even Indian politicians to visit the Valley. There is an electoral exercise underway in the state for local government even as every known politician of the Valley is under house arrest. It is hardly reassuring that there is an impression that politicians can be released if they sign "good behaviour" bonds. This is enormously problematic, as is the Centre's apparent permission to the BJP to carry out political activity in the state while denying it to all other players.

There have been suggestions that the US hearing was the result of failed "media management", or, to quote the External Affairs Minister, S Jaishankar, the "English-speaking liberal media" did not present a fair picture. The truth is, media spin will not be enough to make the questions go away. If the government believes its August 5 decisions were correct, it must be able to convince the people of the Valley without locking them up. This it must do not because some politicians in the US are asking questions, but in India's own interests.

PUT AWAY THE STICK

Assam's insistence on two-child norm for government jobs is a poor stand-in for investments in health, education, nutrition

NTUESDAY, THE Assam government announced that people with more than two children will not be eligible for government jobs from January 2021. Assam will become the fourth state after Maharashtra, Madhya Pradesh and Rajasthan to have a two-child norm in place for government jobs. At least five other states follow this norm for candidates seeking elections to local bodies such as panchayats, municipal corporations and zila parishads. The Assam government's decision comes two months after Prime Minister Narendra Modi flagged the issue of population control in his Independence Day speech. The conversation in the wake of the PM's speech has drawn attention to the limitations of the two-child norm. There is now compelling evidence that measures such as debarring people from holding government office amount to penalising weaker sections of the population, including women, whose reproductive choices are often subject to a variety of constraints. It is unfortunate, therefore, that the Assam government has chosen to ignore the discriminatory nature of the two-child policy.

Almost all surveys indicate that India's population growth rate has slowed substantially in the last decade. According to the latest National Family Health Survey (NFHS-4), at 2.2, India's total fertility rate (TFR) is very close to the desired replacement level of 2.1. In fact, the NFHS-4 data confirms what population experts, gender rights activists and social scientists have maintained over the years: Women's education has a direct bearing on fertility rates. The decadal survey shows that women who have never been to school are likely to bear more than three children while the fertility rate of those who have completed 12 years of schooling is 1.7.

In spite of the fall in TFR, India's population has continued to grow because nearly 50 per cent of the people are in the age group of 15-49. This means that the absolute population will continue to rise even though couples have less children. There is substantial literature to show that a further slowing down of the momentum will require raising the age of marriage, delaying the first pregnancy and ensuring spacing between births. In this context, the NFHS-4 figures on contraception point to a major shortfall: The unmet need for contraception is 13 per cent — over 30 million women of reproductive age are not able to access contraception. Dealing with the country's demographic peculiarity will require investments in health, education, nutrition and employment avenues. The right to seek a government job or contest elections are citizens' rights. State governments will do well to rethink throttling such rights to enforce population control.

Justin 2.0

Trudeau wins a second term as Canada's PM. But he isn't quite the liberal poster boy he was four years ago

OUR YEARS AGO, Justin Trudeau won Canada's general election with his own version of the promise of "achhe din". And for the first half of his first term, it seemed that the Liberal prime minister was indeed delivering on "sunny days", including for the besieged liberals far beyond Canadian shores. Trudeau welcomed refugees fleeing West Asia even as much of the West turned xenophobic, he renewed Canada's commitment to fighting climate change, celebrated diversity and immigrants, all the while wearing quirky ties and socks, to make sure everybody knows he's just another woke guy at the neighbourhood artisanal coffee shop. This week's election result has confirmed that Trudeau will have another term in office. But Justin 2.0 is starting out with just a little less shine.

Two scandals in as many years have cast a shadow over "sunny days". Photographs of Trudeau sporting "blackface" — painting himself to play Aladdin in an Arabian Nightsthemed costume party and as US singer and civil rights activist Harry Belafonte — tarnished the prime minister's claim of being sensitive to issues of race and minority representation. And earlier this year, his cabinet was rocked by the SNC-Lavalin scandal: Canada's Attorney General Jody Wilson-Raybould accused Trudeau of pressuring her to cut a deal while prosecuting the engineering and infrastructure company on corruption. Wilson-Raybould resigned, as did another member of the cabinet due to Trudeau's alleged behaviour. The scandals may have had political consequences: The Liberal Party lost 20 seats and did not get a majority of the vote-share. It will now form a minority govern-

ment, likely with the support of the New Democratic Party led by Jagmeet Singh. Trudeau has suffered, perhaps, because of the high standards he set for himself. After all, the two scandals that cost him so much political capital would barely be a weekend's worth of tweets for his counterpart — President Donald Trump — in the US. Perhaps hypocrisy is indeed the "homage vice pays to virtue". Even so, Trudeau didn't have to prove the adage true.

epaper indianex

The power to impeach



Trump White House's attempt to paint impeachment motion as 'unconstitutional' goes against the law

THE DECISION BY the United States Congress to commence impeachment proceedings against the incumbent president is fraught with distinctively American and global implications. The early responses of the president suggest that it is only a political act by the speaker and the Democratic party with the 2020 presidential elections looming large. Is the decision to impeach a president a political rather than a constitutional decision? In a letter of October 8, the White House counsel, Pat Cipollone, writes to the speaker and other officials, that the procedure thus far adopted is "unconstitutional" and a "dangerous path" aiming at overturning the "results of the 2016 election and deprive the American people of the president that they have freely chosen".

But the very case cited as an authority — Hastings v US (1992) — says otherwise: "Impeachments are not political in nature. To impeach an Article III Judge, the judge must be brought up on real charges, that is, High Crimes and Misdemeanours, and receive a real trial before the full Senate as clearly required by the Constitution. Nothing less will do if this nation is to maintain an independent judiciary". That case spoke mainly about the impeachment of federal justices, and only addressed the senate proceedings for the removal.

The court did lay emphasis on fair procedure but only in the context that applied to senate trials. It held that impeachments "take place not when government is operating as it should but rather when government has gone hideously awry, when it is seriously alleged that a high and trusted public official lacks the respect for law and ethics necessary to hold an office of public trust". But it expressly disavowed any intention of "depriving the House or the Senate of one iota of their exclusive constitutional powers to impeach" in holding that Judge Alcee Hastings was entitled to a full trial by the senate.

Propaganda trumps law here when the White House counsel calls the impeachment motion itself "unconstitutional". The constitution does not provide any timetable; and the incumbent is always free to combat this

If the White House counsel's ultimate argument is to be adopted, any attempt to impeach the president would be an unconstitutional deprivation of an electoral outcome favouring the incumbent. Article II of the US Constitution will be a dead letter as far as the US President is concerned. In deciding the charges of impeachment, the House decides the procedure and to challenge it now on fairness grounds will be itself unconstitutional. One hopes that saner counsel will prevail and desperate attempts at intimidation of the speaker and other officials with multifarious

legal proceedings will cease.

at a political level. But no one has the unilateral power to annul a constitutional provision. The sole power to impeach a president (and other civil officers of the United States) rests with the House and the senate when it finds that the president, among other federal officers, has committed treason, bribery, or other high crimes and misdemeanours.

And so far, decisions to impeach and convict and remove from office are regarded as not reviewable by any court. Indeed, this high power has been very sparingly exercised: Only 15 impeachments (12 addressed judges, one a senator, one a secretary of war) have occurred, and only one president (Andrew Johnson) was impeached and he too escaped conviction by one vote in the senate. President Richard Nixon chose to resign rather than face the Watergate impeachment.

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If President Trump stands successfully impeached, the question of presidential pardon may arise. In such a situation, self-pardoning is not likely to be upheld as legal nor constitutional. However, we need to recall that in 1973 the Office of Legal Counsel memorandum stated that while "no one may be a judge in his own case", the 25th Amendment provided that if the president was temporally unable to perform the duties of his office the vice president as acting president could include the power to pardon the president. Whether the president should resign or resume the office would then be at his discretion.

The successor may exercise pardon power as did President Ford who pardoned Richard Nixon for "any crimes he has com-

mitted or may have committed or taken part in during the period from January 20, 1969 through August 9, 1974". And Chief Justice Warren Berger has ruled that the power to pardon "flows from the Constitution alone, not from any legislative enactments, and that it cannot be modified, abridged, or diminished by the Congress". Most commentators endorse this proposition; but insert the caveat that clemency is only to be exercised for federal offences leaving individual states

the freedom to prosecute for other offences

Since President Trump is an admirer of Indian democracy, he may find it interesting to learn that the Indian Supreme Court has interpreted the rule of law as entailing that public powers ought never to be deployed for private ends and that this has now become the cornerstone of Indian constitutionalism and legisprudence.

He may also benefit from the Gandhian doctrine counselling that all public power constitutes public trust, which has now found full recognition in environmental and constitutional jurisprudence. President Trump may be surprised, happily one hopes, to learn how issues of hyper-partisanship are not held pertinent to Indian constitutionalism. The recent UK Supreme Court decision setting aside the royal prerogative to prorogue the House of Commons also reminds us of the judicial wisdom. It is high time to avoid the Cold War politics of "political brinkmanship". Such styles of governance are least conducive to world peace and security.

America still claims the leadership of the "free" world and enjoys, even when deeply flawed, global hegemony as a solitary superpower. President Trump ought to realise the global responsibilities of an American President and seek to preserve, without any gratuitous overseas advice, a bicentennial constitutionalism and the American presidency. He ought to safeguard the proud heritage of a constitutional democratic tradition.

The writer is professor of law, University of Warwick, and former vice chancellor of Universities of South Gujarat and Delhi

THE LAW ISN'T ENOUGH

Legislation against mob lynching must be accompanied by effective policing

M P NATHANAEL

THE GLARING ABSENCE of figures relating to incidents of lynching in the recently released National Crime Records Bureau (NCRB) database on the pretext that the data received from the states were "unreliable" hints at a deliberate attempt to keep the figures under wraps. Figures available from various other sources indicate that in 63 incidents, 28 persons were killed between 2010 and 2017, of which 24 were Muslims. There have been 266 cases of lynching since 2014 and this continues to show an upward trend, casting an adverse impression about the role of the police in arresting such trends.

On June 17 night, Tabrez Ansari, 24, along with two others was on his way to his home in Saraikela from Jamshedpur when they were waylaid by goons of village Dhatkidih on suspicion of being thieves. While the two friends escaped, Ansari was tied to a pole and brutally beaten by a mob for several hours. When the police arrived, they took him to a police station and then shifted him to a hospital. After a perfunctory medical examination, the doctor declared him fit. Four days later, Tabrez died due to brain haemorrhage. Had the police acted promptly on receiving information from the village chief, his life could have been saved.

Exactly a year before the incident at Saraikela, Qasim Qureshi and Samiuddin were brutally attacked in Hapur, resulting in the death of the former and serious injuries to the latter. A few police personnel are also suspected to have been part of the lynch

Among other recommendations, the Uttar Pradesh State Law Commission has stressed the need to take stringent action against officials for dereliction of their duties. The district magistrate and police officers can be imprisoned for a term extending upto three years

with a fine upto Rs 5000.

mob. While the ugly manner in which the policemen dragged the two victims of lynch mob to the vehicle drew apologies from senior police officials, the manner in which they were treated reflects their abhorrence for the victims. To add to the woes of the surviving victim, an attempt was initially made to close the matter as an incident of road rage. No effort was made to preserve evidence to make a strong case against the culprits.

Though there can be no denying that the police has played a partisan role in most incidents of lynching, there have been cases where policemen acted promptly and prevented incidents of lynching. The derring-do displayed by sub-inspector Gagandeep Singh of Uttarakhand Police in saving a Muslim youth from an irate mob near Garjiya Devi temple in Ramnagar on May 22 last year is one such example.

The Supreme Court has directed the Centre and all states to frame stringent laws against lynching. While Manipur passed an anti-lynching law last November, Rajasthan and West Bengal have passed such legislation more recently. West Bengal's law is stringent, punishing with death those held guilty of lynching victims to death. But these will be futile unless they are strictly enforced on the ground. Political patronage to fundamentalist elements will deter the policemen from doing their duty.

Among other recommendations, the Uttar Pradesh State Law Commission has stressed the need to take stringent action against officials for dereliction of their duties. The district magistrate and police officers can be imprisoned for a term extending upto three years with a fine upto Rs 5000.

Apart from monitoring fake news and arresting those who originate and forward news that could trigger mob violence or communal unrest, the police has to spread its intelligence dragnet to such an extent that any plan to upset the law and order machinery is reported to the control room within minutes. Districts that are communally sensitive ought to have additional armed and well-equipped companies to rush to any spot within minutes to handle frenzied mobs.

Prompt investigations into incidents of mob lynching followed by arrests and trial by fast track courts could go a long way in curbing such incidents. It is likely that every effort will be made to influence the victims and witnesses to either withdraw the case or to give statements that would weaken the prosecution's case. The responsibility will therefore, devolve on the police to protect the witnesses and the victims. In the interest of the victims and the witnesses, lynching must be made a non-bailable offence Policemen who watch as mute spectators should also be tried in the same manner as the culprits. Senior police officers also need to be taken to task if found guilty of dereliction of duty.

> The writer retired as inspector general of police, CRPF

OCTOBER 24, 1979, FORTY YEARS AGO LABOUR UNREST unrest is largely responsible for the slump in industrial output. It has attributed the short-

fall in thermal power generation and the stagnation in coal production to this factor. The commission also fears a decline in employment generation in the current financial year. The annual plan's target, it reckons, would be difficult to achieve in view of the drought in several parts of the country.

PD ORDINANCE IN PURSUANCE OF the preventive detention

ordinance against hoarders and blackmarketeers, the central government has issued guidelines to the states to ensure uniformity of action and effective implementation. Although some state governments have agreed to implement the ordinance, none of them has so far set up advisory boards as required under it. The Centre has issued the necessary guidelines and told the states that the ordinance is intended to supplement the other legal provisions for securing the availability of essential commodities at proper prices to people.

MISUSE OF POWER ALLEGING GROSS ABUSE of government machinery for electoral ends by the caretaker prime minister, the Janata Party sought immediate intervention of the Election Commission. A senior party leader and former information minister, LK Advani, wrote to the chief election commissioner alleging that PM Charan Singh used an air force plane for his two-day visit to Andhra Pradesh to promote the Lok Dal's election prospects. Singh had also taken a press party with him — an officer of the Press Information Bureau accompanied him. "This official had thus become a Lok Dal functionary," Advani said. He quoted the Shah commission's remarks decrying misuse of IAF aircraft on the eve of Emergency by Indira Gandhi.



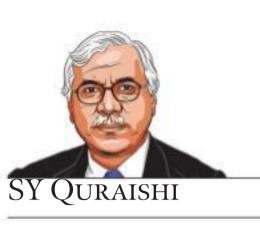
THE PLANNING COMMISSION has voiced concern over the deteriorating labour situation in the country and has said that labour

THE INDIAN EXPRESS, THURSDAY, OCTOBER 24, 2019

THE IDEAS PAGE

Icon on the island

As Sri Lanka prepares for presidential polls, its Election Commission is the winner



ON NOVEMBER 16, Sri Lanka goes to the polls to elect its new president. I was privileged to be a part of a pre-election assessment mission mounted jointly by the Republican Party and the Democratic Party of the United States, through their independent institutes, the International Republican Institute (IRI) and National Democratic Institute (NDI).

SL has a population of 22 million of whom 16 million are registered voters. They will vote at 12,845 polling stations. Counting will be done at 1,500 counting centres. The president has to get a clear majority (50 per cent plus one vote). There is a preferential voting system where every voter can express second and third preference, which most voters rarely do. If no one gets 50 per cent in the first place, the second and third preference votes have to be counted. There is no run-off election. After all three counts, the candidate with the highest vote wins.

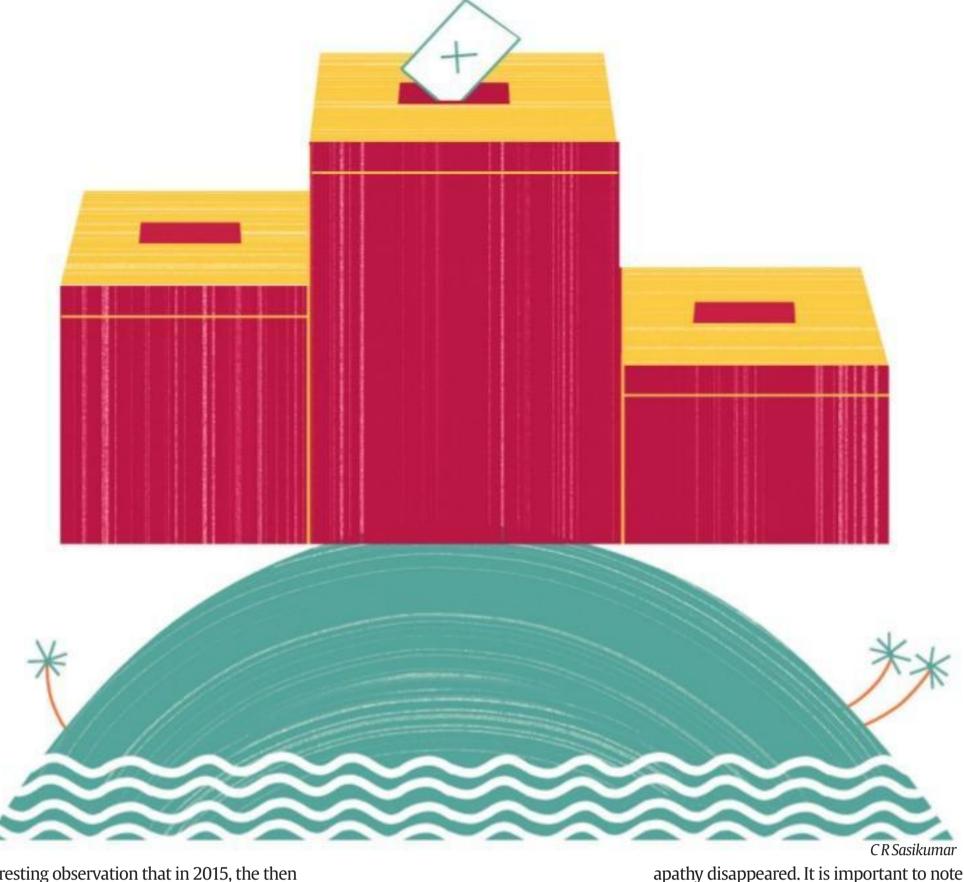
Every stakeholder we questioned vouched for the integrity of the Commission which became a constitutional body only in 2018, and expressed full faith in its ability to conduct a free, fair and credible election. In fact, since the 2015 election, the chief election commissioner. Mahinda Deshapriya, has been no less than a national icon.

The participation of youth was a common concern. There are nearly 3,00,000 first-time voters and the general opinion was that there would be a sense of apathy in them. The reasons given were their disillusionment with the performance of the government and lack of issues of their interest. The absence of campaign finance regulation was also mentioned by almost every stakeholder. The enormous abuse of money power was a common concern. Some people even mentioned foreign money playing a role.

We had an interesting conversation with the former president, Mahinda Rajapaksa, where he complained of being a victim of the opposition. He had complete faith in the election commission despite accusing it of delaying the provincial elections "under pressure of the government". He made an interesting disclosure: One of the three commissioners often goes against the majority, and even goes to the court sometimes.

Referring to the Easter terror attack, he said that the government had detailed information from the government of India "including the names and telephone numbers", but the concerned agencies did not act on it. He made it clear that it was an act of some Muslim extremists but that it cannot be attributed to Islam. When asked whether he expects any foreign interference, he replied with a wink that "hope it won't happen again". It may be recalled that in 2015, he had publicly attributed his defeat to Indian intelligence agencies.

We also met the prime minister, Ranil Wickremesinghe, who complained of low voter interest, attributing it to the disenchantment with the political leaders and unfulfilled promises: This was surprising to hear from an incumbent PM, and reflects bitter dissensions within the ruling coalition. He also observed that the youth were not enthusiastic as they see "no big issue". Further, he mentioned a large base of "floating voters" who can play a decisive role. He made an in-



teresting observation that in 2015, the then President Rajapaksa had everything "including sun and the moon", yet he lost because of these voters. According to him, "it is certain that no one will get 50 per cent votes (leading to the counting of second and third preference votes)". Significantly, he also mentioned the possible role of foreign money.

He admitted that India had given very specific intelligence about the Easter terror attack and lamented that "we didn't follow up". He expressed concerns that Muslims are being vilified but didn't anticipate much violence during the polls. Another important ruling political leader (not a Muslim), however, said that terror is being used as a weapon to harass a community, which is facing many human rights violations.

Women seem to have a very insignificant presence in the electoral scene. This is despite the fact that Sri Lanka gave the world the first elected woman president. Although women dominate the education scene with 74 per cent of the students being female (20 per cent faculty), and with 25 per cent reservation at the provincial level, at the national level, the political role for women is seen confined to women from political families.

Everyone we met — from political leaders and civil society to NGOs — complained about the spinelessness and partiality of the media, largely because most of it is owned by political parties. There is zero self-regulation. Some called it the "washing machine" of the state. The most scathing comment was made by a journalist, "SL is the worst country in the world for media prostitution!" (Does the comment ring a bell? Some consolation this).

We met a very senior Tamil leader who said that there was a general voter apathy among the Tamils. However, when Gota Rajapaksa's candidacy was announced, the

found. He said Tamils are "sick and tired" of voting for the "lesser of the two evils". The same leader also voiced strong anti-Muslim feeling among the Tamils, and feared that some violence was being planned against them, especially in the east, to prevent them from voting. He emphasised the need for the two communities to coordinate The participation of youth and hoped that "close to the elections they would have to work together". was a common concern.

SL elections always invite great world attention. The country is liberal in inviting international observers. Most importantly, their own civil society observers from the two main NGOs — PAFFREL (People's Action for Free and Fair Elections) and CMEV (Centre for Monitoring Electoral Violence), have unrestricted access to the entire electoral process. They depute their observers to almost 80 per cent of the polling stations. Their monitoring and certification carries a lot of weight as well. In a meeting with them, they expressed satisfaction with the arrangements and hoped that the elections, like in 2015, would be free. fair and credible.

that in 2015, it was the Tamil and Muslim

vote which helped dislodge his brother,

political prisoners have not yet been re-

leased, one-third of the land has not been re-

turned and, worse, none of the 20,000 plus

individuals who "disappeared" have been

The leader lamented that 10 per cent of

President Mahinda Rajapaksa.

Finally, the camaraderie and coordination between the representatives of the NDI and IRI was a treat. One wishes to see such bonhomie between our two national parties too.

> The writer is former chief election commissioner of India.

> Views are strictly personal

Development lessons from Gandhi

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Restraining consumption will help achieve harmonious growth



MAHATMA GANDHI'S PHILOSOPHY influenced not only Indians, but many great personalities across the world. Interestingly, it also influenced many a treatise at the international level. But, there is little that the international community attributes to him while drafting the future of the world.

These days, sustainable development goals (SDGs) are the buzzword. In 1908, Gandhiji showed us the path for sustainable development through sustainable consumption. In his *Hind Swaraj*, he outlined the threat to the common future of humanity from our relentless quest for material goods and services.

In 2015, when the UN adopted 17 SDGs, the 12th was about "ensuring sustainable consumption and production patterns". This was perhaps the most fitting tribute to the enduring greatness of Gandhi. But no mention of Gandhiji or of Indian values was made in the preamble to this declaration. If we carefully read the subtext of SDGs, we find that they mirror the philosophy enunciated in *Hind Swaraj*.

The adoption of some of Gandhiji's tenets in the SDGs bear testimony to the fact that these were not flights of fancy, but rather, achievable aims. This has been demonstrated by the development model evolved by the Deendayal Research Institute (DRI) and other such institutions. The DRI was set up to perpetuate the memory of Deendayal

Upadhyaya, who carried on Gandhiji's legacy. After his death, his contemporary, Nanaji Deshmukh, undertook the task to translate this philosophy into action.

An avowed follower of Gandhiji, Nanaji worked in the most backward districts of the country with a holistic approach, encompassing all aspects and dimensions of human life including education, life sciences, livelihood, technology, and social consciousness. This model can be seen in action in Chitrakoot, Gonda, Beed and Nagpur.

Gandhiji was honest in admitting that some of his thoughts may become outdated and, therefore, he had no problem in changing his stance. But the basic principles remained same. For example, both these great men believed that native, indigenous knowledge and culture needs to be respected. This worldview shuns the idea of more consumption, which is both a cause and consequence of greed.

Like Gandhiji, Nanaji also felt that villagers are the trustees of the country's resources. But at the same time, Gandhiji agreed that with technological advancement and changing aspirations of the people, the tools may have to be different. However, he cautioned against unnecessary consumption. Nanaji adopted the same approach while developing his model. Both believed that harmonious growth can be achieved by employing cultural practices. They had an unshakeable faith in the native's wisdom and intelligence. They strongly believed that it could be achieved only by employing local resources and local talent.

Gandhiji's life is an example of how he subtly taught us the virtues of sustainable consumption. On many occasions, he chided Jawaharlal Nehru for wasting precious natural resources for his comfort. He spoke about harnessing natural resources as a virtue. Harnessing seems to be the closest English translation of the Indian concept of "dohan", which says that natural resources should be used respectfully, and carefully to ensure equitable distribution and also to ensure that we leave a better world for future generations. Needless to say, this would ensure judicious consumption of the resources.

Every region has distinctive social and geographical characteristics. There are 127 agro-climatic zones in India. And when the policymakers try to formulate policies on the basis of mere statistics, they find that each such zone has scores of eco-climatic zones.

In 2008, the then French President Nicholas Sarkozy set up a commission to identify the limits of GDP as an indicator of economic performance and social progress, and to examine what additional information might be required for more relevant indicators of social progress. The commission found that there were vast diversities that govern the development of a region.

This is exactly what Gandhi had said a hundred years before the commission was set up. He had underlined the need for a decentralised system of economics and development so that local, distinctive characteristics can be factored in while formulating plans on the basis of statistical information.

Talking of sustainable development without understanding the true meaning of sustainable consumption will be mere rhetoric. Unless we practice restrained consumption, we cannot avoid exploitation of natural resources, and cannot achieve sustainability in production patterns. Upadhyaya also delved into the Indian ethos of restrained consumption (sanyamit upbhog). Citing various classical scriptures and cultural practices, he eulogised frugal (maryadit) spending by Indians, in accordance with their dharma. This, he explained, would lead to less exploitation of resources. He was also averse to vulgar displays of wealth and ostentatious lifestyles. All these form the subtext of SDG 12.

The writer is general secretary, Deendayal Research Institute. This is a part of the lecture delivered in St. Paulskirche, Frankfurt on October 11, to celebrate Gandhi 150

WHAT THE OTHERS SAY

"China is sincere in building a favorable relationship with the US, while preserving internal order. Prioritizing national interests is indisputably justified i nany country." -GLOBAL TIMES, CHINA

Defenders need defending

Those who shielded the defenceless are now being targeted by powers-that-be



APOORVANAND

FOR DECADES, SOME people have defended the rights of those who had no resources to stand against the might of the society and the state. We assume that we live in a country which is ruled by law and that human beings have certain inalienable rights. But, we also see these rights violated by different organs of the state. It is then that we seek these defenders who know the language of the law. We have come to believe that as long as they are present, we have some breathing space — but that time seems to be over. The defenders need to be defended now.

The CBI wants the Supreme Court to remove the shield of protection that the Bombay High Court had given to Indira Jaising and Anand Grover. A special leave petition challenging the Bombay High Court order restraining any coercive action against the lawyers has been filed by the CBI in the SC and may come up for hearing any day.

On July 25, the Bombay High Court gave interim relief to Jaising and Grover after a plea was filed to quash the FIR lodged by the CBI against them, alleging violation of the FCRA and other offences under the IPC. The turn of events leading up to this FIR is worrying: An unknown entity called Lawyer's Voice filed a petition in the SC stating that the Centre should have registered cases against Jaising, Grover and the Lawyer's Collective for offences under the IPC, Prevention of Money Laundering Act, Prevention of Corruption Act and the Income Tax Act.

The alacrity with which the petition was listed for hearing was noted by people aware of the normal ways of functioning of the court registry. It was heard by a bench which included CJI Ranjan Gogoi. The court issued notices to all parties, making clear that the government was free to initiate proceedings against the two. The question of propriety was raised again as Jaising had then taken up the case of the woman who had alleged sexual misconduct against her by the CJI.

After this order, things moved at an extraordinary pace. In less than a week's time, an FIR was lodged against them by the CBI and, thereafter, their Delhi house and various offices in Delhi and Mumbai were raided for evidence in the case of misuse of foreign funds. Recall that in 2016, the ministry of home affairs, Union of India, had cancelled the FCRA of the Lawyer's Collective — this was after it charged the organisation with misuse of foreign funds, and rejected the response of the organisation.

After this, Jaising and Grover, and Lawyer's Collective, moved the Bombay High Court in 2016 which de-freezed their

domestic accounts. Why the hurry by the CBI then, to arrest them now? Since 2016, have they even shown an inclination to evade the law? Have they tried to flee the country? On the contrary, we know that both Jaising and Grover have been declining invitations from other countries, which include speaking assignments and also academic ones simply because there is a case pending against them.

Grover took up the cause of gay rights and fought to win for them a life of dignity. Numerous cancer patients may have never heard about the Novartis case, which he argued successfully, and which drastically reduced treatment cost. People with HIV need to know that he, along with others, fought legally to end discrimination against them in public employment. Overnight, he was labelled "anti-national", however, for taking up the case of Yakub Memon.

Jaising won for all women of India, irrespective of religion, the rights of equal inheritance and guardianship of children, which neither their communities nor the state was willing to give. It was the work of the Lawyer's Collective, under her leadership, for more than a decade, which resulted in the legislation of a civil law on domestic violence. She took up the Gujarat genocide cases, along with those related to the Sohrabuddin encounter case and the case of the mysterious death of Judge Loya. Even crèches in the apex courts were a result of her efforts.

Our case is not one where Jaising and Grover's good deeds become the argument against the CBI taking away their protection. Similarly, the anti-people policies under the Chidambaram regime should not make us rejoice that his arrest is an answer to his misdeeds. Mohan Gopal rightly reminds us that in all such cases a basic constitutional principle is involved — we have a right against self incrimination. Citing the Selvi judgement, he recalls the words of the Supreme Court that "a core rationale of the right against self-incrimination is the protection of voluntariness. As coercion and voluntariness cannot coexist, it follows that custodial interrogation in Indian prisons necessarily violates the right against self-incrimination and is therefore unconstitutional and illegal."

We need not guess why Jaising and Grover are being targeted. One must remember what the PM said in 2015 against getting hoodwinked by "five-star activists" Since then we have seen a concerted campaign against the concept of human rights in India: One must remember that without any questioning and human rights, democracy would turn hollow.

The Jharkhand police has now sealed and attached the property of Father Stan Swamy, a Jesuit priest in his eighties, in a sedition case lodged in Khunti district. Over decades now, Jharkhand has been his home, where he has been working for tribals and human rights — he is now being criminalised by the state, which wants him jailed. Can we not see the link between the actions playing out in Delhi and Ranchi?

The writer teaches Hindi at Delhi University

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

ON WRONG TRACK

erators' (IE, October 23). While privatisation in several sectors has benefited the Indian economy, it should not be seen as a panacea to all that ails it. Privatisation in railways is a step in the wrong direction. The fare for three-tier AC in the privately-run Tejas Express was over Rs 4,000, almost equal to the air fare for the same route. This could lead to a situation where trains run half empty despite heavy demand. Privatisation has been mostly successful in cases where the private sector could take full control over all aspects of operations. Control over railway operations will have to be vested with the government. This could lead to delays and inefficiency.

THIS REFERS TO the article, 'Smooth op-

E A Ibrahim, Chennai

GLOOMY ECONOMY

THIS REFERS TO the editorial, 'The NREGA signal' (IE, October 23). It is one thing to boast of a demographic dividend, it is another to make maximum use of it. The increasing number of youth working under MGNREGA is another reminder of the gloomy state of our economy. There is a need to create jobs and increase vocational opportunities.

Divya Singla, Patiala

DIVERSE PRAYERS

THIS REFERS TO the article, 'Don't sing in Pilibhit' (IE,October 22). The writer has rightly questioned the objection raised about a patriotic prayer. As children, we read verses from the Bible, Gita and Quran in the school assembly. Parents or authorities had never ques-

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,

tioned the daily routine. This routine in, fact, was a beautiful showcasing of

Noida-UP 201301.

India's democracy. Smitha Venkateswari, Bengaluru

PAK'S WAYS

THIS REFERS TO THE editorial, 'The screws tighten' (IE, October 21). Pakistan got a few months reprieve from FATF, thanks to the support of China, Turkey and Malaysia. However, it is too much to expect the country to mend its ways. Pakistan's unsatisfactory compliance with FATF's benchmark report and its cross-border terror provides ample proof of its attitude. As per the FATF charter, the support of at least three countries is required not to blacklist a country. But does it not bother the world community's conscience that just three votes against against a large majority are needed to block the blacklisting of Pakistan?

Lal Singh, Amritsar

ess.com

बिज़नेस स्टैंडर्ड वर्ष 12 अंक 213

निजीकरण ही उपाय

केंद्रीय संचार मंत्री रविशंकर प्रसाद ने मंगलवार को संवाददाताओं को यह जानकारी कंपनियों भारत संचार निगम लिमिटेड (बीएसएनएल) और महानगर टेलीफोन निगम लिमिटेड (एमटीएनएल) को लेकर निर्णय ले लिया है। उन्होंने कहा कि दोनों कंपनियों का विलय किया जाएगा और दिल्ली

तथा मुंबई में संचालित एमटीएनएल, तब तक बीएसएनएल की अनुषंगी होगी। वर्ष 2019-दी कि केंद्रीय मंत्रिमंडल ने सरकारी दूरसंचार 20 के बजट के मुताबिक दोनों कंपनियों को आंतरिक तथा बाहरी बजट संसाधनों से 15,000 करोड रुपये से अधिक की राशि जुटानी थी। इस पैसे को बॉन्ड जारी करके जटाया जाएगा जिसकी भरपाई सरकारी कंपनियां करेंगी लेकिन इनकी गारंटी केंद्र

सरकार देगी। जाहिर है यह राशि ऊंट के मुंह में जीरे के समान है क्योंकि बीएसएनएल खुद भारी घाटे में है। अकेले 2018-19 में इस सरकारी कंपनी को 14,000 करोड़ रुपये का घाटा हुआ। इसके साथ ही उसका समेकित घाटा 90,000 करोड़ रुपये का स्तर पार कर गया। एमटीएनएल की बैलेंस शीट में 20,000 करोड रुपये का घाटा है।

प्रश्न यह है कि क्या सरकार वाकई यह मानती है कि इन कंपनियों को दूरसंचार क्षेत्र में उपयोगी योगदान करने वाली कंपनियों में शामिल किया जा सकता है। सकारात्मक पहलू देखें तो इन सरकारी कंपनियों के पास करीब 70,000 करोड़ रुपये या उससे अधिक मल्य की जमीन है। परंत इन कंपनियों को लेकर नकारात्मक बातों की

भी कमी नहीं है। मिसाल के तौर पर भारी भरकम वेतन बिल। बीएसएनएल और एमटीएनएल के 200,000 कर्मचारियों के वेतन भत्ते में बहुत धनराशि व्यय होती है। बीएसएनएल की बात करें तो उसके खर्च का 77 फीसदी हिस्सा वेतन में जाता है। मंत्रिमंडल ने जिस पुनरुत्थान योजना को मंज्री दी है उसमें अपेक्षा की गई है कि आकर्षक स्वैच्छिक सेवानिवृत्ति पैकेज के चलते अगले पांच से सात वर्ष में बडी तादाद में कर्मचारी स्वेच्छा से सेवानिवृत्ति लेंगे। बीएसएनएल ने सरकार से 4जी स्पेक्ट्रम की प्रशासित कीमत के बराबर की इक्विटी डालने को भी कहा है। ऐसा इसलिए क्योंकि उसका मानना है कि 4जी स्पेक्टम की कमी ने उसे निजी 4जी कारोबारियों के समक्ष गैर

प्रतिस्पर्धी बना दिया है।

दूरसंचार क्षेत्र में बहुत तेज गति से बदलाव होते हैं। यहां तक कि पहले से कारोबार कर रहे निजी कारोबारियों को भी हालिया प्रवेश करने वाली रिलायंस जियो से निपटने में कड़ा संघर्ष करना पड़ा। यह क्षेत्र व्यापक बनियादी ढांचे वाला कारोबार कम और सेवा प्रदाता कारोबार अधिक है। इस प्रतिस्पर्धा में निजी क्षेत्र हमेशा बाजी मार लेता है क्योंकि वह सरकारी उपक्रमों की तुलना में ग्राहकों के अधिक अनुकूल होते हैं। यह उन काराबारियों के साथ भी बड़ा अन्याय है जिन्होंने भारी कर्ज लेकर स्पेक्ट्रम खरीदा और इस क्षेत्र में उन सरकारी उपक्रमों के साथ प्रतिस्पर्धा बरकरार रखी जिन्हें स्पेक्ट्रम नियंत्रित मुल्य पर मिलता है और

जिनके सामने बजट की भी ज्यादा चुनौती नहीं होती। एयर इंडिया को लगातार सरकारी सहयोग से हवाई उड़ानों के बाजार में विसंगति उत्पन्न हुई और इसके चलते अब एक नहीं बल्कि दो पूर्णकालिक विमान सेवाएं ध्वस्त हो चुकी हैं। क्या सरकार दूरसंचार क्षेत्र में कभी यही करना चाहती है ? उसे तथ्यों के अनुसार काम करना चाहिए। बीएसएनएल और एमटीएनएल को करदाताओं के पैसे से मुनाफे में नहीं लाया जा सकता। अगर ऐसा हुआ भी तो इससे बाजार में बुरी विसंगति उत्पन्न होगी और निजी कारोबारी कारोबार से बाहर हो जाएंगे। इससे कमोबेश सबका नकसान होगा। इन कंपनियों का पुनरुत्थान करने के बजाय इनका निजीकरण करना आवश्यक है।



प्याज के आंसुओं की अंतहीन गाथा

भौगोलिक विविधीकरण, पूर्व चेतावनी व्यवस्था और सूखे प्याज के विकल्पों को बढ़ावा देने से अगली बार प्याज के संकट से निपटने में मदद मिलेगी। बता रहे हैं रमेश चंद और राका सक्सेना

आसमान छू रही हैं। पिछले दस साल में यह तीसरा मौका है जब प्याज की कीमतें बेकाबू हुई हैं। मई और जून में प्याज थोक बाजार में 10 रुपये प्रति किलो और खुदरा बाजार में 20 रुपये प्रति किलो के भाव बिक रहा था लेकिन अब देश के अधिकांश बाजारों में इसकी थोक कीमत 35 रुपये किलो और खुदरा कीमत 60 रुपये किलो के पार पहुंच गई है। किसी भी फसल की अंतर-वर्ष मूल्य अस्थिरता और अंतर -वर्ष असामान्य कीमत से उत्पादक और उपभोक्ता दोनों को नुकसान होता है और साथ ही अर्थव्यवस्था भी प्रभावित होती है। इसे देखते हए कीमतों में असामान्य उतार–चढाव को जानने और इसके समाधान के लिए व्यावहारिक विकल्प ढूंढना जरूरी है।

कीमतों में बार-बार असामान्य उछाल से भारतीय उपभोक्ताओं के व्यवहार में एक दिलचस्प बदलाव का खुलासा होता है। इस पर चर्चा करने से पहले प्याज उत्पादन के रुझानों और देश में इसकी उपलब्धता पर नजर डालनी जरूरी है। हाल में दिनों में प्याज सबसे तेजी से बढ़ने वाली फसल रही है। 2004-05 से 2018-19 के दौरान इसकी सालाना वृद्धि दर 10 फीसदी रही जबकि घरेलू उत्पादन 64.3 लाख टन से बढ़कर 2.349 लाख टन पहंच गया। 2004-05 में इसकी प्रति व्यक्ति उपलब्धता 5.15 किलो थी जो 2018-19 में तीन गुना बढ़कर 15.7 किलो पहुंच गई। खाद्य पदार्थों के मामले में प्याज के बाद खाद्य तेल का स्थान है। जाहिर है कि भारतीय तेजी से मसालेदार और तेलयक्त खाद्य पदार्थों का रुख कर रहे हैं जबकि सरकार का लक्ष्य पोषाहार को

यह वास्तव में आश्चर्य की बात है कि प्याज की प्रति व्यक्ति उपलब्धता में भारी बढ़ोतरी के बावजूद, इसकी मात्रा में थोड़ी कमी से ही कीमत में भारी उछाल आती है। यह औसत भारतीय के खपत व्यवहार में बदलाव और इसे संभालने की व्यवस्था में कमी की ओर इशारा करता है। हालांकि प्याज देश के लोगों का मुख्य आहार नहीं है और किया जाता है। लेकिन इसकी भारी मांग से साबित होता है कि लोग इसकी खपत में कमी को लेकर कोई समझौता नहीं करना चाहते हैं। ऐसा लगता है कि उपभोक्ता इसका इस्तेमाल छोडने के बजाय सामान्य कीमत से तीन-चार गना दाम देने को तैयार हैं। सामाजिक दबाव के कारण भी लोग प्याज की खपत नहीं घटाना चाहते हैं। वे ऐसा नहीं दिखाना चाहते हैं कि बढ़ी कीमत के कारण वे प्याज नहीं खा रहे हैं।

हाल के हफ्तों में प्याज की कीमतों में बढोतरी का मुख्य कारण उत्पादन में कमी है। महाराष्ट्र देश में प्याज का सबसे बडा उत्पादक राज्य है और यहीं से इसकी कीमत तय होती है। राज्य के कुछ हिस्सों में सुखे जैसे हालात के कारण रबी के पिछले मौसम

श में एक बार फिर प्याज की कीमतें प्रति व्यक्ति खपत के हिसाब से देश में में प्याज का रकबा बहुत घट गया था। इस कारण राज्य में प्याज के सालाना उत्पादन में 9.11 फीसदी की कमी आई। यही वजह है कि नेफेड ने जुन में रबी की फसल के तैयार होने के बाद प्याज की रिकॉर्ड खरीद की ताकि सितंबर से नवंबर में कम आपर्ति के दौरान प्याज की कीमतों को संभाला जा सके। खरीफ के मौसम में उगाई जाने वाली प्याज की दूसरी फसल महाराष्ट्र के प्याज उत्पादक क्षेत्रों में भारी बारिश और बाढ़ के कारण बरबाद हो गई। प्याज के उत्पादन में कमी की आशंका के कारण कीमतों में

> पिछले वर्षों की तरह इस बार भी सरकार ने प्याज की कीमतें बढ़ने पर व्यापारियों के लिए प्याज की भंडारण सीमा तय की और इसके निर्यात पर प्रतिबंध लगा दिया पहले कदम का मकसद इसकी जमाखोरी रोकना है और दसरे का लक्ष्य निर्यात के लिए जा रही फसल को घरेलु बाजार की तरफ मोडना है। कुछ लोगों ने सरकार के इस फैसले की आलोचना की है जो इसकी मूल्य की स्थिति को समग्रता के साथ नहीं देखते।

खाद्य पदार्थों के व्यापार में मामले में भारत और अधिकांश अन्य देश मुक्त व्यापार के बजाय रणनीतिक उदारीकरण की नीति का पालन करते हैं। इस नीति में उत्पादन की कमी से निपटने के लिए आयात को उदार बनाया जाता है और निर्यात प्रतिबंधित किया जाता है। दूसरी ओर बंपर फसल होने पर इसका उलटा होता है यानी आयात पर

प्रतिबंध लगाया जाता है।

इस नीति के मुताबिक किसानों को कम कीमत से बचाने के लिए अक्सर कृषि और खाद्य जिंसों के आयात पर प्रतिबंध लगाया जाता है। हालांकि उपभोक्ताओं को इसका खमियाजा भगतना पडता है। मौजुदा स्थिति उपभोक्ता के हित में है क्योंकि तीन महीने की कम अवधि में प्याज की कीमतें तीन गुना बढ़ गई हैं। कीमतों में बढ़ोतरी से उन किसानों को मोटा मुनाफा हुआ है जिन्होंने अपनी रबी की फसल बेचने का इंतजार किया। नवंबर में बाजार में खरीफ की फसल आनी शरू होगी या कीमतें सामान्य होंगी. तो निर्यात पर से प्रतिबंध हटने से किसान प्रभावित नहीं होंगे।

कीमतों में बार-बार उतार-चढ़ाव और मांग एवं आपूर्ति की मौजूदा स्थिति से भविष्य में मूल्यों को स्थिर रखने के लिए कई सबक मिलते हैं। पहला सबक यह कि प्याज की कीमतों में कमी के लिए परे साल इसकी निरंतर आपूर्ति की जरूरत है। हालांकि उत्पादन में उतार-चढाव आ सकता है। कीमतों को स्थिर रखने के लिए सार्वजनिक भंडारण पर निर्भरता जरूरी है। हम निजी क्षेत्र से भूमिका निभाने की उम्मीद नहीं कर सकते हैं क्योंकि कीमतों में किसी भी तरह के उतार-चढाव से निजी क्षेत्र को फायदा होता है। अगर नेफेड ने कीमत स्थिरीकरण कोष के रूप में 53,000 टन प्याज की खरीद नहीं की होती तो इसकी कीमतें आसमान पर पहुंच गई होतीं। इसमें से महाराष्ट्र से 45.53 हजार टन प्याज खरीदा गया था जिसे बाजार में उतारा गया। देश को मौसमवार उत्पादन और मांग के मुताबिक रबी और खरीफ के मौसम के अंत में प्याज का उचित भंडार रखना चाहिए। यह न केवल उपभोक्ताओं बल्कि किसानों के लिए भी फायदेमंद होगा। साथ ही कच्चे प्याज के विकल्प के रूप

में प्रसंस्कृत उत्पादों जैसे निर्जलित प्याज और प्याज पेस्ट को बढावा दिया जाना चाहिए। एक उपाय यह है कि देश के प्याज उत्पादन का आधार बहुत कम है और इसमें महाराष्ट्र का एक-तिहाई योगदान है। मौसम में अनियमितताएं बढ़ रही है जिससे भविष्य में उत्पादन में उतार-चढाव बढने की आशंका है। भौगोलिक विविधीकरण और कुछ नए इलाकों में प्याज की खेती, खासकर उत्तरी राज्यों में खरीफ के मौसम में प्याज उगाने से उत्पादन में उतार-चढाव और कीमतों में अस्थिरता पर लगाम लगाने में मदद मिलेगी। साथ ही अलग-अलग इलाकों के अनुकल प्याज की किस्में विकसित करने की जरूरत है ताकि बाजार में हर मौसम में प्याज की आपूर्ति बनी रहे। इसके अलावा प्याज के बारे में बाजार के खुफिया तंत्र को मजबूत करने की जरूरत है और एफएओ की चेतावनी व्यवस्था की तर्ज पर पूर्व समायोजन व्यवस्था विकसित की जानी चाहिए। इस व्यवस्था के तहत अगले सत्र में अनुमानित कीमतों के बारे में किसानों को परामर्श जारी किया जाना चाहिए ताकि वे उसके हिसाब से रकबा घटा-बढ़ा सकें। इन उपायों से देश में प्याज के आंसुओं के चक्र को रोका जा सकता है।

(चंद नीति आयोग के सदस्य हैं। सक्सेना राष्ट्रीय कृषि आर्थिकी एवं नीति अनुसंधान संस्थान, नई दिल्ली में प्रधान अर्थशास्त्री हैं। ये उनके व्यक्तिगत विचार हैं।)

वैश्विक रैंकिंग में नहीं दिखती मोदी सरकार की कड़ी मेहनत

भारत के मौजूदा सामाजिक एवं राजनीतिक परिदृश्य पर अपनी चिंता जाहिर करने वाले नागरिकों पर 'देश की छवि खराब करने ' का आरोप बहुत जल्द लग जा रहा है। इसी से जुडा एक और आरोप यह होता है कि प्रधानमंत्री नरेंद्र मोदी के शानदार प्रदर्शन को कमतर दिखाने की कोशिश की जा रही है। हाल ही में वापस ली गई राजद्रोह याचिका हमें इस पर यकीन दिला देती। मोदी के प्रति आस्था का पुरजोर बचाव करने वालों को यह समस्या हो सकती है कि मौजूदा समय में अंतरराष्ट्रीय संस्थान ही इस छवि को कमतर और धूमिल करने में लगे हुए हैं।

मोदी और शी चिनफिंग की मामल्लपुरम में मुलाकात के ऐन पहले और बाद में तीन संस्थानों ने भारत का आर्थिक वृद्धि अनुमानों को अधिक प्रभावी नहीं रहने की बात कही है। हाल में मूडीज इन्वेस्टर सर्विस ने 2019-20 में सकल घरेलू उत्पाद (जीडीपी) का अनुमान 6.2 फीसदी से घटाकर 5.8 फीसदी कर दिया। रिपोर्ट में कहा गया कि इस सुस्ती के कई कारक हैं जो मुख्यत: घरेलू और आंशिक रूप से दीर्घकालिक हैं।

इसके बाद अंतरराष्ट्रीय मुद्राकोष (आईएमएफ) की नई प्रबंध निदेशक क्रिस्टेलिना जॉजीवा ने भारत और ब्राजील का नाम लेते हुए कहा कि वैश्विक अर्थव्यवस्था समकालिक सुस्ती सबसे ज्यादा इन्हीं देशों में नजर आ रही है। हाल ही में आईएमएफ ने इस वित्त वर्ष के लिए भारत के वृद्धि दर अनमान को सात फीसदी से घटाकर 6.1 फीसदी कर दिया है। इसके बाद विश्व बैंक ने विद्ध अनमानों में तगडी कटौती करते हुए 7.5 फीसदी से भारी गिरावट के साथ महज छह फीसदी कर दिया है। इसके पहले एशियाई विकास बैंक और फिच ने भी वृद्धि अनुमानों को घटा दिया था।

इस खबर के बाद संपादकीय पृष्ठों पर बांह मरोड़ने या शोरशराबे वाले टीवी शो में हंगामा खडा होने के मौके कम ही आए हैं क्योंकि बुनियादी तौर पर ये संस्थाएं ही इस विमर्श के पीछे हैं। आर्थिक गतिविधियों पर नजर रखने वालों को पहले से ही इन बुरी खबरों का अंदेशा था। आरबीआई ने वृद्धि अनुमान को 6.9 फीसदी से घटाकर 6.1



जिंदगीनामा

कनिका दत्ता

फीसदी कर और उच्च तीव्रता वाले संकेतकों में कटौती कर इसकी चेतावनी बहुत पहले दे दी थी। पहली तिमाही के पांच फीसदी वृद्धि दर के आंकड़े बेहद आशावादी बजट अनुमानों को गलत बताते हैं और दूसरी तिमाही में इसके बदतर होने की आशंका है। और अपने दैनिक जीवन में वृद्धि दर की सुस्ती का असर झेलने वाले भारतीयों को पहले से ही इसका अहसास होने लगा है।

गिरते आंकड़ों को लेकर

चिंतित ये संस्थान 'देश की छवि खराब करने ' में अकेले नहीं हैं। विभिन्न संस्थानों की तरफ से जारी होने वाली वैश्विक रैंकिंग से भी यही लगता है कि 'मोदी का प्रभावी प्रदर्शन' देख पाना मुश्किल है। हाल ही में जारी वैश्विक भुख सुचकांक पर नजर डालें तो भोजन के अधिकार का व्यापक एवं खर्चीला कानून होने के बावजूद भारत को इस सूची में असरदार स्थान नहीं मिला है। वर्ष 2010 में 95वें स्थान पर रहा भारत इस सूचकांक में 2019 में 102वें स्थान पर है।

वर्ष 2000 में भूख सूचकांक में 83वें स्थान पर रहे भारत का प्रदर्शन लगातार गिरा है। इन दिनों सार्वजनिक विमर्श को निर्धारित करने वाले व्हाटसऐप संदेशों की भावना को देखें तो यह कहना सही है कि गरीब-समर्थक कही जाने वाली संप्रग सरकार का प्रदर्शन भी खास अच्छा नहीं था। लेकिन इस बात का जिक्र किया जा सकता है कि उसके बाद सत्ता में आने के लिए मोदी ने विकास के काम अभूतपूर्व तेजी से संपन्न कराने का वादा किया था। कद के अनुपात में कम वजन वाली आबादी 2008-12 के दौरान 16.5 फीसदी थी लेकिन 2014-18 की अवधि में यह 20.8 फीसदी पर जा पहंची। इस पैमाने में भारत ने यमन और जिब्रुती को भी पीछे छोड़ दिया

है। ऐसे में विकास के चुनावी वादों की सच्चाई पर सवाल उठने लाजिमी हैं।

मानव विकास के महत्त्वपूर्ण पैमाने उच्च शिक्षा पर मोदी सरकार के मानव संसाधन विकास मंत्रालय की खास नजर कई तरह से बनी रही है। हालांकि इस साल 2012 के बाद पहली बार कोई भी भारतीय विश्वविद्यालय शीर्ष 300 संस्थानों की टाइम्स हायर एजुकेशन युनिवर्सिटी रैंकिंग में जगह नहीं बना पाया है। समग्र मानव विकास के मोर्चे पर हालात शायद ही बेहतर हुए हैं। संयुक्त राष्ट्र विकास कार्यक्रम की 2014 रिपोर्ट में 188 देशों में से 135वें स्थान पर रहने वाला भारत 2018 में 189 देशों में से 130वें स्थान पर रहा।

मेक इन इंडिया, डिजिटल इंडिया, और तमाम घोषित सरकारी कार्यक्रम भारत को औद्योगिक रफ्तार देने के लिए बनाए गए हैं। ऐसे में वैश्विक धारणा के मामले में भारत की रैंकिंग में उछाल आनी चाहिए थी। लेकिन विश्व आर्थिक मंच की तरफ से जारी वैश्विक प्रतिस्पर्द्धात्मकता सूचकांक में भारत 10 पायदान गिरते हुए 141 देशों में 68वें स्थान पर आ गया है। इस गिरावट का कारण यह नहीं है कि भारत ने निर्धारित मानकों पर खराब प्रदर्शन किया है, बल्कि दूसरे देशों का प्रदर्शन कहीं बेहतर रहा।

हालांकि भारत ने उन तीन

सूचकांकों में सुधार दर्ज किया है जो मोदी की प्राथमिकता में ऊपर रहे हैं। कारोबारी सुगमता सचकांक में दो साल के भीतर 53 स्थानों की छलांग लगाते हुए भारत 2018 में 190 देशों में से 77वें स्थान पर रहा। वैश्विक भ्रष्टाचार सूचकांक में भी 2018 में भारत तीन स्थान के सुधार के साथ 180 देशों में से 78वें स्थान पर रहा। वैश्विक नवोन्मेष सूचकांक में भारत पांच साल के भीतर 29 स्थान की छलांग लगाते हए 129 देशों में से 52वें स्थान पर आ गया। कारोबारी सुगमता सूचकांक के तीन पैमानों पर उल्लेखनीय प्रगति के साथ शीर्ष 25 देशों में आ चुका है। लेकिन भारत को 'औसत मध्यम' दर्जे में डालने वाले इन सुधारों को शानदार कहना अतिशयोक्ति ही होगी। यह बात हमें दुनिया बता रही है, 'राष्ट्रद्रोही' भारतीय नहीं।

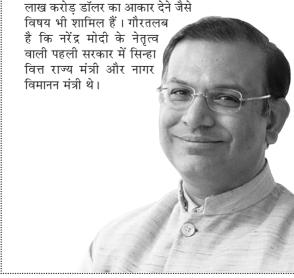
कानाफूसी

सिंधिया की नाराजगी

कांग्रेस महासचिव ज्योतिरादित्य सिंधिया ने एक बार फिर मध्य प्रदेश में अपनी ही पार्टी की सरकार पर हल्ला बोला है। उन्होंने प्रदेश सरकार पर आरोप लगाया कि खानेपीने की चीजों में मिलावट के आरोपियों को सरकार बिना समृचित कार्रवाई के छोड़ दे रही है। सिंधिया ने जहां यह बात कही वहां प्रदेश के स्वास्थ्य मंत्री तुलसी सिलावट मौजुद थे। सिंधिया ने इशारा किया कि गडबड़ी करने वालों के खिलाफ मामले बंद किए जा रहे हैं और मंत्री को इसकी खबर तक नहीं लग रही है। पहले पार्टी नेतृत्व ने मुख्यमंत्री का चयन करते वक्त उनकी अनदेखी की और कमलनाथ को मख्यमंत्री बना दिया। अब वह प्रदेश कांग्रेस कमेटी के अध्यक्ष के नाम की घोषणा करने में भी देरी कर रही है। यही कारण है कि सिंधिया एक के बाद एक सरकार पर हमले करके दबाव बना रहे हैं। कुछ दिन पूर्व उन्होंने किसान ऋण माफी का वादा पूरा न करने के लिए राज्य सरकार को आड़े हाथों लिया था।

अध्ययन सामग्री

जयंत सिन्हा के नेतृत्व वाली संसद की वित्तीय मामलों की स्थायी समिति ने कई ऐसे विषयों का चयन किया है जिनका वह अध्ययन करेगी। समिति ने अध्ययन के लिए जिन 15 विषयों का चयन किया है उनमें मुद्रास्फीति को निशाना बनाने वाली नीतियों और मौद्रिक पारेषण, निगरानी की गुणवत्ता और वित्तीय संस्थानों की निगरानी, ऋणशोधन अक्षमता एवं दिवालिया संहिता तथा जीडीपी को एक



आपका पक्ष

गरीबी रेखा का पैमाना तय हो

भारत में अधिकतर लोग गरीबी रेखा

से नीचे अपना जीवन गुजार रहे हैं। पूर्व एवं वर्तमान सरकार द्वारा कई योजनाएं चलाने के बावजूद गरीबी पूरी तरह से नहीं हट पाई है। योजना आयोग ने कई समितियों का गठन कर गरीबी की गणना एवं गरीबी की पद्धति का मापदंड तय करने के लिए कहा था। देश में गरीबी रेखा न्युनतम उपभोग खर्च के आधार पर तय की जाती है। अलघ समिति द्वारा कैलरी उपभोग की संकल्पना के आधार पर ग्रामीण एवं शहरी का क्रमश: 2,400 एवं 2,100 कैलरी प्रति व्यक्ति प्रति दिन स्वीकार किया गया। तेंडुलकर समिति ने कैलरी का उपयोग छोड़ देने की सिफारिश की एवं अन्न, स्वास्थ्य, शिक्षा तथा कपड़े इत्यादि वस्तुओं पर होने वाले खर्च पर गरीबी रेखा तय की। लेकिन तेंडुलकर समिति द्वारा उपयोग में लाई गई गरीबी गणना की पद्धति की आलोचना की गई। इसके बाद सरकार ने रंगराजन समिति का गठन किया। रंगराजन



समिति ने दोबारा अन्न एवं गैर अन्न वस्तू एवं सेवाओं के उपभोग खर्च के आधार पर गरीबी रेखा एवं उसका प्रमाण को गिनने के लिए सिफारिश की। उन्होंने ग्रामीण एवं शहरी के लिए क्रमश: 2,155 और 2.090 कैलरी प्रति व्यक्ति प्रति दिन लिया। लेकिन सरकार ने इस समिति की सिफारिश स्वीकार नहीं

देश में गरीबी खत्म करने के लिए सरकार को उचित नीति बनाने की जरूरत है

पर आने के बाद नीति आयोग की पहली बैठक में अरविंद पानगड़िया की अध्यक्षता में एक समिति का गठन किया गया। लेकिन इस की। भारतीय जनता पार्टी के सत्ता ः सिमिति ने नई गरीबी रेखा सूचित

समिति स्थापित करने की सिफारिश की। इसका अर्थ यह है कि सरकार अब तक गरीबी रेखा का आधार तय करने में और उसका उचित मापदंड का हल खोजने में असमर्थ रही। तेंडुलकर समिति के अनुसार देश में 21.9 प्रतिशत लोग गरीबी रेखा से नीचे जीवनयापन कर रहे हैं, बल्कि रंगराजन समिति की गरीबी मापने के अनुसार 29.6 प्रतिशत लोग गरीब हैं। देश की योजनाएं अगर उचित वर्गों एवं जरूरतमंदों तक पहुंचाना है तो सरकार का यह दायित्व है कि वह गरीबी रेखा का आधार एवं उसका मूल्यांकन के गणित का हल खोजे। निशांत महेश त्रिपाठी, नागपुर

करने के बजाय इसके लिए दूसरी

कोशल युक्त शिक्षा की जरूरत

प्रधानमंत्री नरेंद्र मोदी ने वर्ष 2024

पाठक अपनी राय हमें इस पते पर भेज सकते हैं : संपादक, बिजनेस स्टैंडर्ड लिमिटेड, 4, बहादर 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।

तक भारत को 5 खरब डॉलर की अर्थव्यवस्था बनाने का लक्ष्य रखा है। इसके लिए सभी क्षेत्रों में कौशल युक्त श्रम की जरूरत होगी जिससे विकास की गति तेज होगी। कामकाजी आबादी की उम्र के मामले में भारत की स्थिति अन्य प्रतिस्पर्धी देशों से बेहतर है। अत: आज बड़ी चुनौती युवाओं को रोजगार प्रदान करने की है। ऐसे में सभी को शिक्षा उपलब्ध कराने के अलावा इंजीनियरिंग, मेडिकल, वाणिज्य, कानून आदि क्षेत्रों में गणात्मक शिक्षा उपलब्ध कराने की आवश्यकता है। शिक्षा प्री करने वाले युवाओं को शुरुआती स्तर पर रोजगार उपलब्ध कराना जरूरी है। कौशल विकास में बढ़ोतरी कर लोगों को कौशल युक्त बनाना होगा। असंगठित क्षेत्र पर भी ध्यान देने की जरूरत है। आर्थिक समीक्षा 2018-19 के अनुसार वर्ष 2030 तक बुजुर्गों की संख्या बहुत सारे विभागों में देखने को मिलेगी। ऐसे में सरकार को सभी क्षेत्रों की ओर ध्यान देने की आवश्यकता है।

संगीता चौधरी, जयपुर

24 अक्टूबर 2019





विचार

धारण करने वाला गुण ही धर्म है

बेतरतीब विकास

दिल्ली में अनाधिकृत बस्तियों को नियमित करने का केंद्रीय कैबिनेट का फैसला एक बड़ी संख्या में लोगों को राहत देने वाला तो है, लेकिन इससे शहरी ढांचे को नियोजित करने के लक्ष्य को हासिल करने में कठिनाई भी आने वाली है। अपने देश में अवैध बस्तियों को नियमित करने के फैसले नए नहीं। आम तौर पर चुनाव के पहले ऐसे फैसले लिए जाते हैं। केंद्र सरकार की तरह राज्य सरकारें भी रह-रहकर इस तरह के फैसले लेती रहती हैं। ऐसा करके वे अपने राजनीतिक हित का संधान ही करती है। इस पर हैरत नहीं कि केंद्र सरकार ने जैसे ही दिल्ली में 1797 अनियमित कॉलोनियों को नियमित करने का फैसला किया, वैसे ही दिल्ली सरकार ने इस फैसले का समर्थन कर दिया। उसने यह भी बताया कि इन कालोनियों में क्या-क्या काम किए गए हैं? अनियमित कॉलोनियों को नियमित करने का मतलब है समस्या को समाधान के तौर पर स्वीकार करना। दिल्ली के साथ देश के अन्य शहरों में अनियमित कॉलोनियों को नियमित करने के फैसले यह भी बताते हैं कि सरकारें शहरों को व्यवस्थित करने और खासकर उनमें बढ़ती आबादी को आवास सुविधा उपलब्ध कराने में नाकाम हैं। इस नाकामी के चलते ही हमारे शहर समस्याओं से घिरते जा रहे हैं। वे बेतरतीब विकास का पर्याय बनते जा रहे हैं और उनकी खबसरती भी नष्ट होती जा रही है।

अगर अनियमित कॉलोनियों को नियमित करने का सिलसिला थमा नहीं तो हमारे शहर बेतरतीब विकास का पर्याय बनकर रह जाएंगे। इस तरह के फैसले किसी न किसी स्तर पर सरकारी और गैर सरकारी जमीनों पर कब्जा करने की प्रवृत्ति को बल ही प्रदान करते हैं। यह सही है कि जब अनियमित कॉलोनियों को नियमित किया जाता है तो वहां रह रहे लाखों लोगों को राहत मिलती है, लेकिन यह नहीं कहा जा सकता कि ये लाखों लोग बेहतर माहौल और पर्यावरण भी हासिल कर पाते हैं। यह खेद की बात है कि अवैध कॉलोनियों को वैध करने की मजब्री के बाद भी उन कारणों पर गौर करने से इन्कार किया जा रहा है जिनके चलते ऐसी कॉलोनियां आकार लेती हैं और फिर समस्या बन जाती है। ऐसी कॉलोनियां नेताओं और नौकरशाहों के संरक्षण से फलती-फुलती हैं। समय के साथ उनमें बिजली, पानी आदि की सुविधा पहुंच जाती है। इसके बाद जब उनमें आबादी बढ़ जाती हैं तो फिर वे वोट बैंक की राजनीति का जरिया बन जाती हैं। इसी के साथ शहरों को संवारने की योजनाएं हाशिये पर चली जाती हैं। अच्छा हो कि हमारे नीति-नियंता इस पर विचार करें कि आखिर अनियमित कॉलोनियों को नियमित करके देश के शहरों को स्मार्ट कैसे बनाया जा सकता है?

सलामत रहे सास

पटना की वायु गुणवत्ता का तीन दिन पूर्व का आकलन डराने वाला है। 19 अक्टूबर को केंद्रीय प्रदूषण नियंत्रण बोर्ड की रिपोर्ट के अनुसार 103 शहरों के वायु गुणवत्ता सूचकांक (पार्टिकुलेट मैटर, पीएम 2.5) में पटना की स्थिति सबसे खतरनाक रही। पटना में पीएम 2.5 का स्तर 309 माइक्रोग्राम प्रति घनमीटर रिकॉर्ड किया गया। मुरादाबाद दूसरे स्थान पर रहा। यहां यह स्तर 303 माइक्रोग्राम प्रति घनमीटर था। बिहार के ही दूसरे शहर मुजफ्फरपुर में पीएम 2.5 का स्तर 279 माइक्रोग्राम प्रति घनमीटर दर्ज किया गया। यह स्थिति चिंताजनक है। कोई सरकार, किसी अभियान से इस स्थिति को नहीं सुधार सकती है। इसके लिए सीधे आम लोग जिम्मेदार हैं। हमें सोचना होगा कि हम सांस में जहर घुलने से कैसे बचाएं। महानगरों की हालत किसी से छुपी नहीं है। दिल्ली में गाड़ियों के परिचालन पर नियमन कड़ा किया जा रहा है। दिन तय किए जा रहे हैं। देश के दूसरे हिस्से में रोक के बावजूद लोग पराली या पुआल जलाने से

बाज नहीं आ रहे हैं। युं बिहार में इसका प्रचलन कम है, लेकिन इस पर पूरी तरह निषेध जरूरी है। हालांकि सरकार के स्तर से पहल की जा रही है। विषय विशेषज्ञों की कार्यशाला के साथ ही लगातार अपील की जा रही है कि लोग खेतों में फसल अवशेष न जलाएं। हम नहीं चेते तो एक

दिन अपने शहर की हालत भी वैसी ही

अभी से हरित दिवाली का संकल्प लें और अपने बच्चों को प्रेरित करें कि सांसों की सलामती के लिए वे भी पहल करें

हो जाएगी। जीना दुभर हो जाएगा। खराब खान-पान और आबोहवा का प्रतिकूल असर पड़ना शुरू हो चुका है। कंप्रिहेंसिव नेशनल न्यूट्रीशन सर्वे (सीएनएनएस) की रिपोर्ट के अनुसार देश में पांच से नौ वर्ष के बीच के चार प्रतिशत बच्चे अधिक वजन वाले हैं। पांच से नौ वर्ष के बच्चों में ज्यादा वजन वाले बच्चे गोवा और नगालैंड में हैं। सबसे कम वजन के मामले में झारखंड और बिहार आगे हैं। बच्चों के वजन का कम या ज्यादा होना दोनों ही स्थिति अच्छी नहीं है। इसी रिपोर्ट के अनुसार बच्चों में ट्राइग्लिसराइड्स का असामान्य स्तर भी पाया गया। प्री डायबिटिक के लक्षण भी पाए गए हैं। सांस में सांस भरने का हमारे सामने मौका है। आइए, अभी से हरित दिवाली का संकल्प लें और अपने बच्चों को प्रेरित करें कि सांसों की सलामती के लिए वे भी पहल करें।

आचरण में बदलाव का अर्थशास्त्र



कृष्णमूर्ति सुब्रमणियन

चूंकि तमाम नीतियां राज्यों के स्तर पर लागू होती हैं इसलिए राज्यों के नीति निर्माताओं को चाहिए कि वे लोगों को प्रेरित करने वाले तौर–तरीकों की अहमियत समझें

🟲 धानमंत्री नरेंद्र मोदी ने हाल में मामल्लपुरम के समुद्र तट पर साफ-सफाई करके एक बडा संदेश दिया। इसे प्रेरक पहल से जुड़े व्यावहारिक अर्थशास्त्र की एक और अनूठी मिसाल कहा जा सकता है जो भारत में व्यावहारिक बदलाव लाने से जुड़ी है। वर्ष 2018-19 की आर्थिक समीक्षा में इस पर व्यापक दृष्टि डाली गई है कि प्रेरक पहल के माध्यम से कैसे व्यवहारगत बदलावों को मूर्त रूप दिया जा सकता है। चूंकि तमाम नीतियां राज्यों के स्तर पर लागू होती हैं इसलिए राज्यों के नीति निर्माताओं को चाहिए कि वे आम लोगों को प्रेरित करने वाले तौर-तरीकों की अहमियत समझें। यदि कोई प्रेरक पहल की संभावनाओं को समझना चाहते हैं तो उस वक्त को याद कीजिए जब आपने जगने के लिए सुबह छह बजे का अलार्म लगाया हो और उसके बजने पर चिड़चिड़ाकर उसे बंद करके फिर से सोने लगे हों? प्रेरक पहल के माध्यम से व्यावहारिक बदलाव के लिहाज से यह क्यों महत्वपूर्ण है? यह इसलिए अहम है, क्योंकि परंपरागत अर्थशास्त्र के सिद्धांत हमें इंसानी ताकत और कमजोरियों से मुक्त रोबोट जैसा मानते हैं, लेकिन अर्थशास्त्र की एक शाखा-व्यावहारिक अर्थशास्त्र ऐसी भी है जो हमें हमारे अनुटेपन के साथ मानव के रूप में ही देखती है। मानव व्यवहार, व्यावहारिक अर्थशास्त्र हमें इस बात की परख कराते हैं कि वांछित व्यवहार की दिशा में लोगों को किसी पहल के माध्यम

से कैसे प्रेरित किया जाए?

भारत में जहां सामाजिक एवं सांस्कृतिक मानक लोगों के व्यवहार को प्रभावित करने में अहम भूमिका अदा करते हैं वहां हमारे व्यवहार में लाभदायक परिवर्तन लाने के लिहाज से व्यावहारिक अर्थशास्त्र एक महत्वपूर्ण माध्यम साबित हो सकता है। मिसाल के तौर पर लाभदायक सामाजिक मानकों को सकारात्मक पहल द्वारा और विस्तार दिया जा सकता है। इनमें हमारे दोस्त और पड़ोसी या वे लोग आदर्श होते हैं जिन्हें हम खुद से जोड़कर देख सकते हैं। दूसरा, विकल्प चुनते समय हम सभी व्यापक निष्क्रियता के वशीभूत होकर अक्सर यथास्थितिवाद वाले विकल्प को पकड़े रहते हैं। इस निष्क्रियता से बाहर निकलने और बदलाव लाने में बमुश्किल ही कोई खर्च आता है। ऐसे में अपने विकल्पों को प्रभावित किए बिना ही वांछित व्यवहार को प्रोत्साहन दिया जा सकता है। तीसरा, अक्सर हमारे लिए अच्छी आदतों को निरंतर बनाए रखना मुश्किल होता है। ऐसे में प्रेरक वचन और पहले किए गए अच्छे कामों को याद करने से व्यवहार में बदलाव को निरंतरता देने में मदद मिलती है।

बीते पांच वर्षों के दौरान सरकार पहले ही सफल व्यावहारिक बदलावों को मूर्त रूप दे चुकी है। बेटी बचाओ-बेटी पढ़ाओ जैसी पहल से बालिका जन्म दर में आशातीत बढ़ोतरी हुई है। इसी तरह बेटी को परिवार पर बोझ के बजाय पिता का गौरव बताने के



अवधेश राजपूत

मकसद से शुरू किए गए 'सेल्फी विद डॉटर' जैसे अभियान ने भी मानवीय भावनाओं की शक्ति को रेखांकित करते हुए व्यावहारिक बदलावों को दिशा दी है।

अपने सत्याग्रह से अंग्रेजों के छक्के छुड़ा देने वाले गांधी जी की जयंती पर शुरू किए गए स्वच्छ भारत मिशन के तहत स्वच्छाग्रहियों की अवधारणा भी व्यावहारिक बदलाव लाने में प्रेरक पहल के सिद्धांत की उम्दा मिसाल है। ऐसी तमाम पहल हुई हैं और उनसे मिली सीख के जरिये लैंगिक समानता, स्वस्थ भारत और कर अनुपालन के जरिये सामाजिक बदलाव के महत्वाकांक्षी एजेंडे को सिरे चढ़ाया जा सकता है। जहां बेटी बचाओ-बेटी पढ़ाओ जैसे अभियान से बहुत मदद मिली है, वहीं लैंगिक असमानता के लिए क्रांतिकारी अभियान की दरकार है। हमारे धर्मग्रंथों में महिलाओं को देवी माना गया है और उनमें स्पष्ट उल्लेख है कि जिन समाजों में स्त्री का सम्मान होता है वहां समृद्धि का वास होता है। इस संदेश की महत्ता को देखते हुए अभियान का जोर सांस्कृतिक एवं सामजिक मानकों पर होना चाहिए, क्योंकि वे भारत में व्यवहार को बहुत निर्णायक तरीके से प्रभावित करते हैं। इस अभियान को बेटी आपकी धन लक्ष्मी-विजय लक्ष्मी का नाम दिया जा सकता है। इसमें धन लक्ष्मी से संपन्नता की देवी लक्ष्मी और विजय लक्ष्मी से जीत की देवी का आभास होता है। खासतौर से महिला के लक्ष्मी रूप से जुड़े संदेश पर विशेष जोर देने की जरूरत है।

अमेरिका, ब्रिटेन और ऑस्ट्रेलिया जैसे देशों में सरकारों ने व्यावहारिक पहलुओं पर गौर करने के लिए विशेष इकाइयां बना रखी हैं। उनसे संकेत लेकर प्रभावी नीतियां बनाई जाती हैं। तमाम अभिभावक स्कल में अपने बच्चे की एक साल और पढ़ाई पर प्रतिफल को कम महत्व देते हैं। वे बच्चे के हाईस्कूल में पहुंचने तक स्कूली पढ़ाई को निरर्थक मानते हैं। तमाम लोग ऐसे भी हैं जो अपने बच्चों को कुछ साल के लिए घर बैठा लेते हैं जबकि वे पढ़ाई का खर्च उठाने में सक्षम होते हैं। मेडागास्कर में कम शिक्षित अभिभावकों को यहां तक बताया जाता

है कि बच्चे की एक और साल तक स्कूली पढ़ाई का उनकी औसतन आमदनी के साथ क्या समीकरण बन सकता है? इसी कड़ी में अमेरिका में एक साधारण से बदलाव ने लोगों की बचत में 40 प्रतिशत की बढ़ोतरी करा दी दरअसल लोग खर्च पर पर्याप्त नियंत्रण न होने के कारण उतनी बचत नहीं कर पाते जितनी वे करना चाहते हैं। लोगों को ऐसे विशेष खातों की पेशकश की गई जिसमें बचत के एक निश्चित लक्ष्य तक पहुंचने से पहले धन निकासी का विकल्प नहीं था। तकरीबन 30 प्रतिशत ने इस विकल्प को अपना लिया। एक साल मे ही बचत अधिशेष 74 प्रतिशत चढ़ गया। लोग अपनी निष्क्रियता और सकारात्मक प्रेरणा के अभाव में ही अपेक्षित बचत नहीं कर पाते लोगों को बचत से जुड़े उनके लक्ष्यों को याद दिलाने के लिए नियमित रूप से प्रेरक संदेश भेजे गए। केवल इन्हीं संदेशों के दम पर बचत राशि में छह प्रतिशत बढ़ोतरी हो गई।

निष्क्रियता-अकर्मण्यता लोगों को अनिर्णय का शिकार बनाती है जिसमें वे यह जानते हुए भी फैसलों को टालते रहते हैं कि इसके कितने खराब परिणाम हो सकते हैं? उर्वरकों की खरीद में किसानों की टालमटोली से निपटने के लिए अफ्रीका में उर्वरक की होम डिलिवरी का प्रयास हुआ। इससे उर्वरक प्रयोग 70 प्रतिशत बढ गया। यह प्रभाव कुछ ऐसा था मानों पचास प्रतिशत मूल्य सब्सिडी को अंजाम दिया गया हो। ये सभी उदाहरण प्रेरक पहल के अहम फायदों को दर्शाते हैं कि वे कैसे व्यावहारिक बदलाव लाने में सहायक हो सकते हैं। राज्यो को केंद्र सरकार द्वारा की गई पहल या अन्य देशों में आजमाए जा रहे कुछ अच्छे विचारों को अपनाकर नीतियों को व्यावहारिक अर्थशास्त्र से जोड़ना चाहिए।

(लेखक भारत सरकार के मुख्य आर्थिक सलाहकार हैं। response@jagran.com

सावरकर को लांछित करने का अभियान

इसे नीर-क्षीर ढंग

से समझना होगा

मांग करके जेल

कि सावरकर माफी

धर एक अर्से से विनायक दामोदर सावरकर बहस के केंद्र में हैं। उन्हें लेकर बहस का सिल्ग्रिका कर और तेज हुआ जब राहुल गांधी ने कांग्रेस अध्यक्ष के तौर पर उनका उपहास उड़ाते हुए उन्हें अंग्रेजों से डरने और उनसे माफी मांगने वाला करार दिया। उन्होंने ऐसा इसके बावजूद किया कि खुद उनकी दादी यानी इंदिरा गांधी ने सावरकर के सम्मान में डाक टिकट जारी किया था। आजादी की लड़ाई में सावरकर के योगदान की सराहना अन्य अनेक कांग्रेसी नेता भी करते रहे हैं। हाल में अभिषेक मनु सिंघवी और यहां तक कि पूर्व प्रधानमंत्री मनमोहन सिंह ने भी किया। यह बात और है कि इसके पहले राजस्थान की कांग्रेस सरकार ने सावरकर को पाठ्यक्रम से हटाने का फैसला कर लिया था। सावरकर को भारतीय स्वतंत्रता आंदोलन में क्रांतिधर्मी लोगों के आलोक में ही समझा जा सकता है। उन्हें समझने के लिए आवश्यक है कि सबसे पहले उनकी किताब '1857 का भारत का स्वातंत्र्य समर' को समझा जाए। 'यह शायद दुनिया की पहली ऐसी किताब है जो प्रकाशित होने के पहले ही प्रतिबंधित की गई। उपासना पद्धतियों से परे और राष्ट्रीयता पर आधारित भारत की स्वतंत्रता का सिद्धांत यदि किसी किताब में सबसे पहले प्रतिपादित किया गया तो '1857 का भारत का स्वातंत्र्य समर' में। इस किताब ने 1857 के संग्राम में जो हजारों लोग बागियों के रूप में मारे गए उन्हें वास्तविक पहचान दिलाई। यह किताब सावरकर की डेढ़ वर्ष की शोध साधना का प्रतिफल थी।

सावरकर लंदन की ब्रिटिश म्यूजियम लाइब्रेरी और इंडिया आफिस लाइब्रेरी में 1857 संबंधी दस्तावेजों और ब्रितानियों के लेखन में डूबे रहे और अंततः इस पुस्तक के रूप में इस सत्य का संधान किया कि 1857 का सिपाही विद्रोह दरअसल भारतीय स्वातंत्र्य समर था। जब अंग्रेजों को पता चला कि सावरकर की यह किताब छपने वाली है तो उन्होंने उसके प्रकाशन के पहले ही उस पर प्रतिबंध की असामान्य घोषणा कर दी। इस पर सावरकर ने द टाइम्स में संपादक के नाम पत्र लिखा कि ब्रिटिश अधिकारियों ने स्वीकार किया है कि वे निश्चयपूर्वक नहीं कह सकते कि मेरी पुस्तक अभी छपी है या नहीं? यदि ऐसा है तो सरकार ने यह कैसे जान लिया कि वह पुस्तक भयावह राजद्रोहात्मक है? द टाइम्स ने सावरकर के उस पत्र को न सिर्फ छापा, बल्कि अपनी तरफ से यह टिप्पणी भी जोड़ दी कि यदि ऐसा असाधारण कदम उठाया गया है तो निश्चित ही दाल में कुछ काला है। 1909 में



से बाहर आते थे तो करते क्या थे ?



सावरकर की इस पुस्तक का अंग्रेजी संस्करण गोपनीय ढंग से छप गया। अगले साल उसका फ्रेंच अनुवाद भी छपा। फ्रांसीसी क्रांतिकारी पिरियोन ने उसके प्राक्कथन में लिखा कि यह एक महाकाव्य और देशभिक्त का दिशा बोध है। 1910 में सावरकर गिरफ्तार किए गए। उन पर राजद्रोह का मुकदमा चला। उन्हें 50 वर्ष लंबे कारावास की सजा सुनाई गई। उन्हें जेल में भीषण यातानाएं दी गईं। सावरकर पहले क्रांतिकारी थे जिन्हें ब्रिटिश सरकार द्वारा दो बार आजीवन कारावास की सजा सुनाई गई। वह पहले भारतीय नागरिक थे जिन पर हेग के अंतरराष्ट्रीय न्यायालय

सावरकर की किताब के प्रथम गुप्त संस्करण से लेकर 1947 में ख़ुले यानी पहले कानूनी प्रकाशन के बीच के वर्षों में न जाने कितने गोपनीय संस्करण छपे। भगत सिंह के क्रांतिकारी दल ने भी उसका एक संस्करण छापा। भगत सिंह सावरकर के प्रशंसक थे। सुभाष चंद्र बोस भी सावरकर के प्रति असीम आदर रखते थे और स्वतंत्रता प्राप्ति की उनकी रणनीति से सहमत थे। रास बिहारी बोस तो सावरकर को अपना गुरु ही मानते थे। सावरकर को जानने और समझने के लिए यह भी जरूरी है कि उनकी रणनीति को समझा जाए। सावरकर ने माफी मांगी। एक बार नहीं तीन बार, लेकिन इसे नीर-क्षीर ढंग से देखना होगा कि सावरकर हर बार माफी मांग करके जेल से बाहर

आते थे तो करते क्या थे? वह बाहर आकर रणनीतिक तौर पर अपने को मजबूत करते थे। उनका मानना था कि जेल में सड़ने से बेहतर है किसी तरह बाहर आकर देश की आजादी के लिए लड़ना। उनकी इस रणनीति को कायरता बताना हास्यास्पद है। अक्सर लोग पूछते हैं कि सावरकर का गांधी की हत्या से साथ क्या संबंध था? वे यह भूल जाते हैं कि न्याय व्यवस्था ने उन्हें गांधी की हत्या में शामिल होने के आरोप से मुक्त किया था। यदि सावरकर के बारे में उड़ने वाली अफवाहों पर चर्चा होगी तो गांधी के बारे में भी पूछना पड़ेगा और नेहरू के बारे में भी सोचना पड़ेगा? कितनी विडंबना है कि इस देश के महान लोगों के ऊपर कीचड उछालने की एक आदत सी बनती जा रही है। सावरकर और गांधी, दोनों हिंदू जीवन दृष्टि को प्रतिपादित करने वाले विचारक थे। सावरकर पूरे जीवन गांधी से मुश्किल से तीन बार मिले। यह सत्य है कि सावरकर और गांधी में वैचारिक मतभेद थे, लेकिन इन मतभेदों के कारण सावरकर को लांछित करने का कोई मतलब नहीं। सावरकर की आलोचना करने वाले यह भूल जाते हैं कि यातना का जीवन जीते हुए भी यदि किसी में भारत की आजादी का दृढ़ संकल्प कूट-कूट कर भरा था तो वह सावरकर थे। सावरकर मूलतः एक ऐसे क्रांतिकारी थे जो साम्राज्यवाद का विरोध करते थे, लेकिन उन्होंने साम्राज्यवादियों के व्यवहार तंत्र और तकनीक को अपनी आवश्यकता के अनुसार स्वीकार करने में कभी परहेज नहीं किया। वह स्वतंत्रता सेनानी के साथ ही तर्कशास्त्री के तौर पर भी जाने जाते थे।

1896 में इंग्लैंड जाने के पहले ही सावरकर ने भारत में अभिनव भारत नाम की संस्था की स्थापना की थी। इसी अभिनव भारत के माध्यम से उन्होंने इंग्लैंड में श्यामजी कृष्ण वर्मा द्वारा स्थापित इंडिया हाउस को अपनी क्रांति साधना का केंद्र बनाया और मातृभूमि की स्वाधीनता के लिए व्याकुल नौजवानों का संगठन खड़ा किया। उन्होंने अंग्रेजों की जमीन से ही अंग्रेजी साम्राज्यवाद और उपनिवेशवाद के विरुद्ध संघर्ष शुरू किया। संदर्भहीन बातों और अफवाहों के आधार पर सावरकर की आलोचना करने वाले यह समझें तो बेहतर कि उनके त्याग, बलिदान और अदम्य पराक्रम का और उनकी भारतीय इतिहास दृष्टि का महत्व कभी कम नहीं हो सकता

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रोशनी की तलाश

यह कहानी किसी एक गांव की तब की है जब धरती पर सभ्यता विकसित नहीं हुई थी और पूरी दुनिया अंधकार में डूबी थी। उस गांव में परंपरा थी कि हर व्यक्ति अंधकार से मुक्ति के लिए हर रोज अंधेरे को टोकरियों में भरकर गांव के बाहर फेंक आया करता था संयोग से एक दिन उस गांव के किसी घर में एक युवक की शादी के बाद दुल्हन आई। घर के बड़े-बुज़ुर्ग ने उस नव-विवाहित दुल्हन को भी टोकरी में अंधेरे को भरकर गांव के बाहर फेंक आने का आदेश दिया। दुल्हन सोचने लगी कि भला अंधेरे को टोकरी में भरकर कैसे बाहर फेंका जा सकता है। अकस्मात उसके दिमाग में बिजली की गति से एक विचार कौंधा। वह घर के बाहर आई बिना देरी किए मिट्टी का एक दीया बना लाई। उसने तत्क्षण ही कपड़े की बाती में थोड़ा-सा तेल डालकर दीये को जला दिया। अब अंधेरा छंट चका था। गांव का हर व्यक्ति इस बात से हैरान था कि आखिर अंधेरे को इस प्रकार दूर कैसे किया जा सकता है। घर की बहु ने गांव के लोगों की आंखें खोल दी थी। इसके बाद से उस गांव में फिर कभी अंधेरा नहीं रहा, क्योंकि लोगों ने रोशनी के लिए दीप जलाना सीख लिया था।

उस गांव में अंधकार दूर करने की अज्ञानता की कहानी हमारी अपनी कहानी है। सभ्यता के तेजी से विकास के बावज़द हम अपनी आत्मा में बसे अंधेरों से मुक्ति पाने में असफल रहे हैं। रोशनी जलाकर बाहर फैले अंधेरे को दूर कर हम आश्वस्त हो जाते हैं कि हमारे अंदर का अंधकार खत्म हो गया है और उजाला फैल चुका है, पर दुर्भाग्यवश हम अपनी आत्मा में ही नहीं झांक पाते हैं जो झूठ, फरेब, मिथ्या आनंद अहंकार, छल-प्रपंच आदि अमानवीय प्रवृत्तियों के तिमिर में डुबी हुई है। करुणा, दया, सहानुभृति, प्रेम धर्म, चरित्र और नैतिकता का सर्वथा अभाव है। आज प्रश्न रोशनी की तलाश का नहीं है, अति रोशनी की चकाचौंध में बंद हुए अपने प्रज्ञान-चक्षु को खोलने का है ताकि आत्मज्ञान, आत्म-संस्कार और आत्म-उत्थान के दीप की बाती की लौ शाश्वत रूप से प्रज्वलित रहे

पशुधन गणना के निहितार्थ

भारत जैसे कृषि प्रधान देश में कृषि के साथ साथ पशुधन की भी उपयोगिता महत्वपूर्ण है। आज भी देश के अधिकतर छोटे एवं मझोले किसान प्रत्यक्ष रूप से पशुओं से प्राप्त आय पर निर्भर हैं। कृषि पर निर्भर परिवारों को पशुओं द्वारा अनुपूरक आय प्राप्त होती हैं। खाद्यान्न के मामलों में हम अन्न के साथ-साथ पशुओं से प्राप्त दूध एवं मांस आदि का सेवन करते हैं। यह देखा गया है कि सूखा और अन्य प्राकृतिक आपदाओं के समय पशुधन ही ग्रामीणों के काम आता है। इससे पता चलता है कि हमारी प्राथमिक जरूरतों का एक बड़ा हिस्सा पशुओं के जरिये ही पूरा होता है।

पिछले दिनों पशुधन गणना-2019 रिपोर्ट जारी की गई। इसमें देश के सभी राज्यों और केंद्रशासित प्रदेशों को शामिल किया गया। इसमें तकरीबन 6.6 लाख गांवों, 90 हजार शहरी वार्ड और 27 करोड़ घरों एवं परिवारों की मदद ली गई। इस पशुधन गणना में पहली बार आधुनिक तकनीकों के माध्यम से आंकड़े जुटाए गए। सरकार पशुधन गणना से पशुओं की वास्तविक संख्या पता कर उनसे संबंधित

इसमें कोई दो राय नहीं कि पशुधन उत्पादन में वृद्धि होने से जीडीपी में ग्रामीण क्षेत्रों का योगदान बढ़ सकता है

नीतियों, योजनाओं और उनके क्रियान्वयन के लिए ढांचागत प्रारूप बनाती है। इस बार जारी रिपोर्ट के अनुसार देश में कुल पशुधन में 4.6 फीसद का इजाफा हुआ है। वर्ष 2012 में देश में पशुओं की संख्या कुल 51 करोड़ 20 लाख थी जो वर्ष 2019 में बढ़कर 53 करोड़ 58 लाख हो गई। इस बार की गणना में बताया गया है कि देश में कुल गोधन की आबादी 35.94 प्रतिशत है यानी 19 करोड़ 24 लाख जिसमें गायों की संख्या 14 करोड़ 51 लाख 20 हजार है जो पिछली बार की तुलना में 18 प्रतिशत अधिक है। वहीं भैसों की संख्या में एक प्रतिशत की बढ़ोतरी हुई है। साफ है कई राज्यों में चल रहे दुधारू पशुओं के संरक्षण प्रोग्राम से इनकी संख्या में इजाफा हुआ है। अन्य आकड़ों में भेड़ों की संख्या में 14.1 फीसद और बकरियों की संख्या में 10 फीसद की दर

से इजाफा हुआ है, वहीं ऊंट, सुअर, घोड़े और खच्चर की संख्या में काफी गिरावट देखी गई है। इनके अलावा मुर्गा-मुर्गी की संख्या में 16.8 प्रतिशत की बढ़ोतरी हुई है। इससे सीधा-सीधा यह निहितार्थ निकलता है कि उत्पादक पशुओं खासकर मादा की संख्या में काफी बढ़ोतरी हुई है, वहीं अनुर्वरक पशुओं की संख्या में कमी देखी गई है। यह इसलिए हो रहा है, क्योंकि वर्तमान दौर में ग्रामीण क्षेत्रों में भी लोग पशुओं से आय प्राप्त करने के लिए उत्पादक पशुओं को अधिक तवज्जो दे रहे हैं। इससे उन्हें आय की प्राप्ति हो रही है और उन्हें सरकार द्वारा भी प्रोत्साहन मिल रहा है।

यह सत्य है कि पशुधन उत्पादन में वृद्धि होने से जीडीपी में ग्रामीण क्षेत्रों का योगदान बढ़ सकता है। नीति आयोग के मुताबिक पशुधन के बेहतर इस्तेमाल से किसान अपनी आय को 10 गुना बढ़ा सकते हैं। साथ ही पशु संपदा में बढ़ोतरी होने से उन 45 फीसद युवाओं को वैकल्पिक रोजगार एवं आय उपलब्ध हो सकती है जो एनएसएसओ के मुताबिक वैकल्पिक रोजगार उपलब्ध होने की स्थिति में कृषि क्षेत्र छोड़ने को तैयार हैं।

(लेखक स्वतंत्र टिप्पणीकार हैं)

कितनी कारगर है डीबीटी योजना

स्कूली शिक्षा में सुधार का सही उपाय शीर्षक से लिखे अपने लेख में प्रोफेसर गीता गांधी किंगडन ने स्कूली शिक्षा की स्थिति पर गंभीर विश्लेषण किया है। उन्होंने डीबीटी को सशक्त बनाने तथा शिक्षकों की जवाबदेही तय करने से सरकारी स्कूलों की स्थिति बेहतर होगी, ऐसा विश्वास व्यक्त किया है। विभिन्न आंकड़ों के माध्यम से यह स्पष्ट करने का प्रयास किया है कि डीबीटी ही एक सशक्त माध्यम हो सकता है। कुछ देशों के उदाहरणों के माध्यम से उन्होंने अपनी बात को पुष्ट किया है, लेकिन क्या भारतवर्ष में डीबीटी योजना कारगर होगी? क्या यहां की जनसंख्या उन सारे देशों की कुल जनसंख्या से भी अधिक नहीं है? भारत शिक्षा के क्षेत्र में विश्व गुरु रहा तो आज केवल स्कूली शिक्षा ही नहीं समूची शिक्षा व्यवस्था में आ रही गिरावट पर विचार क्यों नहीं किया जा रहा? अनेक योजनाएं बनने के बाद भी आज स्कूलों तथा महाविद्यालयों में शिक्षकों तथा संसाधनों की भारी कमी है, क्या इस पर गंभीर विचार नहीं होना चाहिए? गली-गली में राष्ट्रीय तथा अंतरराष्ट्रीय निजी स्कूलों की बाढ़ है, वे फल-फूल रहे हैं, इनमें से किसी भी स्कूल की फीस हजारों में प्रति माह से कम नहीं है। शिक्षा, स्वास्थ्य तथा सुरक्षा केंद्र तथा राज्यों के कर्तव्य हैं। क्या 'एक राष्ट्र एक पाठ्यक्रम', 'एक राष्ट्र एक जैसी फीस' जैसी योजनाएं स्कूली शिक्षा में सुधार का सही उपाय नहीं हो सकतीं? डॉ. वेदप्रकाश, हंसराज कॉलेज, दिल्ली

भारतीय संस्कृति की सीख

दैनिक जागरण के 23 अक्टूबर के अंक में राजीव सचान का लेख, कत्ल होता कानून का शासन, पढ़ा। असहनशीलता पर अब किन्हीं बुद्धिजीवियों का कोई बयान

मेलबाक्स

नहीं आ रहा। हिंदू आतंकवाद की बात करने वाले अब कहां हैं? जब धर्म के आधार पर कुछ कट्टरपंथी सोच रखने वाले कमलेश तिवारी की हत्या कर दे रहे हैं। उनकी ईमानदारी तब झलकती जब वे हर कट्टरपंथी सोच का विरोध करते। सभी कट्टरपंथी सोच रखने वाले चाहे वे मुसलमान हों, हिंदू हों अथवा अन्य किसी धर्म के, सांप्रदायिकता के आधार पर नफरत फैलाने व कानून को हाथ में लेने का अधिकार किसी को नहीं होना चाहिए। पहली बात तो किसी भी धर्म विशेष के खिलाफ किसी को आपत्तिजनक बात नहीं कहनी चाहिए, दूसरे ऐसा कहने पर कानून में तय व्यवस्था के अनुसार ही आरोपी के खिलाफ कार्रवाई हो। किसी को यह अधिकार नहीं कि वह धमकी दे। धमकी देने वालों के खिलाफ भी तत्काल मामला दर्ज कर कार्रवाई होनी चाहिए। भारतीय संस्कृति धर्म के आधार पर भेदभाव की अनुमति नहीं देती है और ना ही किसी धर्म विशेष की पोषण की नीति है। भारत की नीति वसुधैव कुटुंबकम की है। यही कारण है कि भारत ने लगभग 900 साल की गुलामी देखी है, जिसमें आक्रमणकारी भिन्न संप्रदाय के थे, पर भारत ने अपनी नीति नहीं छोड़ी। इसका कारण है हमारी सबको साथ लेकर चलने की नीति। हिंसा भी भारत की नीति का हिस्सा नहीं है। भारतवासियों ने जब भी हथियार उठाएं हैं वो आत्मरक्षा में ही उठाए हैं। भारत की संस्कृति और सभ्यता

सतीश त्यागी काकड़ा, गाजियाबाद

रोजगार से जुड़े शिक्षा

युवा तमाम डिग्री तो हासिल कर लेते हैं, लेकिन उनमें

दुनिया के लिए आदर्श है।

नौकरियों के लिए भी ऊंची डिग्री वाले युवा आवेदन कर रहे हैं। यह स्थिति देश के लिए ठीक नहीं है। ऐसी व्यवस्था तो होनी ही चाहिए, जिसमें कम से कम हर शिक्षित युवा को सम्मानजनक रोजगार मिल सके। इसके लिए वर्तमान शिक्षा प्रणाली में परिवर्तन कर इसे रोजगार से जोड़ा जाना चाहिए gaganbansal12345@gmail.com

किसी कार्य विशेष का हुनर नहीं होता है। तभी तो छोटी

बाजार में अशुद्ध मिठाई

त्योहारी सीजन में खाद्य पदार्थ की नकली और मिलावटी चीजें बेचने की प्रक्रिया धुआंधार चलती है। समाज में बहुत से ऐसे मुनाफाखोर हैं जो थोड़े से फायदे के लिए खाने-पीने की चीजों में मिलावट करके दूसरों की सेहत बिगाड़ते हैं कई बार लोग इसके सेवन से जानलेवा बीमारी का शिकार हो जाते हैं। अब दिवाली का पर्व निकट है। ऐसे में बाजार में नानाप्रकार की मिठाइयां सजने लगी हैं। लेकिन इनकी शुद्धता की कोई गारंटी नहीं है। कोई ऐसी व्यवस्था होनी चाहिए जिससे लोग शुद्धता की जांच कर सकें।

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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

अपराध और आंकडे

वं इंतजार के बाद राष्ट्रीय अपराध रिकॉर्ड ब्यूरो (एनसीआरबी) ने दो साल पहले यानी 2017 के जो अपराध संबंधी आंकड़े जारी किए हैं, वे चौंकाने वाले हैं, खासतौर से देश की राजधानी दिल्ली के संदर्भ में। इन आंकड़ों से पता चलता है कि संगीन अपराधों में दिल्ली सबसे आगे है, जहां रोजाना हत्या, लूटपाट, बलात्कार, महिलाओं से छेड़छाड़ और गैंगवार जैसी घटनाएं होती हैं। हालांकि आंकड़े देशभर के हैं, इसलिए अपराध के मामले में और राज्यों की हकीकत भी सामने है। रिपोर्ट बता रही है कि अपराधों के मामले में उत्तर प्रदेश सबसे आगे है। साल 2017 में पचास लाख से ज्यादा मामले दर्ज हुए थे, जिनमें से तीन लाख से ज्यादा मामले अकेले उत्तर प्रदेश में दर्ज हुए। इसके बाद दूसरे नंबर पर महाराष्ट्र रहा जहां करीब दो लाख नब्बे हजार आपराधिक मामले दर्ज हुए। तीसरे स्थान पर मध्य प्रदेश, चौथे पर केरल, और पांचवें पर दिल्ली रहा। दिल्ली में दो लाख बत्तीस हजार आपराधिक मामले दर्ज हुए थे। इन आंकड़ों से जो तस्वीर बनती है, वह यह कि शीर्ष चार राज्यों और दिल्ली में अपराधी बेखौफ हैं।

दिल्ली में बढ़ते अपराध चिंता का ज्यादा और गंभीर विषय इसलिए भी हैं, क्योंकि यह देश की राजधानी है। इसलिए माना जाता है कि यहां सुरक्षा सबसे ज्यादा होनी चाहिए। लेकिन हकीकत में स्थिति ऐसी है नहीं। राजधानी होने की वजह से दिल्ली में रोजगार के लिए देश के दूसरे हिस्सों से बड़ी संख्या में लोग आते हैं। जाहिर है, दिल्ली पर आबादी का बोझ है और इसलिए अपराध भी बढ़ रहे हैं। आबादी की तुलना में पुलिस की भारी कमी है। दिल्ली पुलिस का बड़ा हिस्सा वीआइपी सुरक्षा में लगा रहता है और ऐसे में पुलिस आम आदमी की सुरक्षा से समझौता करती है। फिर दिल्ली में ज्यादातर आपराधिक घटनाएं दर्ज होती हैं, जबकि दूसरे राज्यों में ऐसा नहीं होता। अपराधों का बढ़ता ग्राफ सिर्फ दिल्ली तक ही सीमत नहीं है। देश के ज्यादातर महानगरों की हालत यही है। लोग काम की तलाश में इन शहरों की ओर जा रहे हैं और काम नहीं मिलने पर अपराध की दुनिया की चपेट में आ जाते हैं। लूटपाट और हत्या की ज्यादातर घटनाओं के पीछे पैसा ही प्रमुख कारण है और इनमें शामिल युवक कई बार बेरोजगारी की वजह से भी ऐसा करते हैं। जबकि आपसी रंजिश में हत्याओं की घटनाएं कम हुई हैं।

लेकिन उत्तर प्रदेश, महाराष्ट्र और केरल जैसे राज्यों में अपराधों का बढ़ता ग्राफ सीधे-सीधे कानून-व्यवस्था से जुड़ा है। अपराधों के मामले में उत्तर प्रदेश हमेशा से आगे रहा है। कहना न होगा कि भीड़ हत्या, बच्चा चोरी के शक में पीट-पीट कर मार डालने की वारदातें, गोरक्षकों के तांडव जैसी घटनाएं तो उत्तर भारत के राज्यों में ही ज्यादा हुई हैं। हैरान करने वाली बात यह है कि एनसीआरबी की इस रिपोर्ट में ऐसे मामलों के आंकडे नहीं दिए गए हैं। जबकि राजद्रोह और साइबर अपराधों के आंकड़े शामिल किए गए हैं। एनसीआरबी दरअसल वही आंकड़े जारी करता है जो उसे राज्यों की पुलिस मिलते हैं। लेकिन वास्तव में देखा जाए तो अपराधों की संख्या इन आंकड़ों से कई गुना होगी, क्योंकि बहुत सारे मामलों में पुलिस रपट ही नहीं लिखती। अपराधों के बढ़ने के पीछे बड़ा कारण पुलिस की निष्क्रियता और लापरवाही है। नागरिकों से पुलिस का सतत संपर्क भी खत्म-सा हो गया है। ऐसे में लगता है कि पुलिस का आमजन से कोई सरोकार नहीं रह गया है। फिर, पुलिस तंत्र खुद सदियों पुराने कानूनों को ढो रहा है और दुर्दशा का शिकार है। ऐसे में पुलिस के भरोसे अपराध रुकें तो कैसे!

अराजक विरोध

जस्थान में बहुजन समाज पार्टी के दो नेताओं के साथ पार्टी कार्यकर्ताओं ने जिस तरह का बर्ताव किया, उसे सिर्फ असंतोष या आपसी कलह का नतीजा कह कर सही नहीं ठहराया जा सकता। अगर कार्यकर्ताओं को कोई शिकायत थी तो उन्हें उचित तरीके से अपना विरोध जाहिर करना चाहिए था, लेकिन उन्होंने गलत तरीके से हिंसा और अपमानित करने का रास्ता चुना। गौरतलब है कि जयपुर में बसपा के राष्ट्रीय संयोजक रामजी गौतम कार्यकर्ताओं की बैठक में हिस्सा लेने आए थे। वहां पार्टी प्रभारी सीताराम मेघवाल भी थे। लेकिन इस बीच पार्टी के ही अन्य कार्यकताओं के एक समूह ने दोनों को पकड़ लिया, उनके साथ मारपीट की, चेहरा काला कर दिया और जूतों की माला पहना कर गधे पर बैठने को मजबूर किया। कार्यकर्ताओं की शिकायत है कि पार्टी नेतृत्व ने चुनावों के दौरान उम्मीदवारों से पैसे लेकर टिकट दिए, जिससे नाराजगी फैली। वहीं कुछ लोगों का कहना है कि यह पैसे के आपसी लेन-देन का मामला है। वजह चाहे जो हो, दोनों नेताओं के साथ जिस तरह व्यवहार किया गया, वह लोकतांत्रिक परंपराओं के विरुद्ध है और यह रास्ता आखिरकार अराजकता की ओर ही जाता है।

दरअसल, पिछले महीने राजस्थान में बसपा के टिकट पर चुने गए छह विधायकों ने एक साथ पार्टी छोड़ कर कांग्रेस में शामिल हो गए थे। तब ऐसे आरोप सामने आए थे कि पार्टी की उम्मीदवारी के लिए पैसे लेकर टिकट दिए गए। सही है कि आमतौर पर जमीनी स्तर पर जनता के बीच काम करने वाले कार्यकर्ता बहुत मेहनत से अपनी पार्टी के लिए समर्थन हासिल करते हैं और उसके नतीजे में चुनावों के दौरान पार्टी उम्मीदवारों को वोट मिलता है। लेकिन जीत जाने के बाद कोई नेता बिना किसी उचित वजह के निष्ठा और पार्टी बदल लेता है तो स्थानीय कार्यकर्ताओं और वोट देने वाली जनता के बीच निराशा फैलती है। लेकिन अगर नेताओं पर पैसे लेकर टिकट देने के आरोप थे तो क्या पार्टी के भीतर शिकायत करने और उसे दूर करने की व्यवस्था नहीं है? इसके अलावा, किसी भी मसले पर विरोध जताने के लिए लोकतांत्रिक तरीके अख्तियार किए जा सकते थे और उसका असर शायद ज्यादा बेहतर नतीजे देने वाला हो सकता था। लेकिन यह राजनीतिक प्रशिक्षण की कमी का ही नतीजा हो सकता है कि किसी वजह से उभरे असंतोष को जाहिर करने के लिए हिंसक रास्ता अख्तियार कर लिया जाए।

सवाल है कि अगर नाराजगी या विरोध जताने के इस तरीके का औचित्य खोजा जाता है और इसे सही ठहराया जाता है तो इसका अंत क्या होगा! फिर विरोध जाहिर करने के ऐसे तौर-तरीकों को उन घटनाओं से कैसे और कितना अलग माना जा सकता है, जिसमें भीड़ में तब्दील हुए लोग किसी व्यक्ति के खिलाफ हिंसा करते हैं और खुद को सही ठहराने के लिए कोई न कोई वजह बताते हैं। हमारे देश में राजनीति और व्यवस्था एक लोकतांत्रिक ढांचे और परंपरा के तहत चलती है। हर शिकायत के निपटारे के लिए एक समूचा तंत्र काम करता है। विरोध और असहमति जताने के तौर-तरीके ऐसे विकसित हुए हैं कि सबको अपना पक्ष सामने रखने और उसका समाधान खोजने के मौके मिल सकें। कार्यकर्ताओं और नेताओं को यह स्वतंत्रता है कि अगर वे अपनी राजनीतिक पार्टी के विचारों और सिद्धांतों से असहमत हैं तो इस्तीफा दे सकते हैं, एक निर्धारित प्रक्रिया का पालन करके पार्टी बदल सकते हैं। लेकिन अगर इन सबको ताक रख कर विरोध जताने के लिए हिंसा का सहारा लिया जाएगा तो ऐसा करने वाले की मंशा और उसके व्यवहार पर सवाल उठेंगे। ऐसे बर्ताव कानून की कसौटी पर कार्रवाई के दायरे में भी आ सकते हैं।

कल्पमधा

मनुष्य जब प्रार्थना करता है तो चाहता है कि कोई अजूबा हो जाए।

- तुर्गनेव

पाकिस्तान पर कसता शिकंजा

विवेक ओझा

एशिया प्रशांत समूह की रिपोर्ट में कहा गया है कि पाकिस्तान कानूनी और वित्तीय प्रणालियों के चालीस मानकों में से बत्तीस मानकों को लागू करने में असफल रहा है। इसके अलावा वह संयुक्त राष्ट्र से मान्यता प्राप्त इकाइयों, अभिकरणों और अन्य गैर सरकारी संगठनों द्वारा आतंक के वित्त पोषण और धनशोधन के खिलाफ कार्रवाई के लिए तय किए गए ग्यारह प्रभावी मानदंडों में से दस मानदंडों को पूरा करने में असफल रहा है।

३मैं तरराष्ट्रीय वित्तीय संस्थाएं और विभिन्न राष्ट्र मजबूत इच्छाशक्ति और समाधान केंद्रित फैसले तथा कार्रवाई पर ध्यान दें तो परिणाम के रूप में ऐसा ही कुछ सामने दिखता है जैसा फाइनेंशियल एक्शन टास्क फोर्स (एफएटीएफ) की बैठक में काली सची में आने से बचने के लिए पाकिस्तान की बेचैनी और हताशा दिख रही है। पिछले हफ्ते एफएटीएफ की हुई बैठक में पाकिस्तान को काली सूची में नहीं डालने और अगले साल फरवरी तक निगरानी सूची में ही रखने का फैसला किया गया। पाकिस्तान को काली सूची में जाने से बचाने में चीन, मलेशिया और तुर्की ने अहम भूमिका निभाई। इन देशों का मानना है कि आतंक के वित्त पोषण को रोकने के लिए पाकिस्तान प्रभावी उपाय करने में लगा है। इन देशों को लगता है कि पाकिस्तान में सब ठीक है। नियमानुसार किसी देश को काली सूची में डालने से रोकने के लिए एफएटीएफ में तीन सदस्य देशों को ऐसा प्रस्ताव करना होता है। वैश्विक स्तर पर

हथियारों की तस्करी. हथियारों की खरीद-फरोख्त को तरजीह देने, कालेधन के इस्तेमाल और धनशोधन, आंतकी संगठनों को किए जाने वाले वित्त पोषण को समस्या न मानने वाले समान विचारधारा वाले देश ही गलत संदर्भों में भी एक दूसरे को बचाने की कोशिश करते हैं। इसलिए यह कहते बनता है कि आतंक के धंधे पर चोट पर चीन, मलेशिया और तुर्की के मन में खोट।

आतंकी वित्त पोषण को रोकने में विफल रहने पर एफएटीएफ की कार्रवाई से घबराए पाकिस्तान ने दस अक्तूबर को आतंकी संगठन लश्करे तैयबा के चार सरगनाओं को गिरफ्तार किया था। पाकिस्तान प्रशासन ने दावा किया कि लश्करे तैयबा और हाफिज सईद के संगठन जमात उद दावा (जेयूडी) के पूरे शीर्ष नेतृत्व के खिलाफ कार्रवाई की जा रही है। पाकिस्तान की इस कार्रवाई की वजह एफएटीएफ की बैठक में होने वाले फैसले का खौफ है। संयुक्त राष्ट्र में इस्लामोफोबिया की बात कर पाकिस्तानी प्रधानमंत्री इमरान

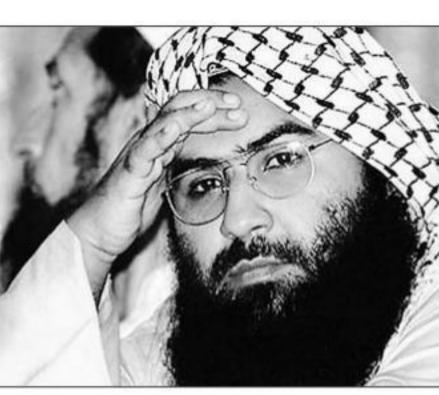
खान ने मुसलिम देशों को साधने की कोशिश भी की थीं। एफएटीएफ के एशिया प्रशांत समूह ने इस साल अगस्त में पाकिस्तान को आतंकियों को वित्त पोषण के मामले में काली सूची में डाल दिया था।

एफएटीएफ की इस कार्रवाई से पहली बार ऐसा लगा कि दुनिया में आतंकवाद पर लगाम लगाने के लिए कोई संगठन वाकई गंभीर हुआ है। आतंकी गतिविधियों पर नकेल लगाने की इस तरह की कवायद अगर होती रही तो आने वाले वक्त में आतंकवाद बीते दिनों की बात हो सकती है। पाकिस्तान पर नकेल कसने के लिए एफएटीएफ के एशिया प्रशांत समूह ने जो फैसला किया था, उसके पीछे उसने तर्क दिया था कि धनशोधन और आंतक के वित्त पोषण के नियंत्रण के बारे में जो सुरक्षा-उपाय बनाए

इसी आधार पर एफएटीएफ ने पहले से ही पाकिस्तान को निगरानी सूची में डाल रखा है। एशिया प्रशांत समूह की रिपोर्ट में कहा गया है कि पाकिस्तान काननी और वित्तीय प्रणालियों के चालीस मानकों में से बत्तीस मानकों को लागू करने में असफल रहा है। इसके अलावा वह संयुक्त राष्ट्र से मान्यता प्राप्त इकाइयों, अभिकरणों और अन्य गैर सरकारी संगठनों द्वारा आतंक के वित्त पोषण और धनशोधन के खिलाफ कार्रवाई के लिए तय किए गए ग्यारह प्रभावी मानदंडों में से दस मानदंडों को पुरा करने में असफल रहा है।

चौदह अगस्त को आजादी का जश्न मनाने के बाद पाकिस्तान ने एशिया प्रशांत समृह को साढ़े चार सौ

पेज की एक रिपोर्ट सौंपी थी, जिसमें आतंकी संगठनों और उन्हें वित्तीय मदद देने वालों के खिलाफ उठाए गए कदमों के बारे में बताया गया था। पाकिस्तान ने दावा किया था कि उसने लश्कर ए तैयबा, जमात उद दवा प्रमुख हाफिज सईद के खिलाफ मुकदमा दायर किया है और जमात उद दवा की सभी परिसंपत्तियों को जब्त कर लिया है। पाकिस्तान ने इस रिपोर्ट में यह भी कहा कि इस साल उसने संयुक्त राष्ट्र सुरक्षा परिषद द्वारा प्रतिबंधित आतंकी समृहों की परिसंपत्तियां जब्त कर ली हैं । गौरतलब है कि एफएटीएफ ने पाकिस्तान के लिए जिस सत्ताईस सुत्रीय कार्य योजना का निर्धारण किया था, उसके संदर्भ में पाकिस्तान द्वारा पेश किए गए दस्तावेज की समीक्षा की जानी है। इसके बाद ही एफएटीएफ पाकिस्तान का भविष्य तय करेगा। भारत एफएटीएफ और उसके एशिया प्रशांत समृह दोनों का ही सदस्य है और पाकिस्तान को अंतरराष्ट्रीय



गए हैं, उन्हें लागू करने में पाकिस्तान असफल रहा है। स्तर पर अलग-थलग करने में लगा है। एफएटीएफ की वार्ताओं में भारत के वित्त मंत्रालय, विदेश मंत्रालय और गृह मंत्रालय के अधिकारी शामिल होते हैं। पाकिस्तान के आतंकी वित्त पोषण के मुद्दे के विषय पर समीक्षा कराने की बात अमेरिका, ब्रिटेन, जर्मनी और फ्रांस ने की है।

पाकिस्तान का अब तक का इतिहास बता रहा है। कि वह वित्तीय अपराधों को रोकने और आतंकी संगठनों के वित्त पोषण को रोकने में असफल रहा है। एफएटीएफ की निगरानी में आने से बचने के लिए पाकिस्तान को छत्तीस वोटों में से पंद्रह वोटों की जरूरत थी। पाकिस्तान का कहना है कि लंदन पाकिस्तान को निगरानी सूची से निकालने में मदद देने

के लिए तैयार हो गया है। पाकिस्तान ने यह भी बताया है कि उसने आतंकी संगठनों को वित्त पोषण रोकने के लिए तीन अहम कदम उठाए हैं, जिनमें बिना टैक्स नंबर के विदेशी मुद्रा के लेन-देन पर रोक, आइडी कार्ड की कॉपी जमा किए बिना खुले मुद्रा बाजार में पांच सौ डॉलर से अधिक की मुद्रा पर प्रतिबंध और कई आतंकी समूहों पर प्रतिबंध और उनकी संपत्ति जब्त करने जैसे बड़े कदम शामिल हैं। एफएटीएफ ने पाकिस्तान से पूछा है कि लश्कर ए तैयबा, जैश ए मोहम्मद, जमात उद दवा और फलाह ए इंसानियत फाउंडेशन द्वारा जिन स्कूलों, मदरसों, अस्पतालों और एंबुलेंस का रखरखाव किया जा रहा है और जिसके लिए पाकिस्तान को सत्तर लाख डॉलर दिए गए हैं, क्या उसकी कोई जांच पाकिस्तान सरकार ने करवाई है। इस स्थिति में अंतरराष्ट्रीय मुद्रा कोष (आइएमएफ), विश्व बैंक, एशियाई विकास बैंक (एडीबी) और यूरोपियन

यूनियन (ईयू) के साथ ही क्रेडिट रेटिंग एजेंसियों मूडीज, फिच और एसएंडपी द्वारा भी पाकिस्तान की रेटिंग घटाने की संभावना बनी हुई है। पाकिस्तान ने आतंकी संगठनों और उनके मुखियाओं के खिलाफ आतंकवाद निरोधक कानुन-1997 के तहत कार्रवाई करने के बजाय बहुत ही हल्के कानूनों के तहत कार्रवाई की है। यह पाकिस्तान की मंशा पर सवाल खड़े करने के लिए काफी है।

सऊदी अरब को हाल में एफएटीएफ की पूर्ण सदस्यता प्रदान की गई है। सऊदी अरब पहला अरब देश बन गया है जिसे इस समूह की सदस्यता मिली है। अमेरिका में आयोजित समृह की सालाना बैठक के बाद सऊदी अरब को यह मौका मिला है। इस संगठन में सऊदी अरब की सदस्यता कई मायनों में दक्षिण एशिया में आतंक के वित्त पोषण को नियंत्रित करने में एक कारगर

कदम साबित हो सकती है। चूंकि एफएटीएफ में खाड़ी सहयोग परिषद (जीसीसी) के छह सदस्यों के अलावा यूरोपियन यूनियन भी सदस्य है, इसलिए यह इन सभी सदस्यों के वित्त पोषण प्रक्रिया को तार्किक बनाने में मददगार साबित होगा। सऊदी अरब अब किसी देश को अनुदान, ऋण देने से पहले सोचेगा कि कहीं इसका इस्तेमाल प्राप्तकर्ता देश आतंकी गतिविधियों को चलाने में तो नहीं करेगा। चूंकि जीसीसी एक क्षेत्रीय समूह के रूप में एफएटीएफ का सदस्य है तो संयुक्त अरब अमीरात, कुवैत, बहरीन, ओमान और कतर पर भी दबाव पड़ेगा कि वे पाकिस्तान जैसे देश को आर्थिक मदद देने के पहले सुनिश्चित कर लें कि पाकिस्तान ऐसे धन का क्या इस्तेमाल करने वाला है।

रोशनी जिंदगी है

कृष्ण कुमार रत्तू

🍞 क दीया आपकी जिंदगी को रोशनी से भर देता 🕇 है। यह सिर्फ कल्पना नहीं, बल्कि एक यथार्थ है और यह प्रत्यक्ष है। रोशनी से भरी हुई जिंदगी ही आपको चमका सकती है। रोशनी आपकी पहचान का एक आईना भी है। और इसी तरह की बातें लोग जब सुनते हैं तब जाकर उन्हें आपकी अहमियत का पता चलता है। यह चलन रोशनी और जिंदगी के बीच के रिश्तों को आदिकाल से परिभाषित करता रहा है। हालांकि समय के साथ-साथ यह परिभाषा भी बदलती चली जा रही है। शायद यह जिंदगी के चलते रहने का एक रोशन पथ है, जो आज भी बाकी है, चल रहा है।

आज की इस तेज रफ्तार और आपाधापी से भरी जिंदगी की नई यात्रा में आदमी के अंदर की रोशनी से चमकते हुए कई चेहरे अचानक मिल जाते हैं तो लगता है कि अभी जिंदगी की रोशनी शेष है। दरअसल, मिट्टी के जलते हए दीए से रोशनी की लौ जिंदगी की जिंदादिली की निशानी है जो हमें गांव की मिट्टी और वर्तमान संदर्भों के साथ न केवल जोड़ती है, बल्कि सहेज कर भी रखती है। बल्कि यों कहें कि शायद यही

वह विरासत है, जिसमें हम जी रहे हैं, अपने अतीत और भविष्य के बीच वर्तमान में चलते हए।

चंद रोज बाद आने वाले रोशनी के इस त्योहार को हम दिवाली के नाम से विरासत और मिथकों में दर्ज परंपराओं के साथ जोडते हैं। दरअसल, यह त्योहार उस उम्मीद का नाम है जो हमारे बीच जिंदा रहने के सबब के साथ बनी रहती है। उपभोक्तावाद और बाजार की चकाचौंध के बीच आज की जिंदगी

जब गांव की मिट्टी से कट कर दुनिया मेरे आगे शहरीकरण में तब्दील हो गई है, तब उस मिट्टी की खुशबू भी शेष स्मृतियों में ही जिंदा है। हालात ऐसे हो चले हैं कि अब ये भी धीरे-धीरे अपनी पहचान की परिधियों में खो रही हैं। महानगरीय जिंदगी की दुश्वारियों में

जकड़ा हुआ गांव का आदमी अब अपनी जमीन, जल, जंगल सबसे अलग-थलग होकर हताशा के उस कगार पर पहुंच गया है, जहां पर कभी भी एक दीए की लौ उसे जिंदा रहने का ढांढ्स बंधाती है। यह एक ऐसा सत्य है, जिससे हम मिट्टी के दीए को जलाते हुए और उसकी लौ के अलौकिक दृश्य को देखते हुए ही पा सकते हैं।

आधुनिक कहे जाने वाले आज के इस दौर में अपनी मिट्टी और गांव को याद करना ठीक ऐसा है जैसे

अपनी मां और अन्य को अंधेरे में ढूंढ़ना। ध्वस्त होती रिश्तों की इस कतार में आदमी का अपनापन भी अंधेरे में डूब चूका है और सत्य यही है। यह सब है और अगर है तो इसका सामना भी हमें करना ही होगा।

सवाल है कि क्यों न अमावस की अंधेरी रात में एक दीया हम अपनों के लिए और एक दीया अपने नाम का भी जलाएं, जिसकी रोशनी से तन, मन और रूह तक सब कुछ रोशनी में डूब जाए। हो सकता है कि हमारे

आसपास घिर आए अंधेरे के

लिए हम जिम्मेदार नहीं हों, लेकिन उसे दूर करने के लिए अपनी चेतना का प्रयोग तो कर ही सकते हैं। वैसे भी अंधेरा अगर घिर ही आए तो उससे छुटकारे के लिए रोशनी का सहारा ही अकेला उपाय है, वह रोशनी हम चाहे जहां से लाएं या फिर पैदा करें।

टूटते हुए रिश्ते और पीछे छूटती हुई मिट्टी की विरासत और अपनेपन की एक काशनी खुशबु अब कहां! मिट्टी का मोह अब पीछे छूट गया है, गांव के खेत-खलिहान अब अपनेपन का एहसास नहीं देते हैं। शहर की चकाचौंध और बाजारवाद के इस माहौल में आदमी कितना अजनबीपन महसस करता है। त्योहारों से जुड़ी संवेदनाओं और

भावनाओं पर तकनीक और कृत्रिम शोभा की वस्तुएं हावी हो चली हैं। लोगों की भावनाओं को भी उसी मुताबिक महत्त्व मिलने की नौबत है। यानी एक तरह से कहें तो अब भावनाओं की कीमत आंकी जाने लगी है। मिट्टी के दीये, तेल और बाती की जगह इलेक्ट्रॉनिक लैंप, झालर और दीयों ने ले ली है। अपनी मिट्टी से जुड़े अहसासों के तार कमजोर होते जा रहे हैं। यह कैसी विडंबना है कि यह सब कुछ अब आम-सा हो चला है।

अपने लिए मिट्टी का एक दीया कभी जला कर तो देखा जाए! इसके बाद ही पता चलता है कि अपने रिश्तों, अपनी मिट्टी और अपने आसमान की पहचान कैसी होती है। इसी में है मां-पिता, घर-गांव और कच्ची पगडंडियों की महक और शेष बची हुई रोशनी की कातर पहचान। अब एक दीया अपने लिए भी जला कर सुखद अनुभूतियों और रमृतियों में खोकर तो देखा जाए... रोशनी के त्योहार में अपने दीए की लौ में खुद से संवाद तो किया जाए...! शायद जिंदगी एक बार फिर से रोशनी से भर जाए! एक होशमंद इंसानी समाज का हिस्सा होने के नाते जिंदगी की लौ को रोशन करना और उसके प्रकाश से आसपास उजाला फैलाना हम सबकी एक जिम्मेदारी भी होनी चाहिए।

शिक्षकों की दशा

आप्तार पर हमें टेलीविजन और अखबारों में उच्च शिक्षा की गुणवत्ता को लेकर बहस सुनने- पढ़ने को मिल जाती है। यह सूचना भी आती रहती है कि किसी अध्यापक के कठोर वचनों के कारण किसी विद्यार्थी ने स्वयं को नुकसान पहुंचा लिया। लेकिन इस तथ्य पर कोई विचार नहीं करता कि स्वयं निजी शिक्षण संस्थानों और सहकारी शिक्षण संस्थानों में शिक्षकों की स्थिति कितनी गंभीर है। साथ ही, जहां अध्यापक अतिथि या सहायक रूप में कार्य कर रहे हैं, वहां भी उनकी स्थिति खराब है। दिल्ली के कुछ निजी स्कूल तो ऐसे हैं जो न केवल अध्यापकों को 'फैसिलिटेटर' समझते हैं, बल्कि उनके आइडी कार्ड पर भी अध्यापक की जगह 'फैसिलिटेटर' लिखा होता है। ये अध्यापकीय भावात्मकता के लिए अच्छा नहीं हैं। इससे शिक्षकों में शैक्षिक पेशे के प्रति धीरे-धीरे न केवल जुनून ख़त्म होता है, बल्कि जिम्मेदारी की गंभीरता भी कम होने लगती है। इसके अलावा सुबह-सुबह बस चालक और हेल्पर के साथ जाकर बच्चों को उनके निश्चित स्थान से लेना और शाम को उसी तरह छोड़ना भी अतिरिक्त मानदेय के कार्य हैं जिसके लिए उन्हें कुछ नहीं दिया जाता।

इसी तरह निजी महाविद्यालय और विश्वविद्यालय भी कम नहीं हैं। यहां प्रवक्ताओं से पढ़वाने के आलावा क्लर्की का काम भी करवाया जाता है। विद्यार्थियों का परिणाम पत्र बनाना, सेमिनार या सम्मलेनों में ड्यूटी, डिग्रियों की सूची बनाने से लेकर उनकी जांच करने जैसे तमाम काम हैं जो मजबूरन शिक्षकों को करने पड़ते हैं। शिक्षण संस्थानों में बढजती इस तरह की प्रवृत्ति अध्यापकीय पेशे के नितांत विरुद्ध है। ऐसे में अध्यापक के ऊपर रात-दिन इतना दबाव रहता है कि वह पढने-पढाने के बारे में कम और जैसे-तैसे अपनी

नौकरी बचाने के बारे में अधिक सोचता है। ऐसे में शिक्षक कैसे अपनी जिम्मेदारियां पूरी करेंगे?

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अखंडता को चनौती

भारत के संविधान में एकता और अखंडता की बात कही गई है। भारत एक लोकतांत्रिक गणराज्य है, जहां पर संविधान ही सर्वोच्च है। 1950 के पूर्व की बाधाओं को पार करते हुए भारतीय संविधान निर्माताओं ने धर्मनिरपेक्षता, समाजवाद, न्याय, स्वतंत्रता, बंधुत्व, एकता, अखंडता जैसे सिद्धांतों के साथ एक सर्वोच्च

एक तरफ तो हम 'एक देश, एक झंडा, एक संविधान' की बात तो करते हैं, लेकिन असल मायने में हम इसमें विफल साबित हो रहे हैं। अनुच्छेद 371(क) के तहत नगालैंड राज्य के संबंध में विशेष है कि हम पूर्वोत्तर के राज्यों से संघवाद स्थापित करने उपबंधों और अनुच्छेद 371 (ग) में मणिपुर राज्य के में क्यों विफल साबित हो रहे हैं? संबंध में विशेष उपबंधों का प्रावधान किया गया है। ऐसे ही पूर्वोत्तर के अन्य राज्य भी हैं जिनको विशेष प्रावधान दिए गए हैं। हाल में मणिपुर के दो उग्रवादी संगठनों– कॉर्डिनेशन कमेटी और एएसयूके और त्रिपुरा के एनएलएफटी ने 15 अक्तूबर 1949

को हुए दोनों राज्यों का भारत में

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

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

संविधान के जरिए मजबत लोकतंत्र और संघवाद स्थापित किया था। परंतु वर्तमान स्थितियों को देखते हुए यह कहना गलत नहीं होगा कि अखंडता और संघवाद की नींव खिसकती जा रही है। इस साल अगस्त में जम्मू-कश्मीर को विशेष राज्य का दर्जा देने वाले अनुच्छेद 370 के प्रावधानों को निरस्त कर 'एक देश एक संविधान' के संकल्प पर बढ़ा गया। साथ ही जम्मू-कश्मीर को दो केंद्र शासित प्रदेशों में बांट दिया गया- जम्मू-कश्मीर और लद्दाख। हालांकि सरकार ने यह अवश्य कहा है कि स्थिति सही होने पर आने वाले समय में जम्मू-कश्मीर को पुनः राज्य का दर्जा दे दिया जाएगा। पूर्वोत्तर के राज्यों को भी विशेष राज्य का दर्जा दिया गया है, परंतु इनकी सीमाएं पूर्व के विशेष दर्जा प्राप्त जम्म्-कश्मीर से कुछ कम हैं।

विलय के विरुद्ध प्रदर्शन किया। इन संगठनों ने कहा कि दोनों राज्यों का विलय भारत मे बलपूर्वक किया गया था और इसे मणिपुर और त्रिपुरा के इतिहास का काला अध्याय बताया। इसी के बाद कुछ दिन बाद ही नगालैंड ने अपने अलग झंडे और संविधान की मांग की। नगालैंड के क्षेत्रीय संगठनों जिनमें से एक एनएससीएन-आइएम ने अलग झंडे और संविधान की मांग की, जिसको भारत सरकार ने बिना विलंब के खारिज कर दिया। नगा संगठनों से वार्ताकार और नगालैंड के राज्यपाल आरएन रवि ने कहा कि बंदुकों के साये में उग्रवादी समृह के साथ अंतहीन वार्ता स्वीकार नहीं है। केंद्र सरकार दशकों पुरानी शांति वार्ता की प्रक्रिया को जल्द से जल्द निष्कर्ष पर पहुंचाएगी। समय-समय पर उठती इस तरह की मांग को भारत की

एकता और अखंडता के विरुद्ध देखा जा सकता है। इसका कारण कहीं न कहीं एक कमजोर संघवाद भी ्हो सकता है। भारत सरकार पर यह प्रश्नचिन्ह लगता

सूर्य प्रकाश अग्रहरि, प्रयागराज

पाकिस्तान की हकीकत

भारतीय सेना के साहस, पराक्रम और शौर्य की कहानी किसी से छुपी नहीं है। पाकिस्तान के रेलमंत्री शेख रशीद और विज्ञान एवं प्रघौगिकी मंत्री फवाद चौधरी उन्मादी बयानबाजी में मशगुल हैं। दहशतगदी के लिए मशहर देश पाकिस्तान के प्रधानमंत्री इमरान का उन्माद तो ह्यूमन राइट ऑर्गनाइजेशन में दिखा जहां उन्होंने पाकिस्तान के समर्थन में अट्टावन देशों के खड़े होने की बात कही। जबिक सच्चाई यह है कि संगठन में अट्टावन देश ही नहीं हैं। कभी सवा ग्राम का पटाखा बम और कभी हर साइज का मसाला बम होने की बात कह कर अपने बेतके बयानों के चलते इमरान सरकार के ये मंत्री पाकिस्तान की जनता के लिए जोकर बने हुए हैं।

पाकिस्तान की जनता इन मंत्रियों को जोकर समझती है और एक सभा में लोगों ने इन पर अंडे तक बरसाए। अगर जमीनी हकीकत की बात की जाए तो पाकिस्तान की जनता इन मंत्रियों की कार्यप्रणाली से त्रस्त है, क्योंकि इस वक्त पाकिस्तान की जनता भुखमरी और महंगाई से परेशान है। बावजूद इसके पाकिस्तान के प्रधानमंत्री इमरान खान और उनके जोकर मंत्री भारत को अपने बेतुकेपन से डराने की नाकाम कोशिश कर रहे हैं। पाकिस्तान के ये मंत्री भारत को अपने पटाखा बम के जरिए धमकी देने से बाज नही आते। इन पटाखा बमों से भारत की जनता और सेना घबराने वाली नहीं है। पाकिस्तान का हाल खिसियानी बिल्ली खंभा नोंचे वाला है।

योगेंद्र गौतम, उन्नाव