

Mismatch of perceptions leads to abuse

A recent Supreme Court ruling can lead to serious tribunal justice reform



WITHOUT CONTEMPT

SOMASEKHAR SUNDARESAN

The future landscape of justice delivery by tribunals in economic matters in India has the potential to be transformed by the recent decisions by five judges of the Supreme Court. Or perhaps not — until some future litigation presents itself against (yet) another violation of this very ruling.

The bench was considering the constitutional validity of provisions of the Finance Act, 2017, which materially and substantially altered the composition and terms of appointment of tribunals under various special legislation, pass-

ing the legislation off as a "money bill". Essentially, various other legislation that became law upon being passed by both Houses of Parliament had been sought to be materially amended by tucking the amendments in the Finance Act, 2017, which, as legislation primarily dealing with fiscal matters, could be passed by the directly-elected Lok Sabha alone.

At the heart of the challenge was Section 184, which essentially entailed the executive being totally empowered to determine what the qualifications, appointment, and terms and conditions of service of members of various tribunals should be. Tribunals are a form of providing easier access to justice, removing the informal trappings of formal courts, but that cannot erode the need for independence from the executive. That the executive got Parliament to pass legislation to empower the executive to be in charge of these facets, led to the independence of such a justice-delivery system being called into question.

Trickily, the issue of whether such legislation can be passed as a money bill has been referred to a larger bench, even while upholding the constitutional

validity of delegation of such power to the executive. A dissenting judgement, both on the validity of such delegation and the usage of the device of money bills by Justice D Y Chandrachud, makes for compelling reading. His, coupled with a partly-dissenting judgement by Justice Deepak Gupta holding that the delegation of powers to the executive is indeed excessive and unconstitutional, should hopefully be the much-quoted "appeal to the brooding spirit of the law" when a future bench takes a look at another abusive legislation.

The net effect is that the rules made by the executive pursuant to the delegation (held to be constitutional by the majority) have been unanimously struck down.

The case now disposed of in 2019, involved enforcement of past rulings of the Supreme Court — made in 1997 and 2010 — in the context of legislation passed in 2017 violating the directions and the law laid down in those earlier cases. Whichever party is in political power, the executive gets the political system to table and pass in Parliament legislation that directly violate the Supreme Court's past directions and rul-

ings. Although the system has been found to have returned a legislative product that clearly disregards the Supreme Court, the ruling does not nudge the system into a space of accountability and a disincentive for preventing future abuse.

The inability to enforce and hold to account violations of the apex court's rulings on constitutional matters and important facets of governance, and the resultant incentive to the executive to indulge in continued violation, is a key theme in Arun Shourie's book *Anita Gets Bail*. Each of the three rulings (the majority judgement and the two others) makes a compelling reading of yet another iteration of this theme. With such a resounding finding of violation of the law already declared by the apex court, the absence of any intervention for accountability, beyond a finding of unconstitutional conduct, is underwhelming.

Not too long ago, a two-judge bench of the Supreme Court imposed costs on the government for agitating a dispute on a question that had clearly been closed by past rulings, by engaging senior law officers to give a sense of

importance and re-agitate a closed issue. It had turned out that in the past too, costs had been imposed for one round of vexatious re-agitation of a closed issue. Among the three pillars of the state, in constitutional matters (as opposed to bilateral disputes), constitutional restraint leads to courts tending to appeal to the good sense of those in positions of governance. Those in the executive see this as a perpetual availability of a long rope. This mismatch of perceptions incentivises abusive conduct.

One clear direction this time has the potential for long-term positive impact on the higher judiciary and its experience and quality of work content. The government has been asked to correct the position of direct appeals to the Supreme Court from the tribunals, by instead, providing for appeals to the High Court, to division benches, if necessary. Such action is directed to be taken "preferably within a period of six months". This measure is a crying need — today, regulatory disputes over most economic legislation completely bypass the high courts. When high court judges go to the Supreme Court, without having handled such cases either as lawyers or as judges, the absence of domain experience, impacts justice delivery. This is a direction that must be complied with.

The author is an advocate and independent counsel. Tweets @SomasekharS

CHINESE WHISPERS

Congress postpones protest



The Congress has postponed its proposed protest on economic slowdown, earlier planned to be held at Delhi's Ramlila Ground on November 30. It will now be held after the winter session of Parliament concludes on December 13. The new date is December 14. Congress sources said the real reason for postponing the event was that they discovered the venue was booked, and by a Congressman at that. Former Lok Sabha member and Dalit rights activist Udit Raj, along with other outfits, has announced a protest there to oppose disinvestment in public-sector undertakings on December 1, and has booked it for November 30 also. When the party asked him if he could postpone his event, Raj declined.

Hopeful event

After postponing several such events that had been planned earlier, both in Srinagar as well as New Delhi, a day-long event has been organised on November 27 to showcase business opportunities in Jammu, Kashmir and Ladakh. The event, titled "Kashmironomics", will be held at a hotel in New Delhi. It will be addressed by Piyush Goyal, Union minister for railways and commerce and industry, and Smriti Irani, Union minister for textiles and women and child development. It has been billed as an event for "ushering in hope, reform and prosperity to Jammu, Kashmir and Ladakh".

Priyanka's faux pas moment



Congress general secretary in charge of Uttar Pradesh Priyanka Gandhi Vadra (pictured) recently faced her own Gautam Gambhir moment on social media. On her Twitter handle, she

shared a video showing a farmer purportedly lying unconscious following a brutal cane charge by the police in UP's Unnao district. The cops had taken action against a group of local farmers protesting inadequate compensation for land that had been acquired for the Trans Ganga City project. The state government soon released the full video, which showed the man first pretending to be unconscious and then running away quickly. Last heard, the video had been removed from Vadra's Twitter handle.

BRI: 'China's social governance of the world'

For the Chinese, the landmark project is more than just a giant infrastructure project

SUBHOMOY BHATTACHARJEE

China's Belt and Road Initiative (BRI), articulated by President Xi Jinping in 2013, is recognised as the largest infrastructure and investment project in global history. Spanning 68 countries, including 65 per cent of the world's population and 40 per cent of global GDP, it is popularly considered an ambitious blueprint for Chinese global hegemony. The BRI's lumpy progress, however, has also provoked predictions of its imminent demise. Talk to senior members of the Chinese establishment and they're equivocal about the first point and flatly contradict the second.

As of November 2019, Hu Billiang, dean of the Belt and Road Institute at Beijing Normal University, estimates that China will pour in \$10 trillion of funds into the projects in the next decade. By comparison, the 11 multilateral institutions have a combined purse of less than \$2 trillion (\$1,723 billion) for the same period. Hu says the Chinese government has already spent \$40 billion for BRI-related projects.

Yet BRI is much more than rushing through a bunch of infrastructure projects, says Zhang Weiwei, professor of international relations at Fudan University, Beijing. It is more about "set-

ting a sense of priorities. You set the compass first and then build a road". Zhang has been by turns a visiting professor at the Graduate Institute of International and Development Studies, and at the Geneva School of Diplomacy and International Relations. His CV includes assignments as speech writer for Deng Xiaoping and now Xi, which means unparalleled access to the minds of the men who have shaped China's policy. He surprised Francis Fukuyama during a debate on the Arab Spring a decade ago, saying it would soon turn into an Arab Winter. He now says Great Britain post-Brexit is on its way to becoming a Little Britain.

According to him, the Chinese concept is to build new points of growth that would "shape up as an irresistible force". The West has understood BRI as a game of chess among competing nations for economic supremacy. It is not so, he insists. It is like Weiqi, a Chinese strategy board game — which, incidentally, aims to surround more territory than opponents but where the loser also shares the spoils.

Six years after it was articulated, BRI is a way of life for the Chinese government, the party and all Chinese companies such as China Civil Engineering and Construction Company, which claims a presence in 89 countries. Every one of

A BRIDGE too far?

- As of 2019 China plans to spend \$10 trillion on projects in 71 countries
- These economies received 35% of global FDI and accounted for 40% of global merchandise exports.
- For the 70 BRI "corridor economies" (excluding China), projects in all

sectors (executed) under construction and planned) are worth about \$575 billion.

- Projects mainly related to infrastructure development in transport, energy, mining, IT and communications sector

In India's neighbourhood

PAKISTAN: 46 projects including China-Pakistan Road link

BANGLADESH: 3 including two port projects

SRI LANKA: 3 including development of International Financial Centre

its project is now potentially a BRI project, it notes, which "provides new models of international cooperation". The company also has a presence in India. The country has begun to hold international symposiums with titles such as "Significance of China's Social Governance to the World". The ambitions are transparent.

That ambition, according to Qi Zhenhong, President of the premier think tank China Institute of International Studies, is to "construct a common human destiny of the world, that of shared prosperity". This is unexceptionable when set against the shared poverty fostered by colonialism in the 19th and 20th centuries. Then, he adds that the goal of shared prosperity can be best achieved through the adoption of BRI. And BRI is not roads and power sta-

tions but a common governance model, both political and digital.

All senior officials are dismissive of the controversies over migration in Europe and the USA, which, they say, make multilateralism a casualty. "World affairs should not be faced by single nations," Qi argues. He does not answer whether the BRI concept was vetted through any international forum, except those called for by China. "We shall not expand territory (but) espouse a common sense of strategic stability," he intones. He describes BRI as a public commons provided for the world by China, which includes other than infra elements of energy, climate, anti-poverty, food and health security besides cyber security.

It is on cyber-security that Chinese experts make clear where they want the

rest of the world to head. Zhang says the internet revolution is unstoppable. But "it cannot be used for freedom of expression. It is meant to help people to use it to earn their livelihood". When it is used without this caveat, unpleasant things such as the Arab Springs happen. In Beijing and elsewhere in China, most global social media platforms are absent and even Indian government sites take time to load.

Of course, there is some good stuff in BRI. Beijing wants to export its Two Mountain theory — a line of thought from Xi that equates clear waters and lush mountains as assets of today comparable to those from gold and silver of yesteryear, a strong pro-environment position. Gu Xueming, dean of the Chinese Academy of International Trade and Economic Cooperation uses this as an example to establish that BRI is an economic imperative not a geopolitical clique.

And what about the obvious sovereign concerns for India because of the China Pakistan Economic Corridor that runs through parts of Jammu & Kashmir. As Qi adds colourfully: "Bad intentioned people in international community are hoping something bad happens between India and China. BRI may not be the only path but one of the paths."

The author was in China recently at the invitation of the Communication University of China

INSIGHT

Modernising the commercial vehicles fleet

The development of a sustainable replacement demand requires a comprehensive end of life policy for CVs



R SRIDHAR

It has been a long-standing demand of the commercial vehicles industry that the government should incentivise the scrapping of old trucks, which would encourage the sale of new commercial vehicles. The sale of commercial vehicles is cyclical in nature — it moves in tandem with the general economic growth, albeit with a small lag. The commercial vehicles industry has been very myopic in its world view; it has not grown beyond seeking to boost sales by demanding some fiscal support from the government to see through the lean times with replacement demand. Their proposal of the government incentive to scrap old trucks and buy new ones is too narrow. It lacks a deeper understanding of the marketplace of used trucks, application-user changeover — from primary through tertiary applications — the role of used truck finance and financiers. The development of a sustainable replacement demand requires a comprehensive end of life policy for commercial vehicles that understands changes in application of a truck through its life cycle, the economics of each application-user segment and the role of used truck finance.

Putting in place an end of life policy for trucks is never an easy political decision. The government has been

talking about commercial vehicle scrapping schemes for over a decade now but without mustering the required political courage to act. Hence, the popular support for urgent anti-pollution measures provides the government with a rare opportunity to put in place a sustainable end of life policy for commercial vehicles.

There are approximately one million commercial vehicles in India, which are more than 15 years old. Scrapping them and creating a replacement demand has the potential to add approximately \$15 billion to the sales of new commercial vehicles. This replacement demand is nearly 1.5 times the average annual sales of new commercial vehicles. The biggest beneficiaries of the huge replacement market will be vehicle manufacturers, ancillaries and vehicle financiers. This huge business opportunity should be used by the government to get the beneficiaries to put in place a sustainable and fully-funded voluntary retirement scheme to encourage and incentivise the modernisation of the nation's fleet. The government should also participate through some fiscal support.

It augurs well that the popular demand for clean air has enthused the government to take some remedial action that shows the desire of the government to reduce urban pollution even as it gives a push to sales of new commercial vehicles.

While the government's effort to solve two problems with one solution is indeed laudable and must receive our wholehearted support, merely incentivising scrapping will not immediately increase the sales of new commercial vehicles and hence it is not sustainable. There is an inevitable time lag between the scrapping of an old truck and the replacement demand for a new truck.

The average age of commercial vehicles plying in our country is over 10 years; a successful modernisation effort has the potential to bring down the average age to around five-six years over the next five years which will be in keeping with the economically advanced countries.

The proposal to give some cash incentive to the truck owner who scraps the truck is not sufficient in itself to modernise the nation's fleet. A 15-year-old truck is commonly used for short distance transportation of sand or garbage within towns and in rural areas. An operator scrapping these trucks will not buy a new truck, even if he gets a sizeable cash incentive to scrap his old truck. He will only buy a relatively newer truck and continue to transport sand or garbage. He will not and cannot buy a new truck. Therefore, such piecemeal efforts are bound to have a limited impact.

A sustainable end of life policy for commercial vehicles should have appropriate incentives for scrapping, the development of agencies to handle the scrapping which can also issue discount warrants in lieu of voluntary scrapping and the creation of a commercial vehicle modernisation fund.

Without doubt, the principal beneficiary of any fleet modernisation project will be the commercial vehicle manufacturers; but these manufacturers are neither central nor critical to the success of the project. The project is critically dependent for its success on the involvement and active participation of the used truck financiers.

The manufacturers play virtually no role in the creation, development and management of the after-market. The role, effectiveness and the flexibility of the used-truck financier is critical to the development of replacement demand. It is the used truck financier who stays with the truck during its application-user and ownership change through its life cycle.

Way back in 2003, when I was the CEO of Shriram Transport Finance Company Ltd, we facilitated a Deloitte study initiated by All India

The commercial vehicles industry has been very myopic in its world view; it has not grown beyond seeking to boost sales by demanding some fiscal support from the government to see through the lean times

Commercial Vehicle Owners' Association to put in place a complete policy framework for the modernisation of the nation's fleet. The policy paper was presented to then Ministry of Surface Transport. The central idea of this policy paper was the creation of a commercial vehicle modernisation fund (CVMF) with the involvement of all the stakeholders — the government, vehicle manufacturers and truck finance companies. The government and the private players would contribute to the fund which could be given suitable fiscal incentives under section 35 of the Income Tax Act, to encourage contributions to the modernisation of the nation's fleet.

The policy paper envisaged a voluntary end of life option to the truck owner, who would in response to suitable economic incentives, voluntarily give up his truck for scrapping. The government would certify scrapping agencies. The agencies would buy the 15-plus year-old trucks from the owners; pay them the salvage value and in addition, issue a discount warrant of ₹50,000 on behalf of the CVMF. The

scrapping agency would receive a fee for each truck scrapped from CVMF for its efforts.

The owner of the 15-plus year-old truck will use the scrap value together with the discount warrant as his equity to take a loan to buy and upgrade to a eight-year old truck. The seller of the eight-year old truck then will use the cash consideration and discount warrant to buy and upgrade to a four-year old truck. It must be understood here that in both these transactions, the role of the used truck financier is crucial, without whose valuation skills and flexible financing schemes the operator's ability to pay will be missing and the demand for newer truck will remain latent. The owner of the four-year old truck then approaches the vehicle manufacturer with the cash consideration and discount warrant as part of his equity to purchase a new truck. The vehicle manufacturer will eventually go to the CVMF and redeem the discount warrant.

The above model creates an excellent ecosystem for handling replacement demand for commercial vehicles in a transparent manner. It is sustainable as it is accountable and fair to all the stakeholders. The social impact study of the proposal will win accolades for the government from environment lobbies within and outside the country.

I suggest the government constitute a committee of experts immediately — to look at the proposal already submitted by the All India Commercial Vehicle Owners' Association to develop a robust, comprehensive and sustainable commercial vehicle end of life policy.

The author is executive vice-chairman & CEO, IndoStar Capital Finance Ltd. rsrithar@indostarcapital.com

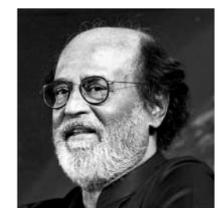
LETTERS

Historical mistrust

I write with reference to Ajai Shukla's review of Anit Mukerjee's book *The Absent Dialogue* — "India's civil-military friction" (November 20). The mistrust goes back to the 1857 mutiny. No one has answered why Indians of that time joined the army of a colonial power. Even the Congress party that was formed in 1885 did not ever try to dissuade Indians from joining the British Indian Army. In the most powerful democracy, generals fought for independence and created a democracy.

TR Ramaswami Mumbai

Create a niche



The recent war of words between Rajinikanth (pictured) and the ruling party leaders of Tamil Nadu and the unexpected turn of events with Kamal Haasan clearly points at

the heavy dose of "masala" in store for the people of the state. Rajinikanth is known to be a highly disciplined man, straight forward, honest, spiritual and committed and definitely not one who would bow before corruption. From his earlier statements and his hesitation to begin a party unlike Haasan reveals that the actor has no interest in politics.

Haasan has his own ideology and if Rajinikanth joins him won't there be a clash between ideology and principles? They both cannot come together to rule the state. It would be better if Rajinikanth came out with his own plan to mitigate the sufferings of the poor and the downtrodden and then step into the political arena alone like actors-turned-mass leaders MGR and Jayalalitha who worked with the help of grassroots supporters and created a niche for themselves.

M Pradyu Kannur

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

Strengthening regulation

Sebi should have taken up the issue of auditors' resignations

The Securities and Exchange Board of India (Sebi) has shortened the period for processing rights issues from the earlier 58 days to 31 days, and has also set a new time limit of 31 days on the disclosure of defaults by listed companies. In addition, it has enhanced the investment threshold in schemes offered by portfolio management services (PMS) and raised the net worth requirements for PMS providers. Sebi has also mandated the top 1,000 listed firms to release a Business Responsibility Report (BRR) — this requirement earlier applied only to the top 500 companies.

These measures should have an overall positive impact. The shortening of the time period for processing rights issues comes as a relief for companies raising cash. This reduces the risk of price volatility, and the rights issue pricing is less likely to vary substantially from the market price of listed shares. This also eases the anxiety of companies raising money; an issue made at a substantial discount, or a premium, to the market price can run into problems.

In addition, the ASBA (applications supported by blocked amount) requirements result in a simpler and more trustworthy allotment system. The investor needs to do less paperwork and she is dealing with a trusted intermediary — her own bank — and earning interest on the money during the allotment period. The increase in net worth norms for PMS providers from ₹2 crore to ₹5 crore provides a cushion against possible defaults in this segment of the financial services market. It should help weed out fly-by-night operators. For existing operators, ample time (36 months) has been given to comply with the new norms. But the rationale for doubling the minimum investment threshold from ₹25 lakh to ₹50 lakh is not clear.

Investors might be a bit disappointed with Wednesday's announcements. Market watchers had expected that the regulator would tighten the default disclosure norms much more stringently. In effect, a listed company has to disclose a default only on the 31st day after the payment becomes due. Investors were hoping that the reporting period would be reduced to 24 hours (within a day of a payment becoming due) and indeed, Sebi was said to be considering a 24-hour deadline. Given the porous nature of India's information ecosystem, defaults tend to be flagged long before 31 days anyhow. So this move may make little material difference in terms of information dissemination.

It was also hoped that the regulator would address the issue arising from abrupt resignations of auditors. There have been many such instances in the recent past, and auditors should be asked to give a comprehensive explanation of their rationale for dropping clients. A case may also be made for insisting the same auditor completes a full fiscal's audit due to the practical difficulties of appointing new auditors in the middle of a fiscal year. Extending the requirement for BRR to the top 1,000 companies in terms of market capitalisation is a good move in theory. A BRR can give investors a better handle on corporate governance if taken seriously. This move will encourage companies with ambitions of entering the big league to develop an internal culture of BRR.

Fixing crop insurance

There are many shortcomings in the design of the PMFBY

The decision by four private insurance companies to opt out of the government's flagship crop insurance programme — the Pradhan Mantri Fasal Bima Yojana (PMFBY) — is least surprising. The scheme, though better than most farm insurance instruments tried out with little success since the early 1970s, suffers from several inherent flaws which undermine its appeal to both insurers and farmers. While the insurance companies find it a loss-making business despite the hefty 90 per cent subsidy by the government, the farmers complain that the compensation is too meagre and comes with an inordinate time lag. The common impression that the subsidy is being cornered unfairly by insurance firms seems true but only partly. In the initial years after the launch of the scheme in 2016, salubrious weather had kept the crop damages and, hence, the reimbursement claims, low, thus, allowing the insurers to make good profits. But the situation has since changed with the aberrant monsoon rainfall — 9 per cent deficient in 2018 and 10 per cent excess in 2019 — inflicting heavy crop losses in several states. As a result, the compensation claims have exceeded the collected premium, thereby, eroding the insurance companies' profits and making crop insurance an unattractive proposition for them.

The shortcomings in the design of the PMFBY are, indeed, many and varied in nature. These include the involvement of banks in the mandatory insurance of the crops grown by borrower farmers and the assessment of damages on the basis of average crop loss in a given contiguous area rather than in the farmer's field. The banks usually adjust the compensation amount against the loans without the consent or knowledge of the farmers. This is stoking up trust deficit between farmers, banks and insurance companies. Besides, the involvement of the state governments in sharing the financial burden equally with the Centre, as also in estimating the losses through crop-cutting experiments and other means, is creating problems. The use of technology in damage evaluation is not happening to the desired extent. This is marring the credibility of the crop loss data and is also needlessly delaying the finalisation of reimbursement amounts. Moreover, states often release their share of the funds late and in installments, affecting the liquidity and paying capacity of the insuring firms. Many states have capped the sum assured at unrealistically low levels, which do not adequately cover costs. This apart, while this scheme covers most of the conceivable production hazards, right from prevented-sowing to post-harvest damage to the produce, it leaves out the all-important price risk, which matters the most to farmers.

These issues need to be suitably addressed to prevent the PMFBY from meeting the same fate as its predecessors. The Indian farmers, being typically heavily indebted small land holders, need crop insurance to hedge their risks which are steadily mounting due to growing menace of pests and diseases and, more importantly, rapidly changing climate. The frequency of erratic and extreme weather events has already aggravated. Devastating cyclones, which used to be rare, have become a common feature in coastal areas. These developments have added to the woes of the cash-stressed farmers. Unless they are provided reliable risk management avenues like conveniently accessible farm insurance, their distress is unlikely to abate.

ILLUSTRATION: BINAY SINHA



RCEP: Two futures for India and its industry

Our poor trade performance reflects poor industrial competitiveness. The sooner industry addresses this, the better for India

The Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership (RCEP) aims to bring together the 10 countries of Asean in Southeast Asia, Japan, South Korea, Australia, New Zealand, China and — until this month — India. These 16 countries account for almost half the world's population, a third of world GDP and trade, and are collectively growing at a rate that is double the rest of the world. After protracted negotiations that began in 2012, the 15 RCEP members (minus India) have committed to signing an agreement next year.

RCEP is good for India

Our negotiators had obtained a good deal for us in the RCEP. Agricultural products, including milk, were largely excluded from the agreement providing protection to the Indian farmer. For industrial products, less access was provided for China than the other 14 countries together with a longer adjustment period. For example, the RCEP covered 90 per cent of all traded items (tariff lines, in trade negotiator jargon) for Asean, but only 74 per cent of all traded items for China. For Asean, most items had zero duty from now, but for China there was a long adjustment period of 5, 10, 15, 20 and even 25 years. Finally, India asked for an automatic safeguard against a sudden surge in imports for any item from China, a unique provision. China had agreed for some 60 of our most sensitive items — we wanted more, but surely this can also be negotiated to an acceptable conclusion.

Certainly, there are things to negotiate, interests to protect and advance, and domestic political concerns to satisfy. But if a decisive prime minister who has emerged as a world leader, heading a government with a strong majority, can't address these issues, then who can?



INDIA'S WORLD?

NAUSHAD FORBES

I wish to focus in this article on industrial competitiveness — and two futures for Indian firms. The voices we hear on trade issues are the ones moaning in all the coverage of RCEP in our media — for example, food processing firms worried about competing with the import of cheese from New Zealand, and steel and chemical firms concerned about China. They have argued for, and obtained, either exclusion of their items from the free trade agreement, or highly extended adjustment periods. If we cannot be confident of competing effectively with China in even 10, 15 or 25 years, do we deserve to be in business?

What it will take to compete

Let us start with costs. Material costs are largely similar around the world — unless one has to buy the item at a higher price from a protected domestic firm. If we protect our steel producers, we spread costs and inefficiency throughout our engineering sector. Low or no tariffs are the best way to ensure our firms get competitive inputs — and our consumers get products at world-competitive prices. This ball is squarely in the government's court — and they have fumbled badly with nine rounds of tariff increases in the last three years.

Labour costs are a big variable between countries. As China has grown into a mid-income country, its wages have risen dramatically. Higher wages must be matched by higher productivity, or one will be uncompetitive. We may look to the government for a better educated and skilled workforce, but the primary responsibility for training and productivity lies within each firm.

The rupee is also overvalued — its real effective exchange rate has appreciated by 20 per cent over the last five years. A rupee at 80 to the dollar would set

Is Sri Lanka the next Argentina?

As Sri Lanka makes another crucial political transition, it faces a major risk of macroeconomic instability. Minimising that risk will depend, above all, on whether the country's newly elected president, Gotabaya Rajapaksa, can defy his reputation and embrace inclusive politics.

This idyllic island in the Indian Ocean was once a star performer. In the years following independence in 1948, progress on leading social indicators such as poverty, infant mortality, and primary education put Sri Lanka well ahead of its neighbours — India, Pakistan, and Bangladesh — and was the envy of much of the developing world. But, for several decades now, divisiveness and conflict have been the serpent in this paradise.

As a result, Sri Lanka has been strikingly prone to macroeconomic instability. According to data compiled by Carmen Reinhart and Christoph Trebesch, the country has spent nearly 70 per cent of the last four decades in macroeconomic stabilisation programmes with the International Monetary Fund. In South Asia, only Pakistan has spent a greater proportion of this period under the International Monetary Fund's (IMF) supervision. Bangladesh has had Fund programmes around 50 per cent of the time, and appears to have graduated from IMF tutelage in 2015. And India has had IMF programmes only about 15 per cent of the time, and none since 1995.

Macroeconomic instability reflects deeper social and political factors. According to the late Albert Hirschman, one of the leading thinkers on economic development, "It has long been obvious that the roots of inflation ... lie deep in the social and political structure in general, and in social and political conflict and conflict management in particular." Even Milton

Friedman, who famously said that inflation was "always and everywhere a monetary phenomenon," conceded that it had deeper social causes.

Essentially, macroeconomic pathologies arise from conflicts over how to divide the economic pie. Unless these conflicts are resolved, they lead to unsustainable fiscal deficits, excessive foreign borrowing, inflation, and exchange rate instability. Latin American macroeconomic irresponsibility, exemplified by Peronism in Argentina, involved favouring urban and government workers. Sub-Saharan Africa's periodic crises, meanwhile, often reflect ethnic and regional conflicts. More generally, Dani Rodrik has shown that external shocks give rise to macroeconomic instability when a society's mechanisms for burden-sharing do not work effectively.

Sri Lanka suffers from cleavages along many different lines, notably ideology, ethnicity, language, and religion. Michael Ondaatje's gorgeously sensitive novel, *Anil's Ghost*, captures the human, personal consequences of these conflicts.

Arguably, Sri Lanka's original sin was the assertion of linguistic dominance in enshrining Sinhala as the only official language in the 1956 constitution. By the 1970s, Sri Lanka was facing a communist insurgency. Then came the decades-long ethnic conflict involving the Tamils, which nearly tore the island asunder. After that war's brutal conclusion in 2009, religious cleavages came to the fore, reflected in the Easter bombings earlier this year by Islamic extremists.

These conflicts have exacted a heavy economic toll. Societies with stable social and economic compacts between citizens and the state tend to have healthy rates of tax collection, reflecting a broad willingness to share the burden of paying for the

things right. Other things add to our cost of doing business in the country. We can be justifiably proud of our jump in the World Bank's Ease of Doing Business rank, but if you ask the average Indian firm whether it is easier for them to do business today than five years ago, the answer would be no.

The buck stops with industry

Ultimately, it is the choice we make in industry that will determine our future. One alternative is to accept that after 72 years of independence, 28 years since reforms began, and another 10 to 25 year adjustment period, we still will not be able to compete with the best in the world. We can then lobby against free-trade agreements, demand protection from the government, and build a moat to keep the world out of India. This policy, which we followed for decades, protected incumbents and kept us poor. The second alternative is to continue what we began 28 years ago — to open up to the world, let the best in, and encourage our best to go out and build businesses that lead the world. Many Indian companies have been doing just this — but are still not typical. Competition from imports is the best way of ensuring that it is this type of firm that predominates.

A 10-year project

Let us set ourselves a project. In 10 years, every Indian company must either be able to compete with the best in the world, or fold up. There are three types of Indian firms. There are those, mainly in commodity businesses with thin margins and little product differentiation, which are most affected by the cost of doing business in India. They need to turn from growling at free-trade agreements to growling at anything that adds to our costs — exchange rates, power tariffs, export paperwork, port congestion, fickle policies, and a new regulation from company affairs every other week. Then, there are the Indian firms which are today happily doing business around the world — software companies, of course, but also motorcycle companies like Bajaj Auto exporting 40 per cent of their output, specialty chemical companies like Aarti Industries exporting over 50 per cent of theirs, and infrastructure companies like TVS Logistics acquiring companies around the world. They need to articulate their interests in free-trade agreements — such as the RCEP — so our government is encouraged to pursue them. And lastly are those firms which have built world-beating businesses that are today domestically focused — our private banks and non-banking financial companies. They need to state their interests in access to world markets. In 10 years, the Indian market will be too small for them, and they will need the RCEP Asian market that is eight times larger than we are.

In other words, it is a question of confidence for Indian industry. Do we seek to hide from the world, secure and protected in our own fortress? Or do we have the confidence to let the world in and ourselves go out and compete with the world on its terms? The RCEP provides us with the stepping stones to integrate with the best in the world — a long adjustment period, graduated tariff reduction, hundreds of excluded items, friends like Japan and Singapore that support our negotiating position. The prosperity of future generations depends on India joining the RCEP before the deal is concluded early next year.

The writer is co-chairman Forbes Marshall, past president CII, chairman of Centre for Technology Innovation and Economic Research and Ananta Aspen Centre. ndforbes@forbesmarshall.com.

Japan's harmonious contradictions



BOOK REVIEW

PARTHA BASU

Even before you've gone through much of Pico Iyer's book, you will realise two of its essentials. First, it's easy on the eye and, second, it's challenging. The book moves forward with quick snapshots of Japan the nation and of the Japanese people with no discernable narrative arrangement, each click individually relevant — much like those black-on-white, thin-brushed Japanese postcards stacked and then dealt out for you — but each digging deeply into the Japanese psyche and ethos, locking you in until the next card. Ironically, the pro-

cess parallels Mr Iyer's frequent promptings about the paradoxes (used by him as positives) that appear to be an integral part of the country and its people. We all know how the Japanese had shielded Michelangelo's David from the public eye with artificial fig leaves while saying nothing about families and neighbours exposing themselves in community baths, but Mr Iyer says a lot without being half as facetious as this. His short paragraphs and sometimes *haiku* — like single sentences that constitute 90 per cent of the book make enjoyable reading and he imbues each with insight and meaning that are not to be taken lightly.

However, as Mr Iyer concludes in his prelude distilled from his 32 years of living in the country with his Japanese wife Hiroko, "The first rule for any foreigner in Japan is not to talk of this-or-that, the second is never to take anything too seriously". To that I'd add, the only people in the world today who don't learn from

Japan are the Japanese. For most readers, whether familiar with Mr Iyer's emblematic writings or not, this apparent (I use the word with care) contradiction in terms forms the leitmotif of his Japanese reflections and you will find this coming through in his stylish prose.

When I visited Japan in the mid-1990s, I declared that this was the most conformist nation in the world, indeed uncomfortably so. I understand now how wrong one could be. Mr Iyer relates the Buddha's principle of flexing his teachings to reach disparate groups of devotees: "What we call inconsistency" he writes, "speaks in fact of a consistent wish to do the appropriate thing"; the operative words that didn't occur to me then were



"consistency" and "appropriate thing". This book, for any number of reasons, is a primer for Mr Iyer's "Beginner" who believes that it's disgraceful to expose one's body yet flagrantly opens his or her mind without pause.

The other widely held conviction is that Japan is not only conformist but regimented as well and the sight of a

A BEGINNER'S GUIDE TO JAPAN

Author:

Pico Iyer

Publisher:

Penguin

Price: ₹499

Pages: 210

office pleasure parlours where feeling ill at ease is the visitor's problem, not the local's. Mr Iyer presents this poser several times in his book and at one point relates his experiences at US's West Point Military Academy to explain how

regimentation tightens the bonds not only between cadet and cadet but also between cadet and country. Naive, maybe, but the alternatives, we know, can be dreadful. The terrible punishments meted out to Allied prisoners of war by invading Japanese forces during World War II were carried out in accordance with strict rules and conventions.

Since Mr Iyer is a consummate craftsman who understands that he is writing a beginner's guide, he doesn't allow his book to become too heavy with elucidations of the many omnipresent principles of Japan — simplicity, clarity, emptiness and so forth — and uses his subliminal humour to surface as a natural counterpoint. For instance, an unusually longish narrative of his complicated and wildly funny exchange with an Apple delivery boy and the girl from the Apple Japan office concerning the replacement of his damaged keyboard is top-drawer. At other times Mr Iyer extols the Japanese virtues of silence; as he says, "Words only separate what silence brings together", which I think is, forgiving the

convolution, an aphorism worth a thousand words.

Ironically, though various critics use the expression "elegant" repeatedly to describe Mr Iyer's writings. Consider his take on Apple Computers. "It remakes the world by keeping most of the world out" and then, "As the world grows more cluttered, the spare Japanese aesthetic (of clean sushi bars and minimalism) grows even more appealing". Mr Iyer could have stopped at that, but he doesn't and there lies his skill; he ends this capsule with, "In a global Varanasi, nothing so clarifies as a bamboo flute in an empty room". The images are sparse, but one needs to stop and reflect at length.

The problem with a winning book when it involves an extremely interesting place and its appealing people is that it may leave the reader thinking more about the book than its subject matter. But these two positions have been known to coalesce in Pico Iyer's work. The true reader will, therefore, have to read this book so totally that people will believe that he hasn't read it at all.

Opinion

THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 21, 2019

NATIONALITY REDEFINED

Union home minister Amit Shah

The process [NRC] will be carried out across the country. No one irrespective of their religion should be worried. NRC doesn't discriminate against any Indian citizen on the basis of religion



TAXING DIVIDEND

THE FAIREST SYSTEM IS DIVIDEND IMPUTATION, WHERE TAX IS PAID ON THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN THE CORPORATE TAX RATE AND THE RATE FOR THE SHAREHOLDER

End triple taxation

SIDDARTH M PAI & TV MOHANDAS PAI

Siddarth is managing partner, 3one4 Capital & Mohandas is chairman, Aarin Capital Partners
Views are personal



tion of distribution tax by the company. Therefore, the tax was computed by the company with reference to the net amount. Due to difference in the base of the income distributed or dividend on which the distribution tax is calculated, the effective tax rate was lower than the rate provided in the respective sections. In order to ensure that tax is levied on proper base, the amount of distributable income, and the dividends which are actually received by the unit holder of the mutual fund or shareholders of the domestic company, as the case may be, were required to be grossed up for the purpose of computing the additional tax."

The above word salad was graciously explained by the tax department as an example—"where the amount of dividend paid or distributed by a company is ₹85, then DDT under the amended provision would be calculated as follows: Dividend amount distributed = ₹85 Increase by ₹15 [i.e. (85*0.15)/(1-0.15)] Increased amount = ₹100 DDT @ 15% of ₹100 = ₹15 Tax payable u/s 115-O is ₹15 Dividend distributed to shareholders = ₹85"

Thus, in 2014, all finance professionals and corporates were reintroduced to the elementary school mathematical concept of grossing up. The department's stance was that since the introduction of DDT in 1997, it was misapplied by corporates on the amount distributed as dividend, and should instead be included as part of the dividend amount declared and subsequently

paid out. This is illustrated in the accompanying graphic. Corporate India should be happy that this change was prospective instead of retrospective, sparing them the accumulated interest, penalties, and fines for lower taxes.

The Finance Act 2016 saw the delicate balance established by the introduction of DDT in 1997 being tinkered with again. Thereon, dividend amounts in excess of ₹10 lakh received by an Indian resident from a company would be taxed thrice—twice in the hands of the company via corporate taxes and DDT, and once in the hands of the shareholder in excess of 10%. The Finance Act (2) 2019 saw the introduction of the "super-rich" surcharge of 37%, further exacerbating the attractiveness of dividends. **The sum total of all these changes is that dividends are taxed thrice at a cumulative rate of 47.36% of the pre-tax profits! One income. Two parties. Three taxes.**

For a company with a turnover of ₹1,000 crore and a profit of ₹100 crore, tax expenses would be ₹25.63 crore. Assuming they declare a 100% of their ₹74.37 crore post tax profits, they would need to fund an additional ₹12.99 crore as DDT. This drives up the effective corporate tax rate for those declaring dividends to 43.10% (25.63% corporate tax plus DDT of 17.47%, as per the grossed-up regime), thereby increasing the cost of capital for corporates. Due to the grossing up provisions, the post-tax profits would have the DDT loaded on to it, lowering the amount available for distri-

bution to ₹61.38 crore. Assuming that the shareholders are in the highest tax bracket, their dividend income of ₹61.38 crore would cost them another ₹8.74 crore as tax, bringing the total tax to ₹47.36 crore (see graphic).

The tax department's motive on taxing the means to return gains to shareholders via dividends and buybacks was to encourage them to invest more into their business. But, corporate India doesn't require tax disincentives to spur investments, they do so based on available opportunities. Firms which are in a growth phase choose to reinvest their earnings so long as the cost of capital is low; firms that are mature choose to return the money back to shareholders so that they can decide to invest the money as they believe. These economic axioms are deeply ingrained in business decision making, and excessive taxes distort these core principles.

It behoves the current government to step in and unravel these dividend distortions. Triple taxation is a perversion of the tax system, and systematically drives up the cost of capital for Indian businesses. The fairest system is the system of dividend imputation, followed by countries like Australia and New Zealand, wherein tax is paid on the difference between the tax rate for the corporate and the tax rate for the shareholder. Barring this, either DDT or the tax paid by the shareholder should be removed, or rationalised to reduce the overall tax rate on corporates to below the current 43.10% level.

This government created history by removing triple *talaga*, corporate India hopes that the prime minister, Narendra Modi, can boost investor sentiment by removing this pernicious form of triple taxation as well. If not, investors in Indian companies who rely on dividends will find themselves reminded of *Hotel California* by The Eagles. "You can check out any time you like, But you can never leave!"

(₹ crore)	Pre 2014	Post 2014	Company tax	₹ crore	Dividend distribution tax	₹ crore	Dividend taxation - shareholder	(₹ crore)
Amount declared as dividend	100	100	Turnover	1,000	Gross amt available for distribution (A-B)	74.37	Dividend amount	61.38
Grossing up for DDT @15%		117.65	Profit (A)	100	DDT @ 15%	11.16	Taxable dividend	61.37
DDT @ 15%	15	17.65	Tax @22%	22.00	Surcharge @12%	1.34	Dividend tax @10%	6.14
Add: Surcharge (12%)	1.8	2.12	Surcharge @12%	2.64	Cess @4%	0.50	Surcharge @37%	2.27
Add: Cess (4%)	0.67	0.79	Cess @4%	0.99	Tax amount (D)	12.99	Cess @4%	0.34
Amount paid to the govt	17.47	20.56	Total tax (B)	25.63	Dividend declared & distributed (C-D)	61.38	Tax amount	8.74
Increase in taxes		17.65%	Effective tax rate	25.63%	Effective DDT rate	17.47%	Effective tax rate	14.25%

Onus of fixing GST not just the central government's

While GST Council must work on tackling ITC fraud better, states must agree to removing exemptions & hiking rates

GIVEN STATE GOVERNMENTS have not got their GST compensation—this is guaranteed when their revenue-growth falls below a certain level—for the months of August and September, and the chances of getting the full compensation for the rest of the year also look bleak, it is not surprising they are up in arms. A joint statement by the finance ministers of four non-BJP states—Kerala, Punjab, Rajasthan and West Bengal—points out that, with GST comprising nearly 60% of the tax revenues of states, this is "literally bringing activities of the States to a grinding halt". A day prior to this, West Bengal finance minister Amit Mitra wrote to union finance minister Nirmala Sitharaman, asking her to convene a meeting urgently to discuss ways to augment revenues, and to set up an effective mechanism to detect and avert input tax credit (ITC) frauds. It is not clear how large ITC fraud is, but given the Centre caught ITC frauds worth ₹11,500 crore last year, the total fraud could be in the region of ₹100,000 crore a year; estimates are the government catches 10-15% of theft. Since higher collections of ₹100,000 crore per year would be enough to ensure the states get fully compensated, Mitra was right in pointing out that development of business intelligence systems to detect such frauds, and setting up dedicated units in each state, is the need of the hour.

It is, of course, not clear how Mitra thinks all fraud can be caught, and within a few months. And, surely the fact that the economy is growing much slower than last year—FY20 growth could be 5.5%-5.75% as compared to FY19's 6.8%—would also have contributed to the slowdown in collections; more so, when you look at how sales of automobiles that are taxed at the highest rate have fared so far in the year.

While it is true that states were promised a compensation, the four state finance ministers are stretching credulity a bit when they say "it was recalled that the assurance of GST compensation was a necessary enabler in States agreeing to subsume their fiscal sovereignty into GST" since the suggestion is that Sitharaman dip into the Centre's tax kitty to pay states the compensation. The GST Act did provide for compensation—paying this if state revenues failed to grow at 14% was more than a bit generous—but, this was to be paid out of the compensation cess; if the cess fell short—as it is now, thanks to the slowdown in sales of automobiles, for instance—there is no mechanism to ensure the states get paid.

The only way to ensure GST grows faster, then, is to reduce the number of items that are not taxed at all, and to raise the tax slabs of 5% and 12% and, over time, also reduce the 28% rate so that GST settles in the 14-16% range; as the number of slabs, and the gaps between them reduce, tax evasion will also fall. And, while it is true that there are problems with the GST system that need to be ironed out, it has to be worrying that 28 months after GST started, the annual returns for even FY18 have not been filed as yet; the last date was this month, and that has just been pushed to December 2019. Nor has, till now, an acceptable solution been implemented for invoice-matching that is at the heart of the GST system. So, when a special GST meeting is called, the states would do well to focus on the real issues instead of trying to exert pressure on the Centre to dip into its own kitty to pay them compensation.

ULBs must get finances right

CAG report on Karnataka highlights problem areas

WITH FUND DEVOLUTION from states often delayed and inadequate, one would think that urban local bodies (ULBs) would look to strengthen their tax revenues—from property tax and/or professional tax. However, as a recent report from the Comptroller and Auditor General (CAG) of India on ULBs in Karnataka shows, even in a top-tier city like Bengaluru, local governments have dropped the ball on tax collection. The Bruhat Bengaluru Mahanagara Palike (BBMP), which had been named the worst performing ULB in Janaagraha's *Annual Survey of India's City Systems 2017*, saw its collections as a proportion of the budgeted estimate slip to 60% in 2017-18, from 66% in 2015-16. Overall, ULBs in the state saw tax collections as percentage of demand raised fall to 54% in 2017-18, from 62% in 2013-14. While the report doesn't state reasons to explain the shortfall, the CAG's findings in the case of the Shimla (Himachal Pradesh) ULB are instructive—authorities not only failed to collect any fraction of a ₹1.77 crore tax demand raised against a company, they also didn't take any punitive or legal action for three years.

The CAG report also talks of how BBMP has repeatedly defaulted loan repayments despite provisioning for these in the budget and availability of sufficient funds, including the portion devolved from the state government. This has caused an avoidable penal interest of ₹20.07 crore to be levied. Such mismanagement is not specific to the ULBs. While the 13th Finance Commission had recommended that states set up a property tax board to assist ULBs in coming up with a transparent process to assess property tax, Karnataka hasn't done this.

The Economic Survey 2017, based on a Janaagraha analysis, had stated that municipalities could earn more by correctly assessing the tax due. In the case of Bengaluru and Jaipur, Janaagraha had estimated that the cities collected just around 5-15% of the total property taxes due in principle. Bengaluru, for instance, could raise as much as ₹4,360-8,694 crore as tax from property. Matching real-time satellite imagery with cartographic archives could help identify untapped property tax potential, even evasion. But, as the CAG report shows, the problem is not just of inadequate funds, but also of poor handling of available funds. While OECD countries have an average property tax collection of around 1.9% of GDP, India's is a much lower 0.2%. The system, thus, is in dire need of a revamp. Ranchi, with its PPP model of tax collection, can be one example—property taxes rose five times in the city in just two years. Raising money via municipality bonds to fund infrastructure could be another. Once ULBs gain a satisfactory record on generation of tax revenue, even municipal bonds that could bolster ULB finances significantly could take off.

RightSTAND

Delhi HC refusing to quash rape FIR after accused agrees to marry petitioner a strong push for justice

THE DELHI HIGH Court has refused to quash the FIR in a rape case after the accused agreed to marry the woman—in similar instances, the Bombay and Kerala High Courts had quashed FIRs using Section 482 of the Criminal Procedure Code that allows for the inherent powers of the High Court to prevail over the provisions of the CrPC if an order of the Court under this provision is passed to, among other things, "secure the ends of justice". In this particular case, Justice Brijesh Sethi opined that rape falls under the category of severe and heinous crime, which could not be quashed even if parties had agreed to settle the dispute. So, even if the person had decided to marry the woman, the criminal case shall continue against him.

Even though SC had warned against HCs using Section 482 to quash cases where parties had amicably settled the matter—it had observed that rape is an offence against society, and is not a matter to be left for the parties concerned to compromise and settle—the practice has been widely prevalent across courts, on the grounds that it would harm the woman's interest if the criminal case against the accused were to continue even after settlement. It is true that many complaints are usually filed in cases of rape on the pretext of marriage, and a lot are settled outside court, but coercion can also lead to rapists getting off scot-free if such a precedent is set. More so, when as per NCRB data, one-third of the 32,559 reported rape cases pertain to assault by a known person. Delhi HC has, thus, done well not to allow such infractions. Not only will it save the Court from frivolous litigation but also protect the rights of the petitioner, and given how rape cases are often settled in the hinterland, this will be a strong vote for justice.

Time for a big bang

The rupee needs to be made convertible on the capital account to create an immediate burst of demand for dollars

JAMAL MECKLAI

CEO, Mecklai Financial. Views are personal

THE RUPEE'S SUDDEN slip below 72 to the dollar last week, the first time in a year that it fell so low, reawakened concerns of another major step down. While it recovered a little equanimity by the end of the week, the big question is how long this respite will last.

Looking at the rupee's history since 2009, from the (then) all-time low of 51.95, it strengthened steadily to a high of nearly 44 under the influence of shockingly easy money (QE); however, the sudden sharp rise in crude in May 2010 (from 61 to over 120) slammed it down, and in a few months, it fell by more than 20% to 54. As oil steadied, albeit at this higher level, the rupee bounced back—still global easy money—to just below 49. By this time, the Euro debt crisis started heating up and threatening global trauma; the rupee once again fell sharply (by over 15%) to 57 in a few months. But, with QE still in play, the rupee yet again climbed grudgingly higher to 54 till the taper tantrum hit in 2013. The Fed merely suggested that it would soon stop its quantitative easing; the main prop under the rupee fell away, and it crashed by nearly 25% in a couple of months to nearly 69.

Dr Rajan, who had just come in as RBI Governor, launched his rescue effort, which helped the rupee recover to 58 in about a year. However, since the market believed that the days of zero cost money were coming to an end, the rupee slowly, but surely drifted lower, and, despite the fact that oil prices had fallen sharply (to around \$40), it remained generally weak. Over the last five years, it tested the 69 low a couple of times; finally, about twelve months ago, when oil climbed

above 80 again, it broke the barrier and hit the all-time low of 74.50.

This capsule history is to point out that the rupee, thus far at least, has only fallen sharply under global pressures—rising oil prices, threat of another global crisis, or the threat of the end of easy money. Domestic considerations—falling exports, growth in the gutter, etc—don't seem to have a significant impact. This is, perhaps, unsurprising because the net demand for dollars (from the current account deficit, debt repayments, outward investment, etc) in the domestic forex market is generally overwhelmed by portfolio flows and, historically at least, direct investment.

Currently, portfolio flows remain strong—they have reached \$17 billion this year, the fourth highest since 2011. Importantly, absent a global crisis, these will likely continue given that more than \$15 trillion of bonds globally currently provide negative yields; the issuers include some AAA corporates as well as some governments, like Romania and Bulgaria, that are normally considered emerging economies. India, despite the major problems with growth and governance, is certainly as good a bet (or better) than some of these and provides fully-hedged dollar returns that are positive. There is also the nearly \$7 billion closure of ArcelorMittal's purchase of Essar Steel through the IBC, plus expected disinvestment proceeds, which the government is budgeting for before the end of the financial year, that could further support for the rupee.

RBI, of course, has been steadily buying dollars—its reserves have risen by over \$1 billion for seven straight weeks—

no doubt aware that a stronger rupee would be disastrous for both the export sector, and local manufacturing.

The government appears to be clueless, perhaps even unaware that there is a problem; to be more charitable, perhaps they are waiting for another global event, which could happen anytime—tomorrow or a few years from now. But, that's hardly sensible—if the rupee were to collapse (to, say, 80 or 85) in the next global firestorm, chances are many other currencies would fall as well, and our relative competitiveness would either not budge or, possibly, take a further hit.

It is clear that we need to grab the bull by the horns, and undertake another set of big bang reforms, part of which would be making the rupee convertible on the capital account. There would be an immediate burst of demand for dollars as people pushed and shoved to send money overseas; there would also be huge speculative short rupee positions, and the rupee could fall as far as 100, perhaps even 120. At such, much weaker levels, investment flows would grow sharply, pushing the rupee back up to, perhaps, 80 or 85. Volatility would rise, and exports would finally become much more competitive.

To be sure, this disruption will only be effective if there is a parallel deregulation of markets for labour, land, and capital. Tax authorities, regulators, the judicial system and governance would need to be overhauled as well. A huge job, but, with appropriate planning, it can be done—indeed, it must be done.

The government needs to get its head out of the sands of self-congratulation, acknowledge the crisis and do its job.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Statistical system at stake

The independence and credibility of the Indian Statistical System is at stake. The government's decision to scrap the Consumption Expenditure Survey which is reportedly to have been pointed out the fall in household consumption by 3.7% is unfortunate. It shows a continual reluctance to accept ground economic realities and an unwillingness to correct course. As households expenditure accounts for a significant share of the economy, the report pointing to a considerable fall in household consumption is very much at odds with official data, which shows that the economy grew at 7.2% in 2017-18. Reliable and timely data form the bedrock of policy making and the government can't ride rough shod over the statistical system's independence. — M Jeyaram, Sholavandan

Cloud of uncertainty

A cloud of uncertainty hangs over government formation in Maharashtra, with none of the political parties making any concrete move. After it appeared that the Shiv Sena had parted ways with its ally, the BJP, the former has indicated that it is again willing to align with the NDA provided that the saffron party reverts to the 50:50 formula. The BJP is also sparing no efforts to get Sharad Pawar's NCP on its side to cobble up the numbers required to form the government. However, the picture continues to be hazy. — NJ Ravi Chander, Bengaluru

Write to us at feletters@expressindia.com



SANJEEV NAYYAR

The author, a chartered accountant, is the founder of www.eSamskriti.com
Twitter @NayyarSanjeev



Constitutional issues arising from telecom, Essar rulings

Unless every organ of our democracy focuses on its own sphere only and outcomes, a constitutional crisis is not too far away

THE SUPREME COURT (SC) needs to be commended for bringing closure on the telecom and Essar Steel cases. Having said that, the implications of some of these orders require wider public debate.

First, the SC upheld the government's definition of adjusted gross revenue (AGR). The estimated liability of companies, including those having gone out of business, is ₹1.33 lakh crore, of which Vodafone Idea's is ₹39,313 crore, Airtel's ₹41,507 crore, and RCom's about ₹16,000 crore, etc.

What surprised me was that the SC asked the parties to pay this sum within three months of its order dated October 24, 2019. In normal times, paying such a large sum in three months is tough even for India's highest rated corporate, but in today's challenging times even tougher.

What was the pray? According to Para 1 of the SC order, the matter to be decided was the definition of gross revenue, i.e. "In the appeals, the question involved with respect to the definition of gross revenue as defined in clause 19.1 of the license agreement granted by the Government of India to the Telecom Service Providers."

Was not the dispute about the definition of AGR? Having decided that, should the honourable court have also decided a payment schedule? Is that not a decision to be taken by the government of India, whose claim was upheld, or and the Association of Independent Telecom Service Providers of India, etc?

Is the executive not best suited to decide on the payment schedule? Its decision could be based on the ability of telecom companies to pay, their existence as a going-concern, possible NPAs, promo-

tion of digital India and government's revenue needs, which has a bearing on the fiscal deficit, etc.

The payment of such large sums, within three months, has increased the gloom in the telecom and banking sectors, both of which are under severe stress. For the record, the net debt as on September 30, 2019, of Bharti Airtel was ₹1.18 lakh crore, and Vodafone Idea ₹1.02 lakh crore.

Now, the SC has to agree on payment terms for which it needs to understand the pros and cons of each parameter referred to above. The point is, these decisions are commercial in nature and do not involve interpretation of law, so do they not lie within the domain of the executive?

I recall the words of eminent lawyer Harish Salve who recently said that "The Supreme Court is to be squarely blamed for the current economic slowdown." In an interview to a news website, Salve has said that the slowdown began with the top court's judgment in the 2G spectrum case in 2012. In the interview, Salve also said that the Supreme Court has been "inconsistent" in dealing with commercial cases, causing "grave concern in the minds of investors."

Do we want a repeat? Telecom companies must realise that the government does not have the fiscal space to repeatedly bail them out because of their errors of judgement (revenue-sharing) or interpretation of AGR.

Whilst the author has the highest regards for the judiciary, here is another matter worth reflecting upon.

Essar Steel's journey under the Insolvency and Bankruptcy Code (IBC) started on August 2, 2017, when its cause was admitted in the National Company Law Tribunal (NCLT), and ended on November 15, 2019, when the SC passed its order. The process took 834 days.

In between the matter kept moving from one court to another. It seemed petitions were being filed to prevent the inevitable. Bankers were frustrated with these delays, since the company owed its financial creditors ₹49,473 crore. Eventually, the government amended the IBC in July 2019, revising the time limit to 330 days including litigation period, from the earlier 270 days.

This was done to put a sense of urgency into the process so that the resolution professional and adjudicating authority took timely steps to complete the process.

In the Essar Steel case, the National Company Law Appellate Tribunal (NCLAT) order was passed on July 4, 2019, and decided by the SC on November 15, i.e. a good 133 days later.

Those involved in the IBC process need to understand the concept of 'time

value of money'. If the Essar Steel matter was resolved a year ago, can you visualise the impact on India's banking sector and the economy?

In its November 15 order, the SC "relaxed the revised 330-day timeline for resolving stressed assets by diluting its mandatory nature and leaving a window open for the adjudicating authority/appellate tribunal to extend the time under certain circumstances." (*Business Standard*).

"The SC called the amendment an excessive and unreasonable restriction on the litigant's right to carry business under Article 19(1)(g) of the Constitution. The amendment goes against Article 14 of the Constitution, which says that the state cannot deny to any person equality before the law or equal protection of the laws within the territory of India." (*Business Standard*).

Given the delays that continue to plague the judicial system, was doing away with the mandatory clause warranted? While constitutional experts can debate this, here are some observations.

It is an example of courts' unwillingness to work within the deadlines laid down by the executive. Bahram Vakil, founding partner at AZB & Partners, said it simply in a November 15 interview on CNBC TV18, "As I say, my profession is not known to be very keen on timelines."

Striking down the word 'mandatory' must also be seen in the context of courts getting involved in governance issues, huge backlog of cases across courts, and its approach that the judiciary is accountable to none but itself.

If the former Chief Justice of India Ranjan Gogoi could, along with four fellow judges, burn midnight oil, first tell the petitioners in the Ayodhya case to finish their arguments before a predetermined date and then pass an order a week before he retired, what is there to prevent the resolution professional, adjudicating authority/tribunal and courts from following a similar approach.

A faster IBC resolution will benefit all, especially India's banking sector reeling under NPAs, and improve India's ranking in the ease of doing business and the business climate in the country.

Coming to Articles 19(1) and 14. Article 19(1)(g) reads, "All citizens shall have the right to practice any profession, or to carry on any occupation, trade or business."

The SC held the 330-day deadline (mandatory) to be an excessive and unreasonable restriction on the litigant's right to carry business. Since this article applies only to the citizens and the 330-day deadline to the corporates, it would be interesting to know why Article 19(1)(g) was applied in this case.

Even if this Article applied to the corporates, it seems difficult to fathom how did the word 'mandatory' 330-day deadline infringe upon the right of a company to carry on any occupation, trade and business? It is by exercising such a right that the business was carried on. The inability of the corporate to repay bank loans started the bankruptcy process, thus all rights ceased.

Now coming to Article 14. It reads, "The State shall not deny to any person equality before the law or the equal protection of laws within the territory of India."

Concept one, i.e. equality before law, ensures that there is no special privilege in favour of any one. This concept of equality is a misnomer. If it were true, Hindus would, like Muslims and Christians, have the privilege of managing their places of worship.

Unless every organ of our democracy focuses on its own sphere only and outcomes, a constitutional crisis is not too far away.

(The purpose of raising these issues is to provoke thought and not cast aspersions on the judiciary, individually or collectively. The author does not claim to be a constitutional expert.)

Taking the rural road to growth

ANIL K KANUNGO

The author is professor, LBSIM, and former senior faculty, IIFT Delhi



Rural demand stimulus could be the key driver to overcome the slowdown

IS INDIA'S ECONOMIC slowdown in sync with the global synchronised slowdown? It is hard to find a definite answer, but in a limited sense it could be 'yes'. Why one argues this is because India is still relatively more domestic-driven than external-driven; we do emphasise the significance of the external sector and its contribution to GDP and growth rate, but such overriding contribution of exports to India's economic growth is yet to be felt, unlike China. This is clear by looking at the last three quarters' data that show mostly continuous decline in exports—6.1% decline by registering \$26.13 billion in September-end 2019 from \$30-plus billion in earlier years.

So, the genesis of the problem possibly lies somewhere else. Surveys and ratings by the IMF, World Bank, WTO and Moody's scare us to the extent that the growth rate could be falling dramatically from above 7% to around 5% in 2020.

What is apparent from India's current slowdown is that there is a deficient sectoral demand, as seen in real estate. With the rise in NPAs, high-handedness and non-delivery by owners/builders, lack of credit, incompetency of the RERA, the sector witnessed a steady collapse of demand. With the fall of real estate demand, supportive sectors also took a hit. Steel, cement and other allied industries found production activities coming to a significant halt—this resulted in layoffs. This structural fall in demand in metropolitan and semi-urban areas created a ripple effect on workers' incomes. The fall in incomes led to a fall in demand across India.

The situation in the construction sector is worse, which employs a large number of informal labour. Those who joined construction activities in metro and semi-urban areas in the last two decades went out of employment because the sector witnessed a slump. Most labour belongs to rural areas migrating to cities. Now they hardly find other employment in cities as they are mostly unskilled. This is forcing them to return home. Their homecoming is adding fuel to the fire, as there is already a serious rural distress with the agricultural production drying up. This additional labour force returning home finds it difficult to be absorbed. The oversupply of labour in the rural economy will put a downward pressure on rural wages, and this will result in a fall in rural demand. The prime indicators of consumption demand in the rural economy for some time have been sales of two-wheelers and consumption of non-durables, and these are witnessing a decline in demand.

So, what can be done? A combination of strategies may be adopted to bail the economy out of this morass. First, it is essential to revive the rural economy. Agricultural activity needs a priority. A substantial amount of agricultural investment needs to be done to help farmers produce more and better. Rural connectivity in terms of physical infrastructure needs to be developed to allow rural agricultural production to be sold relatively at a higher price in semi-urban and urban areas to fetch more incomes for farmers. Micro-credit without collateral for these farmers may be ensured. Agricultural land reforms should be initiated in many states.

Second, it is important to revive real estate, especially construction. Most construction activities are in residential or commercial complexes, not so much in physical infrastructure. This is where rural workforce can find reasonable employment. Employment in cities will generate income for them, which will finally be sent to villages, and that is how the rural economy can be revived.

The announcement by the government to provide a stimulus package to revive the sector may be a good initiative, but not a sufficient condition as consumers lack capital or access to credit. More so, the negative sentiment towards real estate is damaging—many real estate developers are not enthusiastically looking at this market in spite of the reduction in corporate tax. The revival of NBFCs may boost the sector and revive the economy. The Indian economy can perhaps overcome the slowdown through a huge rural demand stimulus.

WE ARE DEEPLY honoured, indeed humbled, to get this prize (Indira Gandhi Prize 2018). Thank you so much for recognising the work of the Centre for Science and Environment. My colleagues and I accept this prize with gratitude, but also with the awareness that so much needs to be done. All our work, all our efforts must add up—we have to make a difference in this increasingly climate change-risked and insecure world. Your recognition will give us courage to persist. But more importantly, it underscores the imperative of action. Urgent action.

We believe Mrs Indira Gandhi brought the environmental concern to national stage in the 1970s... she was the only world leader who went to Stockholm in 1972 to attend the first global conference on environment and development; she brought in the water Act; the air Act; and most environmental legislations that have worked to safeguard us. She saw the need to address this existential crisis, before anyone else environment was not a buzzword for her. It was real. It was urgent. Her foresight, her wisdom is what we need today.

Today, we all understand the imperative and the sheer desperation of the crisis. When every breath we take is toxic, we know that we have a crisis that needs to be fixed. We know also that climate change is not an empty threat any more. It is real. It is happening. The weird weather events that are hitting the world should make us sit up; in India, the monsoon is changing... We are seeing extreme rain events like never before; we go from flood to drought; the intensity and frequency of cyclones has increased; the poor who did not con-

We must rethink our climate plan

When every breath we take is toxic, we know we have a crisis that needs to be fixed. We also know climate change is not an empty threat any more. It is real. It is happening

SUNITA NARAIN

Director general, Centre for Science and Environment (CSE)



tribute to the emissions in the atmosphere are the victims. And remember, this is just the beginning. We are at 1 degree C rise since 1880 and the speed at which the world is pumping greenhouse gas emissions into the atmosphere will be definitely breach the guardrail of 1.5 degree C. Climate change is hitting the poor today, but it will not spare the rich tomorrow.

We must pause and rethink our strategies. When Mrs Gandhi said "poverty is the greatest polluter" (there are many interpretations her statement made in 1972), I believe she spoke about the need for inclusive development. Today we know we cannot have sustainable development and we cannot have peace, without growth that is affordable and inclusive. Why do I say that—

Air pollution is the greater equaliser—

the rich and the poor breathe the same air. Unlike water pollution, where the rich can move to bottled water, here there is no solution. The air purifier is not the answer. If we want our air to be clean, we have to clean the air outside. This means we have to recognise the air-shed is one—the emissions of the woman cooking her food on biomass; farmers burning crop residues because they are poor; or industry using dirty fuel because it keeps them competitive; diesel SUV of the rich all go into the same space—in the same air we breathe.

Therefore, the solutions have to be inclusive. Today, less than 20% of Delhi owns a car or drives; rest take two-wheelers or bus or cannot even afford this and walk or cycle. But cars occupy 90% of the road space; roads occupy 26% of the city's



land area. We are already polluted and congested. Where, then, is the space for the remaining 80% to take a car. But this is also our opportunity. If we can plan and implement a public transport system that is both affordable for the poor and convenient, safe and modern enough for the rich, we can transform mobility, fix our pollution. Inclusive, then, is sustainable.

It is the same with water pollution—most of India is not connected to underground pipeline grid of the rich. My colleagues have done shit-flow diagrams for cities and they show most of our cities are dependent on what we would call septic systems. If we cannot design affordable sanitation systems for the poor, our rivers cannot be cleaned; cost of dirty water in a climate-risked world will be unbearable. It

will make us even more water-insecure.

In an increasingly unequitable and climate-risked world, we must also rethink peace and security... every drought, flood, cyclone takes away the development dividend that governments work so hard to build; it takes away homes, roads, livelihoods; it then costs more to rebuild, to restart from the very beginning... It means that people—however resilient—cannot cope any more. They have no option but to leave their homes, their villages and go in search—no longer of temporary—but permanent new homes, livelihood. We don't know how many are in our cities today because our official counting is always 10 years out of date. But I can tell you that today most Indian cities are growing in the illegal. This suggests massive movement of

people; it will make city governance more difficult... This tipping of the scales of migration means that politics of immigration will and has become even more nasty, more angry, and is feeding insecurity, not just of the poor but also of the already rich.

Our interconnected world has two simultaneous jeopardies—one, it transports climate-altering carbon dioxide emissions from one country to the global atmosphere, and two it transports global news at the speed of mobile telephony. The push and the pull will only increase in this context. This is not the world we want our children to inherit. And this is where Anil Agarwal, CSE's founder, would say: "We have a duty to hope."

We have to work our democracies, build the public opinion on the imperative of change, keep the focus on the possibility (the sheer adventure or audaciousness) of the solution, be bold, fearless and most important ensure that we keep our independence and credibility in all eyes.

This is where we at CSE—my colleagues and our very extended family of supporters and colleagues—will keep ourselves grounded. There is much more to do. When we began our work, we were innocent—it seemed so easy. Now the challenge is massive; daunting even. Every winter in the smog we (I) want to give up. But we can't. We owe it to you the enormous love and respect that we receive from all of you to continue. Be that dog with the bone. Persist and persevere. We have to.

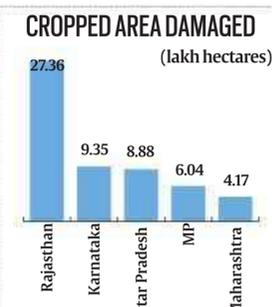
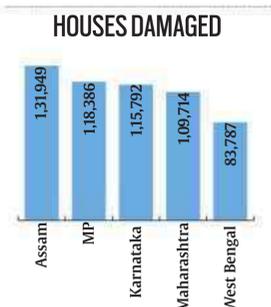
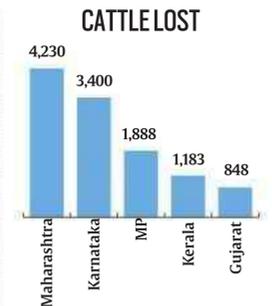
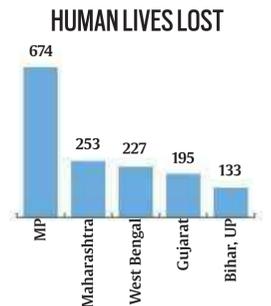
Excerpted from the acceptance speech by Sunita Narain, director general of the Centre for Science and Environment (CSE), which was awarded the Indira Gandhi Prize 2018, on November 19, 2019.

TELLING NUMBERS

Monsoon toll: 2,400 human lives, highest in Madhya Pradesh

FLOODS DURING the southwest monsoon this year claimed 2,391 human lives in 24 states, besides leaving 15,729 cattle dead. While the southwest monsoon season typically runs between June and September, these deaths were recorded between June 1 and November 14, according to data released by the Ministry of Home Affairs during the Winter Session of Parliament. Replying to a question, the Ministry said 8,00,067 houses were damaged and 63.97 lakh hectares of cropped areas were affected due to floods, landslides, cloudbursts and other hydro-meteorological hazards. The highest number of human lives lost was 674 in Madhya Pradesh, followed by Maharashtra (253), West Bengal (227), Gujarat (195) and Bihar (133).

and UP (133 each). The highest number of cattle deaths was 4,230 in Maharashtra, followed by Karnataka (3,400), Madhya Pradesh (1,888), Kerala (1,183) and Gujarat (848). Assam had the highest number of houses damaged, in lakh hectares, was in Rajasthan (27.36), followed by Karnataka (9.35), UP (8.88), Madhya Pradesh (6.04) and Maharashtra (4.17). This year, the monsoon rainfall received in September was about 152 per cent more than normal, and over 560 extreme rainfall events were recorded, as per the Indian Meteorological Department.



Source: Ministry of Home Affairs

THIS WORD MEANS

IDRIS ELBA

A wasp species. Why was it named after the actor?

IN THE Marvel Cinematic Universe, British actor Idris Elba stars as Heimdall. The character has an almost namesake: Heimdallr, a Norse deity believed to be the sole protector of the bridge linking the human world and the realm of the gods. Now, scientists have given the name *Idris elba* to a species of wasp that is again a protector — of crops. The wasp, recently discovered in Mexico, was found living as a parasite in the eggs of another insect, known as the bagrada bug, which is a major pest of cruciferous vegetables.



Idris elba. Source: Pensoft Publishers

The species is described in the *Journal of Hymenoptera Research*. The research team comprised scientists from Colegio de Postgraduados (Mexico), Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada and the Florida State Collection of Arthropods.

In fact, the genus *Idris* already exists, having been described in 1856. It now contains over 300 species, including the newest one discovered and given the species name *elba*. While other species of the *Idris* genus were known to only parasitise spider eggs, specimens of *Idris elba* have now been found to emerge from eggs of the bagrada bug.

SIMPLY PUT QUESTION & ANSWER

Why are birds dying at Sambhar?

Carcasses of over 18,000 migratory birds have been buried in 10 days after they were found at India's largest inland saltwater lake. What has the probe for causes found; why is changing ecology a concern?

HAMZA KHAN
JAIPUR, NOVEMBER 20

OVER THE last 10 days, thousands of migratory birds have been found dead at Sambhar Lake, about 80 km southwest of Jaipur city. Officials have buried over 18,000 carcasses so far. While there is no clarity yet on what has caused the deaths, investigations so far suggest avian botulism, a paralytic and frequently fatal disease caused by the ingestion of toxins.

What birds have been found dead?

Sambhar Lake is India's largest inland saltwater lake at 230 sq km, spread mostly across Jaipur and Nagaur districts and also a part of Ajmer. It has a catchment area of 5,700 square km, with the water depth fluctuating between 60 cm in the dry season to about 3 metres at the end of the monsoon.

Every year, the lake attracts thousands of migratory birds. A total 83 species of water birds have been recorded at the lake, the most abundant of which are little grebe, great crested grebe, great white pelican, little cormorant, black stork, and darter, apart from various species of plovers, egrets, herons, and geese.

Birds of about 25-30 species have now been found dead, including northern shoveller, Brahminy duck, pied avocet, Kentish plover and tufted duck. The trend began on November 10 when visitors found a large number of dead birds. More and more were found over the next several days. Until Wednesday, November 20, the Rajasthan government had, using various agencies, buried 18,422 bird carcasses to prevent the spread of infection. Of these, 8,825 were disposed of in Jaipur and 9,597 in Nagaur. Officials also rescued 748 birds, of which around 400 were still alive as of Wednesday.

Officials said the number of dead birds being found each day is declining now. From a peak of 3,265 and 2,696 burials respectively on November 15 and 16, the count had reduced to 441 by November 20 (74 in Jaipur and 367 in Nagaur). Combing operations are, however, still on.

How much is known so far about the cause of death?

The evidence points to avian botulism, but this has not been officially confirmed. "On the basis of history, epidemiological observations, classical clinical symptoms and postmortem findings, the most probable diagnosis is avian botulism," said a report by the Apex Centre for Animal Disease Investigation, Monitoring



A worker places a dead bird into a sack at the Sambhar Lake in Rajasthan on Monday, November 11. PTI



CARCASS COUNT

DATE	BIRDS DISPOSED	JAIPUR	NAGOUR
November 11	716	-	-
November 12	1,622	-	-
November 13	1,922	-	-
November 14	540	-	-
November 15	1,829	1,436	-
November 16	1,393	1,303	-
November 17	386	5,279	-
November 18	151	877	-
November 19	192	355	-
November 20	74	367	-
TOTAL	8,825	9,597	

and Surveillance at the College of Veterinary and Animal Science under the Rajasthan University of Veterinary and Animal Sciences (RAJUVAS), Bikaner. "The clinical signs exhibited by affected birds included dullness, depression, anorexia, flaccid paralysis in legs and wings, and neck touching the ground. The birds were unable to walk, swim, or take flight. There was no rise of body temperature, no nasal discharge, no respiratory distress or any other sign."

But why is it taking so long to establish the cause of death?

The government is waiting for reports from various sources to establish the exact cause. It has so far engaged eight institutions and agencies, but has received complete reports from only two: RAJUVAS and the

National Institute of High Security Animal Diseases (NIHSAD) in Bhopal. While RAJUVAS has suggested avian botulism, NIHSAD has ruled out bird flu.

Partial reports have been received from the Wildlife Institute of India, Dehradun, and the Rajasthan State Pollution Control Board. Reports are awaited from the Indian Veterinary Research Institute, Bareilly; the Salim Ali Centre for Ornithology and Natural History (SACON) in Coimbatore, the Bombay Natural History Society, and the Sambhar Salt Limited joint venture.

Is there a concern for human health?

Humans are primarily at risk from avian botulism only if they eat infected fish or birds. While NIHSAD has ruled out bird flu, this was what was feared initially. Personnel were di-

rected to adopt appropriate prophylactic measures such as use of masks and gloves and burial of carcasses in deep pits with limestone.

How common is avian botulism?

There have been several waterfowl botulism outbreaks. Between 1995 and 1997 in Alberta, 1,17,000 in Manitoba, and 1 million in Saskatchewan. In 1997, another 5,14,000 birds died due to botulism in Green Salt Lake, Utah, US. In 1952, an epizootic outbreak killed 4-5 million waterfowl across western US.

What could be other possible reasons for the bird deaths at Sambhar Lake?

After a Division Bench of the Rajasthan High Court led by Chief Justice Indrajit Mahanty took cognisance of the deaths, the Rajasthan government listed likely reasons:

- Viral infection;
- Toxicity, as a new area has been filled up after almost 20 years, and there could be higher concentration of salts along the edges;
- Bacteriological infection; and
- Higher temperature and high water levels due to a good monsoon. This might have led to an increase in competition for resources. The weaker individuals, exhausted from the long journey, perhaps were unable to compete, and may have succumbed to stress emanating from the shortage of food, susceptibility to disease/pollutants/toxins and other habitat-related factors in the wintering grounds, the government suggested. If that is the reason, the government said it is expected that with fall of temperature and lowering of water levels, incidence of such mortality will go down.

What are the reasons that make salt concentration a concern?

In a 2016 directive, the National Green Tribunal had noted the impact of the salt industry — including "unauthorised salt pans" — on the ecosystem of Sambhar Lake and asked the state government to cancel allotment of salt pans. Over the last week, the Wildlife Institute of India, the State Pollution Control Board and Sambhar Salts Ltd have collected samples to test for water quality. Part of the lake has been leased to Sambhar Salts, a joint venture of Hindustan Salts Limited and the state government. Sambhar Salts produces 196,000 tonnes of clean salt every year, which is around 9 per cent of India's salt production.

The lake was recognised as a wetland of international importance when it was designated as a UNESCO Ramsar Site in 1990. Today, as per NGO Wetlands International, it has the worst possible Wetland Health Score at E.

AN EXPERT EXPLAINS

Issues at lake: management, hydrology, salt pans



HARSH VARDHAN

Have there ever been so many bird deaths in India? What can the cause be?

No, never. The Salim Ali Centre for Ornithology and Natural History in Coimbatore and Wildlife Institute of India (Dehradun) will give you the causes.

How well has the government handled the situation?

The government does not have the capability to handle such a crisis; they are overwhelmed by an unexpected calamity. But whom should we blame? The Forest Department does not even have an office

there. Personnel from the Animal Husbandry Department personnel have been sent there but they don't even have access to drinking water, let alone make a cup of tea, because the water is saline.

What can the government do?

The government should pass legislation in the Assembly to create a Sambhar Lake Development and Conservation Authority. This authority should be handed A to Z responsibility of Sambhar Lake. Currently, no one is there. No official is ready to speak and every government department passes the buck to Forest or Irrigation. The Revenue Department says they had the land once; Panchayat says that they had the land but gave it to Hindustan Salts Limited, and Hindustan Salts is now not ready to talk; they are not even answering calls.

We are now telling the government that you have not done anything all these years, yet we do not wish to criticise you, but do something at least now. Set up the Sambhar Development Authority along the lines of Odisha's Chilika Development Authority for

Chilika Lake, and make the Chief Minister its Chairman. CM Ashok Gehlot should speak to Odisha CM Naveen Patnaik today and ask him to send over Ajit Patnaik, former chief of Chilika Development Authority, for help in setting up the Sambhar Lake Authority.

What are the issues at Sambhar that need to be addressed immediately?

There is no document about management of Sambhar Lake. World Wildlife Fund had created a document about 22 years ago, and it is now outdated. A fresh document should study why the water from four rivers, which flows into the lake, has decreased over the years. It should study the hydrology, sedimentation, the increase or decrease in depth of the lake, as well as birds, animals, their food sources, etc.

What are the possible reasons for deteriorating ecology at Sambhar Lake?

The absolute lack of management, the lack of bandobast. You [government] have set it loose, and handed it [partially] to Hindustan Salts Limited which did not do

anything and is itself making losses.

In 2016, National Green Tribunal had acted on a complaint that alleged the presence of illegal salt pans at Sambhar Lake. Are those still active?

Dher saarey, plenty of them. And all belong to politicians, sarpanches, MLAs, MPs, ministers. More are in Nagaur. But there is no one to share this information as there is no one who is answerable. For example, Jaipur Development Authority and Jaipur Municipal Corporation are ready to talk about Jaipur, but there is no one for Sambhar. The death of birds should make the government take concrete steps.

Harsh Vardhan, an ecologist with over four decades of work, is currently the Honorary Secretary of Tourism and Wildlife Society of India. He was previously Rajasthan Director of the World Wildlife Fund and been associated with the United States Fish and Wildlife Service and International Crane Foundation. He spoke to Hamza Khan in Jaipur.

What is IPRS, the artists' body that has gone to police against Yash Raj Films?

MOHAMED THAYER
MUMBAI, NOVEMBER 20

THE ECONOMIC Offences Wing (EOW) of the Mumbai Police has registered an FIR against Yash Raj Films (YRF) Pvt Ltd, its chairman and managing director Aditya Chopra, his brother Uday Chopra, and others for alleged criminal breach of trust and failure to pay an estimated Rs 100 crore in royalty to several music composers and writers since 2012.

The FIR was registered on a complaint by the Indian Performing Right Society (IPRS). This is the first criminal case initiated by the IPRS after it was re-registered as a copyright society in 2017. YRF did not respond to questions regarding the case.

What is the Indian Performing Right Society, and how does it function?

The IPRS is a representative body of artists, including music owners, composers, lyricists, and publishers of music, which collects royalties due to the artists if their work is used anywhere from a wedding to a New Year function or on radio or TV — in other words, wherever music is played. The body was set up in 1969, and re-registered as a copyright society in 2017, following which it started functioning actively.

The IPRS has its offices in Mumbai, and lyricist Javed Akhtar is its chairman.

A 2012 amendment in The Copyright Act, 1957 laid down that artists would get 50% of royalties every time their work was used, even if the copyright remained with the production house or the music brand. Which meant that every time a song was played in, say, a large party in a hotel or by a radio station, or streamed or even used as a mobile

phone ringtone, 50% of the royalty would go to the production house or music company, and the other 50% would be split between the lyricist and composer of the song.

The IPRS is responsible for collecting the 50% royalty that is due to artists involved in "literary work accompanied to music" — meaning lyricists, music composers, and publishers of music.

While even individual artists can theoretically approach the users of their work directly, it is likely to be a difficult and long drawn-out process. As members of IPRS, they have better infrastructure at their disposal to press their claim and collect the money due to them.

How does the process of licensing with the IPRS work?

The IPRS has a database of around 10 million songs, including Indian and interna-

lional numbers, for which it collects royalty.

If cases of big events, the IPRS generally approaches the organisers beforehand to inform them about the licensing required to play the songs of artists who are registered with them. Most online streaming platforms are registered with IPRS, and licensed to use the artists' songs.

After being re-registered as a copyright society in 2017 under the amended Copyright Act, the IPRS sent letters to all media platforms, asking them to ensure that artists are paid 50% of the royalty as per the Act.

In 2017-18, the IPRS collected Rs 45 crore in royalty on behalf of artists, and in the following year (2018-19), it collected Rs 166 crore. Between 2012 and 2017, annual collections was usually under Rs 40 crore, an IPRS official said.

In April this year, IPRS distributed royalties of more than Rs 20 crore to composers,

songwriters, and publishers.

What can IPRS do if songs are used without licence?

IPRS has both civil and criminal remedies available to it under The Copyright Act. It has filed civil suits in 20-25 cases earlier, but the move against YRF was the IPRS's first criminal complaint.

According to IPRS, YRF was one of the entities it had written to after 2017, seeking royalty for artists. However, despite the amendment to The Copyright Act, YRF allegedly paid only a minuscule amount to artists. After the dispute remained unresolved despite the exchange of several letters, IPRS lodged a formal complaint with the Mumbai Police some two months ago.

Since the amount involved was high, the matter was handed over to the EOW. After inquiring into the matter for around two

months, the police registered an FIR against YRF on charges of criminal breach of trust, along with sections of The Copyright Act.

What difference has IPRS made for artists seeking copyright dues?

While IPRS has some numbers to show, not all artists are satisfied that it has delivered on its promise. Some music companies and production houses have allegedly found ways to dodge the requirement of sharing royalty with artists. On some occasions, the fees paid to artists are termed as "advance royalty", meaning the royalty has already been paid; on other occasions, the artist is allegedly offered a deal to sign a letter giving the royalty back to the music company. Some big production houses that don't get along with IPRS have started their own body to collect royalties for artists working on their projects, say these artists.



The Indian EXPRESS

FOUNDED BY
RAMNATH GOENKA

BECAUSE THE TRUTH INVOLVES US ALL

BULLY ON CAMPUS

Fee hike is a symptom, as government watches JNU administration turn on its own students

ON TUESDAY, JAWAHARLAL Nehru University's (JNU) administration moved a contempt of court petition in Delhi High Court against the institution's own students. The university authorities have drawn on a court order from August 2017, which "bans protests within 100 yards of JNU's administrative block". The petition is the latest in a series of antagonistic postures that have driven a wedge deeper between the university administration and its students, and thrown JNU into turmoil for nearly a month. The students are protesting against a hike in fees, which they claim is steep. But, by all accounts, the anger and restlessness on campus is also stoked by the administration's pattern of high-handedness. In this case, the fee hike was imposed without even a modicum of consultation with the student body. Then, to students worried about their educational prospects and careers, the JNU authorities have repeatedly given the message that their agitation will be treated as a law and order problem.

The JNU Act 1966, enshrines "social justice" as one of the university's objectives. "The University shall endeavour to promote... social justice, secularism, national integration, democratic ways of life, international understanding and scientific approach to the problems of society," it says. JNU's deprivation points system, discontinued for research scholars in 2017, enabled many students from marginalised communities and backward regions to enter the university's portals. In a country beset with myriad oppressions of caste, gender, and increasingly, religion, the university's classrooms, libraries, hostels, canteens and dhabas have been among the precious spaces where the young from disadvantaged sections can debate, discuss, disagree, and cultivate friendships with their peers from the more privileged strata of society. Around 40 per cent of students admitted to the university in 2017 had a parental income of less than Rs 12,000 per month, according to the university's annual report for 2017-2018. It's this egalitarian ideal and character of the university, the students believe, that will be imperiled by the increase in fees. As a report in this paper last week showed, those likely to be hurt by the hike include those from families with an annual income of less than Rs 50,000, students from families that have lost their sole earning member, women graduates with working class backgrounds.

Universities in democratic societies are the natural home for political discussion, provocative ideas, even dissent. But since 2016, it has seemed that the ruling dispensation has targeted the university, especially JNU, because of its reputation of being a bastion for the left-leaning. Through a variety of incursions in JNU, the BJP-led government has sent out the message that it will go after institutions it accuses of a "nationalism deficit". The JNU administration and its vice-chancellor may have fallen in unresistingly with this project but the government must know that the apparent heavy-handedness with students makes it look, not strong and decisive, but like a bully.

TAMIL TEASER

Promise of Rajinikanth-Kamal Haasan tango in electoral politics is exciting. But they might need more than star power

A TEASER FROM the two mega stars of Tamil cinema, Rajinikanth and Kamal Haasan, on Tuesday, of a possible political blockbuster has created a stir in the state. Though both have punctuated their statement about "joining hands" with several caveats, the idea has the potential to turn the assembly election slated for 2021 into a gripping show. A Rajini-Kamal joint entry is likely to add fizz to the campaign, which, in the absence of AIADMK supremo J Jayalalitha and DMK patriarch M Karunanidhi, is predicted to be a boring affair.

So far, the ageing superstars have had limited traction in Tamil Nadu even though they announced their entry in electoral politics some time ago. Even as Rajinikanth said he was preparing for the next assembly election and skipped the May general election, Kamal Haasan's Makkal Needhi Maiam (MNM) contested all the Lok Sabha constituencies in the state. MNM candidates lost their deposits in all the seats and a number of its candidates finished third behind DMK and AIADMK in urban constituencies. The two actor-politicians have so far been vague about ideology, while offering issue-centric responses, and talking in general terms about the need to do good for the state. But neither of them has rejected the political paradigm and the goals the Dravidian Movement set in the 1950s and '60s, among them social justice and Tamil pride. However, there has been speculation that the BJP may align with Rajinikanth and that the latter could be projected as the face of a non-Dravidian political coalition.

While voter fatigue threatens the prospects of the AIADMK and DMK, Rajinikanth and Kamal Haasan will have to offer a clear and coherent political agenda to emerge as an alternative. To begin with, the two men will have to agree on core issues — Rajinikanth welcomed the abrogation of Article 370 whereas Haasan described it as an "assault on democracy". For all their love of films, people in Tamil Nadu make a distinction between cinema and governance. Rajinikanth and Haasan would do well to realise that while their star power may pull in the crowds, they will need to spell out their political agenda to convince even their fans to vote for them. It is useful, here, to remember a certain MGR, the popular hero-turned-successful politician, who had put in many years in the DMK as a member, campaigner and fund-raiser before branching out with his own political party.

ART, ERODED

International Film Festival of India gives prominent place to mainstream films. That may not be its mandate

THE INTERNATIONAL FILM Festival of India (IFFI) self-professedly aims to "provide a common platform to project the excellence of the art of film-making". In its 50th edition, now playing in Goa, it may need to renew its commitment to its mandate. The imperatives of the mainstream market — stars, box office collections, or even being accessible to a broad audience — are not meant to animate the IFFI. But, as iconic film-maker Adoor Gopalakrishnan told this newspaper, the IFFI is increasingly distancing itself from its stated purpose.

The Indian Panorama section at the IFFI, according to Gopalakrishnan, is important because "it showcases the best of our production every year". This year, 12 of the 26 films being showcased are commercial, mainstream works. Critics, producers and even the discerning audience at a film festival expect more than merely fare that has been successful commercially. "Sadly, with our stupid effort to preen the producers of worthless films, we are providing them with equal status and esteem as the quality filmmakers," says Gopalakrishnan.

He flags an important issue. For festivals the aim is, it must be, the discovery of the new, even the discomfiting; where cinema is art, not just a business proposition. Conversation with the alternative space in Indian cinema has only enriched the mainstream. Excellence in the former is based primarily on artistic merit. By introducing films that are judged by a different yardstick, the IFFI would be placating the audience rather than challenging it. Since 2015, when the festival removed films from the FTII seemingly due to protests by students against the appointment of Gajendra Chauhan as the film school's director, it has lost some of its credibility. It can ill-afford to let the temptations of commerce and glamour erode its image further.

Let them have English

In the absence of a real measure of the school's role, we pick on the medium gap, declare it the culprit



KRISHNA KUMAR

THE LANGUAGE USED by teachers to explain is known as "medium of instruction" in our system. This usage has a considerable history now. It reminds us that education was once regarded as instruction. One would like to believe that things have changed now and that education now covers a wider spectrum of efforts and effects. Had this change in the public perception of education actually occurred, no one would easily share the Andhra Pradesh government's hope that children studying in government schools will now have a bright future because they are going to switch to English medium instruction from Grade I.

Some years ago, I had an unforgettable personal encounter with the medium problem in Mumbai. Two officials of the municipality were with me on a school visit. There were seven schools in that space, each with a different medium. I spent half an hour in a Grade II classroom where the medium was Hindi. After the period, I got a brief chance to speak to the teacher who was a Marathi-speaking young woman. I asked her if there were children in her class with Hindi-Marathi parents. She said: "Quite a few." I asked her: "Do you sometimes use Marathi to explain things to these children?" Her answer stunned me. "I am not allowed to speak Marathi in my classes because this is a Hindi-medium school," she said. The last question I remember asking her was: "Who stops you from speaking your mother tongue?" Instead of answering, she looked at the officials standing beside me. It is hard to say what her gaze meant. It is unlikely that someone had actually stopped her from using Marathi in her classes. More likely, she felt constrained because she had been posted at a Hindi-medium school.

In Andhra Pradesh, the government hopes that English-medium instruction will have a transformative effect. There are plans to re-train teachers and use the new machinery of communication. The pedagogy market is full of attractive teaching devices, and language teaching forms a big segment of this market. The expectation that technology will push our moribund system into a carnival of cre-

ativity is widespread. No one is supposed to have any doubt about that. The buzz word is innovation, and digital devices are the best bet to promote it.

It is, of course, true that judicious use of technology can enhance the teacher's effort. So was it when radio sets were distributed across the system. But the hype didn't help. Now when smart boards are replacing black boards and chalk, we need to ask why teacher training remains poor and school life so regimented. Teachers have always been at the receiving end. Had they been consulted in Andhra, the switch-over to English-medium might not have happened in such a dramatic manner.

Educational reforms are not like economic reforms. The latter are publicly debated every evening. Plenty of voices keep asking for more and speedier reforms in the economy. Since the 1990s, there has been considerable consensus on what it means to reform the economy. There is no such consensus in education.

That is why the decision announced by the Andhra government will impress many as a radical reform while others will shake their heads in resignation and see it as a political gimmick. It is assumed that parents whose children study in government schools will not mind this sharp switch-over. In all probability, they will appreciate it. Like politicians, many parents have zeroed in on English-medium teaching as a solution to the problems their children suffer in government schools and after passing out.

Parental vision has not shrunk overnight. The medium gap has been growing for several decades now in every part of the nation. It is a measure of social distance, between schools ruled by bureaucratic norms and others who feel more free. The difference between the two types is not always clear. It is a common belief that private schools prepare the child for the brave new world of competition, while government schools don't worry about their children. In the absence of any real measurement of the school's role in shaping children's future, public and political imagina-

tion picks on the medium gap and declares it the culprit.

Without exception, all policy documents favour the mother tongue as the best medium of education, especially in the early grades. Those who favour English from the start point towards private schools and ask why government school children alone must carry the burden of implementing the policy. That is a valid point. Sauce for the goose is sauce for the gander. Successive governments have failed to influence the private school world on the question of medium. Introducing English as a medium in government schools, thus, acquires a populist appeal.

To put up a stronger case for the mother tongue, we will have to go into the deeper debate — about learning itself. At the primary level, it means connecting things with words. To do that, the child's language provides a richer resource. The primary teacher who uses the child's language has a great advantage. Whether she makes the best use of this advantage is a different question.

Our teachers seldom feel free or encouraged to do their best; nor are they trained to exercise professional autonomy. Our teachers are used to being told what to do and they are mostly quite poorly trained. Many didn't want to be teachers in the first place, not at least at the primary level. If English is what the Andhra government wants teachers to use in the classroom, they will switch on to English — howsoever they can. Let the children fend for themselves. Private tutors will flourish.

What will happen to the children's mother tongue? The Andhra government has assured us that it will be taught as a compulsory subject. That is nice, but it is not the same thing. To stop the mother tongue from being used across the curriculum as a medium is like changing the architecture of the collective mind.

The writer is a former director of NCERT and author of *The Child's Language and the Teacher*

CHALLENGER FROM WITHIN

PS Krishnan was a rare bureaucrat who sought to reform government for marginalised



V VASANTHI DEVI

P S KRISHNAN, who left us on November 10, was an extraordinary combination of the bureaucrat-reformer-activist. His was a life driven by single-minded devotion to the cause of the deprived and exploited.

From his student days in his native Kerala and later, as a member of the Indian Administrative Service (IAS) in the Andhra Pradesh cadre — and then in various positions including as secretary to the Government of India — he relentlessly worked for the empowerment of the Scheduled Castes (SC), Scheduled Tribes (ST) and Socially and Educationally Backward Classes (SEBC).

He sought to mould governance and public administration into a proactive instrument of reaching out to the deprived communities. He fleshed out the true spirit of constitutional provisions and social legislation, and implemented them with uncompromising zeal, brushing aside severe opposition from powerful sections inside and outside government. Challenging India's inequities and inhumanities is not new. What is rare is the challenge emerging from within the system, from within the core of the "Steel Frame". And Krishnan's life and work are "the rarest of the rare" among Indian bureaucrats.

As a young officer in Andhra Pradesh, he conducted his official camps in Scheduled Caste bastis and tribal villages, infusing self-esteem in the depressed sections, but infuriating the upper caste-classes. In addition, the imperious officialdom did not know how to deal with this young brat, who was striking at the root of its power. They viewed him as a scourge, accusing him of "strident advocacy

of inter-caste marriages, partiality to depressed classes, trusting the words of the villagers rather than village officers and acting in a manner that helped subversive elements."

Not bothering to reply to these remarks, Krishnan went on to advocate not "inter-caste" marriages, but "anti-caste" marriages. He also said that there should be a legislation prohibiting marriages in the same caste. "I expounded the concept of 'social incest', in addition to the concept of 'biological incest'."

As early as in 1957, he launched massive drives for the distribution of agricultural land and house sites to the landless and homeless in Andhra Pradesh. His pioneering work constitutes milestones in the post-independence history of Andhra Pradesh.

His vision derives, Krishnan used to say, from a unique blend of many ideologies: Of Ambedkar, Gandhi, Marx, Periyar, Vivekananda and Narayana Guru. He used to say that he entered the civil service armed with an uncompromising commitment to fight against the entrenched caste system and untouchability, and to strive for social justice.

When he rose to senior positions, as secretary to Gol, for instance, he conceived and implemented path-breaking initiatives. He was the crucial force behind constitutional and legislative enactments like the Constitution (65th) Amendment Act, 1990, vesting constitutional status in the National Commission for SCs and STs; the SC and ST (Prevention of Atrocities) Act, 1989; and, the Employment of Manual Scavengers and Construction of Dry Latrines (Prohibition) Act, 1993.

Krishnan also formulated many schemes

for the betterment of the marginalised like the Special Component Plan for Scheduled Castes (SCP) in 1978. His tireless efforts pulled out the Mandal Commission Report from cold storage and he persuaded V P Singh to implement it. Each of these initiatives he helmed was, inevitably, challenged in the courts. With his remarkable acumen, he drafted elaborate arguments to face the judicial process, that ultimately placed them on unassailable legal foundations. Among these were the Mandal legislation and reservations in educational institutions for SCs, STs and OBCs.

On the question of who are the oppressed sections in India — is it class or caste that is the basic unit of Indian society? — Krishnan advocates a unified caste-class approach. The basic contradiction in rural India today is between the dominant landed backward castes and landless Dalits, who constitute the main labour force. However, a large section of OBCs, particularly the innumerable service and artisanal castes, too, are landless and so there is no contradiction between these castes and Dalits. The two sections of the non-dominant, landless castes coming together and transcending caste barriers, would forge the unity of the oppressed — and lead to the liberation of society. Distribution of land to all the landless is, hence, key to the much needed transformation of Indian society. Krishnan's legacy should lead us towards the annihilation of caste and a world of justice and human rights.

The writer is former vice chancellor of Manonmaniam Sundaranar University, Tamil Nadu

NOVEMBER 21, 1979, FORTY YEARS AGO

SPY PROBE ON

THE GOVERNMENT HAS already commenced investigations in the case of alleged CIA connections of a cabinet colleague of Indira Gandhi during the Bangladesh war. Disclosing this in Delhi, Deputy Prime Minister Y B Chavan said that many ministries besides his own ministry of Home, would be involved in the probe. Chavan refused to say anything more on this except that an adequate probe was necessary in this case as suspicion had been raised and allegations had been made.

INDO-BANGLA FRICTION
INDIA AND BANGLADESH have agreed to

take steps to prevent recurrence of the recent incidents on the border between Tripura and Bangladesh. The two countries signed a joint statement in Dacca, agreeing to remove "all causes of irritation" that have led to several incidents on the border, including exchange of fire between the security forces near Belonia on the Tripura border.

IRAN HOSTAGE CRISIS

TEN MORE HOSTAGES freed from the US embassy in Teheran flew to Europe and one of them said the 49 remaining Americans were "in greater danger than we were" from their militant Islamic captors. After 16 days as hostages, the six black men and four women

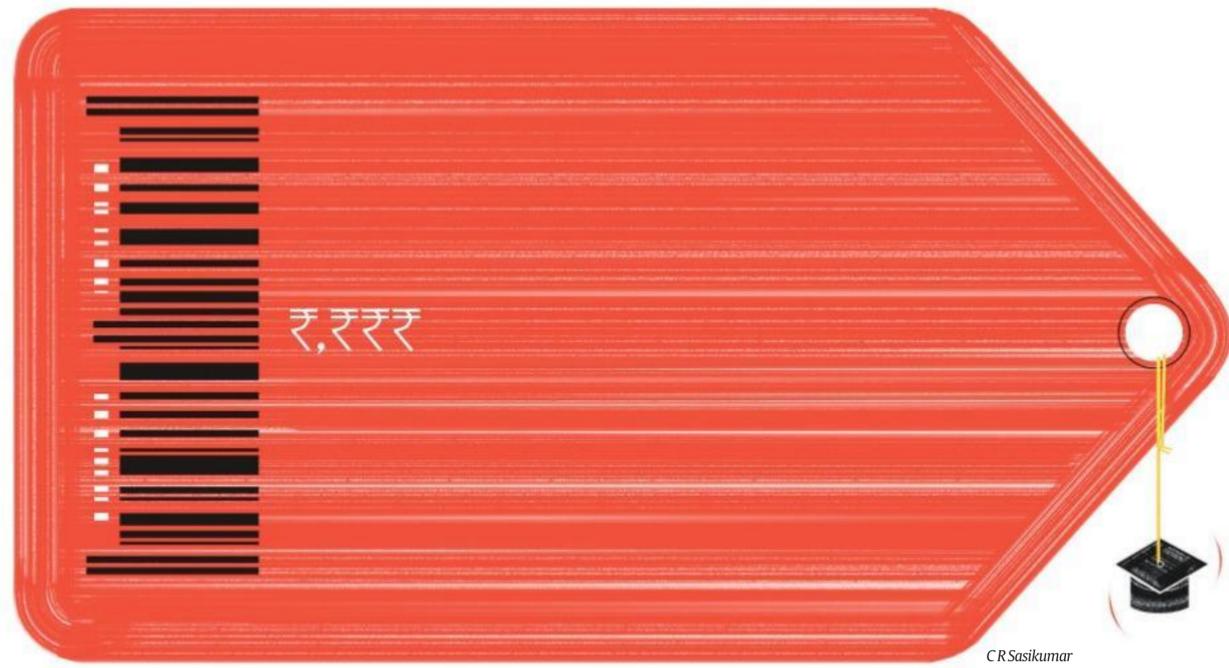
were flown to Frankfurt, West Germany via Paris and driven to a US air force hospital.

CHARAN GOVT FLAWS

CONTRARY TO THE mandate, the caretaker government of Charan Singh has got away with several major policy decisions having crucial financial implications. Following the dissolution of the Lok Sabha on August 22, the President had enjoined upon the government to desist from actions "which set new policy or involve executive decisions". But the series of concessions announced recently for railwaymen, and others, do constitute major administrative decisions and involve spending of no significant order.



15 THE IDEAS PAGE



C.R. Sasikumar

Why we must listen to JNU

Students are speaking out against the eclipse of equitable access to publicly funded education, and attempts to place education in the marketplace rather than at the disposal of the social good



PARNAL CHIRMOLEY

UNIVERSITY STUDENTS AND faculty speaking up for publicly-funded higher education have been the object of intense vilification in sections of the media and the general public countless times in the past few years. And yet, they refuse to fade away, spilling out of campuses, fighting for equitable access to publicly-funded higher education. They refuse to be shamed into submitting to education policies that exclude large sections of the population to make way for the elite few. The background to their persistence needs to be sketched out, especially because trained and paid armies of trolls continue to plague the discourse on higher education with vitriol and lies.

The attempt to construct stereotypes of students in the public sphere as lazy, good-for-nothings who want to survive on the taxpayer's money is a clever sleight of hand by the ruling party and its offspring. Students of research universities like JNU are repeatedly castigated, supposedly by a "taxpaying public" for not earning their own living and paying fees. The argument is that money spent on their education is "a waste". It helps obfuscate the true nature of education policies by this government. It seeks to draw your attention away from the fact that equitable access to inclusive higher education actually transforms lives for the better, wherein a street vendor's child, a former chowkidar, a young woman from a slum in Mumbai can each seek an education that helps them climb out of the pit of deprivation and achieve intergenerational mobility. For a ruling dispensation that stands triumphant on the shoulders of social divisions based on caste, gender, and religion, this disruption of inequality is frightening. And, this is why you are being relentlessly fed these stereotypes so that you will continue as passive participants in the drama of the oppression of the

marginalised and the underprivileged.

Here are a few facts that might help us to cut through the vitriol and ask some hard questions: According to the CAG Report of February 2019, Rs 94,036 crore of the secondary and higher education cess and Rs 7,298 crore of the research and development cess remained unutilised. Where will this money go? The fee hike in JNU (which has led to massive protests in recent weeks, bringing down upon our students the wrath of paramilitary and police), if implemented, will lead to over 40 per cent of our students being completely abandoned by the education system, and render JNU as one of the most expensive public universities in the country.

Here, the question of where the taxpayer's money is going can be sharpened: In 2017-18, the total expenditure on JNU was Rs 556 crore, seeing over 8,000 students through one academic year, over a 1,000 research articles published in reputed journals, 1,086 special lectures being open to the public, and 4,594 MPhil and PhD dissertations being submitted. Contrast this with the Rs 1,313 crore spent on mere publicity of the central government and its schemes. The imbalance in priorities is crystal clear. In JNU, some 2,500 students with fellowships pay Rs 7,500 (Rs 22.5 crore per annum) per month as housing allowance to the university. In the last two years, Mphil/PhD (especially reserved) seats have been left vacant, despite the Delhi High Court castigating JNU for causing a national waste of resources. The struggle against seat cuts now joins the struggle against fee hike to make the same point over and over again — the decimation by the present government of the inclusive and representational higher education for all.

A deeper reflection of this imbalance is the National Education Policy (NEP) 2019, which is really what students in JNU and across campuses are fighting against. This policy is nothing more than a deliberately planned eclipse of equitable access to publicly funded education. Here is why.

The setting up of the Higher Education Funding Authority (HEFA) by this government to replace the University Grants Commission (UGC) requires that institutions of higher education function not on grants, but on loans that are to be recovered through fee hikes and other "internal resource generation", a pseu-

The attempt to construct stereotypes of students in the public sphere as lazy, good-for-nothings that want to survive on the taxpayer's money is a clever sleight of hand by the ruling party and its offspring. Students of research universities like JNU are repeatedly castigated, supposedly by a 'taxpaying public' for not earning their own living and paying fees. The argument is that money spent on their education is 'a waste'. It helps obfuscate the true nature of education policies by this government.

donym for placing education in the marketplace rather than at the disposal of the social good. The vision and the methods of the NEP 2019, which is built on the fundamentals of the HEFA, have nothing to do with universal humanistic values that underlie education policies in many countries where human rights, bridging social, economic, and regional chasms are the objectives of education at all levels. In fact, in many of them, university education is free, even though the average per capita income is far higher than in India. In these imaginations, the subject is defined by her rights and her needs. Moreover, the Constitution of India requires that education policy provide for equitable access to publicly funded education.

The NEP 2019, however, has little beyond the so called "Fourth Industrial Revolution" as the driving impetus, in which, the individual is seen as mere kindling in the fire of economic activity. It sees no other function to education other than producing cheap labour that toils away on the lowest rung of the labour ladder. It renders complete the shift from education as a right to education as a commodity. In the real world, in real time, this policy casts a highly porous net that will benefit but a small section of the population that can buy education from private profiteers, rendering even basic education an unaffordable luxury. Increasingly, the bottom of even the social section that believes it might be able to afford this luxury is also falling out, given the state of the economy where unemployment is the highest in 45 years. In the absence of publicly-funded education, parents and students will be driven in the direction of education loans and a lifetime of indebtedness. This puts education out of the reach of even the middle classes.

This is why students in universities like JNU are at the barricades, in a movement that is spreading like a necessary conflagration through campuses in the country, for they want to ensure their own rights and pay it forward, so that coming generations can rightfully seek solid and affordable education instead of choosing between indebtedness and illiteracy. We need to listen to them, now.

The writer is associate professor, Centre of German Studies, JNU

WHAT THE OTHERS SAY

"Like many other countries, Pakistan too has a spotty human rights record, but when it can speak out against the human rights violations of the Kashmiris and the Rohingya, can it stay silent about the Uighurs?"

—DAWN

Ball is in the majority's court

Manufactured hate should not sway Hindu worldview post the Ayodhya verdict



RAJMOHAN GANDHI

IN AN INDIAN Express article (November 15) following the Supreme Court's Ayodhya verdict, Rajiv Tuli, member of the RSS's Delhi executive, asks India's Muslims to ask themselves a question: "Do we want a Bharat which represents the legacy of Babar, Ghazni and Ghori, or do we want a Bharat where the legacy of the nation is represented by Lord Rama, Lord Krishna, Dara Shikoh, Kabir and APJ Abdul Kalam?"

What Tuli follows up with may be viewed by Muslims as a warning: "The call has to be taken by Muslims in Bharat and the ball is in their court now." He further adds: "Any interpretation of the Babri structure, other than... as a monument of our slavery, will clearly indicate that Hindus are being asked to live with a feeling of humiliation." Tuli hints of campaigns to come when he writes: "Hindus have asked for a peaceful return, of only three of their holy sites (Ayodhya, Mathura and Kashi) that were vandalised."

Clearly, the award of 2.77 acres of contested land has not quenched the thirst for avenging history's presumed wrongs. India's Muslims are expected to do more to remove "the feeling of humiliation" that 80 per cent of Indians supposedly nurse.

Muslims must declare (even if they don't believe it) that the Babri mosque was built to proclaim Hindu slavery, and they must take steps of restitution for other ancient wrongs, starting with Mathura and Kashi — "The ball is in their court."

Actually, the ball is in the court of India's Hindus, who must ask if they will allow further infusion in their minds of manufactured hate. The immortal Tulsidas lost no sleep when the Babri mosque was built. That structure made not the slightest difference either to his Ram or to his *Ramcharitmanas*. For centuries thereafter, that structure failed to humiliate other lovers of Ram and the Ramayana.

Thus, there is no record of Pandit Madan Mohan Malaviya, who probably held more Ramayana events than anyone else in his time, saying that the Babri mosque offended him and it had to go.

K M Munshi, more responsible than anyone else for Somnath temple's renovation, was Uttar Pradesh governor for five years, staying in Lucknow — not very far from Ayodhya — from 1952 to 1957. He seems to have made no demand for Babri Masjid's removal.

Men like Malaviya and Munshi may not have liked the fact that the Babri mosque was raised on or near the site that many believed was Ram's birthplace. They may not have liked the fact that for a long time the

Mughals ruled India, or, later, that the British ruled India.

However, accepting history's facts, they did not ask for the removal of Mughal forts and mosques, or of British palaces and churches. Such buildings might recall past defeats. But they were also part of India's assets, constructed — often impressively — by human skill and toil. Hindus were glad that the structures belonged to India.

Political calculation may see value in destroying the assets, but where will you stop? Will you remove the Red Fort and the Purana Qila? The Taj? The Qutub Minar? Will you pull down Kolkata's Victoria Memorial, New Delhi's imperial structures, and Mumbai's Gateway of India?

It's time for the calm Hindu to speak up, reclaim the Hindu platform, and restore sanity to it. For centuries, the serene confidence of everyday Hindus, as also of exceptional Hindu figures, sprang not from how they were treated by others, whether non-Hindu or Hindu, but from their own peace of mind, and their own creativity.

Loyal to their inner hearts, they were comfortable also with fellow-inhabitants of India and the planet. In our world's current season, however, headlines and megaphones have been seized by merchants of anger and distortion.

History assures us that seasons change. All Hindus who acknowledge the eternal Ram — who is also the eternal Krishna, the eternal Shiva, the eternal Allah, and the eternal God — can contribute to that change by speaking out in their circles and, where possible, on public platforms.

They can, for one thing, register their horror at the demolition of Ram to the status of a national hero. The maker of the universe, the giver of life and the master of death is greater than that.

Dear Mr Tuli, please do not bracket Lord Ram or Lord Krishna with historical figures, not even with extraordinary ones like Prince Dara, Sant Kabir and President Kalam.

You need not agree with Gandhi when he said, "The Rama whom I adore is God himself, unborn and uncreated" (*Collected Works*, 86: 427). But you cannot compel other Hindus — or Muslims or Christians — to declare that Rama was born in a particular spot in Ayodhya on a particular date.

You are entitled to your belief. Others have their liberty to disagree. That is a human right, one guaranteed — so far — by the Indian Constitution.

And, please remember, that the Supreme Court has declared unlawful both the sly insertion in 1949 of Ram idols into the Babri Masjid and the 1992 destruction of the mosque.

You have no right to ask all Hindus to defend or celebrate these two acts which will remain an embarrassment to Hinduism. Only an unqualified apology by those involved can begin to erase that embarrassment.

The writer is research professor at Centre for South Asian and Middle Eastern Studies, University of Illinois at Urbana Champaign

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

ISLAND CHALLENGE

THIS LETTER REFERS TO the editorial, 'Old in the new' (IE, November 19). Sri Lanka's new president, Gotabaya Rajapakasa, has promised to strengthen ties with China. PM Narendra Modi's ambition to shape the Indo-Pacific great game will fail unless he manages to make Gotabaya play ball and keep China at bay. Over the last two years, India had tried to rebuild bridges with Sri Lanka. The various meetings between Modi and Mahinda Rajapakasa, Gotabaya's brother, mean that India will not have to start from scratch. But the Modi government will have to deliver even more on economic and security cooperation. India's main challenge is to deepen the economic interdependence with Sri Lanka and expand connectivity initiatives. India must finalise the Economic and Technical Cooperation Agreement, which has been repeatedly delayed.

P.L. Singh, Amritsar

DON'T GIVE IN

THIS REFERS TO the article, 'Scholarship has no religion' (IE, November 16). It is the beauty of Indian culture that a Muslim professor can be appointed to teach Sanskrit in BHU. The adverse reactions against the appointment must be criticised. The university authorities and the UP government should not bow to these protests.

Rishabh Singh via e-mail

CHECK THE DISTRESS

THIS REFERS TO the article, 'A greater ease of living' (IE, November 20). Public welfare schemes like subsidised food-

LETTER OF THE WEEK AWARD

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

grain, housing, toilets, electricity, and gas connections and access to various financial services have had a significant impact on the lives of the rural poor. But agrarian distress and unemployment among the educated youth has shrunk the disposable income in the hands of the rural population. The high demand for work under MGNREGA indicates the gloomy employment prospects.

Sudip Kumar Dey, Kolkata

BE HONEST

THIS REFERS TO the editorial, 'Figure it out' (IE, November 20). The numbers related to the GDP and the economy are not encouraging. A series of efforts from government to boost economy is not producing results. The least the government can do is to be transparent about the economy. Scrapping the consumption survey will not fetch the desired results.

Bal Govind, Noida



J.S. SANDHU

A cut above

Chief of Defence Staff should play the role of the primary military adviser

CONSEQUENT TO PRIME Minister Narendra Modi's announcement from the ramparts of Red Fort, the proposed structure for the Chief of Defence Staff (CDS) has been deliberated upon. We should soon be seeing the first CDS take charge. The proposed charter of the CDS, his powers and status, etc, has been debated intensely. One school of thought recommends an evolutionary, incremental expansion of the role, while some feel he should be given greater operational control *ab initio*. Like many bureaucratic approval processes, turf battles often cloud judgements, the resistance to change tends to only marginally alter the existing status quo. In this case, too, Service HQs prefer to retain their powers, resources and establishments. Hence, to avoid a dilution of their spheres, they are in favour of the CDS taking charge of new organisations, domains, and also to handle the integrated structures. Existing single-service responsibilities would remain largely undisturbed.

What should be the answer to this dilemma? A logical appraisal is warranted: Retention of existing warfighting structures, while the CDS takes control of newer organi-

sations being set up for tackling future threats, has some merit. Development of future technologies and means to face emerging threats in the cyber, space, missiles domain, nurturing of AI-based platforms, usage of drones for various roles and such modern conflict realities is indeed important. These advancements are extremely costly, and the CDS can facilitate optimal, cost-effective integrated development and deployment of such structures.

Modern war and warfighting has tremendous economic costs. Defence budgets are invariably inadequate to meet the "wishlists", and intense prioritisation of capabilities is inevitable. The CDS can be the vital fulcrum to undertake such prioritisation and rationalisation, and, therefore, can play a stellar role in the perspective planning and development function. Considering the high cost of future technology, the CDS can also contribute towards optimisation of existing structures. Such review of existing establishments and manpower should also be an assigned task for him.

But should the CDS be utilised only in capability building and cost cutting, and opti-

misation measures? Future conflict situations would possibly need integrated application of fighting formations and resources, with unitary operational control of deployed elements. The CDS would be better placed for integrated employment of war fighting potential, and therefore logically needs to be part of the operational control chain.

In the debates on CDS, one often heard the designated profile as "providing single-point military advice". National security decisions are always taken after a multitude of advisory inputs from a number of agencies, duly analysing ramifications and end state probabilities. The CDS is better termed as the primary military advisor, with the service chiefs also remaining important military advisors. The CDS should not become another interposed level between the Raksha Mantri and the service chiefs, whose access to the minister should remain as prevalent.

In effect, the CDS should be in charge of newer domains and organisations, and be well poised to optimise, cut costs and prioritise different service demands. He could be an effective mentor for realising our military-

industrial power potential, and for modernisation and capability enhancement. His tri-service position makes him the most suited driver for the integrated application of warfighting resources and facilitates unitary control in integrated operations. The CDS also has a primary advisory role, and therefore should not be boxed into administrative efficiency roles, but must be in the operational control chain. In the interim, the CDS may not override the operational responsibility of the service chiefs, and in due course, his operational responsibility can expand and become more "hands-on".

Thus, it is clear that the CDS would play a far more critical role in the national security apparatus, than the three service chiefs. Our higher defence organisation would finally mature, and be more in tune with our rising power ranking. From being the "first among equals", I would like to see the CDS graduate to "first above the others".

The writer was General Officer Commanding of the Indian Army's Chinara Corps in Kashmir. Views are personal

बिज़नेस स्टैंडर्ड

वर्ष 12 अंक 236

फसल बीमा सुधार

चार निजी बीमा कंपनियों द्वारा सरकार की प्रमुख फसल बीमा योजना-प्रधानमंत्री फसल बीमा योजना (पीएमएफबीवाई) से बाहर जाने का निर्णय कतई चौंकाने वाला नहीं है। कृषि क्षेत्र में बीमा योजनाएं सन 1970 के दशक के आरंभ से ही अपनाई जाती रही हैं। यह सच है कि इस योजना को ऐसी अन्य योजनाओं को तुलना में अधिक सफलता मिली है लेकिन

यह भी कुछ ऐसी कमियों की शिकार है जिनके चलते यह न बीमाकर्ताओं के लिए आकर्षक रह गई और न ही किसानों के लिए।

बीमा कंपनियों को यह घाटे का सौदा लगती है, सरकार द्वारा 90 फीसदी की भारी सब्सिडी के बावजूद किसान शिकायत करते हैं कि उन्हें मिलने वाला हर्जाना बहुत कम है और लंबे अंतराल के बाद मिलता है आम

धारणा है कि बीमा कंपनियों अनुचित तरीके से सब्सिडी का लाभ ले रही हैं। यह आंशिक सच है। सन 2016 में योजना के शुरूआती वर्ष में मौसम के कारण फसल को नुकसान भी कम हुआ और इसलिए हर्जाना भी कम चुकाना पड़ा। इससे बीमाकर्ताओं को अच्छा मुनाफा हुआ। परंतु तब से हालात में बदलाव आया और 2018 में बारिश सामान्य से 9 फीसदी कम और 2019 में 10 फीसदी ज्यादा हुई। इससे कई राज्यों में फसल को भारी नुकसान पहुंचा। यही कारण है कि हर्जाने के दावे संग्रहीत प्रीमियम से अधिक हो गए। इसका असर बीमा कंपनियों के मुनाफे पर पड़ा और फसल बीमा उनके लिए आकर्षक नहीं रह गया।

प्रधानमंत्री फसल बीमा योजना के डिजाइन

में कई कमियां हैं। इसमें बटाई पर खेती करने वाले किसानों को फसल के बीमा में बैंकों को अनिवार्य रूप से शामिल करना और नुकसान का आकलन हर किसान के लिए अलग से करने के बजाय एक तय इलाके में औसत फसल नुकसान के आधार पर करना शामिल है। बैंक प्रायः हर्जाने की राशि को बिना किसानों की सहमति के ऋण की राशि में समायोजित कर देते हैं। इसके चलते किसानों, बैंकों और बीमा कंपनियों के बीच भरोसा कमजोर पड़ रहा है। इसके अलावा केंद्र सरकार के साथ वित्तीय बोझ वहन करने में राज्य की समान भागीदारी की बात तथा फसल कटाई के प्रयोग के जरिये नुकसान का आकलन आदि भी दिक्कत पैदा कर रहे हैं। नुकसान के आकलन में तकनीक का प्रयोग भी बांछित

तरीके से नहीं हो रहा है। इससे फसल नुकसान के आंकड़ों की विश्वसनीयता पर सवाल उठ रहे हैं और पुनर्भुगतान की राशि को अंतिम रूप देने में देर हो रही है। इतना ही नहीं राज्य अक्सर फंड में अपना हिस्सा देर से जारी करते हैं और वह भी किस्तों में। इसका असर नकदी की स्थिति और बीमा कंपनियों की भुगतान क्षमता पर पड़ता है। कई राज्यों ने सुनिश्चित राशि को बेहद कम रखा है जिससे लागत की भरपाई भी नहीं हो पाती। एक और बात यह है कि फसल बुवाई से लेकर कटाई तक कबरेज प्रदान करने वाली यह योजना मूल्य जोखिम की अनदेखी करती है जबकि वह किसानों के लिए अत्यंत आवश्यक है।

प्रधानमंत्री फसल बीमा योजना का हथ्थ भी ऐसी पुरानी योजनाओं जैसा नहीं हो, इसके

लिए इन मुद्दों को समुचित तरीके से हल करना आवश्यक है। भारतीय किसान खासकर छोटे और सीमांत किसान जो बुरी तरह कर्ज में डूबे हुए हैं, उन्हें फसल बीमा को सख्त आवश्यकता है ताकि वे अपने जोखिम को बचाव कर सकें। बीमारियों, कीट-पतंगों और सबसे बढ़कर जलवायु परिवर्तन के चलते ये दिक्कत बढ़ती जा रही है। अतिरिक्त मौसम की घटनाएं पहले ही बढ़ गई हैं। चक्रवाती तूफान जो पहले कभी-कभार आया करते थे वे हाल के दिनों में देश के तटीय इलाकों में आम हो गए हैं। इन घटनाओं ने पहले से नकदी की किल्लत शैल रहे किसानों को और परेशानी में डाला है। जब तक उन्हें एक सहज फसल बीमा जैसा विश्वसनीय जोखिम प्रबंधन नहीं मिल जाता, उनकी निराशा बढ़ती जाएगी।



अजय मोहंती

आखिर क्या हो मौद्रिक नीति समिति की राह?

मुद्रास्फीति के ताजातरीन आंकड़े अर्थव्यवस्था के लिए किसी गंभीर चिंता का विषय नहीं हैं। इस संबंध में विस्तार से जानकारी दे रहे हैं अजय शाह

संसद और जनता के प्रति भारतीय रिजर्व बैंक (आरबीआई) की जवाबदेही के नजरिये से देखें तो खुदरा मुद्रास्फीति में साल दर साल आधार पर आ रहे बदलावों पर ध्यान देने की बात समझी जा सकती है। यह गैर तकनीकी क्षेत्र के लोगों के लिए समझने लायक है। शीर्ष मुद्रास्फीति जनवरी 2019 के 1.97 फीसदी के न्यूनतम स्तर से अक्टूबर 2019 में 4.62 फीसदी के ऊंचे स्तर पर पहुंच गई। अकेले अक्टूबर में यह मुद्रास्फीति के 4 फीसदी के तय लक्ष्य को पार कर गई। हालांकि यह भी ध्यान रहे कि आरबीआई को शीर्ष मुद्रास्फीति को 2 से 6 फीसदी के तय दायरे में रखना है।

कुछ लोग इस बात को लेकर चिंतित हैं कि मुद्रास्फीति में तेजी आई है और आरबीआई दरों में इजाफा कर सकता है। यह देखना महत्वपूर्ण है कि एक महीने के लिए जब शीर्ष मुद्रास्फीति घटकर 1.97 फीसदी रह गई थी, तब यह 2 से 6 फीसदी के लक्षित दायरे से बाहर थी। जब मुद्रास्फीति का लक्ष्य 4 फीसदी है तो हमें प्रसन्न होना चाहिए कि हम लक्ष्य को भंग करने के बजाय उसके करीब आ गए।

गौरतलब है कि सितंबर में मुद्रास्फीति की दर 3.99 फीसदी थी। परंतु इस

जवाबदेही से अलग हमें अब शीर्ष मुद्रास्फीति में माह दर माह आधार पर आने वाले बदलावों पर ध्यान देने की आवश्यकता है। इनका आकलन प्रायः मौसमी आधार पर समायोजित आंकड़ों के आधार पर किया जाता है। मौसमी आधार पर होने वाला समायोजन हमें व्यावहारिक समस्याओं मसलन खरीफ की उपज और दीवाली की मांग से इतर दृष्टि डालने में मदद करता है।

इन आंकड़ों पर से क्षणभंगुरता का परदा हटने के बाद हमें हकीकत देखने को मिलती है। साल दर साल आधार पर आंकी गई मुद्रास्फीति का प्रत्येक मूल्य, 12 मासिक मूल्यों के आकलन का औसत है। साल दर साल मुद्रास्फीति के ताजातरीन मूल्य को देखें तो अंदाजा लगता है कि बीते एक वर्ष में अर्थव्यवस्था में क्या कुछ होता रहा है। माह दर माह आधार पर मुद्रास्फीति पर नजर डालें तो पता चलता है कि अर्थव्यवस्था की तस्वीर कैसी रही है। सितंबर में माह दर माह आधार पर आधारित मुद्रास्फीति 8.84 फीसदी के उच्चतम स्तर पर रही थी। अक्टूबर में यह घटकर 7.09 फीसदी रह गई। किसी एक महीने के लिए 7.09 फीसदी का मूल्य अस्वाभाविक नहीं है। खासकर माह दर

माह मुद्रास्फीति की दृष्टि से देखें तो। अतीत में कई बार अलहदा महीनों में 10 फीसदी तक की मुद्रास्फीति देखने को मिली है जबकि समग्र प्रदर्शन नियंत्रण में नजर आया और वह 2 से 6 फीसदी के तय दायरे के भीतर रहा।

मौद्रिक नीति समिति का काम कहीं अधिक गहराई से नजर डालने का है। मौद्रिक नीति निर्धारण का काम आसान नहीं है क्योंकि समिति के कदम और अर्थव्यवस्था पर उसके असर के बीच एक अंतराल होता है। हर मौद्रिक नीति समिति को भविष्य पर दृष्टि डालनी होती है। उसे उन कारकों की समझ होनी चाहिए जो उस वक्त सक्रिय हों और साथ ही अगले एक-दो वर्ष के दौरान मुद्रास्फीति की दशा और दिशा का भी अनुमान होना चाहिए। जब हम मौद्रिक नीति समिति के प्रदर्शन पर नजर डालते हैं तो यह समझना काफी आसान होता है कि समिति कब सही या गलत रही। इसके लिए संबंधित निर्णय के एक या दो वर्ष बाद मुद्रास्फीति के नतीजों पर दृष्टि डालना उचित होगा।

यदि हम आज के आर्थिक हालात पर नजर डालें, खासकर जीडीपी आंकड़ों से परे के हालात को देखें तो आज हम कारोबारी चक्र में बेहतर स्थिति में नहीं

हैं। इस बात की संभावना काफी कम है कि क्षमता के इस्तेमाल में उभार आएगी और श्रम बाजार में किसी किस्म की कड़ाई आएगी जो मुद्रास्फीति को दोबारा गति प्रदान कर सके। ऐसे में भविष्य की तिथियों को लेकर मुद्रास्फीति का हमारा नजरिया अपेक्षाकृत नरम रहना चाहिए।

हकीकत यह है कि मौजूदा दौर की समस्या नीतिगत दरों का बहुत अधिक होना नहीं है। बल्कि दिक्कत यह है कि नीतिगत दरों का लाभ अधिकांश अर्थव्यवस्था को मिल ही नहीं पा रहा है। सामान्य परिस्थितियों में भारतीय बॉन्ड मुद्रा डेरिवेटिव का गठजोड़ खराब तरीके से काम करता है।

इससे मौद्रिक नीति का पारेषण कमजोर रहता है। इसके अलावा फिलहाल कई वित्तीय कंपनियों की हालत खराब है। ऐसे में वे अपने अस्तित्व की लड़ाई लड़ रही हैं, उनका ध्यान कारोबारी अवसरों पर नहीं है। ऋण तक पहुंच और ऋण की कीमत की हकीकत की बात करें तो अर्थव्यवस्था में बहुत बड़ी तादाद में शामिल लोगों के लिए यह उस तस्वीर से काफी अलग है जो उन्हें 91 दिन की ट्रेजरी बिल की दर में नजर आता है।

इसके साथ ही साथ समस्या का हल सरकार द्वारा ब्याज दरों में किए जाने वाले बदलाव में भी पूरी तरह निहित नहीं है। हमें इसके लिए कहीं अधिक गहराई से दृष्टि डालनी होगी। वित्तीय कंपनियों के मौजूदा व्यवहार के पीछे भी कारण हैं। जरूरत है वित्तीय क्षेत्र की नीतियों को लेकर गहरे ज्ञान और ऐसे वित्तीय सुधारों की जो वित्तीय क्षेत्र की दिक्कतों की जड़ों पर प्रहार करें।

उदाहरण के लिए प्रशासित ब्याज दर एक अहम समस्या है। जब मुद्रास्फीति 4 फीसदी है, और ईपीएफ या पीपीएफ की 8 या 9 फीसदी की ब्याज दर वास्तव में 4 से 5 फीसदी ही रहती है। ऐसे में जरूरत यह है कि नए माहौल में ईपीएफ या पीपीएफ की ब्याज दर को 5 फीसदी के नॉर्मिनल स्तर पर लाया जाए।

कुछ लोगों को लगता है कि अर्थव्यवस्था की कठिनाइयों के मद्देनजर अब वक्त आ गया है कि मुद्रास्फीति को लक्षित करना छोड़ दिया जाए। इस विषय में हमें उन चुनौतियों का ध्यान करना चाहिए जिनका सामना आर्थिक नीति निर्माताओं को अतीत में करना पड़ा है।

उन्होंने भी उच्च मुद्रास्फीति का मुकाबला किया था। देश में आज जो तमाम समस्याएं हैं उनमें एक बड़ी राहत यह है कि हमें मुद्रास्फीति को तेजी का सामना नहीं करना पड़ना। जब आरबीआई को संपूर्ण संशोधित शक्ति एक ही चीज पर केंद्रित हो, यानी शीर्ष मुद्रास्फीति को 4 फीसदी के आसपास रखने पर तो अनिश्चितता का एक तत्व तो अपने आप समाप्त हो जाता है।

लोगों का मान-सम्मान हासिल करने के लिए जरूरी है कि सही कदम उठाए जाएं। ऐसा बार-बार और लंबे समय तक करना होगा। मौजूदा दौर ऐसा नहीं है जब आर्थिक मसलों से छेड़छाड़ की जाए। हर बीते वर्ष मौद्रिक नीति के साथ-साथ भरोसा भी मजबूत हो रहा है। हमें बस यहां बने रहना है, लाभ अपने आप हासिल होगा।

आर्थिक स्थिति को लेकर श्वेत पत्र जारी करने की जरूरत

देश की अर्थव्यवस्था ऐसे दौर से गुजर रही है जहां एक अदद अच्छी खबर तलाश करना मुश्किल है। आर्थिक वृद्धि में धीमापन है। निर्यात में गिरावट आ रही है, खुदरा मुद्रास्फीति बढ़ रही है, रोजगार बढ़ नहीं रहे हैं और बैंक ऋण की वृद्धि कम हुई है। बिजली का उपयोग कम हुआ है और यहां तक कि कर राजस्व में वृद्धि की गति भी धीमी हुई है। कर राजस्व की वृद्धि दर तो बजट में जताए गए अनुमान से काफी कम है। ऐसे में सरकार के लिए चालू वर्ष में राजकोषीय घाटे के लक्ष्य को हासिल कर पाना मुश्किल है।

अर्थव्यवस्था में अहम कारक माने जाने वाले रुझान में भी गिरावट है। हालांकि सरकार ने बीते कुछ सप्ताह के दौरान आवश्यक कदम उठाए हैं। मसलन कॉर्पोरेशन कर की दर में कमी, आवास, अचल संपत्ति, प्रधान और निर्यात क्षेत्र को गति वाहन करने के लिए पैकेज की घोषणा आदि। लेकिन आर्थिक निराशा के दौर से उबरना शेष है।

सरकार को क्या करना चाहिए? बताया जाता है कि अर्थव्यवस्था में नई जान फूंकने के लिए अभी कई प्रस्ताव विचाराधीन हैं। इनमें बुनियादी क्षेत्र में अतिरिक्त निवेश, आयकर दरों में बदलाव, नीतिगत सुधार और निजीकरण शामिल हैं। इन उपायों से मदद मिलेगी लेकिन उनका असर तात्कालिक नहीं होगा। आर्थिक वृद्धि के आंकड़ों में सुधार सुनिश्चित करने के पहले जरूरी है कि अर्थव्यवस्था की गिरी हुई मनोदशा में सुधार किया जाए। सरकार कुछ उपायों की सहायता से मौजूदा मिजाज बदलने का प्रयास कर सकती है।

पहले बड़े कदम के रूप में सरकार को अर्थव्यवस्था की स्थिति पर श्वेत पत्र जारी करना चाहिए। सरकार तथा किंकर्णक और रेटिंग एजेंसियों समेत तमाम अन्य संस्थानों के सदस्यों ने समस्या की प्रकृति और अर्थव्यवस्था को चुनौतियों को लेकर अलग-अलग टिप्पणी की है। बाजार और उद्योग जगत इस बात को लेकर स्पष्ट नहीं हैं कि उन्हें किस बात को स्वीकार करना चाहिए और किस खरिज। अनिश्चितता ने भी अर्थव्यवस्था को लेकर नकारात्मक माहौल तैयार करने में मदद की है।

ऐसे में सरकार के लिए यह



दिल्ली डायरी

ए के भट्टाचार्य

उचित समय है कि वह बताए कि देश की अर्थव्यवस्था की वास्तविक स्थिति और संभावनाएं क्या हैं? ऐसा दस्तावेज सहज तैयार किया जा सकता है। यदि यह काम किसी स्वतंत्र अर्थशास्त्री को सौंपा जाता है तो इसकी विश्वसनीयता में इजाफा होगा। वह अपनी रिपोर्ट सरकारी अर्थशास्त्रियों, विशेषज्ञों और वित्त मंत्रालय के अधिकारियों की सहायता से तैयार कर सकता है। वर्ष 2012 में विजय एक केलकर द्वारा प्रस्तुत रिपोर्ट को याद कीजिए। आज देश को वैसी ही एक रिपोर्ट की आवश्यकता है।

इससे सरकार से सरकार को अगले 11 सप्ताह में पेश किए जाने वाले बजट से जुड़े अनुमानों का प्रबंधन करने में आसानी होगी। उम्मीदें परवान पर हैं और यदि इन्हें अर्थव्यवस्था की मौजूदा स्थिति के अनुरूप रखा जाए तो बेहतर होगा। स्वतंत्र विशेषज्ञ की रिपोर्ट मौजूदा हालात सामने रखेगी और आगे की चुनौतियां भी। बजट से पहले पेश की जाने वाली आर्थिक समीक्षा चूंकि बजट से एक-दो दिन पहले आती है इसलिए वह ऐसे अनुमानों का प्रबंधन नहीं कर पाएगी।

रिपोर्ट सरकार के भीतर अपने वित्त से जुड़ी समस्याओं से निपटने का भरोसा पैदा करेगी। इस वर्ष अब तक राजस्व की आवक

बताती है कि सरकार 2019-20 में 2.3 फीसदी के राजकोषीय घाटे के लक्ष्य को शायद ही हासिल कर सके। चर्चा है कि सरकार राजकोषीय घाटे के संशोधित आंकड़े भी संशोधित बजट से इतर उधारी प्रस्तुत कर सकती है। अर्थव्यवस्था की स्थिति पर पर्चा सामने आने से ऐसी तमाम अटकलबाजी पर रोक लग जाएगी। ये आंकड़े बजट में जारी करने के बजाय बेहतर होगा कि बुरी खबर सामने लाने के लिए श्वेत पत्र का सहारा लिया जाए।

इससे बजट में उन नीतियों पर ध्यान केंद्रित करने का अवसर मिलेगा जिनमें सुधार की जरूरत है। इसके साथ ही उसमें जरूरी नए व्यय पैकेज भी पेश किए जा सकेंगे। वित्त मंत्री वित्तीय तंत्र में उत्पन्न तनाव की बात स्वीकार करके तथा अर्थव्यवस्था की स्थिति सुधारने की बात दोहरा कर श्वेत पत्र के प्रयासों का पूरक प्रयास कर सकती है।

सरकार का दूसरा कदम यह होना चाहिए कि वह आर्थिक मंदी से मुंह न चुराए। कुछ माह पहले एक सरकारी सर्वेक्षण में ही दर्शाया गया था कि अर्थव्यवस्था में रोजगार वृद्धि में भारी गिरावट आई है। सरकार को पहली प्रतिक्रिया में कहा गया कि ये निष्कर्ष सर्वेक्षणों के प्रारंभिक नतीजे हैं। कुछ महीने बाद सरकार ने स्वीकार किया कि वह रिपोर्ट अंतिम थी।

कुछ दिन पहले सरकार ने उपभोक्ता वित्त पर अपने ही सर्वे को खरिज करने का निर्णय किया क्योंकि आंकड़ों में कुछ दिक्कत थी। इस व्यय में गिरावट आई थी। ऐसे कदम अर्थव्यवस्था में लोगों और उद्योग जगत के भरोसे को सीमित करते हैं। यदि आंकड़ों में दिक्कत है तो सर्वे को खरिज करने के बजाय इस कमी को दूर करने के प्रयास किए जा सकते हैं। आर्थिक मंदी से निपटने के लिए केवल निवेश बढ़ाना और नीतिगत सुधार करना पर्याप्त नहीं है। यदों के स्वरूप तभी हासिल किया जा सकता है जबकि सरकार अर्थव्यवस्था की मौजूदा स्थिति पर श्वेत पत्र जारी करे और आर्थिक आंकड़ों तथा सर्वे के नतीजों को स्वीकार करे।

नरेंद्र मोदी सरकार के पहले कार्यकाल के दौरान तत्कालीन वित्त मंत्री अरुण जेटली ने अर्थव्यवस्था की स्थिति पर पत्र जारी करने का विचार इसलिए खरिज कर दिया था क्योंकि भारत को आंशकी थी कि इससे देश की अर्थव्यवस्था में निवेशकों का भरोसा कमजोर होगा। निवेशक अर्थव्यवस्था की स्थिति को लेकर आतंकवादी घटनाएं कर रहे हैं। आतंकवादी घाटों के भीले भाले लोगों को बहकते हैं। आतंकवादी लोगों से सेना पर पत्थर फेंकने को मजबूर करते हैं। इससे दुनिया को लगता है कि घाटी के लोग भारत सरकार का विरोध कर रहे हैं। लेकिन यह अथूरा सच ही लगता है। आतंकवादियों को बहलाकर सरकारी के खिलाफ आंदोलन करने पर मजबूर करते हैं जिसे देखने वाला यही समझता है कि घाटी के सभी लोग सरकार का विरोध कर रहे हैं। घाटी में पावंदियों के बाद शांति का माहौल है। धीरे-धीरे स्थिति सामान्य हो रही है और आने वाले दिनों में यह वापस भारत का स्वर्ग ही जाएगा। हमें घाटी के लोगों को भरोसा दिलाने की जरूरत है कि उनके हर सुख दुख में देश उनके साथ है।

कानाफूसी

लोस-रास टीवी चैनल का विलय

राज्य सभा टेलीविजन और लोक सभा टेलीविजन का शीघ्र ही विलय होने वाला है। देखने वाली बात यह होगी कि इन दोनों में से किसकी पहचान खत्म होगी। राज्य सभा टीवी की ब्रांड वैल्यू ज्यादा है जबकि लोकसभा टीवी के पास वित्तीय और प्रशासनिक शक्ति है। इसके साथ यह भी देखा होगा कि टीम की लगाम किसके हाथ में रहती है और नई व्यवस्था में मुख्य कार्याधिकारी को नियुक्ति कौन करेगा उपराष्ट्रपति या लोकसभा अध्यक्ष? गौरतलब है कि लोक सभा टीवी देश का पहला संसदीय चैनल है। इसका उद्घाटन तत्कालीन अध्यक्ष सोमनाथ चटर्जी ने जुलाई 2006 में किया था। इस चैनल का स्वामित्व एवं परिचालन दायित्व लोकसभा सचिवालय के पास है। राज्य सभा का स्वामित्व संसद के उच्च सदन के पास है। इसकी शुरुआत 2011 में हुई थी।



बुरे सपने सा जन्मदिन

मध्य प्रदेश के मुख्यमंत्री कमल नाथ का जन्मदिन विवादों से घिरा रहा। भोपाल में उनके जन्मदिन के मौके पर प्रदेश कांग्रेस कमेटी के पदाधिकारियों द्वारा तोते उड़ाए जाने के बाद भोपाल के वन्यजीव कार्यकर्ता अजय दुबे ने इसकी आधिकारिक शिकायत कर दी। कमल नाथ के जन्मदिन पर जहां अधिकांश पार्टी कार्यकर्ताओं ने उनको बधाई दी, वहीं पूर्व कांग्रेस अध्यक्ष राहुल गांधी तथा उनकी बहिन और पार्टी महासचिव प्रियंका गांधी द्वारा उनको सोशल मीडिया पर बधाई नहीं देना भी चर्चा में रहा। इससे पहले स्थानीय अखबारों में दिए गए विज्ञापन में भी नाथ के बारे में कुछ विवादास्पद बातें छपी थीं। जिनके सामने आने के बाद पार्टी ने इस विज्ञापन पर से पल्ला झाड़ लिया था। विज्ञापन में लिखा था कि सन 1996 में उन्हें सुंदरलाल पटवा ने चुनाव में 'पटखनी' दी थी। यह भी कि सन 1993 में उनका नाम मुख्यमंत्री पद की दौड़ में आगे था लेकिन अर्जुन सिंह के अनुशंसा के बाद दिग्विजय सिंह को मुख्यमंत्री बना दिया गया।

आपका पक्ष

शिक्षा को व्यवसाय नहीं बनने दें

दिल्ली उच्च न्यायालय ने दुकानों की तरह दिखने वाले स्कूलों के एक मामले में सुनवाई के दौरान कहा कि दिल्ली में ऐसे स्कूल कैसे चल रहे हैं। कक्षा एक से आठ तक के इन स्कूलों में खेल का मैदान नहीं है। पीठ ने एक स्कूल का फोटो देखने के बाद टिप्पणी की कि ये स्कूल हैं? वे दुकान की तरह दिखते हैं। वे कक्षा एक से आठ तक चलते हैं। क्या उन्हें खेल के मैदान की जरूरत नहीं है? दिल्ली सरकार क्या कर रही है? राजधानी दिल्ली में निजी स्कूलों की स्थिति उच्च न्यायालय की टिप्पणी से साफ हो जाता है। दिल्ली में गली-मोहल्ले में निजी स्कूल खोले गए हैं। प्ले स्कूल हर दूसरी गली में देखने को मिल जायेंगे। अदालत ने यह भी पूछा कि ऐसे स्कूलों को बंद क्यों नहीं कर देते जबकि वहां खेल का मैदान भी नहीं है। इसे बंद करने के लिए फैसला लेने में यह कारण काफी है। आज ऐसे कई स्कूल हैं जिसमें खेल का मैदान तक नहीं है।



ऐसे में बच्चे कहां खेलेंगे और उनका शारीरिक विकास कैसे हो सकेगा। निजी स्कूलों ने शिक्षा को एक व्यवसाय बना दिया है। यहां बच्चे पढ़ने आते हैं। डेर सारा होमवर्क लेकर घर लौटते हैं। घर पर भी पढ़ाई करने लग जाते हैं। जिससे शारीरिक कसरत नहीं हो पाती है। स्कूल में खेलने से बच्चों की शारीरिक कसरत हो जाती है लेकिन

आधारभूत सुविधाएं नहीं देने वाले निजी स्कूलों की पहचान कर उन्हें बंद कर देना चाहिए

जिस स्कूल में खेल का मैदान ही नहीं है वहां बच्चे कैसे खेल सकेंगे। कई स्कूल सरकारी पार्क के बगल में खुले हैं और पार्क की जमीन दिखा कर अपनी मान्यता बचाए हुए

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



दैनिक जागरण

आत्मा प्रत्येक समस्या का उचित उत्तर अवश्य देती है

महाराष्ट्र में मौकापरस्ती

दिल्ली में कांग्रेस और राष्ट्रवादी कांग्रेस पार्टी के नेताओं की मुलाकात से यदि कुछ संकेत मिल रहें हैं तो यही कि महागुष्ट्र में सरकार गठन को लेकर फिर कोई खिचड़ी पक रही है। कहना कठिन है कि यह खिचड़ी कब पकेगी, क्योंकि जब शिवसेना को समर्थन देने के सवाल पर कांग्रेस और राष्ट्रवादी कांग्रेस पार्टी के नेताओं में मंत्रणा हो रही थी तब शरद पवार प्रधानमंत्री से मुलाकात कर रहे थे। हालांकि उनकी मांमें तो वह किसानों के मसले पर प्रधानमंत्री से मिले, लेकिन आखिर इसे कैसे भूल सकते हैं कि चंद्र दिनों पहले सोनिया गांधी से मुलाकात करने के बाद उन्होंने कहा था कि हमारी सरकार गठन को लेकर तो कोई बात ही नहीं हुई। शरद पवार की प्रधानमंत्री से मुलाकात चाहे जिस मसले पर हुई हो, यह दिखने लगा है कि कांग्रेस और राष्ट्रवादी कांग्रेस पार्टी ने शिवसेना को समर्थन देने का मन बना लिया है। इसके बावजूद शायद बात तभी बनेगी जब शिवसेना के नेतृत्व वाली भावी सरकार का स्वरूप तय होगा। इस सरकार का स्वरूप कुछ भी हो, शिवसेना के साथ कांग्रेस और राष्ट्रवादी कांग्रेस पार्टी को भी कुछ कठिन सवालों से दो-चार होना होगा। सबसे पहला सवाल तो यही होगा कि क्या शिवसेना का साथ देने के बाद भी कांग्रेस और राष्ट्रवादी कांग्रेस पार्टी खुद को कथित तौर पर पंथनिरपेक्ष दल बताती रहेंगी? अगर इन दोनों दलों को शिवसेना की राजनीति रस आ गई है तो फिर उनके मुद्दों का क्या होगा जिनके आधार पर वे चुनाव मैदान में उतरे थे? स्पष्ट है कि यदि सत्ता के लोभ में शिवसेना अवसरवादी राजनीति का परिचय दे रही है तो यही काम कांग्रेस और राष्ट्रवादी कांग्रेस पार्टी भी कर रही हैं।

महागुष्ट्र में एक तरह से कर्नाटक को भी मात देने वाला बेमेल राजनीतिक प्रयोग किया जा रहा है। कर्नाटक में भाजपा को सत्ता में आने से रोकने के लिए एक-दूसरे के खिलाफ चुनाव लड़े जनता दल-एल एन और कांग्रेस ने हथ मिला लिया था तो महागुष्ट्र में मुख्यमंत्री की कुर्सी के लोभ में शिवसेना भाजपा से नाता तोड़कर अपने धुर विरोधी दलों की गोद में बैठने को तैयार है। यह मौकापरस्त राजनीति का चरम है। इसके बुरे नतीजे शिवसेना के साथ कांग्रेस और राष्ट्रवादी कांग्रेस को भी भोगने होंगे। निःसंदेह गठबंधन राजनीति के नाम पर राजनीतिक दलों ने पहले भी मनमानी की है, लेकिन महागुष्ट्र में जो कुछ होता हुआ दिख रहा है वह तो एक तरह से जनादेश की लूट है। इस तरह की बेधम राजनीति लोकतांत्रिक मूल्यों और परंपराओं को छिन्न-भिन्न करने वाली ही है। अब न तो चुनाव पूर्व गठबंधन भरोसे के काबिल होंगे और न ही तथाकथित पंथनिरपेक्ष राजनीति।

मानवता शर्मसार

देश के किसी गरीब की इलाज के अभाव में मौत न हो, उन्हें समय पर उपचार मिले-इसी को ध्यान में रख केंद्र और झारखंड सहित सभी राज्य सरकार हर कवायद में लगी हैं। मरीजों की राहत के लिए आयुष्मान भारत योजना और 10८ सरकारी एंबुलेंस सेवा की व्यवस्था की गई है, मगर यह बात भी ध्यान में रखनी होगी कि किसी भी योजना को पूरी शिदत के साथ तभी अमलीजामा पहनाया जा सकता है जब उसे अंजाम देने वाले पेशे के साथ पूरी ईमानदारी बरतें। जो व्यवस्था बनाई गई है, उसे ठीक से लागू किया जाए। यदि कर्तव्य के साथ नाइसाफी हो गई तो उद्देश्य पूरा नहीं हो सकता। गिरिडीह में दो दिन पहले सड़क हादसे में दो लोगों की मौत व्यवस्था की अनदेखी की बानगी है। दरअसल जमुआ-कोडरमा मार्ग पर खोरीमहुआ के पास चादगर इलाके में हादसा हुआ था। बाइक पर जा रहे तीन युवकों को अज्ञात वाहन ने रविवार की रात टक्कर मार दी। घायलों की सहायता के लिए आसपास के लोग दौड़ पड़े। सरकारी एंबुलेंस बुलाई गई। गंभीर रूप से घायल तीनों युवक तड़प रहे थे। बावजूद कम दूरी तय करने की कोश में एंबुलेंस चालक ने अपने फर्ज से मुंह मोड़ लिया। घायल युवकों को गिरिडीह सदर अस्पताल ले जाना चाहिए था, लेकिन वह घायलों को बिरनी सीएचसी ले गया। सीएचसी में चिकित्सक मौजूद थे, मगर कलियुग के भगवान ने उनकी ओर ताका तक नहीं।

बिना प्राथमिक उपचार किए ही घायलों को सदर अस्पताल ले जाने का निर्देश दिया। इसके बाद तो एंबुलेंस चालक ने वह किया जिससे इंसानियत भी शर्मसार हो गई। एक ओर घायल तड़प रहे थे, उनकी सांस टूटती जा रही थी, दूसरी ओर वह कह रहा था कि एंबुलेंस में डीजल नहीं है, उनको दूसरे वाहन से ले जाओ। परिजनों के कार्फी अनुनय-विनय करने पर किसी प्रकार वह सदर अस्पताल गया। इस घटनाक्रम में इतना समय बर्बाद हो गया था कि अत्यधिक खून बहने के कारण दो युवकों ने अस्पताल पहुंचते ही दम तोड़ दिया। परिजनों ने साफ-साफ कहा कि अगर एंबुलेंस चालक ने समय बर्बाद नहीं किया होता तो युवकों की जान बच सकती थी। उधर सीएचसी के डॉक्टरों ने भी जो किया, उसे उचित नहीं ठहराया जा सकता। यहीं पर यह सवाल उठ खड़ा होता है कि व्यवस्था सुचारु कैसे होगी? क्या जान की कीमत लगाई जा सकती है? इसका जवाब है-नहीं। इस घटना से सबक लेना चाहिए और कर्तव्य सर्वोपरि है, इसका संकल्प लेना चाहिए। मानवता के लिए यह जरूरी है।

गुलाबी गेंद का असर

कोलकाता के ईडन गार्ड्स में भारत और बांग्लादेश के बीच होने वाले दूसरे टेस्ट मैच में पहली बार गुलाबी गेंद का इस्तेमाल होगा। इसके साथ ही भारत अपना पहला डे-नाइट टेस्ट मैच भी खेलेगा। हालांकि अभी गुलाबी गेंद मैदान पर उतरी नहीं है, लेकिन उसे लेकर तरह-तरह के कयास लगाए जाने लगे हैं। कुछ लोग बता रहे हैं कि यह गेंदबाजों और बल्लेबाजों के लिए अच्छी साबित होगी तो कुछ का मानना है कि इससे दोनों को नुकसान होगा। अभी तक क्रिकेट मैच लाल और सफेद गेंद से खेले जाते थे, पर गुलाबी गेंद के प्रवेश ने कई तरह के सवाल पैदा कर दिए हैं?

एक सामान्य-सा सवाल है जो बहुत से लोगों के मन में उठ रहा है कि आखिर गुलाबी गेंद ही क्यों? किसी और की गेंद क्यों नहीं? हरी, पीली, नीली, काली... सिर्फ गुलाबी गेंद ही क्यों चुनी गई? दरअसल गुलाबी गेंद लाल गेंद और सफेद गेंद के बीच की है। यानी इसमें टेस्ट मैच खेले जाने वाली लाल गेंद और वन डे मैच खेले जाने वाली सफेद गेंद दोनों का अंश होगा। कहना गलत नहीं होगा कि ये दोनों से मिलकर बनी है। टेस्ट मैच में सफेद ड्रेस के सामने सफेद गेंद ठीक से नहीं दिखती, इसलिए

फिर से

डे-नाइट टेस्ट मैच के लिए गुलाबी गेंद इसलिए चुनी गई है, ताकि खिलाड़ी उसे दिन और रात में आसानी से देख सकें

खिलाड़ी लाल गेंद से खेलते हैं, जबकि वन डे मैच में रंगीन जर्सी होती है, इसलिए सफेद गेंद से खेलते हैं। ऐसे में गुलाबी गेंद इसलिए चुनी गई है, ताकि खिलाड़ी उसे दिन में, शाम को और रात में आसानी से देख सकें। लाल रंग की गेंद को रंग जाना है, जबकि सफेद और गुलाबी रंग की गेंद पर घंट किया जाता है और उसकी एक खास तरह के रसायन से कोटिंग की जाती है, ताकि रंग लंबे समय तक बना रहे। एक सवाल यह भी है कि जब सफेद बॉल से भी रात में और दिन में खेला ही जा रहा था तो गुलाबी की क्या जरूरत है? दरअसल टेस्ट मैच में खिलाड़ियों को 80 ओवर के बाद दूसरी गेंद मिलती है। यानी 80 ओवर तक एक ही बॉल से खेलना होता है। सफेद गेंद इतने अधिक ओवर तक बहुत अधिक खराब हो



जीएन वाजपेयी

किसी भी बेरोजगार से पुछिए कि उसे रोजगार चाहिए या श्रम संरक्षण कानून तो उसका संभावित जवाब यही होगा कि पहले नौकरी तो मिले

हाल में वियतनाम जाना हुआ। वहां हनोंई से हा लोंग बे के मार्ग में फैक्ट्रियों की लंबी श्रृंखला दिखाई पड़ी। मेरे टूरिस्ट गाइड ने बताया कि ये ‘केनन’ की विनिर्माण इकाइयां हैं। उसने मुझे यह भी बताया कि सैमसंग के 60 प्रतिशत कौन वियतनाम में बनते हैं। गत वर्ष वियतनाम से होने वाले कुल निर्यात में 20 प्रतिशत हिस्सेदारी सैमसंग के उत्पादों की थी। यह वाकई एक बड़ी पहली है कि युद्ध की विभीषिका झेलने वाला एक देश कैसे कुछ दशकों में अपनी कायापलट करने में सक्षम हुआ। गरीबी घटाने के मामले में उसका रिकॉर्ड चीन से भी बेहतर है। 199० में वियतनाम की 60 प्रतिशत आबादी गरीब थी, जबकि अब मात्र 10 प्रतिशत लोग ही गरीब रह गए हैं। वियतनाम प्रवास के दौरान मैंने जाना कि यह सफलता लचीली श्रम नीतियों और उपयुक्त बुनियादी ढांचे की शानदार जुगलबंदी से ही संभव हुई। भारत में मोदी सरकार ने जबसे सत्ता संभाली है तबसे वह उत्पादकता बढ़ाने के भरसक प्रयास में जुटी है। इस दिशा में अहमकी, जिएस्टी और मोट्रिक नीति समिति के रूप में सरकार ने कुछ बड़े सुधार किए हैं। फिर भी काफी कुछ किया जाना शेष है। जैसे कि भूमि एवं श्रम सुधार।

भूमि सुधार एक भावनात्मक मुद्दा है। पहले कार्यकाल में मोदी सरकार ने भूमि सुधारों की दिशा में तमाम प्रयास किए। इसके लिए नौ बार अध्यादेश भी लाया गया, लेकिन गज्यसभा

की स्वीकृति न मिल पाने के कारण वह सुधार अधर में रह गया। हल में संसद ने एक नई श्रम संहिता को स्वीकृति दी है। इसमें श्रम नीति के तमाम प्रावधानों को सुसंगत किया है। मसलन भविष्य निधि के फायदों का दायर अस्थाई-अनुबंधित कर्मचारियों तक बढ़ाया गया है। श्रमिकों की भागीदारी को और उदार बनाने के लिए समन्वित प्रयास भी किए जा रहे हैं। श्रम सुधार भी बहुत भावनात्मक मुद्दा है। श्रम सुधारों को लेकर नीति आयोग के उपाध्यक्ष ने जोर देकर यह बात दोहराई है कि इसमें कोई भी ‘हायर एंड फायर’ नीति नहीं अपनाई जाएगी। चीन, वियतनाम, इंडोनेशिया और मलेशिया जैसे देशों के मुकाबले भारत में सरस्ती श्रम दरों के बावजूद श्रम की कुल लागत कहीं अधिक है। श्रम उत्पादकता देश में विनिर्माण के अपेक्षित विस्तार में एक बहुत बड़ी बाधा बनी हुई है। श्रम उत्पादकता में सुधार के लिए तकनीकों मार्चें पर निवेश और उपक्रमों का आकार बढ़ाने की दरकार है। विनिर्माण क्षेत्र में उद्यमी और निवेशक या तो अपने सीमित दायरे एवं लचर श्रम उत्पादकता या फिर अन्य बाजारों की कमी के साथ टिके हुए हैं।

फिलहाल भारतीय अर्थव्यवस्था बुरे दौर से गुजर रही है। भारत की तिमाही जीडीपी वृद्धि दर गोता लगाते हुए पांच प्रतिशत के दायरे में आ गई है। स्वाभाविक रूप से इसका सीधा संरोकार लोगों की आर्थिक दशा-दिशा से है।

साकार हो रहे गरीबों के सपने

उत्तर प्रदेश में सिद्धार्थ नगर जिले के एक गांव में अमरावती अपने बच्चों के साथ झोपड़ी में रह रही थीं। वह गांव में मजदूरी से होने वाली आमदनी से अकेले ही घर का खर्च चलाया करती थीं। मानसून में उनकी झोपड़ी में बारिश का पानी टपकना आम था। इस दौरान खाना बनाने के लिए सूखे लकड़ी भी कठिनाई से मिलती थी। ऐसे में वह कई बार काम के अवसर भी खो देती थीं। अमरावती के लिए इस तरह की कठिनाइयों के बीच गरिमापूर्ण जीवन बिताना कल्पना से बाहर की बात थी। यह कहानी अकेले अमरावती की ही नहीं है, ऐसे कई लोग और परिवार हैं जिनके लिए पक्के मकान में गरिमापूर्ण जीवन जीने का सपना भी दुर्लभ था। प्रधानमंत्री नरेंद्र मोदी के नेतृत्व में शुरू की गई प्रधानमंत्री आवास योजना (ग्रामीण) के अंतर्गत अमरावती एवं उनके जैसे ८7 लाख से अधिक परिवार जरूरी सुविधाओं से युक्त आवास पाकर आज गरिमापूर्ण जीवन जी रहे हैं। यह सब प्रधानमंत्री आवास योजना (ग्रामीण) के सफल क्रियान्वयन से संभव हो पाया है।

शौचालय, एलपीजी सिलेंडर के साथ बिजली और पेयजल जैसी मूलभूत सुविधाओं के साथ पक्के मकान की उपलब्धता गरिमापूर्ण जीवन के लिए महत्वपूर्ण होती है। इसके लिए पूर्व की इंदिरा आवास योजना का पुनर्गठन कर उसे एक अप्रैल, 2016 से प्रधानमंत्री आवास योजना (ग्रामीण) का स्वरूप दिया गया। प्रधानमंत्री मोदी ने उत्तर प्रदेश में आगम से 20 नवंबर, 2016 को इसका शुभारंभ किया। इसका तात्कालिक उद्देश्य 2016-17 से 2018-19 के बीच पहले चरण के अंतर्गत एक करोड़ मकानों का निर्माण करना था। बाकी एक करोड़ 95 लाख मकानों को दूसरे चरण के अंतर्गत 2019-20 से 2021-22 के बीच पूरा करने का लक्ष्य है। सभी राज्य सरकारों की भागीदारी से ग्रामीण विकास मंत्रालय ने अब तक ८7 लाख से अधिक आवासों का निर्माण पूरा कर लिया है। यह सच है कि पानी, रसोई गैस, शौचालय और बिजली जैसी बुनियादी सुविधाओं के साथ पक्के मकान का होना किसी भी परिवार का आत्मसम्मान बढ़ाता है, क्योंकि इससे उस परिवार को दिन-प्रतिदिन की चिंताओं से मुक्ति प्राप्त होती है। वह अधिक समय आर्थिक गतिविधियों के लिए निकाल पाता है। उस परिवार को और अधिक आर्थिक एवं सामाजिक स्वतंत्रता प्राप्त हो जाती है। वर्चस्वित मकानों से लोगों के जीवन की गुणवत्ता में भी सुधार आता है। प्रधानमंत्री आवास योजना (ग्रामीण) के अंतर्गत हम ये



मूलभूत सुविधाएं भारत सरकार के विभिन्न कार्यक्रमों के साथ तालमेल के जरिये उपलब्ध करा रहे हैं।

प्रधानमंत्री आवास योजना (ग्रामीण) के प्रभावी क्रियान्वयन के लिए सबसे पहले सरकार ने आवास विहीनता के मानदंडों पर आधारित सामाजिक-आर्थिक जाणित जनगणना-2011 के जरिये लाभार्थियों की पहचान करने का निर्णय लिया। इसके बाद ग्राम सभा स्तर पर सत्यान प्रक्रिया अपनाई गई। इससे इस योजना के लाभार्थियों के चयन और स्थाई प्रतीक्षा सूची में पूर्ववर्ती क्रम के अनुसार मकानों के आवंटन में पारदर्शिता लाने में मदद मिली। सरकार प्रत्यक्ष लाभ अंतरण (डीबीटी) के माध्यम से लाभार्थियों के खातों में धनराशि को सीधे भेजने से भ्रष्टाचार रोकने में भी सफल हुई है। इस योजना में गिरानगी प्रक्रिया साक्ष्य-आधारित है। भुगतान करने से पहले आवास एप के जरिये निर्माण के पूर्व निर्धारित स्तरों के चित्र लिए जाते हैं। फिर इन जियो टैक्ड चित्रों को समय और तारीख के साथ आवाससॉफ्ट पर अपलोड किया जाता है। ये विवरण सार्वजनिक तौर पर उपलब्ध हैं। इससे वित्तीय अनुशासन कायम हुआ है। हम घर बैठे देश के किसी कोने में निर्मित हो रहे आवास की वास्तविक प्रगति से अवगत हो सकते हैं। इस योजना में एक अन्य महत्वपूर्ण पहल प्रत्येक गज्य/संघ शासित क्षेत्र में एकल

नोडल खाता खोलने और संचालित करने की भी रही। पुरानी ग्रामीण आवास योजना में राज्य, जिला, ब्लॉक और उप-ब्लॉक के स्तर पर विभिन्न खाते होते थे। उनमें अनावश्यक रूप से पैसे पड़े रहते थे। पात्र लाभार्थियों को फंड जारी नहीं हो पाते थे। नतीजतन मकान निर्माण में देरी होती थी। एकल नोडल खाता प्रणाली से इस समस्या का समाधान हो गया है। इस खाते से राज्य के किसी भी हिस्से में लाभार्थी के खाते में धनराशि सीधे भेजी जा सकती है। इससे धनराशि का सुचारु प्रवाह सुनिश्चित हुआ है और मकानों के निर्माण में देरी आई है।

ग्रामीण क्षेत्रों में मकानों की गुणवत्ता के मुद्दे से निपटने और ग्रामीण आवास के निर्माण की सभी जरूरतों को एक ही जगह पर पूरा करने के उद्देश्य से ग्रामीण विकास मंत्रालय ने प्रधानमंत्री आवास योजना (ग्रामीण) के अंतर्गत ग्रामीण राजमिस्त्री प्रशिक्षण कार्यक्रम शुरू किया है। इसके तहत न केवल राजमिस्त्री से संबंधित प्रशिक्षण दिया जाता है, बल्कि बच्च-बोंडों और शटरिंग इत्यादि का काम भी सिखाया जाता है। इससे इनको रोजगार मिलने के अवसर बढ़ें हैं। इस कार्यक्रम के तहत कुल 53,370 उम्मीदवारों को प्रशिक्षित एवं प्रमाणित भी किया जा चुका है। प्रौद्योगिकी के प्रभावी उपयोग से मकान का निर्माण पूरा करने में लगने वाले दिनों की औसत संख्या भी घटी है। 2015-16 में किसी मकान का निर्माण कार्य पूरा होने में औसतन 314 दिन लगते थे जो वर्ष 2017-18 में घटकर 114 दिन रह गए। इससे वार्षिक आधार पर पूरे किए जाने वाले मकानों की संख्या में वृद्धि हुई है। इस महत्वाकांक्षी योजना के पहले चरण के क्रियान्वयन के दौरान सरकार को ऐसे परिवारों के बारे में पता चला जो संभवतः पात्र हैं, लेकिन वे स्थाई प्रतीक्षा सूची में किसी कारण शामिल नहीं हो पाए। ऐसे छूटे हुए परिवारों का विवरण दर्ज करने के लिए आवास प्लस मोबाइल एप विकसित किया गया। इनसे मिले अंकेडों के आधार पर पात्र उम्मीदवारों की सूची को अपडेट किया जा रहा है।

प्रधानमंत्री नरेंद्र मोदी के नेतृत्व में सरकार वर्ष 2022 तक गरीबी मुक्त नए भारत का सपना पूरा करने जा रही है और इसी कड़ी में ग्रामीण विकास मंत्रालय प्रधानमंत्री आवास योजना (ग्रामीण) के माध्यम से हर पात्र लाभार्थी को मार्च, 2022 तक सभी बुनियादी सुविधाओं से युक्त आवास उपलब्ध कराने के लिए कुतर्कसक्त्य है।

(लेखक केंद्रीय ग्रामीण विकास मंत्री हैं)

response@jagran.com



अवधेश राजपूत

भारत में पहली बार समग्र मांग में गिरावट देखी जा रही है। इसके पीछे बढ़ती बेरोजगारी को वजह माना जा रहा है जो लोगों की क्रय शक्ति को प्रभावित कर रही है। इस बीच अमेरिका और चीन, जापान और कोरिया के बीच जारी व्यापार युद्ध एवं आमजन से जुड़े मुद्दों पर टकवश से विनिर्माण केंद्रों से पलायन बढ़ा है। विशेषकर चीन से तमाम कंपनियों किनारा कर कहीं और विनिर्माण केंद्र स्थापित कर रही हैं। ऐसे में यह भारत के लिहाज से अनुकूल अवसर है कि वह इन इकाइयों को अपने यहां स्थापित कराने के प्रयास करे। इससे भारत वैश्विक आपूर्ति श्रृंखला में एक अहम कड़ी के रूप में उभरेगा। मोदी सरकार ने कॉर्पोरेट टैक्स घटाकर इस दिशा में एक बड़ा कदम उठाया है। अब यह दुनिया के कई देशों विशेषकर एशियाई प्रतिस्पर्धी मुल्कों की तुलना में खासा कम हो गया है। देर-सबेर भारतीय अर्थव्यवस्था को इससे बहुत फायदा होने की उम्मीद है। हालांकि जब तक विनिर्माण इकाइयां भारत का रुख नहीं करतीं, तब तक इसका पुरा लाभ नहीं मिलेगा।

एक ऐसे समय में जब पर्याप्त मात्रा में रोजगार सृजन नहीं हो रहा तब श्रमिक संरक्षण के लिए बने कायदे-कानूनों का कोई खास महत्व नहीं रह जाता। श्रम कानून इसलिए बनाए गए हैं ताकि श्रमिकों को शोषण से बचाया जा सके। अहम सवाल यह है कि जब कोई रोजगार ही नहीं होगा तो फिर हमें किसके अधिकारों का संरक्षण करने की जरूरत होगी? फिलहाल भारत में 98 प्रतिशत रोजगार के अवसर कृषि, अंसंगठित अर्थव्यवस्था के अलावा सूक्ष्म, छोटे एवं मझोले उद्योग यानी एमएसएमई और एसएमई के जरिये सृजित होते हैं। अमूमन इनमें श्रम संरक्षण कानून लागू नहीं होते। कहने का अर्थ यह नहीं कि श्रम कानूनों को पूरी तरह समाप्त कर दिया जाए, लेकिन उन्हें तार्किक अवश्य बनाया जाना चाहिए।

क्या यह संभव नहीं बनाया जा सकता कि कम से कम 300 लोगों को नियुक्त करने के प्रावधान को विदाई दी जाए। साथ ही नियोक्ता को आवश्यकतानुसार ‘भर्ती एवं कार्यमुक्ति’ की गुंजाइश दी जाए। कम से कम लोगों के पास रोजगार तो होना चाहिए। किसी भी बेरोजगार से स्पष्टि कि उसे रोजगार चाहिए या श्रम संरक्षण तो उसका संभावित जवाब यही होगा कि पहले नौकरी मिले तो सही। एक बार यदि पर्याप्त मात्रा में रोजगार के अवसर सृजित

हो जाएं तो सरकार कल्याणकारी मसलों को सुलझा सकती है। वह नई आर्थिक गतिविधियों से होने वाले फायदों के जरिये गजबत गुजराकर एक कोष बना सकती है। पहले श्रमिक का संरक्षण, फिर रोजगार की तलाश और फिर कल्याणकारी कदमों वाले समीकरण को पलटना चाहिए। वैश्विक विनिर्माण को लुभाने के लिए चीन, वियतनाम, कंबोडिया और अन्य एशियाई तेजतरंग देशों ने यही किया है।

सामाजिक तानेबाने को न छेड़ने के मकस से चीन ने ऐसे विशेष आर्थिक क्षेत्र यानी सेज बनाए जहां कारोबार को बढ़ाने की पूरी आजादी दी गई। इससे बड़े पैमाने पर निवेश आकर्षित हुआ। इसकी तुलना में भारत में सेज महज कर रियायतों और जमीन अधिग्रहण की पहली ले ही उलझकर रह गए। 2004 में बतौर सेबी गए हैं ताकि श्रमिकों को शोषण से बचाया जा सके। अहम सवाल यह है कि जब कोई रोजगार ही नहीं होगा तो फिर हमें किसके अधिकारों का संरक्षण करने की जरूरत होगी? फिलहाल भारत में 98 प्रतिशत रोजगार के अवसर कृषि, अंसंगठित अर्थव्यवस्था के अलावा सूक्ष्म, छोटे एवं मझोले उद्योग यानी एमएसएमई और एसएमई के जरिये सृजित होते हैं। अमूमन इनमें श्रम संरक्षण कानून लागू नहीं होते। कहने का अर्थ यह नहीं कि श्रम कानूनों को पूरी तरह समाप्त कर दिया जाए, लेकिन उन्हें तार्किक अवश्य बनाया जाना चाहिए।

क्या यह संभव नहीं बनाया जा सकता कि कम से कम 300 लोगों को नियुक्त करने के प्रावधान को विदाई दी जाए। साथ ही नियोक्ता को आवश्यकतानुसार ‘भर्ती एवं कार्यमुक्ति’ की गुंजाइश दी जाए। कम से कम लोगों के पास रोजगार तो होना चाहिए। किसी भी बेरोजगार से स्पष्टि कि उसे रोजगार चाहिए या श्रम संरक्षण तो उसका संभावित जवाब यही होगा कि पहले नौकरी मिले तो सही। एक बार यदि पर्याप्त मात्रा में रोजगार के अवसर सृजित

(लेखक सेबी और एलआइसी के पूर्व चेयरमैन हैं)

response@jagran.com



जीवन दृष्टि बदलें

ईश्वर के कार्य में कोई विशेष प्रयोजन अवश्य होता है। कुछ परिवर्तन नियमबद्ध हैं, कुछ आकस्मिक। यह अनायास नहीं हो रहा है, क्योंकि इससे कभी सृष्टि की गति भंग नहीं हुई है। ऐसा लाया है कि हर जीव, हर घटना की अपनी कोई भूमिका होती है जो उसे पूरी करनी ही होती है। मनुष्य अपने तन की ओर देखे। अधिकश मुण्य आर् और लंबा जीवन जो कर चले गए। जीवन भर उन्हें ज्ञात ही नहीं हो पाया कि उनके जीवन में कितने अंगों का कैसा योगदान रहा। ज्ञान-विज्ञान के वर्तमान युग में भी बहुत से लोगों को अपने तन की आंतरिक रचना की सटीक जानकारी नहीं है। इसके बावजूद सब अपने-अपना काम करते हैं तभी जीवन चलता है। एक भी अंग शिथिल हो जाए तो जीवन रुकने लगता है। तब उस अंग का महत्व समझ आता है। सृष्टि मानव तन का व्यापक स्वरूप है। जो पिंड में है वही ब्रह्मांड में है। यदि मनुष्य अपने तन को सहेज जाने है तो वही संवेदनशीलता उसे ब्रह्मांड के प्रति भी दिखानी चाहिए। मनुष्य के तन का भी अंग यदि योगरस्त हो तो जीवन प्रभावित होता है। ब्रह्मांड का एक भी अंग यदि तिरहित होने लगे तो ब्रह्मांड का संतुलन, सामंजस्य टूटता है। इसका अर्थ ईश्वर की व्यवस्था में व्यवधान होना है। परमात्मा की व्यवस्था में व्यवधान डालना स्वयं अपने जीवन को दुख और दर्द की ओर ले जाना है।

मनुष्य समाज और सृष्टि को अपने तन की भाँति समझे। जैसे वह अपने तन को स्वस्थ रखने के उपाय करता है वैसे ही समाज को सुखी बनाए रखने में अपना योगदान दे। मनुष्य अपने जीवन में सृष्टि से बहुत कुछ लेता है, किंतु जितना वह ले रहा है कम से कम उतना सृष्टि को लौटाने का भी उपाय करे। वह सृष्टि से इतना कुछ इसलिए प्राप्त कर सका है, क्योंकि यह उसके लिए सहेज कर रखा गया था। जब वह सृष्टि को सहेजता है तो अपने अगले जन्मों को ही सुखद बनाता है। जो वह आज दे रहा है कल ईश्वर की कृपा से किसी न किसी रूप में उसके पास ही लौट कर आना है। ऐसे में हमें जीवन को देखने की दृष्टि बदलने की आवश्यकता है।

डॉ. सत्येंद्र पाल सिंह

कर रहे हैं। इस तरह का दूषित पानी का लंबे समय तक सेवन करने से हमारे शरीर के विभिन्न अंग जैसे किडनी, लीवर, आंतों में सीधा असर पड़ता है जो स्वास्थ्य के लिए अत्यंत नुकसानदेह है। सभी राजनीतिक दल इस विषय पर राजनीति न करते हुए परिस्थिति की गंभीरता को समझें एवं साथ आकर काम करें।

anandchetri621@gmail.com

सस्ती हो शिक्षा

शिक्षा तो सस्ती होनी ही चाहिए, ताकि आम, गरीब, मजदूर व किसान के बच्चे भी पढ़ लिख सकें। एक तरफ देश के सांसदों, विधायकों, मंत्रियों को सरकारी खजाने से भारी भ्रमक वेतन मिलता है, फिर भी उन्हें 4000 यूनिट बिजली, खाने की कैंटीन में भोजन पर सब्बिडी, टेलीफोन सुविधा या अन्य कई प्रकार के भत्ते क्यों? इस पर सवाल नहीं उठाए जाते। लेकिन जब वे छत्र शुल्क वृद्धि का विरोध कर रहे तो तर्क दिए जा रहे हैं कि शुल्क की वृद्धि जायज है। शिक्षा को अति कम शुल्क या मुक्त रखा जाना जरूरी है।

hemahariupadhyay@gmail.com

इस संतभ में किसी भी विषय पर राय व्यक्त करने अथवा दैनिक जागरण के राष्ट्रीय संस्करण पर प्रतिक्रिया व्यक्त करने के लिए पाठकगण सादर आमंत्रित है। 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

^[1] संस्थापक-रव्य. पूर्णचंद्र गुप्त. पूर्व प्रधान संपादक-रव्य.नरेंद्र मोहन. संपादकीय निदेशक-महेन्द्र मोहन गुप्त. प्रधान संपादक-संजय गुप्त, नानारण प्रकाशन लि. के लिए- नीतेन्द्र श्रीवास्तव द्वारा 501, आई.एन.एस. बिल्डिंग,रकी मार्ग, नई दिल्ली के प्रकाशित और उन्हीं के द्वारा डी-210, 211, सेक्टर-63 नोएडा से मुद्रित, संपादक (राष्ट्रीय संस्करण) -विष्णु प्रकाश त्रिपाठी *

^[2] दूधाम: नई दिल्ली कार्यालय: पूर्वी-43166300, नोएडा कार्यालय: 0120-4615800, E-mail: delhi@nda.jagran.com, R.N.I. No. DELHIN/2017/74721 * इस अंक के प्रकाशित समस्त समाचारों के प्रकाश हेतु पी.आर.बी. एच.के अंतर्गत उत्तरदायी। समस्त विवाद दिल्ली न्यायालय के अधीन ही होंगे। हवाई शुल्क अतिरिक्त।

सरोकार का सवाल

उत्तर भारत के बड़े हिस्से, खासतौर से दिल्ली व इसके आसपास के इलाकों में वायु प्रदूषण से बिगड़ते हालात पर संसद में मंगलवार को चर्चा के दौरान जिस तरह से बड़ी संख्या में सांसद नदारद रहे, वह वायु प्रदूषण से कहीं ज्यादा गंभीर चिंता का विषय है। इससे यह पता चलता है कि गंभीर मुद्दों के प्रति हमारे माननीय जनप्रतिनिधि कितने सजग हैं और आमजन से जुड़े अहम मुद्दों के प्रति उनका कितना सरोकार है। मामला सिर्फ सांसदों तक ही सीमित नहीं है, ऐसे गंभीर मुद्दे पर चर्चा के दौरान मंगलवार को लोकसभा के अधिकारी और संबंधित स्टायफ भी सदन में नहीं पहुंचे। लेकिन जिनको चर्चा करनी है अगर वे ही सदन में न हों तो अधिकारी पहुंच कर क्या करते! इससे लोकसभाध्यक्ष का नाराज होना स्वाभाविक ही है। पिछले एक महीने से जहरीली होती हवा से दिल्ली जिस तरह हांफ रही है और इस गंभीर समस्या पर देश की सर्वोच्च अदालत तक सक्रिय है, ऐसे में इस मुद्दे पर चर्चा के दौरान बयासी फीसद सांसदों की गैरमौजूदगी यह बताने के लिए पर्याप्त है कि प्रदूषण उनके लिए कोई बड़ा मुद्दा नहीं है। इससे पहले शुक्रवार को शहरी विकास मंत्रालय से जुड़ी संसद की स्थायी समिति ने दिल्ली-एनसीआर में प्रदूषण के मुद्दे पर बुलाई बैठक में उनतीस में पच्चीस सांसद बैठक से नहीं पहुंचे थे।

सदन की बैठकों से जनप्रतिनिधियों का गैरहाजिर रहना कोई नई बात नहीं है। अक्सर देखा गया है कि महत्त्वपूर्ण मुद्दों पर चर्चा के दौरान सांसद सदन में नहीं होते हैं। इन दिनों वायु प्रदूषण का मुद्दा सबसे गंभीर इसलिए भी है कि इससे न सिर्फ दिल्ली, बल्कि देश के कई शहर त्रस्त हैं। दुनिया के सबसे ज्यादा वायु प्रदूषण वाले शहर भारत में ही हैं और इनमें भी पहले दस शहर उत्तर भारत के हैं। ऐसे में अगर इस समस्या पर चर्चा से बचा जाएगा तो समाधान के रास्ते कैसे निकलेंगे, यह सोचने की बात है। हालांकि जितने सदस्यों ने भी वायु प्रदूषण पर चर्चा के दौरान अपने विचार रखे, वे सब इस बात पर एकमत दिखे कि इस समस्या से निपटने के लिए संसद को साझा जिम्मेदारी लेनी होगी। पर यह हो कैसे, इसका व्यावहारिक उपाय कोई नहीं सुझा रहा। वायु प्रदूषण के मुद्दे पर चर्चा एक दूसरे पर टीकरा फोड़ने और दोषारोपण करने पर ही केंद्रित रही। कोई दल मानने को तैयार नहीं है कि पराली जलाने से वायु प्रदूषण खतरनाक रूप लेता जा रहा है। प्रदूषण किस कारणों से बढ़ रहा है, यह तो विवाद का विषय होना ही नहीं चाहिए। अगर पराली जलाने से प्रदूषण नहीं हो रहा है, या यह प्रदूषण का बड़ा कारण नहीं है तो क्यों सुप्रीम कोर्ट को इतने सख्त कदम उठाने पड़ रहे हैं ?

हरियाणा, पंजाब और उत्तर प्रदेश में किसान अभी भी पराली जला रहे हैं। इसके पीछे वजह यही है कि प्रशासन एक सीमा के बाद हाथ खड़े कर दे रहा है। पराली जलाना किसानों की मजबूरी है, वरना खेती कैसे होगी। जनप्रतिनिधि चाहें तो किसानों से संवाद करके इस समस्या का समाधान निकालने में बड़ी भूमिका निभा सकते हैं। संसद में बहस के दौरान ऐसा कुछ नया नहीं कहा जा रहा जो कोई उपाय सुझाता हो। एक दूसरे को जिम्मेदार ठहराने के बजाय बेहतर हो सांसद अपने-अपने क्षेत्रों में जाएं और किसानों से संवाद करें, प्रशासन उनको मदद क्यों नहीं कर पा रहा, पता लगाएं। प्रदूषण फैलने के दूसरे कारणों और उनके समाधान के लिए धरातल पर काम करें। सांसदों के अधिकार और विकास के लिए मिलने वाला पैसा कम नहीं होता। बस पहल करने की जरूरत है।

भाषा की सीमा

इससे बड़ी विडंबना और क्या हो सकती है कि विशेष योग्यता रखने वाले किसी व्यक्ति का विरोध सिर्फ इसलिए किया जाए कि उसकी धार्मिक पहचान अलग है। वाराणसी में काशी हिंदू विश्वविद्यालय (बीएचयू) में एक ऐसा मामला सामने आया है, जो किसी भी संवेदनशील और प्रगतिशील सोच वाले व्यक्ति को असहज करने के लिए काफी है। गौरतलब है कि बीएचयू में एक पूरी और लंबी प्रक्रिया को पूरा करने के बाद सहायक प्रोफेसर के पद पर फिरोज खान की नियुक्ति हुई। इस पद पर बहाली के लिए उन्हें कई अन्य उम्मीदवारों के मुकाबले सबसे ज्यादा योग्य पाया गया था। कई बार किसी भाषा को जिस तरह एक सामुदायिक पहचान के साथ नथ्थी करके देखा जाता है, उसमें फिरोज खान के रूप में संस्कृत विद्या धर्म विज्ञान विभाग में एक सक्षम अध्यापक की नियुक्ति विश्वविद्यालय के लिए एक विशेष उपलब्धि थी। लेकिन बेहद अफसोसनाक है कि सांस्कृतिक रूप से यह बेहतरीन तस्वीर कुछ लोगों को रास नहीं आई। राष्ट्रीय स्वयंसेवक संघ और अखिल भारतीय विद्यार्थी परिषद से जुड़े रहे कुछ छात्रों ने सिर्फ इस तर्क पर फिरोज खान की नियुक्ति के खिलाफ अभियान छेड़ दिया कि कोई मुसलिम व्यक्ति संस्कृत विद्या धर्म विज्ञान को पढ़ाई कैसे करा सकता है!

यह प्रथम दृष्टया ही एक दुर्भावन और दुराग्रह से भरा रवैया है कि किसी भाषा को एक खास धर्म के दायरे में कैद करके देखा जाए। सहायक प्रोफेसर के रूप में फिरोज खान को अन्य सभी अभ्यर्थियों के बीच सबसे योग्य पाया गया और इसी वजह से उनकी बहाली हुई। इस तरह न सिर्फ संस्कृत भाषा के विद्वान होने के नाते, बल्कि संवैधानिक और नागरिक अधिकारों के नाते भी अपनी नियुक्ति वाले पद पर सेवा देना उनका अधिकार है। बाकी ऐसे सवाल सामाजिक विमर्श का विषय हैं कि एक मुसलिम व्यक्ति आखिर संस्कृत में विशेषज्ञता हासिल करने का अधिकार क्यों नहीं रखता। यें फिरोज खान बचपन से ही संस्कृत से अनुराग रखते हैं और उनके घर और आस-पड़ोस तक में संस्कृत को लेकर ऐसा कोई आग्रह नहीं है कि उन्हें मुसलमान होने के नाते संस्कृत नहीं जानना-पढ़ना है। लेकिन संस्कृत के अध्यापक के रूप में उनकी नियुक्ति को कुछ लोग स्वीकार नहीं कर सके। जबकि भिन्न धार्मिक पहचान के बावजूद फिरोज खान की संस्कृत में विशेष योग्यता को न केवल सहजता से स्वीकार करना चाहिए था, बल्कि पारंपरिक जड़ धारणाओं के मुकाबले इसे भाषा के बढ़ते दायरे के रूप में देखा जाना चाहिए था।

इसी संदर्भ में एक खबर आई कि केरल में एक ब्राह्मण महिला गोपालिका अंतरजन्म ने एक संस्थान में उनतीस साल तक अरबी पढ़ाई और एक मुसलिम संगठन ने 2015 में विश्व अरबी दिवस पर उन्हें इसके लिए सम्मानित भी किया था। इसके अलावा, भारत में प्रेमचंद से लेकर हिंदू पहचान वाले ऐसे कई लेखक रहे हैं, जिन्होंने उर्दू को अपने लेखन का जरिया बनाया था, लेकिन इससे उनकी रवीकृति में कहीं कमी नहीं आई। यों भी, जिस तरह पिछले कुछ समय से एक भाषा के रूप में संस्कृत का दायरा सिकुड़ने को लेकर जैसी चिंताएं जताई जा रही हैं, उसमें कायदे से होना यह चाहिए था कि एक मुसलिम पहचान वाले व्यक्ति के संस्कृत का अध्यापक बनने को इस भाषा और सद्भाव के प्रसार के तौर पर देखा जाता और खुशी जाहिर की जाती। लेकिन इसके उलट इसे धार्मिक दुराग्रहों का सवाल बना कर संस्कृत को एक खास धार्मिक पहचान में समेटने की अफसोसनाक कोशिश की गई। दुनिया भर में कोई भी भाषा किसी खास धर्म की पहचान में सिमटी नहीं रही है और न होनी चाहिए। लेकिन कोई भाषा किसी भी वजह से एक समुदाय के दायरे में कैद रही, उसके सामने अस्तित्त्व तक का संकट खड़ा हुआ।

कल्पमेधा

जिस प्रकार सुबह दिन का द्योतक होता है, उसी प्रकार शैशव भी मनुष्य का परिचायक होता है।

- मिल्तन

जनसत्ता

पराली की तपिश में झुलसता किसान

संजीव पांडेय

पराली प्रबंधन की मशीनों को लेकर भी किसान संगठनों ने सरकार पर घपले के आरोप लगाए हैं। किसान संगठनों का कहना है कि जितनी कीमत पर अनुदान देकर मशीनें किसानों को उपलब्ध करवाई जा रही हैं, उससे सस्ती मशीनें खुले बाजार में उपलब्ध हैं। इस तरह अनुदान की रकम में खेल हो रहा है। मशीन बनाने वाली कंपनियों के साथ मिलकर अधिकारी घालमेल कर रहे हैं।

दिल्ली में प्रदूषण का स्तर इन दिनों घातक स्तर पर है। तमाम दावों के बीच पंजाब और हरियाणा में पराली जलाने की घटनाओं में कमी नहीं आ रही है। तीस में अक्टूबर महीने में पराली जलाने के लगभग तीन हजार और हरियाणा में चार हजार से ज्यादा मामले सामने आए। अभी भी यह सिलसिला जारी है। दिल्ली के प्रदूषण में पराली के धुएं से होने वाले प्रदूषण की भागीदारी लगभग चवालीस फीसद है, जबकि छप्पन फीसद दिल्ली का प्रदूषण दिल्ली से के स्थानीय कारणों से है। इसके बावजूद पराली की राजनीति में किसानों को खलनायक बनाने में कोई कसर नहीं छोड़ी जा रही। हालांकि किसानों का दर्द कोई समझने को तैयार नहीं है। दिल्ली सहित देश की तमाम शहरी आबादी के लिए अनाज का यही किसान पैदा करते हैं। फसलों का लागत मूल्य बढ़ने और कम कीमत मिलने से किसान परेशान हैं। दूसरी तरफ बढ़ते

कर्ज के कारण किसान आत्महत्या कर रहे हैं। बदहाल आर्थिक स्थिति के कारण खेतों में पराली जलाना तो किसानों की मजबूरी है, क्योंकि पराली से निकलने वाला धुएं के प्रदूषण का पहला हमला दिल्ली पर नहीं, बल्कि उस किसान के परिवार पर ही होता है जिसके खेत में पराली जलती है। लेकिन उसकी मजबूरी है कि वह इसे जलाए नहीं तो क्या करे ?

खेतों में पराली जलाने के पीछे उसकी मजबूरी को समझने को कोई तैयार नहीं है। एक सच्चाई यह है कि धान की कटाई हाथ से करने लिए अब किसानों को मजदूर नहीं मिलते। हाथ से पराली की कटाई काफी महंगी पड़ती है। पराली में इतना ज्यादा कीटनाशक होता है कि किसान इसे हाथ से कटवाना नहीं चाहते, क्योंकि बाद में इसे चारे के तौर पर जानवरों को खिलाना खतरनाक होगा। इसलिए पंजाब और हरियाणा के किसान सबसे आसान रास्ता इसे जलाने का चुनते हैं। हालांकि एक राय यह भी है कि पंजाब सरकार ने 2009 में जो जल संरक्षण अनुदान बनाया था, वह भी पराली जलाने की घटनाओं को बढ़ाने के लिए जिम्मेवार है। इस अधिनियम के मुताबिक धान के पौधों को खेतों में दस जून से पहले नहीं लगाया जा सकता। दरअसल इस तरह का कानून बनाना राज्य सरकार की मजबूरी थी। दरअसल पंजाब के किसान मई महीने में ही धान के पौधे खेतों में रोप देते थे। इससे भारी भूजल का दोहन होता था। राज्य में लगभग पंद्रह लाख ट्यूबवेल हैं। साल 2009 से पहले मई की भीषण गर्मी में इन ट्यूबवेलों से धान की खेती के लिए भारी भूजल का दोहन होता था। इससे हालात इतने खराब हुए कि आज राज्य के राज्य के एक सी अड़तीस ब्लॉकों में से एक सी दस ब्लॉक डार्क जोन में चले गए हैं।

पंजाब में अभी भी तिहत्तर फीसद खेती सिंचाई के लिए भूजल पर निर्भर है। इसलिए राज्य सरकार ने धान का पौधा खेतों में लगाए जाने का समय जून महीने में तय किया, क्योंकि जुलाई में मानसून आने की संभावना रहती है। गौरतलब है कि एक किलो चावल पैदावार के लिए लगभग पांच हजार लीटर जल की खपत होती है। राज्य सरकार के जल संरक्षण को लेकर लागू नए नियमों से राज्य में भूजल का बचाव हुआ है, इसमें कोई शक नहीं है। लेकिन किसानों के सामने एक नई समस्या खड़ी हो गई। नवंबर के मध्य तक गेहूं की फसल लगाने के लिए किसानों को खेत तैयार चाहिए होते हैं। ऐसे में सिर्फ पंद्रह से बीस दिनों

संघर्ष का परिसर

अरविंद दास

किसी भी व्यक्ति या संस्थान के जीवन में पचास साल का खास महत्त्व होता है। दिल्ली स्थित जवाहरलाल नेहरू विश्वविद्यालय का यह पचासवां वर्ष है। होना तो यह चाहिए कि विश्वविद्यालय के लिए यह उत्सव का वर्ष होता, जहां उसकी उपलब्धियों और खामियों की समीक्षा होती। लेकिन छात्रावास की फीस में अप्रत्याशित बढ़ोतरी और जेएनयू की लोकतांत्रिक जीवन शैली पर प्रशासन के दबिशा देने की मंशा के खिलाफ जेएनयू के विद्यार्थियों को सड़क पर उतरना पड़ा।

जेएनयू उच्च शिक्षा के लिए देश और विदेश में एक जाना-पहचाना नाम है। मानव संसाधन विकास मंत्रालय की ओर से जारी नेशनल इंस्टीट्यूशनल रैंकिंग में जेएनयू उच्च पायदानों पर रहा है। हालांकि वर्ष 2016 से जेएनयू की चर्चा शिक्षा के एक उत्कृष्ट शिक्षा संस्थान से ज्यादा देशद्रोह और राष्ट्रवाद जैसे मुद्दों को लेकर विचारधारात्मक संघर्ष के परिसर के रूप में होती रही है। अब यह लोगों को सफ़्त में आने लगा है कि इसके पीछे किस तरह की राजनीति और कारोबारी प्रचार और संचार तंत्र का हाथ रहा है।

शुरुआती दौर से ही जेएनयू की छवि एक प्रगतिशील विचारधारा और राजनीतिक रझान वाले संस्थान की है,

महंगी परीक्षा

लंबे इंतजार के बाद मध्यप्रदेश लोक सेवा आयोग ने राज्य सेवा एवं राज्य वन सेवा परीक्षा का विज्ञापन जारी किया। इससे इस परीक्षा की तैयारी करने वाले लाखों उम्मीदवारों ने राहत की सांस ली। लेकिन इस विज्ञापन में आवेदन शुल्क को तीन गुना अधिक बढ़ा कर पंद्रह सौ रूपए कर दिया गया है। सरकार के इस अत्यवहारिक कदम से प्रतियोगी परीक्षा की तैयारी करने वाले उम्मीदवारों को न केवल घोर निराशा हुई है, बल्कि उन्हें चिंतित भी कर दिया है। वैसे यह कोई नई बात नहीं है। आजकल अधिकांश राज्य सरकारें ऐसा कर रही है, चाहे मध्य प्रदेश हो, बिहार हो, झारखंड हो, कोई राज्य इससे अछूता नहीं है। एक तरफ तो ये सरकारें तरह-तरह की सरकारी योजना और छात्रवृत्ति योजनाओं के माध्यम से छात्रों को आर्थिक सहायता मुहैया कराने की बात करती हैं, वहीं दूसरी तरफ प्रतियोगिता परीक्षा के आवेदन शुल्क के नाम पर मोटी फीस वसूली जा रही है। सरकार जानती है कि सभी छात्र साल में कई प्रतियोगी परीक्षाओं में बैठते हैं और इतना ज्यादा आवेदन शुल्क इनके लिए गंभीर आर्थिक समस्याएं खड़ी कर देता है। सरकार को यह सुनिश्चित करना चाहिए कि रोजगार के लिए जारी विज्ञापन का आवेदन शुल्क सिर्फ सांकेतिक हो, साथ ही किसी भी प्रतियोगिता परीक्षा का प्रथम प्रयास सभी उम्मीदवारों के लिए निशुल्क किया जाना चाहिए जिससे सभी को समान रूप से परीक्षा देना का अवसर मिल सके। किसी भी सरकार का मकसद प्रतियोगिता परीक्षा के आवेदन शुल्क से धन जमा करना कतई नहीं होना चाहिए। इस तरह का कदम आर्थिक रूप से कमजोर उम्मीदवारों को परीक्षा से वंचित रखने की साजिश है। जिस तरह से राज्य सरकारें आवेदन शुल्क के नाम पर छात्रों से मनमाने तरीके से फीस वसूल रही हैं, उसे देखते हुए केंद्र सरकार को चाहिए कि इस पर कोई ठोस कानून

में गेहूं की फसल के लिए खेत तैयार करने के मकसद से किसान को पराली जलाने का विकल्प ही सबसे उपयुक्त लगा, क्योंकि कम समय में दूसरे तरीकों से पराली प्रबंधन का रास्ता महंगा है। कर्ज के बोझ तले किसान इस खर्च का खर्ह नहीं कर सकते। दूसरे तरीकों को अपनाने पर प्रति एकड़ लगभग पांच हजार रूपए का खर्च आता है। किसान इतना पैसा खर्च करने की स्थिति में नहीं है।

किसान संगठनों के अनुसार पराली प्रबंधन के दूसरे तरीके किसान अपना सकते हैं, बशर्तें सरकार किसानों को धान पर प्रति क्विंटल दो सौ रूपए का बोनस दे दे। लेकिन लंबे समय से सरकार किसानों को यह मांग नहीं मान रही है। किसान पराली नष्ट करने वाली मशीनों को खरीदने की स्थिति में भी नहीं है। सरकारों को किसानों की बदहाल स्थिति का पता है। राष्ट्रीय हरित प्राधिकरण (एनजीटी) ने अपने



आदेश कहा था कि सीमांत किसानों को मुफ्त में पराली प्रबंधन से संबंधित उपकरणों को दिया जाए। पांच एकड़ तक जमीन के मालिकों को सस्ती दर पर मशीनों उपलब्ध करवाई जाए। सच्चाई तो यह है कि अगर पंजाब सरकार एनजीटी का आदेश लागू कर भी दे तो काफी हद तक पराली जलाने की घटनाएं कम हो जाएंगी। पराली प्रबंधन के लिए सिर्फ उपकरण ही नहीं, ट्रैक्टर भी चाहिए। हर किसान के लिए यह संभव नहीं है कि वह लाखों रूपए खर्च कर ट्रैक्टर भी खरीद सके। ऐसी सूरत में पराली प्रबंधन के लिए खर्च तो सरकार को ही करना होगा, तभी पराली जलाने की घटनाएं बंद होंगी। लेकिन दिलचस्प बात है कि पंजाब

सरकार ने किसानों को सीधी मदद करने के बजाय पराली प्रबंधन के विज्ञापन पर करोड़ों रूपए खर्च कर दिए हैं। विज्ञापन पर करोड़ों खर्च के बावजूद पंजाब जैसे राज्य में पराली जलाई जा रही है।

पंजाब सरकार का दावा है कि पराली जलाने की घटनाएं कम करने के लिए स्ट्रू मैनेजमेंट सिस्टम, हैप्पी सोडर, पैडी स्ट्रू चॉपर, हाइड्रोलिक रिजर्वल माउण्ड बोर्ड आदि मशीनों का उपयोग को बढ़ाया जा रहा है। इनके उपयोग से किसानों को पराली जलाने से मुक्ति मिल जाती है। पंजाब सरकार इन मशीनों की खरीद पर किसानों को छूट भी दे रही है। लेकिन अभी तक अच्छे नतीजे सामने नहीं आए हैं। पंजाब सरकार ने इस साल अट्ठाईस हजार मशीनों को बहुत ही सस्ते मूल्य पर देने का फैसला किया था। इसके लिए राज्य सरकार ने दो सौ अठहत्तर करोड़ रूपए का बजट भी रखा था। किसानों को इन मशीनों पर पचास फीसद का अनुदान भी दिया गया। फिर भी राज्य में पराली जलाने की घटनाओं में कमी नहीं आ रही।

पराली प्रबंधन की मशीनों को लेकर भी किसान संगठनों ने सरकार पर घपले के आरोप लगाए हैं। किसान संगठनों का कहना है कि जितनी कीमत पर अनुदान देकर मशीनें किसानों को उपलब्ध करवाई जा रही हैं, उससे सस्ती मशीनें खुले बाजार में उपलब्ध हैं। इस तरह अनुदान की रकम में खेल हो रहा है। मशीन बनाने वाली कंपनियों के साथ मिलकर अधिकारी घालमेल कर रहे हैं। किसानों को अनुदान के बाद पचहत्तर हजार रूपए में जो मशीन उपलब्ध कराई जा रही है, वह खुले बाजार में साठ हजार में मिल रही है।

अगर उतर भारत को हर साल अक्टूबर और नवंबर में भारी प्रदूषण से बचाना है तो उजर भारतीय राज्यों में कृषि विविधिकरण पर जोर देना होगा। किसानों को धान की खेती के लिए हतोत्साहित करना होगा। किसानों को तिलहन, दलहन, मक्का, रागी की खेती के लिए प्रोत्साहित करना होगा। इन फसलों को बढ़ावा देने से देश भर में फैल रहे गैर संक्रामक रोगों में भी कमी आएगी, जिसमें मधुमेह और रक्तचाप जैसी बीमारी शामिल हैं। पंजाब जैसे राज्य में चावल की खपत नहीं के बराबर है। पंजाब के धान से बना चावल दूसरे राज्यों में जाता है। बासमती का निर्यात पश्चिम एशिया के देशों में होता है। जबकि गैर बासमती चावल का निर्यात अफ्रीकी देशों में होता है। किसान धान की खेती तभी छोड़ेंगे जब उन्हें दूसरी फसलों की अच्छी कीमत मिले।

लेकिन किसी भी उत्कृष्ट विश्वविद्यालय की तरह यह एक लोकतांत्रिक परिसर है जहां बहस-मुवाहिशा और प्रतियोगी के स्वर हमेशा बुलंद रहे हैं। खासतौर पर आपातकाल के दौरान जेएनयू सत्ता के खिलाफ प्रतिरोध का एक केंद्र बन कर उभरा था। सरकार की ज्यादतियों के खिलाफ छात्र-छात्राओं ने एक बड़ा संघर्ष किया था। राजनीतिक सक्रियता जेएनयू के विद्यार्थियों को विरासत में मिली है। लेकिन हाल ही में इस परिसर में छात्रावास के शुल्क वृद्धि को लेकर उभरे विरोध के बाद टीवी पर समाचार चैनलों में पूर्वाग्रह दिखाई पड़ा।

इसके अलावा, सोशल मीडिया में कई लोगों ने ‘शट डाउन जेएनयू’ जैसे हैशटैग के साथ ‘जेएनयू बंद करो’ का अभियान चलाया।

यूथ थाद है कि पिछले दशक में जब मैं जेएनयू का छात्र था तो समाजशास्त्र में राजस्थान के भील समुदाय से आने वाले एक छात्र ने एमए में दाखिला लिया था। हम एक ही हॉस्टल में रहते थे। बातचीत के दौरान उन्होंने कहा था कि ‘मेरे मन में अपनी आर्थिक-सामाजिक पृष्ठभूमि का खयाल हर वक्त रहता है, पर सहपाठी, मित्रों और शिक्षकों ने किसी भी तरह की हीन भावना को मेरे मन में घर नहीं करने दिया।’ बहरहाल, एक आंकड़े के मुताबिक 2017-18 के दौरान जेएनयू में पढ़ने वाले करीब चालीस फीसद विद्यार्थियों के परिवार

की मासिक आय बारह हजार रूपए से कम आंकी गई थी। जेएनयू की नामांकन पद्धति में सामाजिक-आर्थिक रूप से पिछड़े छात्र-छात्राओं को नामांकन के लिए ‘डेप्रिवेशन पाईंट्स’ के साथ वरीयता दी जाती है।

जेएनयू में सबसिडी की वजह से पढ़ाई-लिखाई का खर्च, छात्रावास की फीस वगैरह काफी कम हैं और इस लिहाज से शुरुआती दौर से देश के कोने-कोने से प्रतिभावान विद्यार्थी पढ़ने और शोध करने आते रहे हैं।

इनमें से कई विद्यार्थी अपने परिवार और रिश्तेदारों में पहली पीढ़ी के होते हैं, जिन्होंने उच्च

शिक्षा के लिए विश्वविद्यालय का रुख किया होता है। पिछले दिनों सन 1981-83 के दौरान जेएनयू के छात्र रहे और अर्थशास्त्र में नोबेल पुरस्कार विजेता, अभिजीत बनर्जी ने भी बातचीत में इस बात का जिक्र किया था कि उनके दौर में भी जेएनयू में देश के विभिन्न हिस्सों से विद्यार्थी मौजूद थे, जो इसकी खूबी थी। इस तरह जेएनयू अखिल भारतीय स्वरूप का प्रतिनिधित्व करता रहा।

पुरी दुनिया में शिक्षा को ‘पब्लिक गुड’ मानने और शिक्षा के निजीकरण को लेकर राजनीतिक बहस चल रही है। अमेरिका और ब्रिटेन में विद्यार्थियों को कर्ज लेकर महंगी उच्च शिक्षा पूरी करनी होती है। नतीजतन, एक खास वर्ग तक ही उच्च शिक्षा की पहुंच है। इसके उलट जर्मनी और फ्रांस में उच्च शिक्षा को कई तरह का वित्तीय

रेलवे का निजीकरण

भारत की पहली निजी ट्रेन तेजस के बाद अब नीति आयोग ने कुछ ट्रेनों और रेलवे स्टेशनों को निजी हाथों में सौंपने का सुझाव दिया है, ताकि रेलवे का समग्र विकास हो सके। वैसे देखा जाए तो रेलवे बुनियादी ढांचे और सेवाओं के आधुनिकरण के साथ तालमेल रख पाने में असफल रहा है। रेलवे में निजीकरण से बेहतर बुनियादी ढांचा, सेवा गुणवत्ता में वृद्धि, दुर्घटनाओं में कमी जैसे सकारात्मक परिणाम देखने को मिल सकते हैं, लेकिन सीमित कवरज अर्थात्-राष्ट्रव्यापी कनेक्टिविटी कमजोर

किसी भी मुद्दे या लेख पर अपनी राय हमें भेजें। हमारा पता है : ए-8, सेक्टर-7, नोएडा 201301, जिला : गौतमबुद्धनगर, उत्तर प्रदेश

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

हर बार संसद के सत्र कमोवेश हंगामे की भेंट चढ़ जाते हैं। सत्र शुरू होने से पहले संसद को सुचारू रूप से चलाने के लिए जो सर्वदलील बैठक आयोजित की जाती है, वह भी मात्र औपचारिक बन के रह जाती है। संसद का शीतकालीन सत्र शुरू हो चुका है और कयास लगाए जा रहे हैं कि इस बार भी सत्र हंगामेदार होगा। संसद सत्र का एक-एक दिन बहुत महत्त्वपूर्ण होता है, इसलिए हर दल के हरेक सदस्य को इसका महत्त्व समझना चाहिए। सभी को एक दूसरे का सहयोग करना चाहिए। सांसदों का पहला दायित्व आम आदमी की समस्याओं को उठाना है। शोरगुल और हंगामे की वजह से अगर संसद की कार्यवाही में अगर बाधा आती है तो इससे ज्यादा नुकसान देश और आम लोगों को ही होता है।

- नीतीश कुमार पाठक, आश्रम, दिल्ली**

अनुदान यानी सबसिडी देकर सस्ता बनाया गया है। इस दशक में इंग्लैंड में उच्च शिक्षा में महंगी ट्यूशन फीस को लेकर कई बार विद्यार्थियों ने विरोध प्रदर्शन किया है। मिश्रित अर्थव्यस्था के दौर में देश में उच्च शिक्षा को विभिन्न तरह के अनुदान देकर सुलभ बनाया गया था। उदारीकरण के बाद कई निजी विश्विद्यालय उभरे हैं, जिनका जोर गुणवत्ता पर कम और अपने कारोबार को आगे बढ़ाने के अव्दार देता है। पिछले पचास सालों में जेएनयू ने देश को बेहतरीन शिक्षक, अध्येता, राजनेता, नौकरशाह, समाजसेवी और पत्रकार दिए हैं। कहा जा सकता है कि भारत जैसे विकासशील देश में जेएनयू सामाजिक न्याय और समानता का एक सफल मॉडल है। जेएनयू की स्थापना के पचासवें वर्ष में उच्च शिक्षा को लोकहित में मानते हुए एक सार्थक विमर्श होना चाहिए, ताकि हम राष्ट्र निर्माण की सही दिशा में आगे बढ़ सके। यही जेएनयू की परंपरा रही है।

राजनेताओं-शिक्षाविदों ने देश निर्माण में शिक्षा के महत्त्व को हमेशा महत्त्वपूर्ण माना है। उच्च शिक्षा कई तरह की जातीय-वर्गीय-लैंगिक बाधाओं को तोड़ता है और समाज के हाशिये पर रहने वाले कमजोर तबकों को आगे बढ़ने के अव्दार देता है। पिछले पचास सालों में जेएनयू ने देश को बेहतरीन शिक्षक, अध्येता, राजनेता, नौकरशाह, समाजसेवी और पत्रकार दिए हैं। कहा जा सकता है कि भारत जैसे विकासशील देश में जेएनयू सामाजिक न्याय और समानता का एक सफल मॉडल है।

जेएनयू की स्थापना के पचासवें वर्ष में उच्च शिक्षा को लोकहित में मानते हुए एक सार्थक विमर्श होना चाहिए, ताकि हम राष्ट्र निर्माण की सही दिशा में आगे बढ़ सके। यही जेएनयू की परंपरा रही है।

तक नहीं हैं और इसलिए सोच भी नहीं पाते कि प्लास्टिक उपयोग करना कितना घातक है स्वास्थ्य के लिए। इसलिए लोग इसका बेधड़क उपयोग कर रहे हैं। पहले बरसात में प्लास्टिक के जूते चप्पल का इस्तेमाल करते थे, लेकिन अब तो बच्चों के खिलौने से लेकर खाने के प्लेट, तश्तरी, कटोरी, बिजली के तार हैंडल आदि सब प्लास्टिक से बन रहे हैं। प्लास्टिक का साम्राज्य सभी जगह व्याप्त हो चुका है। एक अनुमान के मुताबिक वर्ष 1950 से अब तक दुनिया में आठ अरब टन से अधिक प्लास्टिक का उत्पादन हो चुका है। इससे अंदाजा लगाया जा सकता है कि धरती पर प्लास्टिक के कितने पहाड़ खड़े हो गए होंगे। इसलिए अगर धरती को बचाना है, मानव को स्वस्थ रहना है तो प्लास्टिक का उपयोग बंद कर दूसरे विकल्प तलाशने चाहिए।

- रितेश कुमार उपाध्याय, संत कबीर नगर**

वशिष्ठ नारायण अमर रहे!

‘वशिष्ठ नारायण अमर रहे’ के नारों से आसमान गूँज रहा था और एक आम विहारी की अर्थी कंधों पर थी। अफसोस कि जिस अर्थी के पीछे अमरत्व की कामना करते लोग चल रहे थे, वह शख्स ताउम्र गुमानामी के अंधरे में रहा। देश की सियासत ने हमें इस हद तक पंगु बना दिया कि प्रोफेसर वशिष्ठ नारायण सिंह की विशिष्टता को सहेजने में हम नाकाम रहे। शिकायत किस से करें जब अपने बिहार ने ही अपने अनमोल रत्न की मृतकाया को भिन्न-भिनाति मक्खियों के हवाले छोड़ दिया। अविस्मरणीय है वह भाई जिन्होंने बिना कहीं गिड़गिड़ाए आँखिरी दम तक अपना फर्ज निभाया है। हस्ती का मिट जाना एक सच्चाई है, मगर डॉक्टर वशिष्ठ नारायण सिंह की बेकद्री से बिहार की छवि बेशक धूमिल हुई है।

- एमके मिश्रा, आम आनंदमयीनगर, रा्टू**