

A new, alien animal

The aviation sector in India has undergone a structural change – from one dominated by personalities to one dominated by well... nothingness



OUT OF THE BLUE

ANJALI BHARGAVA

Aviation in India, during the rule of the NDA government as compared with the 10 years of the UPA rule, has lost what I call is its “personality”. As a reporter covering the sector, I remember Union Aviation Minister Praful Patel

(2004-11) loomed large almost on a daily basis in the newspapers, leading the Indian media on a merry dance and handing out breaking news like it was confetti. That is not to take away from the fact that he did make sweeping changes through his tenure. While the jury was out — and still is — whether all the reforms were undertaken with national interest in mind or for other considerations, nobody can deny that he changed the face of the sector over his seven-year ministership. But it wasn't just at the ministerial level. Even in the airlines, personalities ruled. Reporters followed the daily high life and exploits of the “King of Good Times”, the underhand machinations of Naresh Goyal aka NG, Captain G R Gopinath aka Capt Gopi who sprung out of nowhere

and expressed his intention to democratise flying and even Subrata Roy and his alleged underworld connections. Even the smaller personalities that came and went piqued everyone's imagination — be it the “only business” class Paramount Airways' M Thiagrajan or the “only vegetarian” MDLR Airlines' Gopal Kanda. VJM, NG, Gopi, Roy, Kanda, Thaigrajan have all since been consigned to ignominy and are in varying amounts of trouble. To say the NDA-led government's tenure by comparison has been dull would be an understatement. It is more accurate to say that the sector has undergone a “structural” change. From one dominated by personalities to one dominated by well... a sense of nothingness.

So what can we really expect in 2020? There are a few things one can expect, government action or the lack of it notwithstanding. One, the much talked about Air India sale led by Home Minister Amit Shah is already being taken as a foregone conclusion. After the government had egg on its face following the first failed sell off attempt, industry observers are certain the next attempt will succeed even if they have to browbeat someone into buying as the government has put its might behind it. If it does manage, it will be a big feather in its cap as the current condition of the national carrier is untenable and a drain on both the sector and the country. The coming year could be a critical one for market leader IndiGo. The airline has covered

a long distance in its journey and built a fairly robust company although 2019 saw a setback with the dispute between the promoters getting ugly and public. Experts, however, point out that the international market is a double-edged sword. The pickings can be rich; so can the dangers. How IndiGo fares on this front may well decide its future course. There will hopefully be some concrete and definitive action taken to improve the airport infrastructure across the country. The Navi Mumbai airport, which has been in the making since the 1997, ought to be the priority and if I were the Prime Minister, I'd place it directly under Amit Shah's hawk-eye to ensure action. Airports across the country have been picked out for upliftment although the ability of groups with no proven track record (such as the Adanis, which won the bid to modernise and run six of them) in the area has come under scrutiny. The CFO of GMR, known for his ability to ensure financial closures for such projects, joined the Adani group in March for six

months and quit before anyone could blink. Why? He's not divulging as of now. The other ambitious project — the new airport in Jewar — has got off to a speedy start but many are questioning the ability of the Swiss to pull it off in the UP badlands. Their choice of local partner may well decide the fate of this project. Mind you, building an airport is only half the battle won. How does one reach it? The two — access and building — need to move in tandem for it to actually work. And Mumbai's precedent on this front has been less than reassuring. I'll end with the scheme to encourage UDAN of the desh' ka aam nagrik. The government has been auctioning routes to the same old bidders and a few flights have taken off but the aviation sector maintains that the scheme remains a non-starter in the sense that it has failed to bring in a single new name on the horizon, former minister of state for civil aviation Jayant Sinha's good intentions and countless interviews on the topic notwithstanding.

The great refinery debate

BPCL's impending privatisation and RIL's stake sale to Saudi Aramco raise questions about the future of the West Coast Refinery, once touted as the world's largest

SHINE JACOB

Two events have raised doubts about India's plans to build the world's largest refinery. The 60 million tonne, \$44 billion West Coast refinery project was announced in June 2018 in which Saudi Aramco and Abu Dhabi National Oil Company (Adnoc) hold 50 per cent and Indian oil marketing companies Indian Oil Corporation (IOC), Bharat Petroleum Corporation (BPCL) and Hindustan Petroleum Corporation (HPCL) hold the remaining stake.

Since then, in August, Mukesh Ambani-led Reliance Industries (RIL) announced plans to sell 20 per cent stake in its chemicals and refining business for \$15 billion to Saudi Aramco as part of a broader plan to become a zero-debt company by March 2021. And in November 2019, the government announced that it would sell its 53.29 per cent stake in Bharat Petroleum Corporation Ltd (BPCL). Saudi Aramco is one among a raft of bidders such as French major Total, BP Plc, Vedanta, Exxon Mobil, RIL and the Adani Group. All of this has made the prospects for the West Coast Refinery look bleak since the debate now hinges on whether a greenfield refinery is a better option than a brownfield one. In other words, is BPCL a better option for buyers than the West Coast one? Perhaps not, say industry experts

citing the fact that BPCL is already a depreciating asset that was probably in its prime 20 years ago. “If you build a new refinery, you will go for new technologies, more efficient units, production and crude handling will be more geared for the future,” said a senior expert from a global consulting firm. This is valid in theory but this being India, the West Coast project has been stuck at the first hurdle — acquiring land for the project. Protests in the Ratnagiri region had forced the joint venture to shift location 140 km to the north to Raigad district. The refinery-petrochemical complex of three crude oil units requires at least 15,000 acres of land, including marine storage and port facilities, and is yet to acquire a single piece of land due to protests from locals. Now, however, the project may run into political problems. The Shiv Sena, which had led the land protests in

Ratnagiri, heads a coalition in Maharashtra. So acquiring land in Raigad, too, may face problems. “We are going ahead with the technical work for the refinery. However, land has to be firmed up and we are looking at two-three locations. Saudi Aramco is fully part of the ongoing works,” said B Ashok, chief executive officer for Ratnagiri Refinery and Petrochemicals, the name of the joint venture.

Based on an industry estimate, the value of BPCL's refining segment alone will come to around \$400 a tonne, while another \$200-300 a tonne can be added to the remaining infrastructure — including terminals, pipelines and retail outlets. This was reached based on the recent Essar-Rosneft deal and HPCL's plans for its Barmher refinery. BPCL does not have much exposure in petrochemicals. On the other hand, to set up a greenfield refinery and petrochemicals, the cost may be around \$600-700 a tonne. “For any foreign investor, BPCL appears to be an ideal choice because it means immediate cash-flow added by a countrywide presence in marketing too. A project like West Coast may take at least five to seven years to get commissioned,” said A K Sharma, former director (finance) of IOC.

Based on current market cap, the value of 53.29 per cent government stake in BPCL comes to around \$57,000 crore and another 20-30 per cent premium is expected to stretch the value closer to around \$70,000-80,000 crore. Investments in IGL and Petronet — in which BPCL holds 22.5 and 12.5 per cent respectively — are also factored in, could add to the deal value.

This valuation may not, however, be the price that buyers will pay. According to a consortium of officers' associations — including Public Sector Officers Association, Federation of Oil PSU Officers (FOPO) and Confederation of Maharashtra Company Officers Association (COMCO) — BPCL's assets can be valued at around \$9 trillion. Industry experts think otherwise. “Looking at a conservative calculation, you will get around ₹1.5 trillion as a replacement value for BPCL. But a greenfield refinery may give them more flexibility,” said the official from the global consulting firm.

The “greenfield versus existing” debate has been in the air for some time and mostly centred on plans for Saudi Aramco, the world's largest crude oil producer, to invest in India. In April 2016, Petroleum Minister Dharmendra Pradhan met its then chairman Khalid al-Falih offered three options: partnership in the West Coast refinery, participation in the expansion of the Bina refinery in Madhya Pradesh owned and operated by a joint venture between Bharat Petroleum and Oman Oil Company, or a petro-



ON THE JOB

Focus on growth



MAHESH WYAS

The labour participation rate (LPR) had fallen to an all-time low of 42.4 per cent in November 2019. This, along with a host of other fast-frequency data, suggest that the Indian economy is likely slowing further in the third quarter of fiscal 2019-20 after growth dropped to 5 per cent and then 4.5 per cent in the first and second quarters respectively. Preliminary and partial data for December indicate that labour participation is recovering from the November fall, but perhaps, not enough to make November look like an aberration. The LPR has scaled up in each of the three weeks of December so far. In the last week of November, the LPR was 42.21 per cent. Since then it has inched up progressively — initially to 42.72 per cent, then 43.08 per cent and then to 43.24 per cent in the week ended December 22. The average LPR during the first three weeks of December was 43.01 per cent. The 30-day moving average of the LPR was 42.87 per cent. The LPR, which was falling for several years, had stopped its decline about a year ago. Over the past year, the LPR has mostly been range-bound between 42.5 per cent and 43 per cent. In recent months it had displayed a little tendency to rise above 43 per cent. August, September and October 2019 had seen the LPR remain persistently above the 43 per cent line. 42.5 per cent was a red-line of sorts. But this was breached in November. In December, the LPR could

climb out of that redline and may reach the 43 per cent mark. However, this increase in the LPR is likely to be accompanied by an increase in the unemployment rate. This averaged 8.22 per cent in the first three weeks of December compared to the 7.5 per cent pencilled in November 2019. The unemployment rate is sensitive to the labour participation rate. If the labour participation rate rises, the unemployment also rises. This indicates that the Indian economy is not able to provide jobs to the additional flow of labour into the labour markets. Demand for labour in December seems to be facing two major problems. First, the economy is slowing down. Power generation was down by 12 per cent in October and down again by 6 per cent in November. Industrial production has been falling too. Automobiles and real estate are witnessing a protracted slowdown and, the kharif crop was partly but significantly damaged because of late rains. If the economic activity slowed down further in December or even it continued to remain weak, it is expected that the demand for labour would have been adversely impacted correspondingly. Any increase in labour participation rate will therefore lead to a higher unemployment rate. Second, strains in the social fabric are likely to be impacting the demand for labour in places where the tensions have spilled over into the streets. The continued effective lockdown in Kashmir puts out an estimated four million out of the labour force. Or, it constrains their effective participation in the labour force. Elsewhere in India, where law and order is disturbed, daily wage earners, small traders and street vendors are immediately pushed out of the labour markets. According to CMIE's Consumer Pyramids Household Survey, there are an estimated 88 million small traders, hawkers, street vendors and daily wage earners in India. They account for about 20 per cent of the total labour force and 22 per cent of all employed persons.

These are the vulnerable people. Social unrest spread through scores of towns in December. These witnessed imposition of restrictions on assembly and in some cases even limited curfew. In such places around 20 per cent of the workforce is immediately pushed out of the labour markets. An equally vulnerable set is the 14 per cent self-employed entrepreneurs. These are shop keepers, taxi drivers, self-run barber shops, self-run gymnasiums, beauticians, tourist guides and the like. While the daily wage earners and street hawkers lose wages during civilian strife, self-employed entrepreneurs run the risk of loss of property during such times. The impact of social strife on factory workers and office goers is also increasing because the proportion of contractual workers in total employment is increasing. Often, payments to contractual workers are subject to attendance or even output. A fragile economy can ill-afford the social strife that has spread across Indian states. The relatively vulnerable sections of society — small traders, vendors, daily wage earners — cannot afford the effects of this strife on their economic well-being. Neither the Citizenship Amendment Act approved by Parliament nor the proposed National Register of Citizens are important enough to stake the well-being of so many or stake economic growth. Getting growth back on track is more important. Growth generates employment for those who are willing to work. And, good employment for those who are willing to work can motivate more to join the Indian labour force to seek employment. India needs more hands to the till to accelerate growth to reach its cherished target of becoming a \$5 trillion economy. Staying focused on this target may be a good strategy. Even a partial failure in achieving this target may be better than the distractions around determination of citizenship.

The author is the MD & CEO of CMIE

LETTERS

Don't bully, introspect

This refers to “Governance by diktat, in an echo chamber” (December 23). I agree that politicians, especially those in power, tend to sermonise while speaking both to the captains of industry and bankers. Ministers need to introspect to see why private investment is not happening. Is it due to the business climate, bureaucratic heavy handedness, the slowdown in bank/NBFC lending or regulatory and tax policies etc? Ministers are smart enough to know where to put their money. Those who do speak up, the chiefs of Vodafone and Airtel for example, are promptly given a dressing down for asking for too much and pressurising the government. No amount of exhortations to let loose the “animal spirits” will work unless the ground situation improves. As far as no lending by public sector banks is concerned, a quick perusal of their capital adequacy ratios, losses and other facts that have recently come out will make things clear. The number of criminal cases registered and investigations launched creates an environment of fear though the corrupt must be brought to book. It's time for introspection and quiet talking with those who matter rather than bullying from pulpit. Arun Pasricha New Delhi

Need structural reforms

This refers to the editorial “Twisting the curve” (December 23). Despite the repo rate cut of 135 basis point to counter the cyclical problems, the economy is still not recording any positive result. The weak monetary policy transmission has proved unfavourable for the growth of investment in the private sector. Another rate cut and enforcing full transmission of the past rate cut are vital to lifting the economic sentiment to boost investment. The government must desist from the practice of borrowing at a higher rate because it is creating a higher interest rate scenario that is inhibiting the

transmission of policy rate cuts. The demand for credit and the credit absorption capacity of the various segments are critical to boosting the supply of credit. Therefore, at this juncture, structural reforms are just as important as monetary policy measures. The stimulus packages to revive



consumption are showing little result because of the lack of structural reforms in tandem with the monetary and fiscal reforms. Those should be the focus areas to achieve the economic goals.

VSK Pillai Kottayam

Global trend

Apropos “Where have all the women bankers gone?” (December 23) by Tamal Bandyopadhyay, a variety of causes account for a decline in the number of women bank managers in general and at the top in particular. One, this phenomenon is part of the global picture. Recent studies (cov-

CHINESE WHISPERS

Maya in a fix



Disconcerted at the prospect of Bhim Army chief Chandrashekhar getting support from the Dalit youth with his participation in the ongoing Citizenship Amendment Act protests and subsequent arrest in Delhi, Bahujan Samaj Party (BSP) President Mayawati (pictured) has dubbed him a puppet in the hands of her opponents. She said Chandrashekhar, as part of a conspiracy, was bent on hurting the BSP's vote bank in Delhi. According to her, the Bhim Army chief stages such protests to get arrested and later play the victim card to gain public sympathy and publicity. Earlier, Mayawati had labelled Chandrashekhar, who has dropped his alias of Ravan, an agent of the Bharatiya Janata Party and spurned his overtures to join forces with her.

Just need your blessings

Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal has turned Santa for many senior citizens this December. Several of them have received a letter from him offering a free trip to a range of places — from Madurai and Rameshwaram to Amritsar and Bhubaneswar, to name a few. The letter says the cost of the trip — AC train tickets, food and stay, and having an attendant — will be borne by the government. All they have to do is reach out to their local MLA and get their names listed. If the cynics are wondering whether the freebie has anything to do with the elections next year, they are wrong. The letter mentions the government wants nothing but blessings from the elderly.

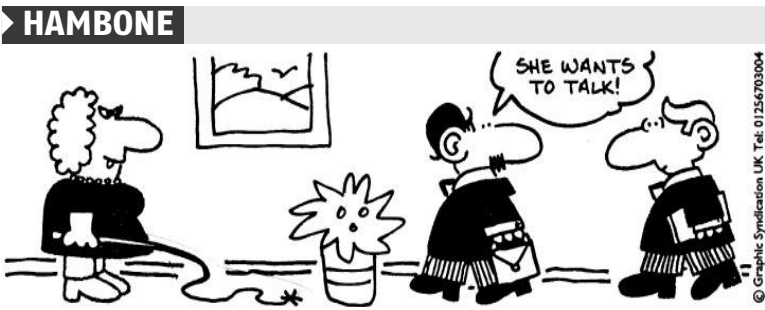
A unique protest

A Member of Parliament of the YSR Congress Party (YSRCP) found a unique way to protest. Gorantla Madhav, a member of the Lok Sabha from Andhra Pradesh's Hindupur, surprised media persons by licking police boots to protest alleged remarks by opposition Telugu Desam Party (TDP) leader J C Diwakar Reddy against the police force. Madhav, a former police officer, said he was reacting to allegations by Reddy that the police under the YSRCP dispensation were partisan. Reddy, a former MP, had also said that if the TDP returned to power, it would force officers from the “partisan police force” to “lick our boots”.



ering India also) such as by leadership consulting firm DDI and market research firm Kantar contradict the general perception that globally women are inching towards leadership roles. The reality is that they continue to be discouraged from assuming leadership roles — even progressive nations like the US and the UK are regressive in this regard. Two, when the percentage of women in the workforce hovers at only over 20 per cent nationally, the intake in banks also remains lower because it is a part of the knowledge industry. Three, the banking industry does not rank high in the preference of women for employment and prospect of rural postings diminishes the preference further. Y G Chouksey Pune

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Walk the talk on NRC

The PM needs to clarify his party's stand

Prime Minister Narendra Modi's statements over the weekend on the National Register of Citizens (NRC) have created confusing signals for the people of India and they urgently demand clarification. Stung by the nationwide protests over the NRC and the recently passed Citizenship Amendment Act (CAA) over the past week, Mr Modi chose a rally in Delhi to make three points. First, he claimed, barring Assam, the question of a nationwide NRC had never been discussed in the Cabinet or, for that matter, at any time these past five years. Second, he said, no rules have been issued for the NRC or discussed in Parliament. Third, the prime minister said no detention centres had been built in readiness for this exercise. But Mr Modi's claims do not tally with the reality on all three counts.

The parliamentary record of November 20 bears witness to Home Minister Amit Shah announcing in the Upper House the government's intention to launch a nationwide NRC on the lines of the controversial exercise just completed in Assam. Mr Shah was, in fact, reiterating a tweet of May 1 that spoke of the sequencing of the exercise — the CAA first and NRC second — to “deport every infiltrator from our motherland”. The NRC was mentioned prominently in the party's manifesto ahead of the Lok Sabha elections in May as well. Also, if there was no such initiative in the offing, other Bharatiya Janata Party stalwarts appear not to have got the memo. Defence Minister Rajnath Singh made a statement to this effect on December 1. Karnataka, which had said it would not implement the NRC in October, has reportedly held discussions to launch an exercise as early as March 2020. Mr Modi's assertion that the matter has not come to Parliament nor rules have been framed is also confusing. The NRC does not have to come to Parliament because the appropriate legislation was passed in 2003 (when Atal Bihari Vajpayee was prime minister) and the process began in the form of the National Population Register enrolments in various states. On detention centres, land has been identified for such purpose-built camps in Guwahati, Navi Mumbai, Bengaluru, and two places in West Bengal.

Such inconsistencies between statement and fact are unlikely to allay the worries of civil society. It is possible, of course, that Mr Modi has absorbed the message from the widespread protests, including from BJP allies, that he has misjudged the public mood — brute parliamentary majorities tend to have that effect on leaders. Since he is unlikely to admit to an error in public, it is possible that his rally statements were a way of signalling that the NRC has been put in abeyance. If that is the case, a more unequivocal announcement would go a long way in offering clarity rather than allowing millions of Indian citizens to wallow in febrile uncertainty over what to expect next. Certainly, after five years of majoritarian rhetoric, it is refreshing to hear the prime minister refer to unity in diversity as India's speciality. It would be even better if he chose to walk the talk on that foundational value as well.

Lessons for BJP

Jharkhand's new govt must focus on governance and investment

The Opposition alliance of the Jharkhand Mukti Morcha (JMM), Congress, and the Rashtriya Janata Dal comfortably crossed the halfway mark in the Jharkhand Assembly elections. The incumbent state government, under the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) and Chief Minister Raghubar Das, has certainly seen the mandate of the people withdrawn. One thing is clear: The contestation and political competition that are not really visible at the Central level are alive and well in India's states. One more state, and this the crucial resource-rich state of Jharkhand, has slipped out of the BJP's grasp. This follows the devastating loss of Maharashtra after negotiations with its long-time ally, the Shiv Sena, broke down in the context of a poorer than expected performance by the BJP.

Indian voters have several times in recent years demonstrated an ability to detach the state and national political narratives. Something similar may be at work in Jharkhand, and the Aam Aadmi Party will be devoutly hoping that voters focus on local issues and its performance in power during the Delhi Assembly elections in February. For the BJP, it is a timely reminder that in state elections, which are fought frequently on issues of service delivery and livelihoods, its handling of the economy is causing it distinct political distress. It must stop being distracted by various social issues from its main task of reviving the economy. If it continues to dissipate political capital and administrative energy on other issues, then political setbacks at the state level are likely to multiply. It is time perhaps for the BJP to look once again at how it intends to win state-level elections. It needs to invest in new state leaders who are distinguished not by their loyalty to the central leadership or to the party's ideology but who can create followings of their own, thanks to their performance, sub-national appeal, and charisma — much like Narendra Modi did as chief minister in Gujarat. The Jharkhand verdict has sent out a clear signal that the image of Mr Modi, despite his enduring personal popularity, has limitations as a mascot when it comes to state elections.

It is almost certain that Hemant Soren of the JMM will be sworn in as chief minister of Jharkhand. The party of the Jharkhand agitation has successfully navigated the transition to being a “regular” political party better than many of its analogues elsewhere. But Jharkhand's new leadership should keep in mind the reasons for their predecessors' relative unpopularity. Jharkhand needs infrastructure, investment, and service delivery. It is, of course, important to ensure social inclusion. But without growth inclusion is difficult to attain, and voters express their disappointment through the ballot box. The party should also be on guard against a tendency in recent years by new state administrations to demand wholesale renegotiation or to cancel contracts signed by the previous incumbents. There may be questions worth asking about deals made by the previous government — there often are — but any decisions should not be precipitate and made only after transparent investigations. Jharkhand needs investors, and the new government cannot afford to put off investors.

Addressing the Great Slowdown

Here's a list of measures that will not help India overcome the slowdown

In a recent paper, we set out a strategy for addressing what we called India's Great Slowdown. The strategy aims at solving the balance sheet crisis by improving participants' incentives to resolve stressed assets. It also aims at revitalising the real estate and power sectors by creating two bad banks. And it calls for boosting confidence and trust, in part by improving data generation systems. Call these measures the “to-do list.”

Here we want to focus on several “don'ts,” especially fiscal stimulus via individual income tax cuts and boosting goods and services (GST) revenues by increasing tax rates. These measures would not help India overcome the slowdown; they would instead make things worse.

Start with the proposal for a fiscal stimulus. Ever since the global financial crisis, there has been a shift toward fiscal activism in advanced countries, as a way of boosting growth. Some international economists have urged India to join this trend, while some domestic economists have asked, “If they can do it, why can't we?”

The answer is that India is in a very different position than advanced countries. In India, the space for fiscal stimulus simply doesn't exist. The government is starting from a weak fiscal situation, much weaker and deteriorating more rapidly than the headline figures suggest. As has been noted by several observers, and implied by the Comptroller and Auditor General's assessment, India's consolidated fiscal deficit was close to 9 per cent of gross domestic product (GDP) in 2018-19. This year's outcome will almost surely be worse.

In recent years, the government has been unable to reduce its debt-to-GDP ratio, despite rapid nominal GDP growth. If growth remains low while the “true” deficit reaches double digits, debt sustainability concerns will soon follow.

A key reason is that India has run into what might be called the (i-g) problem. In advanced countries, the rate of interest for the government (i) is well below the rate of nominal growth (g). If at the same time primary balances (revenues less noninterest expenditures) are small, then even large borrowings will not push up the debt/GDP ratio, because growth will increase the denominator faster than the accumulating interest will push up the numerator. This is precisely why some advanced country economists support larger deficits. But India is different. Right now, the primary balance is in deficit and by much greater than suggested by the official deficit because all the off-balance sheet spending increases the primary deficit. At the same time, interest rates on government securities exceed the nominal rate of growth (see *chart*). As a result, large borrowing will make for deadly debt dynamics that India needs to steer clear of.

All of this would place constraints on fiscal expansion in normal times. But these are not normal

times. There is a balance sheet crisis, and this crisis is placing even tighter constraints on the government's ability to issue debt. The reason is that stressed banks have little appetite for government securities, since they need to be very careful about taking on assets that run the risk of generating losses. Even government securities, which have (virtually) no default risk, can still generate losses because their prices fall when interest rates rise.

The implications for fiscal policy are clear. A large fiscal stimulus is precisely the wrong strategy for an economy where deficits are already large and interest rates are already too high relative to GDP growth. Large additional government bond issues will put further upward pressure on government interest rates, which will push up corporate bond rates, and as companies then shift to borrowing from banks, this will push up bank lending rates as well. Higher rates will then put further stress on the corporate and banking sectors, aggravating the balance sheet crisis.

Accordingly, fiscal stimulus will not help the economy. It will only make things worse, by intensifying the vicious corporate stress-bank stress downward spiral. If there is no scope for a large stimulus, what about providing a small boost by modestly reducing individual income taxes? This would also be unwise. Tax cuts are easy to make, as they are politically popular. But precisely for that reason they are very difficult to reverse. And from a long-term point of view, it is



ARVIND SUBRAMANIAN & JOSH FELMAN

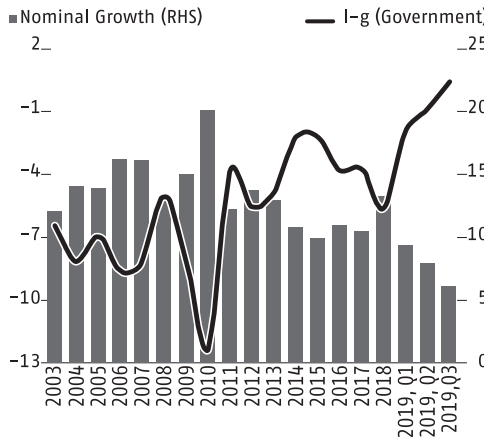
far from obvious that fiscal resources should be devoted to favouring a small share of the population, who are by no means amongst the most deserving. In fact, structurally, India should be thinking of ways to bring more taxpayers into the income tax net. It should not be raising exemption limits, as was done unfortunately in the 2019-20 Budget.

Indeed, if the aim is to boost consumption, it is far better from an equity perspective to help people at the lower end of the income distribution than income tax payers who are at the very top end. A modest direct benefit transfer (DBT) to rural households along the lines we had proposed here (https://www.business-standard.com/article/economy-policy/quasi-universal-basic-rural-income-the-way-forward-119012700713_1.html), could be a way forward. Expanding the government's PM-KISAN programme could be another.

Beyond these structural considerations, the scope for small income tax cuts is further constrained, because there is a large GST problem. The growth in aggregate GST collections so far this fiscal year has only been about 3.5 per cent, yet states want their guaranteed compensation of 14 per cent growth. And the compensation commitment is sacrosanct. Should the GST rates then be increased?

INTEREST-GROWTH RATE DIFFERENTIAL FOR GOVERNMENT

(Interest measured as the g-sec rate and growth in terms of nominal GDP)



Actually, no. Consider how perverse it would be to think of cutting income tax cuts to boost consumption of the rich while raising GST rates on the other. For example, raising the 5 per cent rate would hit commodities that are consumed disproportionately by the poor — that was the reason the rates were set low in the first place.

Moreover, the fact that space does not exist for additional stimulus does not imply that there should be active fiscal policy tightening, as this will only weaken already-enfeebled aggregate demand. Without doubt, greater simplification of the rates is ultimately necessary along the lines that one of us had proposed: A lower rate of 8-10 per cent, a standard rate around 12-14 per cent and a higher rate of 40 per cent for all demerit goods with no cesses and no multiplicity in the rates of cess. But the time for these rate changes is not when the economy is in the midst of the Great Slowdown. Rather, structural changes to the GST should be made once the economy recovers and these changes should be big and decisive enough to stop the ceaseless tinkering of rates that has taken place and contributed to policy uncertainty. In the meantime, the commitment to the states should be funded by allowing the deficit to rise, modestly.

A final word on the GST. Many commentators have argued that the poor collections this year reveal fundamental problems in the functioning and efficacy of the GST system. Without doubt, the working of the system needs to be improved. But we should be careful not to over-dramatise the problem. Poor GST collections likely reflect a very weak economy—much weaker than headline GDP numbers suggest—combined with problems in the automotive sector, which is a major contributor to GST; and the impact of GST rate cuts in the second half of last fiscal year.

Summing up, there are (at least) five “no's”: first and foremost, the current budgetary practice of shifting expenditures off-balance sheet in order to be seen to be meeting fiscal targets should be discontinued; additional fiscal stimulus would be imprudent; individual income tax rates should not be cut; GST rates should not be raised now. And we should not blame the GST when the root causes lie elsewhere. The fault lies not in the GST, but in the weak state of the economy.

Subramanian, a former chief economic adviser to the government of India, is a non-resident senior fellow at the Peterson Institute for International Economics. Felman is director of JH Consulting

Saving the planet — in three acts

In order to solve a problem, we have to first acknowledge it. Climate negotiators failed to do so in Madrid, despite taking more time than in any other annual climate talks (overrunning the scheduled time by more than 44 hours) before ending up with a non-deal. The Paris Agreement was a compromise, offering something for everyone. This year's Conference of the Parties (COP-25) offered nothing for anyone. Failed climate talks are not the issue. The real problem is that we do not trust each other.

Restoring trust in any relationship must start with honesty, then shift to addressing past wrongs, eventually leading to vows to work together. Here is a plot spoiler for saving the planet in three acts.

Act 1: Rectitude. Honesty is a trait; credibility a reputation. Promises at climate negotiations are not credible because there is little honesty about two bitter truths: The climate has already changed; and actions are nowhere near sufficient. The world is on track for at least 3.2 degree Celsius of warming above pre-industrial levels. The UN Environment Programme recently warned that greenhouse gas emissions must fall 7.6 per cent each year during 2020-2030 if warming were to be limited to 1.5 degree Celsius above pre-industrial levels, as the Paris Agreement aspires.

Against this evidence, there is expectation that each country would raise ambitions. But the concept is flawed because there is no sense of urgency. If a country announces a net-zero emissions target by 2050, it is considered a climate leader. There is no reprimand for not acting sooner or for not planning to reduce emissions earlier. Delays in actions by the historically largest polluters (rich countries) shrinks the carbon budget left for the majority of the world's population. Long-term strategies are not credible if countries remain dishonest about basic carbon arithmetic.

The first act should end with a dramatic show of

moral rectitude: Countries tabling long-term strategies and enhanced ambition must also report how far their plans are frontloaded and what checks and balances are in place to ensure that they get implemented.

Act 2: Redressal. It is easier to forgive than to forget. Rich countries have not lived up to their pre-2020 promises. No developed country upped its ambitions in line with the Doha Amendment to the Kyoto Protocol, nor have sufficient countries ratified the Amendment. This means that emissions reductions fell far short of what was needed by 2020 (against a 1990 baseline).

Moreover, instead of the promised \$100 billion in climate financing by 2020, multilateral climate funds approved only \$10.4 billion for mitigation during 2013-18; adaptation funding was at \$4.4 billion.

A third challenge is that there are 4 billion unsold certified emissions reductions under the Clean Development Mechanism (CDM). Not paying for them undermines confidence in carbon markets. Carrying them over would flood a post-2020 carbon market with credits and lower the price of offsets further. Couldn't the past be forgotten and all just focus on implementing the Paris Agreement, which comes into force on January 1, 2020? Unfortunately, on all three counts — unambitious actions, unfulfilled financial commitments, and unsold carbon credits — the nagging question remains: “How do I know you won't cheat again?”

The second act demands that past grievances be redressed. By September 2020, developed countries should commit that the gap between their pre-2020 commitments and outcomes would be met entirely by domestic actions in addition to their post-2020 pledges. Further, the unsold CDM credits (now worth less than \$1) should be paid off by developed countries via a one-time settlement. Negotiating the discounted rate (as in bankruptcy proceedings) would be fraught. But any settlement value would be minuscule compared to the



INFLEXION POINTS

ARUNABHA GHOSH

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A guide to the inequality debate



BOOK REVIEW

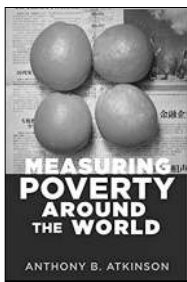
P C MOHANAN

Sir Anthony Atkinson (1944-2017) is a revered figure to all who have ever delved into the fascinating subject of poverty and inequality. The inequality measure known by his name and the mathematical rigour that goes with his work has made him a leading expert in this field, where we in India can take pride through the seminal work of many economists led by Amartya Sen. This book, which could not be completed during Sir Anthony's lifetime has now been published after excel-

lent editing and appropriate comments by two of his colleagues. There are two erudite afterwords on the unfinished chapters by Francois Bourguignon and Nicholas Stern. The book is a tribute to Atkinson's understanding of the topic and a valuable guide to students and researchers.

The book has 10 chapters besides the two afterwords by Professors Bourguignon and Stern. Sixty national reports containing a summary of their poverty measures and methodology are appended to the chapters. These national reports give for each of the countries a short write-up on the available poverty measures and country practices that help relate the global and national poverty measures. In a way, it is a neat summary of where we are. The efforts by international agencies led by the World Bank in improving the data systems for measuring poverty are highlighted as well.

Chapter two details the various concepts that lead to the different poverty measurements as we know today. These cover the approaches to understanding poverty, starting with the basic needs approach, consumption and income definitions, going on to Dr Sen's deprivation of capability, global and national approaches without entering into any mathematical nuances and supported by empirical evidences and examples. These concepts are clarified in detail in chapter three, which covers comparability, choice of measurement unit, reference period, purchasing power comparisons and



multi-dimensional indices. These two chapters presents in a concise form our understanding of the various concepts of poverty aided by empirical analysis.

MEASURING POVERTY AROUND THE WORLD

Author:

Anthony B. Atkinson

Publisher: Princeton University Press

Price: ₹799

Pages: 464

the consumption survey that forms the bedrock of poverty measures. The linking of household surveys and national accounts are discussed with a checklist on poverty concepts and data. The data that

form the foundation of poverty analysis comes from painstakingly conducted surveys, the setting of which differs from country to country. All of these are noted briefly. The concerns expressed on the data collection issues have become more relevant in recent times.

The chapter on global poverty centres on the dollar- and purchasing power parity or PPP-based measures used by the World Bank and the International Comparison Program (ICP) that provides the PPP numbers to arrive at comparable global poverty measures. The non-monetary poverty measures such as the multi-dimensional poverty indices (MPI) or the sustainable development goals (SDGs) goals as an alternate to the World Bank's absolute measures do not always confirm the adequacy of either of the measures.

Three chapters are devoted to describing poverty in individual countries in different regions and their efforts to reduce poverty. The chapter also focuses on poverty in rich countries and global measures of poverty. The

conclusions remain tragically incomplete but well compensated by the two afterwords that explains the complex relationship between poverty, growth and inequality. Professor Stern goes on to introduce the new global agenda with climate change and the SDGs and the political economy coming into play in the poverty debate.

The broad canvass that the book traverses covers not just measuring poverty but the inter-linkages of poverty, inequality growth, climate change and the SDGs, all of which are of public concern. The global coverage of issues in the book constrains the national level discussions to an extent. The details on data collection issues including references to the experiences from Indian national sample surveys in chapter four brings in the centrality of accurate data in all discussions relating to poverty and inequality.

The reviewer was acting chairman of the National Statistical Commission

PM dials down the NRC, but keeps options open

PM tries to reassure people after nationwide protests; must have a full consultation the next time around

HERE CAN BE little doubt that prime minister Narendra Modi glossed over vital facts in his Ramlila Maidan speech on Sunday. Apart from his statement on there being no detention centres (for the National Register of Citizens, NRC) in the country being clearly incorrect, he chose not to recall his home minister's repeated statements on it when he told the crowds that he didn't know where all the talk of an impending NRC process came from since there was no Bill nor any proposal on this that had even been cleared by the Union Cabinet. On more than one occasion, home minister Amit Shah has been seen, on video, as saying that once the Citizenship Amendment Act (CAA) is passed and Hindus/Sikhs/Christians/Buddhists/Jain refugees are made citizens, the NRC will be used to weed out illegal immigrants; the BJP's twitter handlers even deleted a tweet from its official handle that had the home minister talking of NRC. And, though a combative prime minister continued to blame the Congress—and 'urban Naxals'—for spreading rumours about what an NRC would do to local Muslims, an important takeaway was that he was trying to distance his party and government from the process.

And, he didn't repeat his statement, made during the Jharkhand campaigning, of how one could identify who was creating trouble by just looking at their clothes; on Sunday, he applauded the anti-CAA protestors who were holding the national flag. The prime minister, though, probably struck a chord when he sought to convert the issue from a Hindu-Muslim one into one of the poor vs the non-poor; did we ask you what your religion was, he thundered, when we built 1.5 crore houses for the poor, or when 5 crore poor were covered under Ayushman Bharat and 70 lakh were given free treatment... And why, he asked, would I regularise the homes of 40 lakh homeless Delhiites if I had to, at the same time, take away your rights?

If the government has, in the face of widespread protests by students across the country, decided to go slow on the NRC, that is indeed good news since, more than the CAA, it was the NRC that was worrying; as a result of the countrywide protests, even chief ministers of parties that supported the CAA in parliament, said they wouldn't allow NRC in their states. It is, of course, unfortunate that India is choosing to define its citizenship on religious grounds; and while it is true that citizenship rights of Indian Muslims are not being taken away by CAA, if only non-Muslim immigrants are to be granted fast-track citizenship if they are being persecuted in Pakistan/Afghanistan/Bangladesh, this sends an unequivocal message to the Muslims in the country. Few would argue that illegal immigrants don't need to be dealt with firmly, but if the process also involves the possibility of millions of poor citizens becoming non-citizens as they don't have the requisite documents, the picture is quite different.

Indeed, the government itself has been issuing contradictory statements on this. In a bid to dampen sentiments against NRC, government 'sources' first gave the media FAQs that even suggested Aadhaar cards could be accepted as valid citizenship documents—a day later, this was even issued by the Press Information Bureau; this was odd since, with most Indians issued Aadhaar numbers, how would this weed out illegal immigrants? Indeed, the home minister had earlier said, in a TV interview, that Aadhaar is not proof of citizenship; what are citizens to believe?

It is, of course, always possible that the government could try and introduce the NRC after the anger over CAA dissipates. But, should that happen, it is to be hoped this is after a detailed consultative process, and not by stealth. Merely stating that an NRC was always part of the BJP's agenda since it was on the party's manifesto—and people voted for the BJP in 2014 and 2019—is neither here nor there; even provision of more jobs and higher economic prosperity are part of the manifesto, but neither seems like they are being fulfilled right now.

Getting skilling right

Track record of existing programmes remains poor

HERE IS LITTLE doubt the national skilling programme, under the Pradhan Mantri Kaushal Vikas Yojana (PMKVY), has got better with age. While the first iteration saw the skilling of 18 lakh persons—at a cost of ₹1,500 crore—the second one has been 69 lakh persons getting enrolled, 66 lakh getting trained, and 50 lakh getting certifications of training from agencies appointed as third-party evaluators. Where it gets worrying, however, is that apart from the fact that the training target was one crore, just 15 lakh—a fourth of those trained—actually got jobs. And, a report by the parliamentary standing committee found that despite the link between PMKVY and Mudra, just a little over 2% of candidates were sanctioned loans. Last year, a CAG audit of the Rajasthan Skill and Livelihoods Development Corporation found that just a third of the job placements claimed during 2014-17 were genuine.

This is not to say that India does not need a PMKVY; of course, it does. But, not only does the PMKVY need to reach out and train more people, the skills taught have to be upgraded in a very big way since many of the skills being taught right now are very basic and for jobs that are rapidly getting outdated. Indeed, skills being taught need to include, for instance, precision-welding for underseas pipes, or the use of big data. Dedicated skills universities, such as the one run by Team Lease, are probably a good idea where, in association with industry organisations, students can get a diploma along with some basic education in, say, management. More than that, it would be a good idea to encourage existing colleges/universities to branch out into these areas. The government would also do well to, wherever possible, also provide some kind of stipend to those undergoing training since, where the courses are not online or part-time, students need to give up their jobs as well.

UP&Down

UP identifying rioters to take action against them is good, but summary justice is not the way forward

WHILE THE UP government is firm on its stand to take action against rioters, its approach seems questionable. The government, without due course, is sealing property of those it believes to have been involved in rioting and arsoning, and it is doing so based on primarily video and photographic evidence. Videos are indeed a crucial part of evidence, but they only reveal a part of the story. For instance, of the videos circulated after the Jamia stand-off, one showed a policeman trying to pour some fluid in a bus. While many claimed it was an accelerant, it was later found that he was trying to pour water to douse the fire. Had the government gone by videographic evidence and popular opinion, the first reaction would have been to sack the policeman. The UP government would do better not to settle the matter in haste. A court-appointed investigation would ensure there is no bias. Besides, it shall also provide evidence on whether the situation got worse after police action. In the case of UP, some television channels have been using video evidence to debunk the claim that police personnel fired no bullet.

Historically, prosecuting those accused of destroying property has been a tricky proposition. The Centre came out with a law against destruction of public property in 1984 and the SC issued guidelines based on recommendations of two expert committees in 2009, but the conviction rate in such cases has been low. Data from NCRB show that in the 14,876 instances—UP, Haryana, and Tamil Nadu account for 6,300 of these—recorded in 2017, the conviction rate was only 29.8%. Confiscation of property can be a viable threat, but if UP is to set a template for the country, it should do so using legal means. Summary justice will only alienate those protesting against the government, exposing the state to accusations of abuse of power.



LOSING GAINS

NCP chief Sharad Pawar

Jharkhand is an adivasi-dominated state, poverty is more. In such a situation, the BJP tried to use financial strength to retain power. I am happy the people of Jharkhand have not accepted (the BJP)

US-CHINA TRADE DEAL

IT IS UNREALISTIC TO ASSUME THE PHASE-1 DEAL WOULD END THE US-CHINA TRADE WAR, THE UNDERLYING CAUSES OF WHICH ARE SYSTEMIC AND LINKED TO GEOPOLITICAL RIVALRY

Deal offers nothing but superficial symbolism

AMITENDU PALIT

Senior research fellow & research lead (trade and economic policy), NUS. Views are personal



PHASE 1 OF the US-China trade deal marks cessation of retaliatory trade actions that the two countries have been engaging in for nearly two years now. But, it doesn't mean that trade friction between the two countries has come to an end.

The fact that both countries continue to view each other suspiciously is evident from the fact that the tariffs they imposed on each other's products over the last twenty months remain in place. The deal has not, at least till now, ensured that both countries remove the tariffs on a large number of bilaterally traded items that were set in motion after the Section 232 tariff impositions by USA on steel and aluminum imports. While these tariffs affected steel and aluminum exports to the US by various countries, including India, the later tariffs imposed by the US, specifically on Chinese products, were justified under Section 301. Section 232 tariffs are brought in on national security grounds. Section 301 tariffs, on the other hand, are driven by unfair trade practices by US trade partners—in this instance, specifically by China. None of these tariffs, imposed at various points in time by the US, are going to go. The ones imposed by China, in retaliation, are also going to stay.

What does the deal achieve then? Much of the outcome is symbolic. The symbolism is of far greater significance for the US. Unilateral tariff actions were begun by the US. It is far more important for the US, therefore, to demonstrate that it was able to fork out a deal that made the trade war worthwhile. But, does the deal justify the trade war?

The core elements of the deal are

intellectual property, technology transfer, agriculture, financial services, currency, foreign exchange, and dispute resolution. It is important to note that the core US angst against China was the 'unfair' practices maintained by the latter on various aspects of managing IP, and technology transfer. From the fact sheet released by the USTR on the subject, it is not clear exactly what the specific commitments made by China for safeguarding IP content, primarily by acting on piracy and counterfeiting, are about. On technology transfer, the fact sheet claims that for the first time in any trade agreement, China has agreed not to 'pressurise'...foreign companies to transfer their technology to Chinese companies as a condition for obtaining market access, administrative approvals, or receiving advantages from the government'. What exactly the commitment by China in this regard might be is unclear and won't be known till the text of the deal sees the light of day. But, if Chinese authorities wish to block market access for foreign companies as a negotiating chip to obtain knowledge of technology, they might well be able to do so through various other means. The mere 'agreement' provided in consultations and negotiations is insufficient for what the US was looking to achieve. Perhaps, the US trade negotiators also know this only too

well. It remains to be seen how China fares following the deal, in future Section 301 investigations, and the US IP watch. There is not much to suggest that the outcomes of these investigations would change dramatically.

On symbolism, a point the US trade authorities would wish to sell firmly to domestic constituencies is the commitment by China to remove a large number of non-trade barriers on US agricultural exports. Equally high on the symbolism quotient would be the Chinese commitment to buy more of various US goods and services. Both assume importance at a time when the US is heading into its next Presidential elections with the knowledge that trade war and tariff actions have not really delivered American producers the goods they promised to do. Less politically symbolic, but nevertheless strategically important, would be emphasis on commitments by China to refrain from unfair exchange rate practices and currency manipulations.

Principally, the deal, the way it has come out from US official agencies, underpins a situation where a naughty, ill-behaved kid (China) has

promised to behave in the future, following stern action (tariffs) by a strict guardian (the US). The US is keen to build the deal as evidence of the success of its efforts to put China 'in line'. Whether that actually is the case will only be known in future. China's ability to restrict market access through creative protectionism, notwithstanding official grant of concessions in several respects, is well known, and visible from the trade policy actions following its accession to WTO. Over the years, China has taken to blocking market through a variety of complex, internal 'beyond the border' domestic regulations rather than 'on border' restrictions, like tariffs. It might continue to do so, notwithstanding US pressure.

It would be unrealistic to assume that the Phase 1 deal would bring to an end the US-China trade war. The underlying causes behind the US-China friction are systemic, and linked to their overall efforts to gain a geopolitical edge over each other through technology-driven economic supremacy missions. More is expected to happen in the foreseeable future. The onus of such developments, till now, has been with the US. It remains to be seen whether China begins a new fold of response to the hostilities. Critical issues like data governance, and surveillance concerns arising out of suspicions over Huawei remain untouched in the deal. Symbolic commitments might not be enough to keep both countries away from locking horns on the 'alive' issues soon again.

The US is keen to build the deal as evidence of the success of its efforts to put China 'in line'. Whether that actually is the case will only be known in the future

Fighting ships' pollution bad for planet

Health benefits may come at a cost of actually worsening shipping's climate impact. That is because the sulphates from ships' exhaust emissions contribute a cooling effect that will be lost with their removal

JULIAN LEE

Bloomberg

THE SHIPPING INDUSTRY is getting serious about cutting sulphur dioxide emissions. People who live along busy shipping lanes will see health benefits from reduced particulate emissions and a reduction in acid rain when new regulations come into force on January 1, 2020. But, the sulphur particles help offset some of the warming caused by powering the ships, so the rules may also increase the likelihood that rising sea levels caused by global warming leave those same populations without a home.

The new regulations from the International Maritime Organization, a United Nations agency responsible for ensuring safe and efficient shipping on clean oceans, allow for two ways of tackling the problem. Either ships must burn fuel with a sulphur content of no more than 0.5%, down from the 3.5% that is currently permitted outside of designated special emission-control areas. Or they must install scrubbers to remove sulphur from their exhaust.

The change targets the public-health impact of shipping, which is estimated to contribute 13% of total sulphur oxide emissions annually. It will slash the amount of sulphur dioxide from ships by 75%. Doing so will dramatically reduce premature deaths resulting from sulphate emissions from ships, according to a paper published in *Nature Communications* in 2018 by a team of researchers from US institutions and the Finnish Meteorological Institute.

Most of the health benefits will be felt by communities in coastal regions of densely populated countries with busy ports or those on major sea-trade routes, especially in India and China. People living near coastlines in the US or Europe won't see a difference since ships operating in those areas already face far stricter limits that restrict them to burning fuel with a maximum sulphur level of 0.1%.

But, these health benefits may come at a cost of actually worsening shipping's climate impact. That is because the sulphates from ships' exhaust emissions contribute a cooling effect

that will be lost with their removal.

Sulphur aerosols from ship exhaust reflect energy back into space. But, they also help make clouds brighter, so they reflect more sunlight away from the Earth as well. Mikhail Sofiev, one of the authors of the *Nature Communications* paper, explained it like this: Clouds with many small droplets are "whiter"—more reflective—than the clouds with few large droplets. Anthropogenic particles are small and numerous. They attract water and prompt formation of many small cloud droplets—and we get white-top cloud.

Fewer sulphate particles reaching the cloud tops will reduce their albedo (ability to reflect) because the cloud droplets will become less numerous, bigger and therefore, less reflective.

Most of the cooling effect from ship exhaust comes from this secondary impact on clouds, accounting for about 92% of the total. The new regulations will reduce that cooling impact from the world's shipping fleet by 81%, according to the study. The net effect of the IMO 2020 rule on the climate impact is to increase the warming effect of all human activities by 3.8%.

Removing the sulphur from ship emissions exposes the climate effects of shipping. As James Corbett, another of the report's authors, points out, "sulphate aerosols mask climate forcing, they don't change it".

The sulphur puzzle is just one piece of IMO's efforts to clean up an industry that is crucial to keeping global trade flowing, with more than 80% of global trade carried by sea. The Third IMO GHG study, published in 2014, estimated that in 2012 international shipping accounted for about 2.2% of all anthropogenic carbon dioxide emissions, and that such emissions could grow by between 50%

and 250% by 2050.

In 2018, the London-based group adopted a strategy to reduce greenhouse gas pollution. The goal is to cut the carbon intensity of international shipping "by at least 40% by 2030, pursuing efforts towards 70% by 2050, compared to 2008", according to the document. It also aims to bring about a peak in total greenhouse gas emissions "as soon as possible" and reduce them by at least 50% by 2050 compared with 2008 levels. The overall emissions target is lower than the carbon intensity goal because the volume of shipping is forecast to increase over the next 30 years.

One proposal to help achieve all of this is to lower fuel consumption by introducing speed limits. Others include technical approaches such as mandatory power limits.

Where sulphur dioxide emissions are concerned, some of the negative climate impact may be offset by a parallel reduction in organic carbon and black carbon particles from ship exhaust, which have strongly warming properties. Low-sulphur fuels contain fewer black carbon particles and scrubbers remove them alongside the sulphur. They also have another important component: They are extremely expensive.

The higher cost of IMO 2020-compliant ship fuel and the fact there is no single worldwide specification for compliant fuel may in and of itself increase the incentive for ship operators and charterers to cut consumption, Corbett argues, thereby reducing CO2 emissions.

Until an industry-wide greenhouse gas strategy is adopted and implemented that may be the best hope we have.

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

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

BJP's flip-flop

The controversy over the National Register of Citizens (NRC) has taken a dramatic twist with prime minister Narendra Modi striking a conciliatory note and reaching out to Muslims at an election rally in New Delhi. Training his guns on his political rivals, Modi accused them of spreading canard and lies and stoking fear among people. The prime minister also rubbished claims that a detention centre was coming up and confirmed that a pan-India NRC was never on the table. His statements coming on the back of home minister Amit Shah telling Parliament that NRC will happen in the country soon has stumped many and shows that the BJP is quite capable of doing a flip-flop — NJ Ravi Chander, Bengaluru

Troubled diplomacy

Union external affairs minister S Jaishankar's decision to cancel his meeting with US congressional committee has brought to the fore emerging troubles of Modi-led BJP government at the centre. As an integral part of the US government with huge diplomatic influence and substantive fiscal power, the US legislature with 435 members of the House of Representatives and 100 members of Senate has never shied away from articulating its opinion on issues grappling the world at large. Our sustained diplomacy to renew and strengthen country's bilateral relationship with the US over the decades had paid off well. But, PM Modi's politics of majoritarianism and egregious policies, including the abrogation of Article 370 of the Indian constitution and the CAA, now appears to be alienating critical sections in the US who champion human rights and religious freedoms. The perception in the US and Western world that the Modi-led dispensation is abandoning the political values that endeared India to a democratic world should not be allowed to persist for long, considering its negative repercussions on our economy and our standing as a vibrant democracy. — M Jeyaram, Sholavandan

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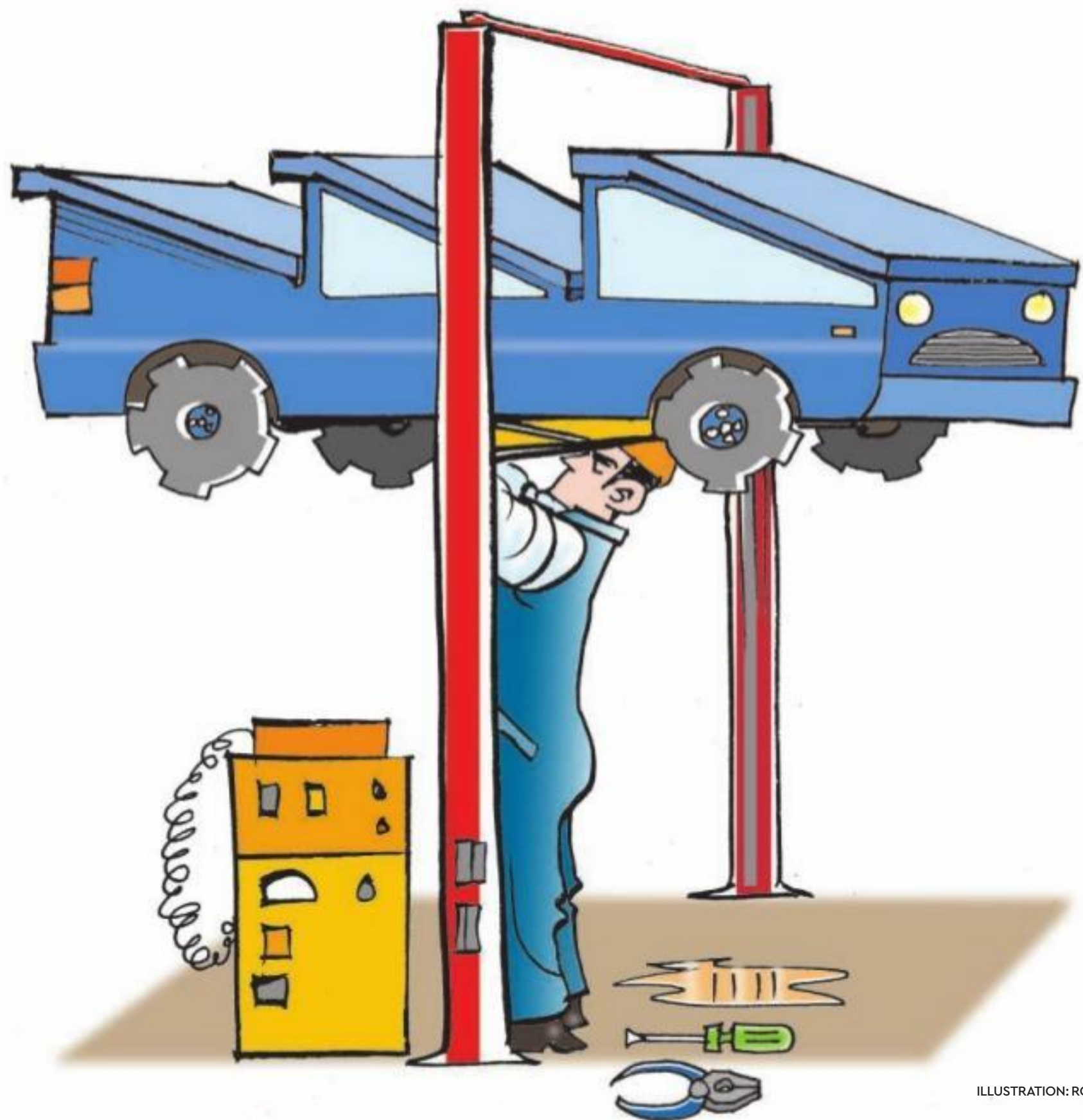


ILLUSTRATION: ROHINIT PHORE

RITESH K SINGH & STEVEN R PADAKANDLA

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Tackling India's economic slowdown

A weaker rupee rather than high import duties will provide protection to domestic manufacturers and improve India's export competitiveness. Liquidity situation in the shadow banking space must also improve. A key supply-side measure that can help in the short-term is a genuine attempt to reduce the compliance burden for SMEs

INDIA'S GDP GROWTH has decelerated to 4.5% in the second quarter. Neither consumption nor export and private investment are supportive. In fact, India's economic growth is being driven by government expenditure. Excluding the government part that comprises not more than 13%, the Indian economy grew just 3.05% in the July-September quarter. Therefore, things are much worse than what headline growth number suggests. Slowing GDP growth will lower tax collections, and even cap the government's ability to spend and support growth.

The government has been hinting that the global headwinds are behind sluggish exports, and this is not without reason. US President Donald Trump has removed India from the US GSP (Generalized System of Preferences) beneficiary list, with adverse implications for export items such as chemicals, pharmaceuticals and engineering goods. The American tightening of immigration rules dampens Indian information technology (IT) export prospects. The European Union (EU) is struggling with Brexit, and slowing growth in its larger economies such as Germany. The Middle East—another major export market for Indian merchandise—is troubled by its over-reliance on oil and the regional political turmoil. Supply chains are now sourcing more locally than before. All of these developments are bound to affect India's exports.

However, what the government is not telling—and which it rather should—is that India's merchandise exports have been hovering around \$300 billion for a very long time. The figure stood at \$305 billion in FY12, and it will be no different in FY20. Obviously, the problem is internal mismanagement. Countries such as Bangladesh and Vietnam are fast replacing India in the products the latter has traditionally dominated; for example, apparels. India's textile majors such as Arvind and Raymond are silently shifting their production base to Ethiopia to take advantage of cheaper labour and electricity, and duty-free market access in top consuming markets. Vietnam, in fact, is far ahead of India in attracting top electronics manufacturers and, in turn, it is now pushing electronics exports as well.

Similarly, a number of factors are

responsible for the slowdown in consumption, which has fallen to 5.1% year-on-year in Q2FY20 compared to 9.8% in Q2FY19. Continuing rural distress, which was accentuated first by the note ban and then by domestic and global supply gluts, is now capping rural demand. The wholesale prices of most agricultural crops are 15-20% lower than their MSP (minimum support price), while the prices of major farm inputs and equipment have gone up by 10% or so. This is squeezing margins and, in turn, farmers' incomes and their demand for goods and services.

High taxation and regulatory rent-seeking in sectors such as automobiles and real estate are aiding the demand slowdown. For instance, effective taxation is up to 50% for automobiles. Similarly, high GST (goods and services tax) on key inputs such as cement, protectionism-induced high-priced steel along with prohibitive stamp duty and registration charges are keeping home prices inflated and the demand for them capped. This hampers the prospects of dependent industries. Rising household debts and credit crunch in the shadow banking space are further contributing to the demand slowdown. No wonder, investment, as measured by the gross fixed capital formation (GFCF), grew by a meagre 1% in Q2FY20, even as its share in GDP continued to decline.

The decline in capacity is reflected by 3.8% contraction in factory output in October—the third month in a row. Government investments, which usually bridge the gap during a slowdown, started losing steam as state governments' capex—which makes up the major share of public investments—has shrunk in the last two quarters.

Nevertheless, a 15.6% increase in government expenditure in the second quarter, compared to 10.9% in the same quarter last fiscal, has contributed one-third of the 4.5% GDP growth rate. However, government demand is primarily dependent upon its tax collection as it can't really borrow much without forcing interest rates to rise. That crowds out private investment.

The direct tax including corporate and personal income tax grew 5% in the period April-September 15, compared to the same period last year. Therefore, to achieve the budgeted target of 17.3% in FY20, it must grow by a whopping 27%—which is highly unlikely. GST collection remains muted due to slowing growth and low base—only 1.2 million out of the 62 million companies are GST-registered. Given this backdrop, badly-timed corporate tax cut will further limit the government's ability to spend and support growth. And if that was not enough, recent disruptions related to amendments in the citizenship Act and national registry will hurt economic activities and hamper growth.

Going forward, the government can do the following to revive consumer demand. The GST Council should increase GST on low GST items with inelastic demand, and reduce GST rates for high GST items with elastic demand. That will reduce rate differentials and discourage GST evasion and corruption. That will also boost the overall consumer demand. As reviving demand remains the key to reviving private investment, reducing income tax rates for lower-income people, if not for all, can be a big sentiment booster.

Keeping import duties high, especially on key industrial raw material such as steel or polyester and synthetic fibres, hurts downstream industries and induces import of high-value finished goods—this adds to the import bill. Similarly, a stronger rupee encourages imports and hurts exports. Therefore, a weaker rupee rather than high import duties will provide protection to domestic manufacturers and yet improve India's export competitiveness. In addition, liquidity situation in the shadow banking space must improve. One key supply-side measure that can help even in the short term could be a genuine attempt to reduce the compliance burden for SMEs.

● BIT BY BIT

It's been a year of transition

NANDAGOPAL RAJAN

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The year ushered in some drastic changes that could impact how we use devices

THE YEAR IS almost over, and as we look ahead to what the new year might hold for us, it is also the time to ponder what we did well and what could have been better in the past year. As far as personal technology goes, 2019 was an interesting year, and I would think the one in which many milestones were covered when it comes to crossing over from one era to another. This could also be because 2019 was also the end of a decade, a decade that changed our lives drastically.

Smartphones, the technology product that touches most number of lives the most number of ways, saw at least one dramatic change. This was the year when large batteries became the norm across Android, and even iOS, devices. So much so that Samsung Galaxy M30s was able to offer a 6000mAh battery in a slim chassis, thus finally overcoming a problem of physics that has held back smartphones for long. With the iPhone, too, offering batteries that could charge really fast and then hold the charge for well over a day, we can say 2019 was a year when smartphones got over the big pain point of battery life.

It was also a year in which triple and even quad cameras almost became a norm. An ultra-wide, regular and telephoto lens combo is now the standard across most price points, even though we all know most users will need, and use, just one of these most of the times. Even the iPhone went the triple camera way, but offered all settings from panorama to slow-motion across all the lenses. It also showed that on a powerful phone like the iPhone 11 Pro Max, all of these lenses along with the selfie camera can record 4K footage at the same time. Unprecedented in more ways than one.

The other big switchover was in cameras. I think this was the year the mirrorless cameras finally came on their own. While these cameras have been there for close to a decade, this year they became dominant across many price points and use cases. So much so that even professionals were now looking to upgrade to a mirrorless from their speeded-up DSLRs. The fact that these cameras perform better in low light and are a bit lighter is helping them gain widespread acceptance across price points. Yes, both Nikon and Canon offer mirrorless cameras now, but it is Sony that lords over the new technology, with its Alpha range of cameras.

Then, the laptops; no one talks much about them these days. However, I was fascinated by how even affordable laptops are now thin and light. This is in contrast to the large and heavy devices most students and entry-level office executives used to lug around. With AMD Ryzen processors stealing a bit of Intel's thunder, companies like Asus were offering entry-level laptops that were not much heavier than the Ultrabooks. Even gaming laptops are becoming lighter. In fact, 2020 could be the year when it becomes pointless to launch a laptop that is an unnecessary burden on its user.

Meanwhile, in the course of the year, the iPad finally did what no tablet had done before, become powerful enough to run a heavy software like Adobe Photoshop. Yes, the latest iPad Pros are powerful enough to run a lot of software that could bother even some laptops. While Adobe launched unbundled apps that allowed users to take the power of the Photoshop to touchscreens, it also learnt that there is no longer a reason to offer 10 ways to add the same filter as it has done for decades. With some of the most powerful software in the world coming on touchscreens, we should be prepared to see a new wave of experts emerge with no context on how these software used to work before and hence with completely new, and maybe more natural, techniques to master these apps. Yes, it is truly a brave new world out there.

It was a year when large batteries became the norm across Android, and even iOS, devices. Samsung Galaxy M30s, for example, was able to offer a 6000mAh battery in a slim chassis

APPELLATE BODY

Managing the WTO crisis

The WTO Appellate Body going into slumber is a serious setback for the rules-based multilateral trading order

PRABHASH RANJAN

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ON DECEMBER 11, the World Trade Organisation's Appellate Body (AB)—which is part of the WTO's dispute settlement mechanism—went into hibernation. This mechanism, which was created to settle trade-related legal spats amongst the 164 WTO member countries, is made of two levels. The first level constitutes of WTO panels—these are *ad hoc* bodies in charge of adjudicating disputes between WTO members in the first instance. The second level consists of an appellate mechanism or the AB, which is a permanent body, comprising of seven individuals appointed for four-year terms. The AB hears appeals from reports issued by WTO panels. Three out of seven AB members serve on any one case. AB rulings are binding on the countries that are parties to the dispute. If a country fails to comply with an AB ruling, the winning country can take countermeasures against the disobedient country as per WTO rules. Therefore, the WTO's dispute settlement mechanism brings certainty and predictability to the rules-based multilateral trading order by holding countries accountable for not keeping their end of reciprocal bargains, and by sanctioning and capping countermeasures in case of non-compliance.

US's obduracy

The AB has gone into hibernation because the numbers of AB members kept dwindling, coming down to just one on December 11, due to the US blocking fresh

appointments. The US believes that the AB has gone beyond its mandate. Its major complaint with the AB is that the latter, in a series of rulings, has overturned the US practice of 'zeroing'—a controversial methodology for calculating anti-dumping duties on foreign products. The US has also expressed other concerns such as the AB's treatment of Chinese state-owned companies, violations of statutory timelines as the AB often takes more time than stipulated to decide on a case, and AB rulings having precedential value.

In the late 1990s and the early 2000s, the critics of economic globalisation used

to single out the US for creating international economic institutions like the WTO, which were, at the time, seen as part of the global imperialist state pushing neoliberal capitalism to the detriment of the Third World. In fact, the WTO's dispute settlement system was specifically criticised for creating coercive enforcement machinery pressurising the Third World countries to liberalise their markets. Interestingly, today, the US has turned out to be the biggest critic of the AB, while the Third World states like India are campaigning for its protection.

The AB has actually become a victim of



File photo of Ujal Singh Bhatia, the AB member, whose term ended December 10

its own success. In less than 25 years of existence, it has produced close to 156 rulings involving myriad of issues like taxes on alcoholic beverages, subsidies given for civilian aircraft production, importation of solar cells, anti-dumping duties on shrimps, packaging regulations for cigarettes, regulation of gambling services, measures affecting imports of beef, etc. The AB, upholding international rule of law, on several occasions, has passed judgments against powerful developed countries like the US. Both in terms of sheer volume of cases and the wealth of jurisprudence produced, the AB has out-

performed most international courts and international tribunals.

Adverse implications

The AB going into slumber is a serious setback for the rules-based multilateral trading order. The most immediate implication would be that if any WTO panel report were appealed, it would go into a 'void', as the AB doesn't have the minimum number of members required to hear the case. This would allow a country to block the adoption of the report if it loses a trade dispute, and thus not comply with the WTO panel decision. India, recently, has

appealed against a WTO panel ruling, which pronounced India's certain provisions of the domestic export incentive initiatives as WTO-inconsistent. Therefore, India can continue with these measures despite their inconsistency with WTO rules. Likewise, the US has appealed against a WTO panel ruling in favour of India in the renewable energy sector, thus allowing it to continue with the WTO-inconsistent measures.

The role of the WTO's dispute settlement mechanism including the AB is premised on the assumption that a country unilaterally determining treaty violation by another country may be wrong. Any such unilateral determination may lead to countries overreacting in suspending reciprocal concessions that form part of WTO agreements. This, in turn, will trigger greater retaliation from the other side, leading to trade wars and ushering in instability in the global economy. As the noted international lawyer Joost Pauwelyn believes, given the eventual uselessness of purely unilateral enforcement, hopefully the US will also accept third-party adjudication in some form. However, it is important for WTO member countries to carry out required reforms ensuring that the AB follows the strict timelines given in WTO rules to decide on appeals. Finally, all nations, especially the US, should remember that the liberal rules-based global economic order built so ardently post the Second World War should not be sacrificed at the altar of domestic and competitive populism.

11 | E. EXPLAINED



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THIS WORD MEANS

TOTOK

A messaging app could be an Emirati spying tool

TOTOK, A chat and voice calling app that became available earlier this year and has since been downloaded millions of times from the Apple and Google app stores, is actually a spying tool, according to a United States intelligence assessment, *The New York Times* reported on Sunday.

ToTok is used by the government of the United Arab Emirates (UAE) to try to track every conversation, movement, relationship, appointment, sound and image of those who install it on their phones, *The New York Times*, which investigated both the app and its developers, said.

The UAE has restricted popular messaging services like WhatsApp and Skype, and ToTok was billed as a “fast, free, and secure” way to chat by video or text message. While the majority of its users are in the Emirates, the app has been downloaded throughout the Middle East, and in Europe, Asia, Africa, and North America.

In the US, ToTok surged to become one of the most downloaded social apps last week, according to app rankings and App Annie, a research firm, *The NYT* report said. According to recent Google Play rankings quoted by the report, it was among the top 50 free apps in Saudi Arabia, the UK, India, Sweden, and other countries. However, not many people in India actually use ToTok.

HOW TOTOK WORKS: ToTok appears to be a copy of YeeCall, a Chinese messaging app offering free video calls, slightly customised for English and Arabic audiences, according to a forensic analysis commissioned by *The NYT*. It functions much like the myriad other Apple and Android apps that track users’ location and contacts. Its name is an apparent play on the Chinese app TikTok, which is hugely popular in India. The Chinese tele-



ToTok has now been removed from Apple and Android app stores. *NYT*

com giant Huawei recently promoted ToTok in advertisements.

WHO'S BEHIND TOTOK: According to *The NYT*, the firm behind ToTok is Breej Holding, most likely a front company affiliated with DarkMatter, an Abu Dhabi-based cyberintelligence and hacking firm where Emirati intelligence officials, former US National Security Agency employees, and former Israeli military intelligence operatives work. DarkMatter is under FBI investigation, according to former employees and law enforcement officials, for possible cybercrimes.

WHAT HAPPENS NOW: *The NYT* report has been quoted extensively in media across the world. On Thursday, Google removed the app from its Play store after determining ToTok violated unspecified policies. Apple removed ToTok from its App Store on Friday and was still researching the app. Users who already downloaded the app will still be able to use it until they remove it from their phones.

TIP FOR READING LIST

THE ANCIENT ART OF WAR, REIMAGINED

AS BOOKS on war strategy go, the two most frequently mentioned works are the Prussian general Carl Philipp Gottfried von Clausewitz’s unfinished *On War* (German, *Vom Kriege*) which was published by his wife in 1832, a year after his death; and *The Art of War*, credited to a Chinese philosopher and military strategist named Sun Tzu, who is believed to have lived 2,500 years ago, between 544 BC and 496 BC.

The central tenet of Sun Tzu’s philosophy is well known: that the real mastery of the art of war is to achieve one’s desired strategic goals without having to go to war. Over the last century or so, the book has been translated and interpreted by a large number of scholars writing in multiple languages; the latest of these efforts in English has been made by Michael Nyilan, a professor of history at the University of California at Berkeley, specialising on Early China. Prof Nyilan has written several scholarly books and innumerable papers



in her area of research, and the publisher’s note describes her latest — out early next year — as being “the first time in any modern language (that) a female scholar and translator (has) reimagine(d) *The Art of War*”.

The New York Times review of Nyilan’s translation describes it as being “marvelously pointy and plainspoken”, in which “each sentence is a struck match”. An example:

“Warfare is the art of deception. So when you can, feign incapacity, And when deploying troops, appear to have no such plans.

When close, seem to them to be far away, and when far away, seem near.

If the enemy commander is avid for advantage, use it to lure him in;

If he is volatile, seize upon that;

If he is solid, prepare well for battle;

If he is strong, evade him; if he is angry, rile him; if he is unpresuming, feed his arrogance.”

‘Principle of discrimination based on faith will be difficult to limit’

Understanding the context and philosophy of Indian citizenship, the situation in countries around the world, and why the implications of the Citizenship Amendment Act may extend to other realms as well



NIRAJA GOPAL JAYAL

What were the Indian ideas and rules of citizenship in the Constitution before the Citizenship Amendment Act (CAA), 2019?

The Articles (5-11) on citizenship in the Constitution of India were formulated specifically for the immediate aftermath of the Partition, leaving it to Parliament to enact the law on citizenship, which it did in 1955.

The Constituent Assembly held the principle of *jus soli* (citizenship based on birth on the soil of a country) to be the more “enlightened modern civilised” principle, as compared to the “racial” principle of *jus sanguinis* (citizenship based on descent); although citizenship by descent, as well as registration and naturalisation, also found recognition in The Citizenship Act of 1955.

The law on Indian citizenship is located within a constitutional framework that confers equal rights on all citizens, and does not discriminate between them on grounds of caste, creed, tribe or gender.

But if the new citizenship law does not impact Indian Muslims, should the exclusion of Muslims from Pakistan, Bangladesh, and Afghanistan bother Indians?

It is true that the CAA *per se* does not impact Indian Muslims. When twinned with the National Register of Citizens (NRC), however, it could adversely impact not only Indian Muslims, but also poor Indians of all faiths.

Even if (given the conflicting signals from the government) the NRC is not implemented, and the differentiation is only in relation to illegal migrants in the CAA, the very introduction of the principle of religious discrimination is cause for concern. Once the principle is admitted, that discrimination on religious grounds is permissible in law, it may not be possible to limit or contain its application to other realms as well.

How has the switch to *jus sanguinis* been significant in the great citizenship debates of the world?

The direction of change varies. When Donald Trump became President of the United States, he did indeed signal a questioning of the idea of birthright citizenship. On the other hand, Germany has moved in a more inclusive direction, combining elements of both *jus soli* as well as *jus sanguinis*. So there are historical fluctuations and hybridisations.

The Indian law of citizenship recognizes both — but through an amendment enacted when Atal Bihari Vajpayee was Prime Minister, *jus soli* was undermined in favour of *jus sanguinis*, through the exclusion of people born in India, but with one parent who was an illegal migrant at the time of their birth.

The new amendment consolidates this shift, introducing an explicitly religious crite-



Large crowds have been protesting against the Citizenship Amendment Act in cities across the country. *Praveen Khanna*

rion into a hitherto religion-neutral law.

Did the collapse of countries such as the USSR and Yugoslavia feed the idea of ethnicity/race and nudge India towards an exclusive idea of citizenship?

The disintegration of the Soviet Union and the break-up of Yugoslavia were a long time ago.

The hyper-nationalism and xenophobia in countries experiencing populist regimes have been attributed to the perceived excesses of globalisation. But the fact is that we have been in what is called a post-multicultural world since at least the mid-1990s.

The impetus for the decline of multiculturalism in Europe had different sources. From left to right, it ranged from the broadly left dissatisfaction with identity politics as a distraction from the project of equality to the concern that it had failed to improve the condition of minorities to the populist worry that being over-sollicitous of minority cultures was threatening the majority’s way of life.

The Indian case is, however, distinct from all of these. The great civilisational diversity of this country makes imperative an inclusive architecture of governance.

This found powerful expression in the freedom movement, in the deliberations of the Constituent Assembly, and in our Constitution. Even if the word ‘secular’ was a later addition, India’s Constitution is a document that builds the imperatives of diversity and pluralism into the architectural design of how we are governed, from reservations for historically disadvantaged groups to cultural rights for religious minorities and even the federal arrangement initially based on language.

The questioning of this architecture has less to do with the outside world and more to

do with our own polity.

What other examples are there in the world of countries asking all citizens to prove citizenship at government windows, in the way that some fear the NRC might do? Does that not mean assuming everyone is illegal unless proven otherwise?

I am not aware of any example in the world in which an entire population has been asked to prove its citizenship.

Even national ID cards have been controversial. In 2006, the United Kingdom legislated National ID cards, to be linked to a National Identity Register, carrying 50 categories of information on every citizen. Among the significant objections were concerns about discrimination expressed by black and South Asian citizens. Significantly, the Commission for Racial Equality said that this could result in a two-tiered racial structure, in which British ethnic minorities may be obliged (by the state or by employers) to register while white British people may not. The Act was repealed in 2011, and the data on the National Identity Register was destroyed within a month.

Based on the experience in Assam, how much might a nationwide NRC exercise cost?

The cost of the Assam NRC was Rs 1,600 crore, and 50,000 officials were deployed to enrol 3.3 million applicants. We now know that it ended up excluding 1.9 million people, mostly genuine citizens of all religious affiliations. If we take this as the basis of a back-of-the-envelope calculation, counting only the Indian electorate of 879 million voters, an all-India NRC would entail an expenditure of Rs 4.26 lakh crore, and would re-

quire 1.33 crore officials to conduct it.

Can the NRC be “done again”, as is being said in Assam’s case? How does a repeat of the exercise impact the credibility of the state?

The huge margin of error — especially exclusion errors — obviously dents seriously the credibility of such an exercise.

But there can also be errors of inclusion. As Kamal Sadiq’s book *Paper Citizens: How Illegal Immigrants Acquire Citizenship in Developing Countries* showed, there is a greater likelihood of poor illegal migrants holding proper documents than of poor nationals. Migrants, because that’s the condition for their survival, have to organise papers on arrival, through what Sadiq calls “networks of kinship” and “networks of profit”. This is what he describes as “documentary citizenship”.

Essentially, it means that documented non-nationals (illegal migrants) may be able to prove their citizenship even as undocumented nationals are unable to do so. The dangers of stripping legitimate citizens of their citizenship should surely outweigh any advantage of ‘detecting’ illegal foreigners.

Credibility is also called into question when the authenticity of documents issued by the state is impugned. The courts have been known to cast doubts on the legitimacy of the citizenship of Indian passport holders, on the grounds that a passport could have been acquired by misrepresentation and fraud.

Prof Niraja Gopal Jayal is one of India’s most well-known political scientists, with extensive work on the question of citizenship. She is the author of Citizenship and its Discontents: An Indian History. She spoke to Seema Chishti.

In citizenship debate, a related question — that of Sri Lankan Tamils

ARUN JANARDHANAN
CHENNAI, DECEMBER 23

THE EXCLUSION of Sri Lankan Tamils figured prominently in the debate on the Citizenship Amendment Bill, and the crucial support extended by the AIADMK to the government in Parliament has handed the opposition in Tamil Nadu a stick to beat the ruling party in the state.

About 1 lakh Tamils from Sri Lanka live in India, including some 60,000 in camps across Tamil Nadu. These refugees are mostly Hindu, and are of both Sri Lankan and Indian origin. The AIADMK claims Home Minister Amit Shah has promised Chief Minister Edappadi K Palaniswami that the question of the Tamil refugees would be considered soon.

When did the refugees from Sri Lanka arrive in India?

Tamils who came from Sri Lanka can be separated into those who came before 1983 and those who came after, when the separatist movement in the island nation took a violent turn followed by a series of anti-Tamil riots. Most of the 1 lakh documented Sri Lankan illegal immigrants who live in Tamil Nadu today, fled this ethnic conflict.

Those who reached India before 1983

were mostly Indian-origin Tamils whose forefathers migrated to Sri Lanka a century previously, mainly to work in the tea plantations. In 1964, Prime Ministers Lal Bahadur Shastri and Sirimavo Bandaranaike signed an agreement to allow some 9,75,000 people of Indian origin in Sri Lanka, who had citizenship of neither country, to become citizens of the country of their choice. Many of those who arrived in India until 1982 got legal accommodation; however, the process was not comprehensive, and was ultimately not completed.

Some 4.6 lakh repatriations from Sri Lanka have been officially recorded so far, besides thousands of Tamils of Sri Lankan origin who sought asylum in India. Some of those who arrived from Sri Lanka managed to travel onward to countries of Europe; some others married Indians and resolved their identity issues.

The arrivals from Sri Lanka dwarf the arrivals from Burma (about 1.4 lakh from 1963 to 1989, when it was stopped) and Vietnam (a total 2,055 repatriates between 1975 and 1980), government records show. Arrivals from Sri Lanka turned into a flood after 1983.

What are the conditions in the Tamil Nadu camps like?

About 19,000 Sri Lankan families, comprising 60,000 individuals, live in 107 camps



DMK’s M K Stalin and leaders of other parties march against the CAA in Chennai Monday. Stalin has attacked AIADMK on the refugees’ question. *PTI*

in Tamil Nadu. Some 10,000 of these inmates are children below the age of eight, according to latest available data from August 2019.

“Technically, those who arrived by boat and other informal, illegal channels during the war in Sri Lanka are considered illegal immigrants, not refugees,” said S C Chandrasekaran, head of the Organisation for Eelam Refugees Rehabilitation (OFERR), the only nongovernment agency that is allowed to work in the camps and have free access to the inmates.

Most of these “illegal immigrants” reached Tamil Nadu in the 1980s and 1990s. Thereafter, a few hundreds came over the

years — until arrivals spurted during the last leg of war, which ended with the final defeat of the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) in 2009.

At least 20 per cent of these refugees claim an Indian origin on the basis of Sri Lankan birth certificates that identify them as “Indian Tamil”, and documents issued by Indian grandparents or other ancestors.

Dwellings in the so-called refugee camps are in most cases a single room that was allotted to a family when it reached India in 1983 or later, and where they have continued to live ever since. Most of these camps are in shambles. No rent is charged from the residents, and they get rice for 57 paise a kilo. Each member of a family aged eight and older is eligible for 12 kg of rice every month. The head of the family gets an allowance of Rs 1,000 every month, the spouse gets Rs 750, and children below the age of 12, Rs 400 each.

Besides the 60,000 in the camps, about 30,000 Sri Lankan Tamils live on their own, and are required to periodically report to the nearest police station. They do, however, have greater freedom of movement than those who live in the camps, which have a system of attendance — inmates of camps cannot go outside Tamil Nadu, and require permission to even travel out of the

district. A VIP visit in the vicinity of the camps almost always brings interrogation and inquiries from the Q-Branch of the police and central intelligence agencies. The relatively free atmosphere in the refugee camps changed permanently after the assassination of Rajiv Gandhi in 1991.

What do the refugees from Sri Lanka expect from the government?

They expect citizenship of India — because they fear persecution and violence at the hands of the Colombo government and the Sinhala Buddhist majority if they return to Sri Lanka, and because they are unable to go anywhere else (such as to an European country). Also, most of the Indian-origin Tamils have ancestral roots, relatives, and property in India. Many could have got Indian citizenship under the Shastri-Bandaranaike Pact if they had chosen to come to India before the ethnic riots broke out in Sri Lanka.

OFERR’s Chandrasekaran, who is himself of Sri Lankan origin, and the son of S J V Chelvanayakam, a prominent Sri Lankan Tamil leader and a torchbearer of the Tamil rights movement in that country, however, believes that those who live in the camps should return to Sri Lanka. It is better for them to “become one among the few millions in Sri Lanka, instead of being one

among over a billion population in India”, Chandrasekaran said.

“There is no process in India to give them citizenship, and these camps were built as a temporary arrangement for people in distress, to make them feel safe until such time as they could return to Sri Lanka after normalcy was restored. The European model of giving asylum and citizenship to refugees works on individual cases. That is impossible in India, as there are thousands of Tamil refugees,” he said.

A dozen-odd refugees whom *The Indian Express* met last week disagreed with Chandrasekaran. Most of those in the camps have nothing left in Sri Lanka, no property or community to go back to, they said.

The situation of the Tamil refugees has been a fairly emotive issue in Tamil Nadu. DMK chief M K Stalin has in recent statements and speeches repeatedly attacked the AIADMK for voting in favour of the citizenship Bill that did not include a provision for Sri Lankan Tamils, and recalled the efforts of DMK regimes to make them eligible for government schemes.

The AIADMK, which finds itself on the defensive, has tried to counter-question the DMK for its failure in get citizenship for the Sri Lankan Tamils despite having been part of the UPA government at the Centre for a decade.



THE EDITORIAL PAGE

WORDLY WISE

YOU'RE NOT TO BE SO BLIND WITH PATRIOTISM
THAT YOU CAN'T FACE REALITY. WRONG IS WRONG,
NO MATTER WHO DOES IT. — MALCOLM X

The Indian **EXPRESS**

FOUNDED BY
RAMNATH GOENKA

BECAUSE THE TRUTH INVOLVES US ALL

US VERSUS US

PM has distanced himself from NRC but he needs to go further.
He could begin by acknowledging protesters' real anxieties

ALL SPEECHES ARE made of what is said and what is not. On the day after, therefore, listen closely to both Prime Minister Narendra Modi's words, and his silences, at Ramlila Maidan in the national capital on Sunday. The seething backdrop, still unfolding, is the spiralling agitation and anger, expressed in university campuses and outside, by mostly young people, against the law fast-tracking citizenship for non-Muslim persecuted minorities from three Muslim-dominated neighbouring countries and the BJP government's oft-stated threat to extend nationwide the National Citizenship Register process in Assam. While PM Modi apparently distanced himself from his own home minister, and his party's manifesto, among others, when he denied that the NRC was being talked about by the ruling regime — a sign, perhaps, of retreat in the face of the protests — what he didn't say was even more significant and controversial: He did not say there would be no NRC. In other words, having passed a law that makes religion, for the very first time, the basis for giving citizenship to foreigners, the BJP government reserves the right to bring an NRC which would unsettle large swathes of the country's own minorities and poor at a moment of its choosing. It keeps with itself the power to pick out the "ghuspaithiya (infiltrator)" from the "sharanarthi (refugee)".

This central message was amplified by several other things that the PM said, and didn't say. From the podium on Sunday, he addressed "yeh log", "inki raajneeti", "inke irade" (these people, their politics and motives), naming the Congress and its allies, and "Didi" or West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee. He did not speak to the agitators, denying them agency and suggesting they are mere puppets pulled by strings "parde ke peeche (in the dark)", or at the mercy of a "remote control". He exhorted his audience to demonstrate their respect for the policemen battling protesters on the street, and for elected MPs in Parliament who passed the CAB. He did not urge or express respect, or empathy, for the young people who are opposing the law by taking on the might of the state, and its brutality, mostly peacefully, and sometimes by holding aloft the Constitution and the Tricolour. In fact, PM Modi did make a mention of those who are waving the Tricolour as they oppose a discriminatory law — "yehi hai kasauti (this is the test)", he said, adding a new nationalism test to the old. If earlier, "They", those whom he had in an earlier speech identified on the basis of their clothes, and also "urban Naxals", were challenged to prove their patriotism by holding up the flag and, quite literally, by singing the national anthem, now they would also be asked, as the PM did on Sunday: Have you criticised terror, raised your voice against Pakistan, while holding the flag?

Finally, the PM employed a tactic he has used several times before. He personalised the issue, put himself at the centre. The furore over the citizenship law, he said, implicitly, explicitly, was a conspiracy to unseat him from power. The PM has said his piece. With more and more CMs standing up and saying no to the Centre on NRC, the pushback grows.

WAY FROM RANCHI

Jharkhand results offer a sobering moment for the BJP, and a reminder of the usefulness of coalitions

THE JHARKHAND RESULT should worry the BJP, not least because it has been losing assembly elections and allies since 2017-18. The loss of Jharkhand will rankle particularly, since the BJP had won 11 of the 14 Lok Sabha seats in the state in May and provided a stable government for the full five-year term, a first since the state was formed in 2000. The defeat may also have come at an inopportune time for the party — neighbouring Bihar, where the BJP is in office in alliance with the JD-U, is headed to polls next year. The gains in Jharkhand will be a boost for the Opposition, which, since the drubbing in the general election, has been lying low.

There are lessons for the BJP in the Jharkhand loss. One, the party's over-reliance on a single leader, Narendra Modi, for mobilising votes, is problematic in the states. Voters, clearly, make a distinction between national and state elections and national trends are not necessarily replicated in the states: Local issues can carry greater salience in the assembly election than so-called national issues. Modi and Amit Shah campaigned primarily on national security, including the CAA and NRC, whereas the gathbandhan — the JMM, Congress and RJD — focussed on local concerns, particularly unemployment, land alienation of tribals, failures in the delivery of public goods. The BJP projected Raghubar Das as its sole face in the state, but the move triggered dissent within the party. Two, the election may also be read as a reminder of the usefulness of alliances in a fragmented polity. The gathbandhan's success is largely the result of a well-crafted coalition whereas the BJP, once famed for its skill in building alliances, was handicapped by the absence of allies. It failed to reach a seat-sharing arrangement with the All Jharkhand Students Union Party (AJSUP), its partner in office, and that hurt both the parties: The AJSUP mopped up nearly 8 per cent of the vote.

States voting differently in the general election and in assembly polls is an indication of a powerful federal impulse that seems to have survived the BJP's push for the centralisation of politics and governance. The Maharashtra and Jharkhand outcomes suggest that ignoring regional factors, and parties, could prove costly.

LOST IN TRANSLATION

A new study shows that emotions do not always carry across languages. But there are ways to bridge the gap

THE HUMAN CONDITION, it appears, is not amenable to translation. A study published in *Science* last week found that words referring to emotions — love, anger, hate, surprise, fear — are understood in vastly different ways across language groups. "Love", for example, is closer to liking and fondness in Indo-European languages and akin to pity in Austronesian languages. Imagine, if you will, whispering sweet nothings to a paramour, and your words instead of being taken as an expression of joy are confused as being patronising.

But more than the immediate interpersonal concerns, the study challenges the notion that there can be universal values; that true communication is possible between people who come from vastly different contexts. So, while yelling "surprise!" at a party is meant to invoke a startled sense of joy, for many it only means anxiety, which in turn could be associated with either fear or regret, depending on the language group. If we can't understand what people feel, how they react to love, death, melancholy and danger, how can we have themes that resonate across the world? And have the millions who read *Crime and Punishment* in translation — and felt the despair of Raskolnikov — felt something somehow less real than the creators intended?

Not all is lost, though. Language, as many philosophers, linguists and anthropologists have shown, goes beyond merely labelling and describing an inner narrative. It is in communication — through context, metaphor, body language and empathy — that new worlds open up for people, and they realise how they really feel. Besides, in the age of techno-symbolism, a new more direct form of communication for emotional states is emerging. Perhaps, in time, the existential angst of Raskolnikov will have its own emoji.



SUHAS PALSHIKAR

IF THE MIDDLE of the year saw the BJP at an all-time high, 2019 seems to be ending on a sombre note for the party. A midnight Midas-touch by some of its leaders might still help the BJP retain office in Jharkhand, but the state assembly results surely invite a less than flattering assessment of the party. Parties are assessed on several criteria — electoral performance, governance records, popularity and the ability to set and pursue the agenda. It would be worthwhile to take stock of how the BJP is doing on these four fronts. However, electoral performance is bound to be the key to a party's performance in other arenas. That is why Jharkhand would hurt the BJP.

The Jharkhand result falls into a pattern: In its second honeymoon period, post-May, the BJP has faced three setbacks. The party can argue that these are not decisive. It has lost seats but gained vote-share, the BJP may have suffered a loss of face but retained power nevertheless (as in Haryana), it could still claim to be the single-largest party and also harp on statistical details like "strike rate" as in Maharashtra. This argument is specious, particularly in the backdrop of the party's convincing victory in May. The BJP has not found it easy to repeat its performance in the parliamentary elections in the states. This is in contrast to the post-May 2014 situation, when the BJP went on to win Haryana and emerged as the single-largest party in Maharashtra and Jharkhand, assuming office in all three states.

Surely, the party is not down — and far from being out yet. But the failure to translate its all-India victory into state victories indicates the BJP's limitations and alerts us to the splitting of electoral choices. And, the electoral outlook for the party does not appear bright — the AAP appears to have an upper hand in Delhi and the JDU is probably waiting to upset the BJP's appalcart in Bihar.

Can the BJP boast of an improved governance record? While opinions on governance in states where the party holds office are bound to be deeply divided, at least three things are clear. One, the states run by the BJP are not better governed than those run by non-BJP parties. This includes even the states where the BJP has been ruling without allies — Haryana before 2019, UP and

BJP loses another state, but continues to make its
opponents become more like BJP to fight it

Politics, though, is never a straightforward enterprise and the BJP can still find comfort in the fact that it continues to be fairly popular — the public may be disappointed with government's performance but not disenchanted with the party. Retaining popular acceptability, however, is going to be a tough task because over the past two parliamentary elections, the BJP has added a large number of supporters to its core base — who are around 20 per cent at most. The new supporters of the party may look for alternatives and as state elections indicate, these are rather discerning supporters who are willing to switch to state parties during state elections.

Karnataka today. Two, if the economy is any indication, the abysmal failure on the governance front is apparent, particularly for a party that came to power originally promising better times. This failure is even more glaring if one takes into account the enormous trust the voters placed in Narendra Modi despite the economy not doing well in May 2019. The governance failure, thus, tantamounts to a breach of trust — and becomes colossal. Third, if governance is judged on its democratic dimension, the BJP government has gone from bad to worse in its second term. Subterfuge, sleight of hand and excessive propaganda are the techniques of non-performing governments. Having taken recourse to all these, this government is increasingly resorting to semi-repressive and clearly repressive measures to hide its non-performance.

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Yet, it would be unrealistic to deny the diffused popularity enjoyed by the BJP. This popularity owes to various factors. One is the party's organisational reservoir of support. The other reason for the party's popularity is Modi himself. Much of the addition to the BJP's popularity has been Modi's contribution. So long as the PM's personal popularity remains relatively high, the party can bask in reflected glory. This source of popularity is crucial as much as it is risky. The moment Modi flounders, this chunk of popularity could diminish. The BJP's efforts to gain acceptability by building a Hindutva political identity has also been successful. It has managed to convince a large section of Hindu society to understand politics through the prism of imaginary Hindu interests.

This takes us to the fourth yardstick to assess the party: How far has it been successful in setting an agenda and pushing it towards a direction desired by it? Here, we confront a complex picture. The party has gone down from being in office in two-thirds of India two years ago to just a little over a third of the country today. But a cursory look at today's public debates would show how successful the BJP has been in setting the agenda. During the campaign for the Lok Sabha elections and after that, unemployment, the slowdown in the economy and issues related to livelihood could barely make their presence felt.

In its first term, through issues of cow-protection and instances of mob vigilantism, the party was able to keep its agenda on the front burner. More recently, it has successfully managed to legislate its agenda into public policies. In the past six months, the BJP has effectively steered the agenda of public decision-making. When we look back at the past six months, bringing a fundamental change to India's identity will emerge as the single most effective thing the BJP did in this period. It has rewritten the Constitution without having to make any amendment to it. This is something not even Indira Gandhi could do during the heyday of her authoritarian rule. And this achievement means that non-BJP parties will have to play by the new rules set by the BJP. They will have to acquiesce into the new normal of violence, hatred and illiberal law-enforcement — they will have to be more like the BJP in order to fight it. But the moment they show willingness to engage the BJP in an authentic manner, the party's achievement will shrink.

Success brings arrogance and insensitivity. The BJP exemplifies this maxim. But the BJP's problem — and the problem caused by it — goes much beyond this. It sees electoral ascendance as a licence to alter the nature of India and the character of the Constitution. With two-thirds of India keeping its distance from the BJP in state elections, it will be of immense interest how far the party can continue to push its agenda.

The writer, based in Pune, is chief editor of Studies in Indian Politics and co-director of Lokniti programme, CSDS



JANMEJAYA SINHA

I READ YOUR edit, 'Reset the boardroom' (IE, December 20) with some concern. You talk about the distinction between "decisiveness and arbitrariness" and "the growing distrust of corporates" to perhaps suggest that the actions taken by majority shareholders need to be contained. I am not a student of law and certainly don't want to go into the merits of any specific judgment. However, I do want to express my confusion around the rights of a majority shareholder and orders which grant what is not sought by a plaintiff.

In an era, where there is a lot of talk of good corporate governance and about the rights of minority shareholders, I want to ask what the rights of majority shareholders are. What is the point of owning 51 per cent of a company if you cannot decide on who the chairman of the company is? Should corporate democracy not offer clear rights to the majority shareholder (contained of course in not doing things that may be prejudicial or oppressive to the minority shareholders)? Can the majority shareholders not remove a director? Do they need to discuss who a chairman of a company is with every minority shareholder in the name of corporate governance before tak-

BOARDROOM BASICS

Minority shareholders must be protected but not at the cost of the majority

DEAR EDITOR, I DISAGREE

A fortnightly column in which we invite readers to tell us why, when they differ with the editorial postions or news coverage of "The Indian Express"

ing a decision? How would the mechanics of such consultation work?

Further, can a board not appoint or remove a CEO? Around the world we see swift action. Most recently, the GE board suddenly removed its CEO without comment. In hindsight, we may even wonder whether the decision taken was a good one for the company. But the power to do so rests with the board. We can't criticise the decision but it is not wrong. Rules allow for predictability in decision making. In fact, any business leader can tell you that every business decision that a company management takes will not be good ones, but in my view, that should not be taken as being prejudicial or oppressive to minority shareholders. What is oppressive and prejudicial to a minority shareholder is where, say, the management diverts funds out of the company. But a bad business decision cannot be seen as oppressive to minority shareholders, it happens in the course of business, all the time. Minority shareholders rights need to be protected from prejudicial actions of the majority for sure but we should be careful not to disturb the basic tenets of corporate democracy.

The other issue that to a layman is sur-

prising is when relief that is not sought is given. If a plaintiff appeals wrongful termination by a company and goes to court seeking compensation for wrongful dismissal, is it ok for a court to order that the plaintiff is reinstated or should it order on the compensation sought? The plaintiff may not have sought reinstatement because he may believe the working conditions that he will get on return, may be inimical. He wants to be compensated and have nothing to do with the company. Why should we believe the plaintiff does not know his or her own self-interest best? Does that not appear paternalistic?

Investors, domestic and foreign alike, seek predictability of law and a clear understanding of the rights of majority shareholders. Predictability in law is important in creating a business environment in which unforeseen and inefficient transaction costs to governance are not added. Otherwise there is too much uncertainty in conducting business. I truly hope this gets cleared very soon.

The writer is chairman, Boston Consulting Group, India. Views are personal

DECEMBER 24, 1979, FORTY YEARS AGO

URS ON JANATA DEVRAJ URS, CONGRESS president, hinted that his party might, if necessary, form a coalition government at the Centre with the Janata after the elections. Talking to newsmen after a hectic tour of West Bengal and Orissa, Urs ruled out his party joining hands with the Congress (I). Urs, for the first time, admitted that it was a "mistake in a way" to join the Lok Dal-headed central ministry. He also refrained from making any assessment of Lok Dal-prospect in the forthcoming election. But he kept the option of supporting or forming a coalition with other parties after the election open saying that, "I would not like to make any predictions."

INDIA'S OIL BILLS INDIA'S BILL FOR import of crude oil and petroleum products will go up by at least Rs 1,200 crore during 1980 as a result of the latest hike in prices by the oil exporting countries. The total import bill for crude and petroleum products would cross Rs 4,500 crore next year as compared to the estimated total import bill of about Rs 3,300 crore in the current year. The increase in outgo of foreign exchange for the projected import of 18 million tonnes of crude oil is estimated at Rs 960 crore. India is hit hard by the recent price hike because all her traditional oil suppliers, including Iraq, Iran, Saudi Arabia, United Arab Emirates and Libya have pushed their oil

prices ranging from \$4 to \$6 per barrel.

MORARJI ON POLLS

MORARJI DESAI SAID in Hyderabad that he was opposed to the presidential form of government because it would lead to more dictatorship. It suited the US because the people there were "more alive and conscious of their rights" and a president had to leave office with just one Watergate scandal. Desai admitted that the Janata's poll prospects were not the same as they were in 1977. Though he was personally not in favour of coalition governments, coalition by itself was no evil and such governments were successfully functioning in many countries, Desai said.



A deluded dissent

The notion that CAA is anti-minority is based on conspiracy theories. It is, in fact, a fulfilment of India's moral and constitutional obligation to minorities in its neighbourhood



IN A DEMOCRATIC society, the formulation of a law — apart from constitutional compatibility — is expected to address two subjective issues. The first is its social utility and the second, the moral consciousness of the people. It is in this context that the Citizenship Amendment Act (CAA) should be examined. Its critics assert that it betrays our commitment to secularism, the very foundation of the Constitution. Is this objection valid?

The idea of the CAA was mooted and finally given shape in law to protect people from religious persecution in three neighbouring countries — Pakistan, Bangladesh and Afghanistan. All of them are Islamic states and the increasing radicalisation of society in these countries led to brute religious majoritarianism against minorities — Hindus, Sikhs, Buddhists, Jains, Parsis and Christians. There has been consensus in India that such victims should be given dignity and protection. In fact, it constitutes a core ingredient of our social philosophy from time immemorial. Even before we framed our secular democratic Constitution, India provided shelter to people facing religious persecution. When Parsis and Jews faced threats to their right to worship and religious identity, they found dignity and space on our soil. According to the 1931 census, there were 1,09,752 Parsis and 24,000 Jews in India. Moreover, both these communities have shown little inclination to return to their respective nations. The CAA is consistent with this secular tradition of India.

The Indian state has never been antithetical to the cause of minorities in our neighbourhood, irrespective of the political party in power. Such victims have been accommodated during the Congress government in the past as well. Even the Left parties supported India's active intervention to protect "refugees" from Bangladesh. The 20th party congress of the CPM in 2012 passed a resolution demanding an amendment in the Citizenship Act 2003 to give citizenship to Bengali refugees who were, according to the party, victims of "historical circumstances". The unchecked atrocities on minorities in these states by fundamentalists, and the failure of the states to defeat such elements, gave rise to an abnormal situation.

There were over two lakh Hindus and Sikhs in Afghanistan before the 1990s. Their number has dwindled to a few hundred in the last three decades. Further, out of 64 temples and gurdwaras in the country, only three are functional.

The situation in Bangladesh is no less grim. The work of Abul Barkat of Dhaka University and statistics released by the Bangladesh Statistical Bureau revealed a situation beyond our imagination. Barkat, based on decades of research, establishes that 632 Hindus have gone missing everyday in Bangladesh since 1964 (East Pakistan till 1971). Both the sources confirm that no less than 11.1 million Hindus have gone missing in Bangladesh between 1964 and 2013. The Enemy Property Act was renamed as the Vested Property Act after the formation of Bangladesh. It affected more than 1.3 million Hindu households — more than two lakh acres of land possessed by the Hindus was forcibly grabbed. The efforts of the state to safeguard Hindus remained abysmally ineffectual. In 2002, Bangladesh enacted the Vested Property (Return) Act and subse-

quently the Vested Property (Return) Amendment Act, 2011 with the intention to give back possession of their land to Hindus. But this was in vain.

The Jinnah Institute in Pakistan and other sources, including news reports in the international and national media, present a gloomy picture of the condition of Hindus and other religious minorities in that country. Attacks on the dignity of women, forcible conversions, grabbing of land and other properties of the Hindus and Christians have been a part of daily life.

It is thus urgent to address the existential threat to religious minorities in these three countries. And it is with this aim that the Narendra Modi government formulated the CAA. Contending that this humanitarian action is a betrayal of our commitment to secularism is a classic example of the peculiar absurdity of double think. The CAA is, rather, an extension of and commitment to the idea of secularism.

The Act also corrects the historical mistake committed in the Nehru-Liaquat pact. Then Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru had not engaged his cabinet colleagues and senior party leaders before signing the pact on February 8, 1950. The secular pretensions of Nehru, emanating from the Western variety of flawed modernity, led him to backtrack from the promises to the Hindus who lived in Pakistan. The Congress leadership had promised during Partition that their life and religion would not be in peril. The pact was a great retreat from that promise. Syama Prasad Mookerjee resigned from the Union cabinet on February 19, 1950, in protest against the Nehru-Liaquat Pact. A few months later, the world witnessed the protest by the Law Minister of Pakistan, J N Mandal, whose close friendship with M A Jinnah was well known. The undiminished atrocities on Hindus, particularly Scheduled Caste women, led him to resign from the government on April 29, 1950 and return to India. He wrote: "I cannot bear the load of untruth and pretensions that Hindus live with honour and security of their life, religion and property in Pakistan."

On December 4, 1947, Mahatma Gandhi demanded that the Nehru government bring back Scheduled Castes from Pakistan due to the inhuman treatment meted out to them and their forced conversion. The CAA is a fulfilment of the historical responsibility to those people whom Partition made state-

The Act also corrects the historical mistake committed in the Nehru-Liaquat pact. Then Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru had not engaged his cabinet colleagues and senior party leaders before signing the pact on February 8, 1950. The secular pretensions of Nehru, emanating from the Western variety of flawed modernity, led him to backtrack from the promises to the Hindus who lived in Pakistan. The Congress leadership had promised during Partition that their life and religion would not be in peril. The pact was a great retreat from that promise.

less. India's secular democracy has historically been invested with moral force and this has been exhibited by the CAA. Earlier, governments used gradualism to provide protection to the Hindus and other minorities of these states. The Modi government has formalised the process to end the uncertainties and odds faced by these stateless and persecuted people.

In a democracy, dissent and doubts are important and logical dialogue is the only way to yield a constructive consensus. But the protests that emerged abruptly against the CAA seem to be explicitly driven by a prejudice against the government — that it is pursuing Hindutva majoritarianism to exclude Muslims. This is based on an over-active imagination and conspiracy theories. How does giving humanitarian shelter to the victims affect Indian Muslims or any other citizen of India?

Importantly, Muslims in these countries do not face any crisis in pursuing their right to worship. India cannot meddle in the internal disputes among various sects of Islam, whether Ahmadiya or Shia or Sunni, who have been competing with each other for hegemony and over interpretations of the historical evolution of Islam. Religious persecution and aspiration for hegemony are two different things.

The concept of citizenship is not static or stagnant. It is a dynamic process and is intertwined with the nation state. It progressively expands and sometimes, unwillingly, shrinks according to circumstances.

There are two examples from our own historical experiences. Millions of Indians ceased to be citizens with the formation of Pakistan as fraternity mutated into unfriendliness between communities. The second example is reflected in a correspondence between two great Parsi leaders. Dadabhai Naoroji wrote the following to Dinshaw Wacha on December 20, 1888: "We are India's and India is our mother country... and we can only sink and swim as Indians. If we break with it our fate will be that of a peacock feather's."

The CAA fulfils both the constitutional morality and civilisational ethos historically endowed to us. It is time for the Muslims to be part of this Indian tradition rather than being fed the delusion that the Modi government is anti-minority.

The writer is a Rajya Sabha MP from the BJP

WHAT THE OTHERS SAY

"Modi should be in no doubt: the world is watching him now. His reputation and India's are in the balance. The hateful victimisation of Muslims must stop. A good start would be the immediate scrapping of the noxious citizenship bill."

— THE GUARDIAN

When politics hurts diplomacy

Delhi needs to remove growing negative perceptions of its domestic policies in the Muslim world



BY C RAJA MOHAN

THE ISLAMIC SUMMIT in Kuala Lumpur last week raised many familiar questions about the role of religion in promoting solidarity between nations; it also reminded us of the well-known answer that national interest often tends to trump shared faith. The gathering in Kuala Lumpur did bring some key Islamic nations together, but it also revealed the deepening schisms in the Muslim world today that are of considerable importance for the Subcontinent.

While Malaysia, Turkey and Qatar were the moving forces behind the summit, Saudi Arabia, Egypt and the United Arab Emirates were among the notable absentees. Indonesia, the world's largest Islamic nation, kept a low profile at the summit, while Pakistan's Imran Khan was a surprising dropout at the last minute.

For Mahathir Mohamad, the summit, and the diplomacy surrounding it are means to increase his domestic room for manoeuvring and win a leadership role in the Muslim world. Many in the Middle East, however, see the claims for Islamic leadership from outside the region with either bemusement or condescension.

The real contestation for leading the Islamic world remains within the Middle East. Turkey and Iran have a long tradition of challenging the Saudi leadership of the Islamic world. Qatar, which punches way above its weight, has now joined their ranks.

The Saudis expressed displeasure at convening the Islamic nations outside the Organisation of the Islamic Cooperation. Mahathir, of course, claimed that the summit was not about undermining the OIC and its Saudi leadership. But, he said enough to suggest that the OIC has not been an effective instrument in addressing the contemporary challenges facing the Islamic world.

The idea that religion can bind people together has an enduring appeal. In practice though, religion has not been enough to sustain unity within and among nations that profess a common faith. Many countries in the Islamic world struggle to respect the rights of minorities, Muslim or non-Muslim, and cope with the problems of religious sectarianism and ethnic separatism.

If keeping the faithful together within a nation is hard enough, it is a lot harder to promote supra-national solidarity in the name of Islam. The origins of pan Islamism date back to the late 19th century, but its record in binding nations has not been impressive.

The same is true of ethnicity-based solidarity in the world. For example, the pan-Arab and pan-Asian movements that stirred the world in the 20th century, are today, pale shadows of themselves. While the decline of pan-Arabism has been evident, the idea of Asian solidarity endures. But, just look beneath the rhetoric on "Asian solidarity", and you will find deep contradictions between, for example, China and India, and China and Japan.

Solidarity based on other ideologies, class or political values, too has been difficult to

sustain for long periods. The communist solidarity that seemed so powerful in the middle of the 20th century crashed quickly against the rocks of nationalism in Central Europe, Russia and China.

On the face of it, shared values — political and economic liberalism — have been far more successful in holding together the so-called political and economic "West". After the collapse of the Soviet Union, it became ever harder to sustain harmony within the western world. US president Donald Trump appears determined to restructure the political-economic institutions built after the World War II. Intra-Western contradictions shaped the world before the middle of the 20th century, and are becoming an important factor in the 21st century. In all these cases, the tension between transcendental ideologies and narrow national interests has often been resolved in favour of the latter.

The splits in the Islamic world exposed by the Malaysian summit should be of great interest to the Subcontinent. The main differences are about political Islam and its role in shaping the domestic structures in Muslim nations. Turkey and Qatar have championed the Muslim Brotherhood that seeks to overthrow the current political order in Saudi Arabia, the UAE, as well as in Egypt. Iran has its own variant of political Islam for export.

Saudi Arabia, Egypt and the UAE seek to protect their own societies and state structures from external onslaught, and are pushing back. Beyond the nature and role of Islam, there is also the growing competition among the major Middle Eastern states for strategic influence in the region and beyond.

The South-Asian political discourse tends to see the Muslim world as a monolith. That has become increasingly difficult to maintain amidst the current conflicts in the Middle East.

Imran Khan has showcased his special relationships with Turkey's President Recep Tayyip Erdogan and Malaysia's Mahathir. He was supposed to play a leading role at the Kuala Lumpur summit. But, apparently under pressure from the Saudis and the Emiratis, his main economic benefactors, he chose to stay home.

For Delhi too, the divisions in the Islamic world are of significance. If Malaysia and Turkey have become increasingly critical of the NDA government's policies, the UAE and the Saudis have given India the benefit of doubt, until now. The Qatar-owned Al Jazeera channel has run a far more damaging campaign against Delhi in recent months than the much-maligned *New York Times*.

Delhi has an urgent need to remove the growing negative perceptions of its domestic policies in the Middle East and more broadly the Muslim world. In his speech at a rally in Delhi on Sunday, Prime Minister Narendra Modi referred to India's expanding friendships in the Middle East during the last few years. The PM, however, might be in the danger of squandering a major diplomatic achievement, if he miscalculates the external costs of the government's domestic politics. Worse still, Delhi might be giving an opportunity to an otherwise divided world, Muslim and non-Muslim alike, to agree in their disapproval of India's domestic politics.

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



DUSHYANT DAVE

While the court fiddles

Apex court has not acted with urgency to protect citizens from executive excesses

THE SUPREME COURT of India enjoys an extraordinary status in the hearts and minds of Indians. They look up to it when it comes to keeping the essence of the nation intact and insulated from attacks by the executive of the day. The Court has created for itself an exalted position over the last seven decades by assuming the role of a sentinel on the Qui Vive ("on the alert" or "vigilant").

Part III of the Constitution of India contains Fundamental Rights and Article 13(2) thereof mandates that, "The State shall not make any Law which takes away or abridges the rights conferred by this part and any Law made in contravention of this Clause shall to the extent of contravention be void." Thus, there is a twofold provision — prohibiting the state from making an unconstitutional law, and simultaneously declaring that such a law would be void. Article 14 contains a positive injunction against the state: "The State shall not deny to any person equality before the Law or the Equal Protection of the Laws within the territory of India".

Affirmative action on the part of the state in favour of disadvantaged sections of society is within the framework of liberal democracy. Socio-economic justice is part of the equality clause. Equal protection also means right to

equal treatment of citizens: This is the essence of Article 14, a basic feature of the Constitution, which obliges the courts, especially the Supreme Court, to review state-made laws and declare them as unconstitutional, if found to be so. The Court cannot desert its duty to determine the constitutionality of an impugned statute. And so, the decision of the SC, led by the chief justice himself, to defer the examination of the challenge to the much talked about Citizenship (Amendment) Act, 2019 is, to say the least, disappointing.

The Court should have put aside other matters and heard the group of writ petitions challenging the validity of this ex-facie unjust law. Its vacation is hardly an excuse to defer such a challenge. Even if the judges wanted to enjoy their much deserved winter vacation, their refusal to stay the law is even more disturbing. Such an order would have immediately defused the tempers running high across the nation, and, "We, the People" could have breathed a sigh of relief. Instead, the judges have left us to fend for ourselves in the streets of our cities. The cost of this decision by the Court will only become clear with time.

The granting of a stay order against the operation of this citizenship law would not have caused any prejudice to public interest

whatsoever. On the contrary, it is my belief, that it would have served the public interest well. It is true, there is, generally, a presumption in favour of constitutionality of law. But that is not an absolute rule. If the Act ex-facie violates the fundamental rights of citizens, a mere presumption which decides the burden cannot serve that law.

The Delhi High Court's order to defer the writs in the Jamia violence cases is a shocking abdication of its constitutional duty. It appears that judges across the spectrum are unwilling to test the executive's actions, however unconstitutional they may be.

We must beware that the popular saying, "Nero fiddled while Rome burned", does not come true for this great nation. The Supreme Court, in recent years, has shown its leanings in favour of the executive. In a series of decisions, the Court has, surprisingly, justified many of the state's actions, which either needed a deeper probe or simply to be declared unlawful. In fact, the Court is almost proving that it stays in ivory towers. After the appointment of the current chief justice, those of us who admire the Court had expected a departure from such a course.

One can only hope that the Court introspects and intervenes forthwith to stop any

bloodshed in the country, and assuage the sentiments of a large section of the society, which feels they are no longer wanted.

The Preamble is an irreversible contract between the state and its people to keep India a "Sovereign, Socialist, Secular, Democratic Republic", and, "to secure to all its citizens" justice, equality, fraternity and liberty of thought, expression, belief, faith and worship. The great judge, H R Khanna, in the celebrated Kesavananda Bharati case declared that the "State shall not discriminate against any citizen on the ground of religion only", and, interpreted Articles 15(1) and 16(2), even before the "secular" word was added to the Preamble.

All citizens, including judges, must remember the words of B R Ambedkar: "It is quite possible for this new born democracy to retain its form but give place to dictatorship in fact. If there is a landslide, the danger of the second possibility becoming actuality is much greater." These words appear too relevant today. Will the judiciary's conscience awaken soon?

The writer is a senior advocate at the Supreme Court of India

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

PM'S POSTURING

THIS REFERS TO the reports, "PM: No talk of NRC at all" and 'Reality check: Before PM's distancing, there was Shah's underlining' (IE, December 23). Prima facie both are contradictory. Statements made on the floor of the House and public statements from BJP leaders like Rajnath Singh and J P Nadda were not referred to by the PM while criticising the Opposition. His was a selective public posturing that may not allay anxieties.

L R Murmu, Delhi

CHANGING TASTES

THIS REFERS to the article, 'Some onion lessons' (IE, December 23). The solutions the authors offer to curb onion prices are valid. Yet, it is beyond belief that people will adopt dehydrated onions to replace fresh onions. Changing the food preferences of the people will require strong political will and the appetite to digest a backlash. The most appropriate solution is to shift towards reliable contract farming and farm-to-fork supply chains.

Kabir Singh Brar, Chandigarh

HUGS NOT ENOUGH

THIS REFERS to the editorial, 'Delhi

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.

can't duck' (IE, December 23). The controversy over External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar's cancelling his meeting with a US Congressional Committee over India's controversial track record on human rights has not erupted out of the blue. It is the Indian diplomatic establishment and government that thought that our bear hugs and occasional anti-China postures will keep America in a good humour. For obvious reasons, Jaishankar cannot dare to be his own master in such matters.

Tarsem Singh, Mahilpur

बिज़नेस स्टैंडर्ड

वर्ष 12 अंक 264

एनआरसी पर स्पष्टीकरण

प्रधानमंत्री नरेंद्र मोदी ने सप्ताहांत पर राष्ट्रीय नागरिक पंजी (एनआरसी) को लेकर जो बातें कहीं उनसे देश की जनता में भ्रामक संदेश गया है।

इस विषय पर तत्काल स्पष्टीकरण की आवश्यकता है। एनआरसी और हाल ही में पारित नागरिकता संशोधन अधिनियम (सीएए) को लेकर हो रहे देशव्यापी प्रदर्शन

से परेशान मोदी ने दिल्ली में एक चुनावी सभा में तीन बातें कहीं।

पहला, उन्होंने दावा किया कि असम को छोड़कर देश के अन्य हिस्सों में यानी देशव्यापी स्तर पर एनआरसी लागू करने को लेकर कैबिनेट में कभी चर्चा नहीं हुई। बीते पांच वर्ष में ऐसा कभी नहीं हुआ।

दूसरी बात, उन्होंने कहा कि एनआरसी

के लिए न तो कोई नियम जारी किए गए हैं और न उन पर संसद में चर्चा हुई है।

तीसरा, प्रधानमंत्री ने कहा कि इसे अमल में लाने के लिए कोई डिटेंशन कैंप (नजरबंदी शिविर) नहीं बनाए गए हैं। परंतु इन तीनों मोर्चों पर मोदी की बात सच नहीं है।

संसद का 20 नवंबर का रिकॉर्ड बताता है कि गृहमंत्री अमित शाह ने उच्च सदन में असम में समास विवादास्पद एनआरसी प्रक्रिया के तर्ज पर देश भर में एनआरसी लागू करने का सरकार का इरादा जाहिर किया था।

शाह दरअसल 1 मई के अपने द्वीट को ही दोहरा रहे थे कि पहले सीएए और उसके बाद एनआरसी आएगा। उन्होंने कहा

था कि देश से हर घुसपैठिये को बाहर निकाला जाएगा। मई में हुए लोकसभा चुनाव से पहले भी पार्टी के घोषणापत्र में एनआरसी का प्रमुखता से उल्लेख किया गया था।

इसके अलावा यदि ऐसी कोई पहल नहीं की गई होती तो क्या भाजपा के अन्य बड़े नेताओं से जवाब तलब नहीं किया गया होता ? रक्षा मंत्री राजनाथ सिंह ने 1 दिसंबर को इस संबंध में वक्तव्य दिया था। कर्नाटक जिसने अक्टूबर में कहा था कि वह एनआरसी लागू नहीं करेगा, उसके बारे में जानकारी है कि वहां मार्च 2020 से यह कवायद शुरू करने की चर्चा हुई है। मोदी का यह कहना भी भ्रामक है कि मामला न तो संसद में आया है और न ही नियम बने हैं।

एनआरसी को संसद में लाने की आवश्यकता नहीं है क्योंकि संबंधित कानून 2003 में अटल बिहारी वाजपेयी के कार्यकाल में पारित हो गया था और विभिन्न राज्यों में राष्ट्रीय जनसंख्या रजिस्टर में नामांकन के रूप में प्रक्रिया शुरू भी हो गई थी। जहां तक डिटेंशन सेंटर की बात है तो गुवाहाटी, नवी मुंबई, बेंगलुरु और पश्चिम बंगाल में दो स्थानों पर इसके निर्माण के लिए जगह चिह्नित कर ली गई है।

सच्चाई और वक्तव्य में इतनी विसंगति से आम जनता की चिंता दूर होने वाली नहीं है। यह संभव है कि मोदी ने भाजपा के सहयोगियों समेत व्यापक विरोध से निकले संदेश को समझ लिया हो और उन्हें लगा हो कि जनता का मिजाज ठीक से समझ

नहीं पाए।

भारी बहुमत पाने के बाद अक्सर नेताओं से ऐसी चूक हो जाती है। चूँकि वह सार्वजनिक रूप से गलती स्वीकार नहीं करेंगे इसलिए संभव है रैली में उनका वक्तव्य इस बात का संकेत हो कि फिलहाल के लिए एनआरसी को टाल दिया गया हो। यदि ऐसा है तो लाखों नागरिकों को अनिश्चितता में धकेलने के बजाय इस विषय में स्पष्ट वक्तव्य जारी किया जाना चाहिए।

यकीनन पांच वर्ष तक बहुसंख्यकवादी बातों को दोहराने के बाद प्रधानमंत्री के मुंह से यह सुनना वाकई अच्छा लगा कि अनेकता में एकता भारत की विशेषता है। यदि वह देश के इस बुनियादी मूल्य पर अमल करने का निर्णय करें तो और भी बेहतर होगा।

अस्वाभाविक समय में भी नैसर्गिक साझेदार हैं अमेरिका और भारत



दोधारी तलवार

अजय शुक्ला

निरंतरता रहेगी। भारत की लाज बचाते हुए उन्होंने कहा कि अमेरिका भारतीय लोकतंत्र का सम्मान करता है क्योंकि भारत में खुद इन विषयों पर बड़ी बहस चल रही है।

बहरहाल, भारत के साथ अपने रिश्ते को लेकर अमेरिकी प्रशासन को एक नई तरह की शर्मिंदगी का सामना करना पड़ रहा है। इसका असर अमेरिकी कांग्रेस में भारत के साथ रिश्ते को लेकर द्विपक्षीय सहमति पर भी पड़ेगा। माना जा सकता है कि भारत होने के नाते हमें अमेरिका से जो सहूलियतें मिलती थीं वे बंद हो सकती हैं। भारत के लिए रूस एस-400 हवाई रक्षा मिसाइल खरीदने को अमेरिकी इजाजत मिलनी मुश्किल हो जाएगी। वहीं कई मुद्दों पर अब भारत को खुलकर अमेरिका के साथ आना होगा, भले ही भारत के हित उस कदर जुड़े हों या नहीं।

विदेश और रक्षा मंत्रियों के उपरोक्त संवाद के नतीजे आशा के अनुरूप ही थे। अमेरिका ने हिंद-प्रशांत में भारत की सुरक्षा स्थिति का समर्थन किया। भारत ने भी उस सुरक्षा ढांचे का समर्थन करते वक्त चीन की आवश्यकताओं का ध्यान रखा। अमेरिका ने अफगानिस्तान में भारत के योगदान की सराहना की लेकिन तालिबान के साथ अमेरिका की वार्ता इस बात से विश्वभ्रमशी है। अमेरिका ने ईरान के मसले पर भारत से कहा कि वह अधिकतम दबाव में सहयोग करे। हालांकि उसने भारत और ईरान के बीच चाबहार बंदरगाह पर सहयोग को मंजूरी दे दी है। अमेरिका ने चीन के 5जी संचार नेटवर्क पर चिंता जताई जबकि भारत के मंत्री खामोश रहे। रक्षा साझेदारी के क्षेत्र में और प्रगति देखने को मिली। औद्योगिक सुरक्षा समझौते पर हस्ताक्षर अहम हैं। इसके तहत भारत को अहम

अमेरिकी रक्षा तकनीक हासिल होगी। दोनों देशों के रक्षा उद्योग में करीबी संबंध कायम होंगे। इस संबंध में वार्ता सितंबर 2018 में शुरू हुई थी। इससे पहले के दो समझौतों को पूरा होने में एक दशक लगा था।

ऐसे में बुनियादी विनिमय एवं सहयोग समझौते (बीईसीए) के रूप में एक ही ऐसा समझौता शेष है जो भारत और अमेरिकी सेना के बीच जानकारीय़ा साझा करने की बीच व्यवस्था को सुसंगत बनाएगा। इससे नेविगेशन और निशाना तय करने की व्यवस्था बेहतर होगी। भारत-अमेरिका सामरिक साझेदारी मंच के सलाहकार विक्रम सिंह कहते हैं कि उम्मीद थी कि बीईसीए को जल्दी मूर्त रूप दिया जा सकगा लेकिन अभी भी चिंता के तमाम विषय बरकरार हैं।

रक्षा रिश्तों में दोनों पक्षों ने रक्षा तकनीक और व्यापार पहल (डीटीटीआई) के तहत तीन समझौतों को अंतिम रूप देने की घोषणा की। इसके तहत अहम तकनीक विकसित की जाएंगी। दोनों देशों के रक्षामंत्रियों और नई दिल्ली स्थित भारतीय नौसेना मुख्यालय तथा हवाई स्थित इंडो-यूएस पैसिफिक कमांड के बीच हॉटलाइन का काम पूरा होने की घोषणा भी की गई। बहरीन स्थित अमेरिकी नौसैनिक बल की केंद्रीय कमान में एक भारतीय नौसेना अधिकारी को तैनाती का घोषणा भी की गई।

दोनों देश हिंद महासागर में चीनी पनडुब्बियों पर करीबी नजर रखने के लिए सहयोग कर रहे हैं। ऐसे में एक दूसरे के यहां अधिकारियों को तैनाती कारगर होगी। इस पर भी सहमति बनी कि अमेरिकी सेना की केंद्रीय कमांड और अफ्रीकी कमांड के अधिकारियों को साझा प्रशिक्षण दिया जाए।

दोनों देशों के व्यापार और वाणिज्यिक मसलों पर अहममति के बावजूद रक्षा रिश्ते मजबूत बने हुए हैं। पारंपरिक तौर पर देखें और पाकिस्तान का उदाहरण लें तो अमेरिका मानवाधिकार और राजनीतिक तथा धार्मिक आजादी पर सुरक्षा साझेदारी चिंताओं को तरजीह देता है। परंतु भारत के लिए यह बेहतर होगा कि वह सहिष्णुता की परीक्षा न ले और उन मूल्यों की ओर लौटे जो अंतर्राष्ट्रीय जगत में उसे प्रभावी और स्वीकार्य बनाए रखते थे।



अजय मोहंती

वित्तीय क्षेत्र में रेटिंग सुधारने का तिलिस्म

किसी देश की रेटिंग का ताल्लुक सेवा क्षेत्र को ऋण देने की उसकी क्षमता एवं उत्सुकता से बुनियादी तौर पर होना चाहिए। इसकी अहमियत बता रहे हैं टी टी राम मोहन

रेटिंग एजेंसी स्टैंडर्ड एंड पुअर्स (एसएंडपी) ने भारत के लिए चेतावनी जारी कर दी है: सकल घरेलू उत्पाद (जीडीपी) वृद्धि की हालत सुधारें या रेटिंग में कटौती के लिए तैयार रहें। मूडीज ने पहले ही भारतीय अर्थव्यवस्था के परिदृश्य को ‘स्थिर’ से बदलकर ‘नकारात्मक’ कर दिया है। एसएंडपी ने वित्त वर्ष 2019–20 में वृद्धि के 5.1 फीसदी रहने का अनुमान लगाया है। मूडीज ने आर्थिक वृद्धि दर के इस साल 4.9 फीसदी रहने की बात कही है। महज दो साल पहले किसने सोचा होगा कि भारत की जीडीपी वृद्धि छह फीसदी से भी नीचे आ जाएगी ?

संभावित डाउनग्रेड की चेतावनी देने के लिए रेटिंग एजेंसियों को दोषी नहीं ठहराया जा सकता है। खबरों का प्रवाह काफी डरावना है। औद्योगिक उत्पादन सूचकांक (आईआईपी) अक्टूबर में 3.8 फीसदी ऋणात्मक रहा था। उपभोक्ता मूल्य सूचकांक आधारित महंगाई नवंबर में एक साल पहले की तुलना में 5.5 फीसदी बढ़ गई। वर्ष 2019–20 में राजकोषीय घाटे का जीडीपी के 3.3 फीसदी रहने के बजट लक्ष्य से पार जाना तय ही है। वित्तीय क्षेत्र में तनाव बरकरार है। कर्ज लेने की दर काफी गिर चुकी है।

एजेंसियों ने अच्छे वक्त में भी भारत को रेटिंग देने के मामले में गलती की है। आर्थिक

समीक्षा 2016–17 में कहा गया था कि भारत एसएंडपी से मिली बीबीबी रेटिंग से बेहतर का हकदार है क्योंकि उस समय अर्थव्यवस्था का प्रदर्शन काफी अच्छा था। एक देश की रेटिंग सेवा ऋण के मामले में उसकी क्षमता एवं उत्सुकता से संबंधित होनी चाहिए। भारत ने बीते वर्षों में अपनी कर्ज देनदारियों में चूक नहीं की है। इसका कर्ज एवं जीडीपी के बीच करीब 65 फीसदी का अनुपात ऊंचा लग सकता है। लेकिन इसे जीडीपी में बाध्य ऋण के अनुपात और इसकी वृद्धि दर के तारतम्य में ही देखा जाना चाहिए। क्या विदेशी लेनदारों को यह लगता है कि आज भारत पर अपनी कर्ज देनदारी पूरा नहीं कर पाने का खतरा मंडरा रहा है क्योंकि हमारी वृद्धि दर फिसल चुकी है ? यह सुझाव हंसी के लायक ही लगता है।

यह ठीक है कि रेटिंग एजेंसियां कहीं नहीं जाने वाली हैं और रेटिंग में गिरावट हमेशा ही एक सिरदर्द होता है। ऐसे में भारत के लिए चुनौती यह है कि बढ़ी हुई वृद्धि दर दोबारा हासिल की जाए। घाटे के मौजूदा स्तर के हिसाब से देखें तो राजकोषीय राहत देने असंभव नजर आता है। सार्वजनिक इकाइयों (पीएसयू) की परिसंपत्तियों की त्वरित बिक्री कर राजस्व जुटाने की चर्चा चल रही है। लेकिन ऐसा कर पाना आसान नहीं है। रणनीतिक बिक्री में मूल्य-निर्धारण

एवं बोली लगाने की कठिन प्रक्रिया का पालन किया जाना चाहिए। और वे विवाद से उस समय भी परे नहीं हैं। एयर इंडिया की बिक्री को बाहर निकलकर एनबीएफसी की परिसंपत्तियां लेने के लिए नहीं उत्साहित करेगी। बैंक इस कर्ज के बड़े हिस्से को लेकर आशंकित होंगे क्योंकि वह असुरक्षित उपभोक्ता कर्ज हैं। रियल एस्टेट कर्जों में आईसीएस परियोजनाओं के कर्ज, पट्टा किराया छूट, वाणिज्यिक परिसर और डेवलपर वित्त का जोड़ है। बैंक पहले दो समूहों के प्रति रुचि दिखाएंगे लेकिन इन दोनों उत्पादों के लिए खासी मांग पहले से ही है। ऐसे में बैंकों को एनबीएफसी से ऋणग्रस्त परिसंपत्तियां खरीदने की जरूरत नहीं महसूस हो सकती है। आर्थिक वृद्धि की फिसलन मूलत: इस वजह से आई है कि एक बैंकिंग संकट के बाद एनबीएफसी संकट भी आ गया है। एनबीएफसी क्षेत्र को दोबारा अपने पैरों पर खड़ा करना एक लंबी कवायद होने जा रही है। इस सुस्ती को दूर करने के लिए ध्यान

इस तरह अर्थव्यवस्था में नई जान फूंकने के लिए दो बड़े वृहद-आर्थिक उपकरण—राजकोषीय एवं मौद्रिक प्रोत्साहन कुंद हो चुके हैं। लिहाजा सरकार क्षेत्रवार स्तर पर मुद्दों का समाधान करने पर ध्यान देने के मामले में सही है। वित्तीय क्षेत्र में तनाव को दूर करना प्राथमिकता होनी चाहिए। बैंकिंग क्षेत्र में दो तरह की अच्छी खबरें हैं। पहली,

आपका पक्ष

सड़क हादसे रोकने के लिए हों उपाय

देश में सड़क हादसों में एक दिन में जितने लोग जान गंवाते हैं उतने तो आतंकवाद के शिकार नहीं होते हैं। सरकार को सड़क हादसे रोकने के लिए भी उतना ही गंभीर होना चाहिए जितना कि देश की सुरक्षा के लिए आतंकवाद को लेकर है। सड़क हादसा कभी किसी की लापरवाही से हो जाता है तो कभी दूसरों की लापरवाही किसी की जान पर भारी पड़ जाती है। दोपहिया वाहनों की दुर्घटना के आंकड़े भी दिन प्रतिदिन बढ़ते जा रहे हैं। मोटरसाइकिल या स्कूटर चलाने वालों को हमेशा हेलमेट पहन कर वाहन चलाना चाहिए। केवल चालान भरने के डर से हेलमेट पहनने की आदत बदलनी चाहिए। सरकार सड़क हादसे रोकने के लिए कानून बनाती है लेकिन इस कानून का पालन वाहन चालकों को करना पड़ेगा। यातायात नियम तोड़ने वालों का चालान काटने का मकसद किसी चालक को परेशान करना नहीं होता है, बल्कि सरकार का



मकसद उन लोगों को सबक सिखाना होता है जो यातायात नियम तोड़ कर अपनी और दूसरों की जान खतरे में डालते हैं। सड़क पर सावधानी, सतर्कता और यातायात नियमों के पालन से स्वयं तथा दूसरों की कीमती जान को बचाया जा सकता है। अपनी लापरवाही से जब कोई दुर्घटना होती है तो लोग सरकार को दोष देने लगते हैं। अगर

सड़क दुर्घटनाओं में कमी लाने के लिए सरकार को विशेष उपाय करने चाहिए

हम खुद ही लापरवाही बरतेंगे और हादसों का कारण बनेंगे तो सरकार इस मामले में क्या कर सकती है। सरकार की तरफ से तो ऐसा कोई कानून नहीं होता है कि एक छोटे

पाठक अपनी राय हमें इस पते पर भेज सकते हैं : संपादक, बिजनेस स्टैंडर्ड, 4, बहादुर शाह जफर मार्ग, नई दिल्ली - 110002. आप हमें ईमेल भी कर सकते हैं : lettershindi@bmail.in पत्र/ईमेल में अपना डाक पता और टेलीफोन नंबर अवश्य लिखें।

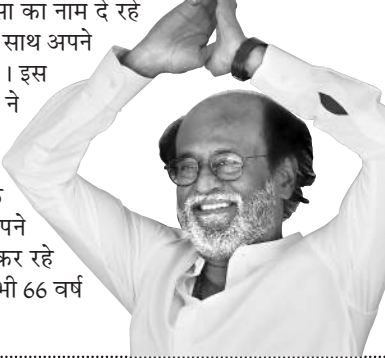
कानाफूसी

मध्य प्रदेश के नाखुश विधायक

मध्य प्रदेश में कांग्रेस के पहली बार विधायक बने 15 नेताओं ने मंत्रियों और अफसरशाहों की बेरुखी से नाखुश होकर एक दबाव समूह बनाया है। उनका इरादा आगे नियमित बैठकें करने और अपनी मांगों, अनुशंसाओं पर उठाए गए कदमों की समीक्षा करना तय है। इय नेताओं का यहां तक कहना है कि अगर भविष्य में हालात नहीं सुधरे तो वे अपनी शिकायत प्रदेश के मुख्यमंत्री कमल नाथ तक पहुंचाएंगे। नाराज विधायकों में संजय शुक्ला, सुरेंद्र सिंह शेरा, अशोक मर्शकोले और भूपेंद्र मरावी समेत कई नाम हैं। ऐसे मंत्रियों में शहरी विकास एवं आवास मंत्री जयवर्द्धन सिंह, ऊर्जा मंत्री प्रियव्रत सिंह और वन मंत्री उमंग सिंघार शामिल हैं।

स्टालिन या रजनीकांत ?

द्रविड़ मुन्नेत्र कषगम (द्रमुक) के अध्यक्ष एम के स्टालिन के बेटे और पार्टी की युवा शाखा के अध्यक्ष उदयनिधि स्टालिन को सोशल मीडिया पर रजनीकांत का विरोध करने के कारण राजनीतिक विरोधियों और रजनीकांत के प्रशंसकों की नाराजगी का सामना करना पड़ रहा है। रजनीकांत ने ट्विटर पर लोगों को सलाह दी कि वे हिंसा न करें और एकजुट रहें। हालांकि उन्होंने द्वीट में नागरिकता संशोधन अधिनियम को लेकर हो रहे देशव्यापी प्रदर्शन का उल्लेख नहीं किया। उधर लोगों को नागरिकता संशोधन अधिनियम के खिलाफ द्रमुक के आंदोलन से जुड़ने का आह्वान करते हुए जुनियर स्टालिन ने 69 वर्षीय अभिनेता रजनीकांत पर हमला बोल दिया। उन्होंने लिखा कि जो बूढ़े लोग अधिकारों के लिए हो रहे प्रदर्शन को हिंसा का नाम दे रहे हैं, वे सुरक्षा के साथ अपने घर पर बैठें रहें। इस पर लोगों ने उदयनिधि से पूछना शुरू कर दिया कि क्या वह अपने पिता की बात कर रहे हैं क्योंकि वह भी 66 वर्ष के हैं।



डॉनल्ड ट्रंप अपनी राष्ट्रवादी नीतियों के चलते अपनी जीत पक्की मान रहे हैं। वहीं डेमोक्रेटिक पार्टी का भी पूरा जोर ट्रंप को हराने पर है। ट्रंप पर महाभियोग चलाने की प्रक्रिया शुरू हो गई है। हालांकि कुछ लोगों का मानना है कि जिस तरह से पूर्व राष्ट्रपतियों एंड्रू जॉनसन व बिल क्लिंटन को महाभियोग से क्लीन चिट मिल गई थी वैसे ही ट्रंप को भी इस महाभियोग से क्लीन चिट मिल गई थी वैसे ही ट्रंप को भी इस महाभियोग से क्लीन चिट मिल जाएगा। मगर हमें यह भी नहीं भूलना चाहिए कि रिचर्ड निक्सन ने महाभियोग सफल होदे देखकर त्यागपत्र दे दिया था। विपक्षी प्रत्याशी जो बाइडन या यूक्रेन के जरिये चरित्र हनन कराने का आरोप लगा रहा है इसी तरह वर्ष 2016 के चुनाव को रूस के जरिये प्रभावित कराने का आरोप लग चुका है। प्रतिनिधि सभा में विपक्षियों को बहुमत हासिल है लेकिन सीनेट में नहीं है। रिपब्लिकन पार्टी के कई सांसद ट्रंप के क्रियाकलापों से खासे नाराज हैं और इसका असर आगामी चुनावों पर भी पड़ेगा।

भूपेंद्र सिंह रांग, पानीपत

दैनिक जागरण

असफलता में भी भविष्य की सफलता के कई सूत्र छिपे होते हैं

भाजपा का गिरता ग्राफ

झारखंड में हार के साथ ही भाजपा के हाथ से एक और राज्य निकल गया। इसके पहले मध्य प्रदेश, राजस्थान और छत्तीसगढ़ में उसे पराजय का सामना करना पड़ा था। हाल में उसने हरियाणा में जैसे-तैसे सरकार अवश्य बना ली, लेकिन महाराष्ट्र में शिवसेना की बगावत से उसके खाते से एक और राज्य कम हो गया। इसकी अनदेखी नहीं की जा सकती कि बीते दो वर्ष में विधानसभा चुनावों में भाजपा का प्रदर्शन उसकी उम्मीदों के अनुकूल नहीं रहा है। गुजरात में उसे जैसे-तैसे बहुमत मिला था और कर्नाटक में वह सत्ता से चंद कदम पहले ही ठिठक गई थी। हालांकि बाद में वहां उसने येन-केन प्रकारेण सरकार बना ली। झारखंड में मुख्यमंत्री रघुवर दास पार्टी के विद्रोही उम्मीदवार सरयू राय से जिस तरह पिछड़ गए उससे भाजपा को कहीं अधिक चिंतित होना चाहिए और इस पर तो खास तौर पर गौर करना चाहिए कि राज्यों के चुनाव राष्ट्रीय मुद्दों अथवा राष्ट्रीय नेता के बलबूते नहीं जीते जा सकते। निःसंदेह राष्ट्रीय नेता और मसले एक हद तक असर करते हैं, लेकिन विधानसभा चुनावों में तो मतदाता इस पर ध्यान देते हैं कि उनकी आकांक्षाएं पूरी करने में कौन समर्थ है? प्रधानमंत्री मोदी को सुनने-सराहने वाले यह भली तरह जानते हैं कि राज्य का शासन तो किसी और को ही चलाना है।

यह सही है कि झारखंड के गठन के बाद पहली बार रघुवर दास के रूप में किसी मुख्यमंत्री ने पांच साल तक सरकार चलाई, लेकिन नतीजे यही बता रहे हैं कि जनता उन्हें एक और मौका देने को तैयार नहीं थी। इसकी एक वजह तो उम्मीदों का पूरा न होना ही हो सकती है और दूसरी, पार्टी के अंदर गुटबाजी और असंतोष। शायद इसी का नतीजा रहा कि एक बड़ी संख्या में भाजपा नेता विद्रोही उम्मीदवार के रूप में चुनाव में उतरे। रही-सही कसर इससे पूरी हो गई कि भाजपा अपने गठबंधन के सहयोगी संग मिलकर चुनाव नहीं लड़ सकी। झारखंड मुक्ति मोर्चा कांग्रेस और राजद से मिलकर भाजपा की राह रोकने में सफल रहा तो केवल इसलिए नहीं कि उसके नेतृत्व वाला गठबंधन कहीं अधिक मजबूत था, बल्कि इसलिए भी कि वह लोगों की नाराजगी का फायदा उठाने में सक्षम रहा। इसी के चलते भाजपा के कई मंत्री भी चुनाव हार गए। बेहतर हो कि भाजपा नेतृत्व इसकी तह में जाए कि राज्यों में उसके मंत्री इतने अक्षम क्यों साबित हो रहे हैं? उसे राज्यों में शासन-प्रशासन के कामकाज में बुनियादी बदलाव लाने के साथ ही इस पर भी ध्यान देना होगा कि असंतोष एवं गुटबाजी से कैसे बचा जाए? हार पर चिंतन का महत्व तभी है जब पार्टी की कार्यशैली में बदलाव भी दिखे।

विकास की राह

जम्मू कश्मीर अनुच्छेद 370 के खत्मे के बाद धीरे-धीरे शांति की राह पर लौट रहा है। गत दिनों वहां इतिहास में पहली बार वर्ष 2018 में पंचायत और 2019 में बीडीसी यानी खंड विकास परिषद के चुनाव हुए। अब जिला परिषद के चुनाव की बात भी हो रही है। उम्मीद थी कि इन चुनावों के बाद जम्मू कश्मीर के ग्रामीण आंचल में लोकतंत्र मजबूत होगा और गांव विकास की राह पकड़ेंगे। लेकिन ग्रामीण विकास की गति पंचायतों के खातों से न निकल पाने वाली धनराशि ने रोक दी। जम्मू कश्मीर के पंच-सरपंचों का दावा है कि मनरेगा के तहत एक हजार करोड़ रुपये बकाया जारी नहीं हो पा रहे हैं। वहीं पंचायतों के लिए 14वें वित्त आयोग द्वारा मंजूर की गई धनराशि का भी जमीन पर इस्तेमाल नहीं हो पा रहा है। पंचायतों के विकास के लिए केंद्र 6700 करोड़ रुपये जारी करेगा। मगर अभी तक पंचायतों के खातों में एक हजार करोड़ रुपये ही पहुंचा है। इसकी निकासी के लिए अभी व्यवस्था ही नहीं बन पा रही है। केंद्र से अभी 5700 करोड़ रुपये अभी आने बाकी हैं। अगर साग पैसा मिल जाए तो जम्मू कश्मीर की हर पंचायत को करीब डेढ़-डेढ़ करोड़ रुपये मिलेंगे। पैसा नहीं मिल रहा है। विकास नहीं हो पा रहा है। इसके लिए कौन जिम्मेदार

है? आखिर किन कारणों से मनरेगा के बकाया फंसा हुआ है? यह सवाल उठने लाजिमी है। पंच, सरपंच मनरेगा के बकाया और 14वें वित्त आयोग द्वारा मंजूरी धनराशि पाने के लिए प्रदर्शन कर रहे हैं। सीधा प्रभाव गांवों के विकास पर पड़ रहा है। अगर सही में प्रशासन व सरकार जम्मू कश्मीर के विकास के लिए प्रतिबद्ध हैं तो योजना के तहत मंजूर पैसा भी तो जारी किया जाना चाहिए। सरपंचों की शिकायत है कि खातों में पहली बार आई राशि का भुगतान न होने से विकास नहीं कर पा रहे हैं। प्रशासन ने पंचायत में पंचायत सचिव व सरपंच के संयुक्त खाते खोले हैं। इसके लिए डिजीटल हस्ताक्षर का पंजीकरण न हो पाया है, जिस कारण सरपंच पैसे का भुगतान नहीं करवा पा रहे हैं। इससे पंचायत प्रतिनिधि ग्रामीण विकास विभाग के कामकाज से खुश नहीं हैं। प्रशासन और सरकार सही में ग्रामीण विकास को रफ्तार देना चाहते हैं तो कार्यप्रणाली में सुधार करना होगा।

पूरे देश में एक ही दिन सैलरी

मीनाक्षी भटनागर

औपचारिक क्षेत्र, विशेष रूप से श्रमिक वर्ग में श्रमिकों के हित की रक्षा के लिए केंद्र सरकार ‘वन नेशन, वन पे डे’ (एक देश, एक ही वेतन का दिन) प्रणाली शुरू करने की योजना बना रहा है। इस व्यवस्था के तहत हर सेक्टर में सभी वर्ग के कर्मचारियों और मजदूरों को एक दिन सैलरी मिल सकेगी। इससे देश के करीब 50 करोड़ श्रमिकों को इसका फायदा मिलेगा। इससे मासिक वेतन पाने वाले कर्मचारियों को अगले महीने की 7 तारीख तक वेतन मिलेगा, वहीं जो लोग साप्ताहिक आधार पर काम कर रहे हैं उन्हें हप्ते के आखिरी दिन और दैनिक कामगारों को उसी दिन पारिश्रमिक मिलना सुनिश्चित होगा। ‘वन नेशन, वन पे डे’ व्यवस्था के लागू होने से हर सेक्टर में काम कर रहे कर्मचारियों और मजदूरों को एक दिन ही सैलरी मिला करेगी। देश भर में एक दिन सैलरी दिए जाने से नौकरीपेशा वर्ग को काफी राहत मिलेगी। अभी कई क्षेत्रों में वेतन मिलने की लिथि को लेकर अनिश्चितता रहती है। इससे नौकरीपेशा लोगों को कई तरह की परेशानी झेलनी पड़ती है। वे अपने दैनिक जरूरतों को पूरा करने के

देश भर में एक दिन सैलरी दिए जाने से नौकरीपेशा वर्ग को काफी राहत मिलेगी।अभी अनिश्चितता रहती है

बारे में फैसले लेने से हिचकते हैं। यह आर्थिक असुरक्षा उनके कामकाज पर असर डालती है। इसका भी उनके कामकाज पर असर पड़ता है। जब सैलरी का दिन तय हो जाएगा तो कामकाजी वर्ग के भीतर एक तरह की सुरक्षा की भावना रहेगी। सैलरी को लेकर असमंजस की स्थिति खत्म हो जाएगी। लोग अपने तमाम खर्च को लेकर योजनाएं बना सकेंगे। इससे उन्हें बचत और निवेश करने में भी सहूलियत होगी। हाल में एक रिपोर्ट आई थी जिसके अनुसार अधिकांश लोग ईएमआई चुकाने में देरी इसलिए करते हैं, क्योंकि उन्हें समय पर वेतन नहीं मिलता है।

उम्मीद है कि जब इस संबंध में कानून बन जाएगा तो कंपनियों भी वेतन देने में टालमटोल नहीं कर पाएंगी। एक लोककल्याणकारी राज्य की अवधारण भी कहती है कि नौकरीपेशा

लोगों के वेतन में ज्यादा अंतर नहीं होना चाहिए। हर मजदूर को इतना पैसा जरूर मिलना चाहिए कि वह उससे अपने तथा अपने परिवार के लिए जरूरी सुविधाएं आसानी से जुटा सके। हालांकि यह सही है कि सरकार यूनिफॉर्म मिनिमम वेज प्रोग्राम को लागू करने की दिशा में भी काम कर रही है, ताकि मजदूरों की जिंदगी में सुधार हो सके।

इसके अलावा कामकाजी वर्ग को दूसरी कई सुविधाएं देने के लिए सरकार व्यावसायिक सुरक्षा, हेल्थ एंड वर्किंग कंडीशन कोड, कोड ऑन वेजेज को लागू करने आ रहा है। संसद से कोड ऑन वेजेज को पहले ही स्वीकृति मिल चुकी है और अब इसकी लागू करने पर काम चल रहा है। हेल्थ एंड वर्किंग कंडीशन कोड भी 13 श्रम कानूनों को मिलाकर तैयार किया जा रहा है। इसके अलावा इसमें कई और प्रावधान भी जोड़े गए हैं। जैसे कि हर कर्मचारी को नियुक्ति पत्र, हर साल मुफ्त हेल्थ जांच जैसी सुविधाएं देने की बातें इसमें शामिल की गई हैं। कुल मिलाकर कहा जा सकता है कि इन बदलावों से देश के सामाजिक-आर्थिक हालात में अहम सुधार देखने को मिलेगा।

(लेखिका स्वतंत्र टिप्पणीकार हैं)



हृदयनारायण दीक्षित

आंदोलन राज और समाज को दिशा दे सकते हैं, लेकिन अराजकता आंदोलन को प्रभाव शून्य कर देती है

आंदोलन गैर जिम्मेदार राजनीतिक कर्मकांड नहीं हो सकते, क्योंकि वे तो जीवंत जनतंत्र की प्राण ऊर्जा होते हैं। आंदोलनकारी अपने विचार के पक्ष में लोकमत का परिष्कार और संस्कार करते हैं। ध्व्यनिष्ठ आंदोलनकारी संविधान और विधि व्यवस्था को तोड़ने का काम नहीं करते। बीते कई दिनों में आंदोलन के नाम पर देश के विभिन्न हिस्सों में अरबों रुपये की संपदा आगजनी और तोड़फोड़ में स्वाह कर दी गई। अकेले रेलवे को करीब 90 करोड़ रुपये की क्षति हुई। हिंसक विरोध प्रदर्शन के कारण 20 से अधिक लोग मारे गए और एक बड़ी संख्या में पुलिसकर्मी घायल हुए। इस हिंसा में तमाम सरकारी-गैर सरकारी वाहन भी फूँके गए और वह भी तब जब कई जगह सड़कों पर उतरे लोग गांधी, आंबेडकर आदि के पोस्टर भी लिए हुए थे। माक्सवादी चिंतक डॉ. रामविलास शर्मा ने ठीक लिखा है, ‘गांधी, आंबेडकर, लोहिया वर्तमान भारत के राजनीतिक और सांस्कृतिक आंदोलनों के लिए प्रार्सर्गिक हैं। जो समाज व्यवस्था से असंतुष्ट हैं, उन्हें तीनों का अध्ययन करना चाहिए।’ भारत के स्वाधीनता आंदोलन से दो उपलब्धियां हासिल हुईं। इसमें स्वाधीनता पहली उपलब्धि है। दूसरी उपलब्धि यह रही कि इस आंदोलन ने राष्ट्र को समाजवाद, राष्ट्रभक्ति, त्यागपूर्ण राजनीति और अहिंसक जीवन मूल्य दिए। ये आदर्श जीवन मूल्य संजोकर रखे जाने वाले हैं। संविधान में मूल कर्तव्यों में भी कहा गया है कि ‘स्वतंत्रता

के लिए हमारे राष्ट्रीय आंदोलन को प्रेरित करने वाले उच्च आदर्शों को हृदय में संजोए रखें और उनका पालन करें।’ संविधान का अनुच्छेद 51 ए/बी कहता है कि ‘सार्वजनिक संपत्ति की सुरक्षा और हिंसा से दूर रहना’ भी संवैधानिक कर्तव्य है, लेकिन हाल के कई आंदोलनों में ये आदर्श सिरे से गायब दिखे हैं। स्वाधीनता आंदोलन में जब विदेशी सत्ता से भारत का टकसब था तब भी आंदोलन आदर्शों जीवन मूल्यों से प्रतिबद्ध था तो इसीलिए कि यह भाव प्रबल था कि आंदोलन को अपनी मर्यादा बनी रहनी चाहिए।

गांधी जी स्वाधीनता आंदोलन के निर्विवाद नेता थे। आंदोलन की धार तेज करने के लिए उन्हें सरकारी आदेशों की अवज्ञा का विचार आया। गांधी जी ने इसे ‘सविनय अवज्ञा’ आंदोलन कहा। मार्च 1940 में उनसे बार-बार पूछा जा रहे था कि सविनय अवज्ञा आंदोलन कब शुरू करेंगे? गांधी जी ने कांग्रेस कार्यसमिति में कहा, ‘देश अभी सविनय अवज्ञा आंदोलन के लिए तैयार नहीं है। छोटी सी अनुशासनबद्ध कांग्रेस को लेकर मैं विषय से लड़ सकता हूँ, लेकिन कांग्रेस लचर है। सविनय अवज्ञा आंदोलन शुरू किया गया तो ‘अवज्ञा’ ही बचेगी, ‘सविनय’ लुप्त हो जाएगा।’ गांधी जी के आंदोलन आदर्श में ‘सविनय’ महत्वपूर्ण था। अहिंसा और भी महत्वपूर्ण। उन्होंने कहा कि ‘कांग्रेस के भीतर अनुशासनहीनता और हिंसा भरी है। ऐसे में सविनय अवज्ञा आंदोलन का एलान आत्महत्या



अवधेश राजगुप्त

जैसा होगा।’ आंदोलन की हिंसा पर भी गांधी जी के विचार दो टूक थे। संपूर्ण गांधी गाम्य के अनुसार गांधी जी ने कहा, ‘तोड़फोड़ की कवायद और इसमें शामिल सभी बातें, संपत्ति का विनाश अपने आप में हिंसा है।’

स्वतंत्र भारत के तमाम आंदोलनों में स्वाधीनता आंदोलन के राष्ट्रीय मूल्य नहीं दिखे। आंदोलन और अराजकता पर्यायवाची हो रहे हैं। जयप्रकाश नारायण के नेतृत्व में राष्ट्रव्यापी संपूर्ण क्रांति आंदोलन (1975-1977) हुआ था। भ्रष्टाचार के विरुद्ध हुआ यह आंदोलन स्वाधीनता आंदोलन के आदर्शों से ओतप्रोत था। तब हम लोग नारा लगाते थे ‘हमला चाहे जैसा भी हो, हाथ हमारा नहीं उठेगा।’ तब अहिंसा का मूल्य ही आदर्श था। इसी आंदोलन के दौरान आपातकाल की घोषणा हुई। आपातकाल के तहत मौलिक अधिकार भी छिने, लेकिन आंदोलन ऐतिहासिक रूप में सफल रहा। आंदोलनों के सदाबहार नेता डॉ. राममनोहर लोहिया सविनय अवज्ञा को सिविल नाफरमानी कहते थे। उन्होंने व्यक्तिगत सत्याग्रह भी किए। सामाजिक मुद्दों पर उनके आंदोलन प्रगतिशील थे। अंग्रेजी

हटाओ का विषय उनके आंदोलन के मूल में था। उनके आंदोलन का व्यवहार शास्त्र आदर्श था। नारा था कि गलत बात मानेंगे नहीं, मारेंगे भी नहीं। आंदोलन को जनतंत्र की मजबूती का हथियार बनाना ही राष्ट्र का प्रेय श्रेय है। कुछ साल पहले ही अन्ना हजारे के नेतृत्व में भी राष्ट्रव्यापी आंदोलन हुआ। आंदोलन को लेकर प्रतिबद्धता तो थी, लेकिन सार्वजनिक संपदा को क्षति पहुंचाने, पुलिस पर हमला करने, लोगों को भयभीत करने जैसी अराजकता नहीं थी।

आंदोलन राजनीतिक हमला नहीं होते। वे तो सत्ता और समाज का ध्यानाकर्षण होते हैं। मुद्दा आधारित सभी विमर्श आंदोलन हैं। सभा, जुलूस और प्रदर्शन आंदोलन के ही भिन्न रूप हैं। इधर कुछ विषयों पर मोमबत्ती लेकर भी जुलूस निकाले गए हैं। इनमें अतिरिक्त शालीनता रही है। आंदोलन राज और समाज को दिशा दे सकते हैं, लेकिन अराजकता आंदोलन को प्रभाव शून्य कर देती है। शालीन आंदोलनकारी जननायक दिखाई पड़ते हैं, अराजकता उन्हें जनता की नजरों में गिराती है। रूसी चिंतक साहित्यकार टॉल्स्टॉय ने असहमति व्यक्त करने के लिए ‘पैसिव

झारखंड में खुद से हारी भाजपा

झारखंड विधानसभा चुनाव में हार के साथ ही भाजपा के हाथ से एक और राज्य की सत्ता फिसल गई। जहां जीत में कई कमियां छिपी रह जाती हैं वहीं हार की स्थिति में एक-दूसरे पर टीकाकर फोड़ने का सिलसिला शुरू हो जाता है। पराजित मुख्यमंत्री रघुवर दास इसकी अपनी वजहें गिना रहे हैं वहीं जीत के नायक बने झारखंड मुक्ति मोर्चा यानी झामुमो नेता हेमंत सोरेन भाजपा की नीतियों को दोष दे रहे हैं। उन्होंने कहा कि पहले भाजपा ने नोटबंदी के लिए लोगों को लाइन में लगाया और अब एनआरसी के जरिये फिर वही दोहराने की फिस्क में है। वह अपनी जीत के लिए केंद्र सरकार को आड़े हाथ ले रहे हैं। क्या यह माना जा सकता है कि नागरिकता कानून और संभावित एनआरसी के अलावा उस नोटबंदी का भी भाजपा की इस हार में योगदान रहा जिसे अतीत में उसकी कई जीतों का श्रेय दिया गया था? प्रधानमंत्री मोदी और गृहमंत्री अमित शाह ने राष्ट्रीय महत्व के कई मुद्दे विधानसभा चुनाव में प्रखरता से उठाए। इनमें नागरिकता संशोधन कानून, अयोध्या में मंदिर निर्माण, तीन तलाक कानून और अनुच्छेद 370 को खत्म करने जैसे मसले शामिल थे। इन पर यदि आज भी राज्य में सर्वेक्षण करा लिया जाए तो शायद उनके पक्ष में बहुमत मिलेगा। कहने का तात्पर्य यह कि ये मुद्दे चुनाव में थे जरूर, लेकिन केवल यही हार का कारण नहीं बने।

भाजपा की हार की वजहों में सबसे बड़ी वजह यह रही कि उसके समानांतर झामुमो, कांग्रेस और राजद का एक मजबूत गठबंधन बना। इससे भाजपा विरोधी मतों में बिखरव नहीं हुआ। झामुमो ने अपने लिए अधिकांश ग्रामीण और कांग्रेस को शहरी सीटें देकर अच्छा रणनीतिक प्रयोग किया। आजसू से भाजपा का गठबंधन न होने का भी कुछ असर हुआ, किंतु ये सब भी उतने प्रभावी नहीं। झारखंड के जनादेश को समझने के लिए हमें बीते दिनों हरियाणा और महाराष्ट्र के नतीजों पर भी नजर डालनी होगी। हालांकि तीनों राज्यों की राजनीतिक स्थिति और सामाजिक-जातीय समीकरण बिल्कुल अलग हैं, लेकिन भाजपा के लिए कुछ कारक यहाँ एकसमान रहे। जैसे हरियाणा में भाजपा के 16 बागी उम्मीदवार थे जिनमें से छह जीत भी गए और शेष ने भाजपा को हारने में भूमिका अदा की। महाराष्ट्र में भी पार्टी के 50 से अधिक बागी उम्मीदवार चुनावी रण में थे। झारखंड में भी इस बार भाजपा के 50 से अधिक विद्रोही चुनावी मैदान में थे। खुद मुख्यमंत्री के खिलाफ उनकी कैबिनेट में मंत्री रहे



अवधेश कुमार



सरयू राय ताल ठोंक रहे थे। वह जीत भी गए। भाजपा के पूर्व प्रदेश अध्यक्ष भी बागी उम्मीदवार बने। एक उदाहरण देखें: संधाल परमाना में भाजपा और झामुमो के बीच हमेशा कांटे की टक्कर रही है जिसमें भाजपा अच्छा प्रदर्शन करती रही है। यहाँ की 16 सीटों से भाजपा के 11 विद्रोही खड़े थे। इतनी संख्या में कहीं भी विद्रोही खड़े हो जाएं तो फिर पार्टी के लिए बेहतर प्रदर्शन करना मुश्किल है। आखिर इतनी संख्या में विद्रोही क्यों खड़े हुए? पार्टी में इतने व्यापक असंतोष के क्या कारण थे? पांच साल की भाजपा सरकार में किसी बड़ी गड़बड़ी या घोटाले की कोई खबर नहीं आई। स्थानीय लोग बताते रहे कि केंद्र की योजनाएं जमीन तक पहुंची हैं। सड़क, बिजली और पानी की व्यवस्था बेहतर हुई। प्रधानमंत्री आवास योजना के तहत घर बने। किसान सम्मान निधि तो किसानों तक पहुंची ही, प्रदेश सरकार ने भी मदद की। इन सबसे बढ़कर माओवादी हिंसा में व्यापक कमी आई, फिर भी नतीजा प्रतिकूल रहा।

जो लोग आदिवासी और गैर आदिवासी की बात कर रहे या छोटा नागपुर टिनेसी एक्ट को हार की वजह बता रहे वे इन क्षेत्रों में भाजपा को मिले मतों पर गौर करें। यह ठीक है कि धर्मांतरित आदिवासियों का मत एकमुश्त

भाजपा के खिलाफ गया और चर्च की भी भूमिका रही, मगर ये कारक पहले भी रहे हैं। हार के असल कारणों की तलाश करें तो यही सार निकलेगा कि भाजपा स्वयं से हारी है। प्रधानमंत्री मोदी ने 2014 से राज्यों के मुख्यमंत्रियों के रूप में लीक से हटकर प्रयोग किए। इसी कड़ी में महाराष्ट्र में गैर मराठा देवेंद्र फडणवीस, हरियाणा में गैर जाट मनोहरलाल और झारखंड में गैर आदिवासी रघुवर दास को मुख्यमंत्री बनाया। लगता है कि इस प्रयोग की भी पार्टी को कुछ कीमत चुकानी पड़ी। रघुवर दास को लेकर आंतरिक असंतोष की खबरें भी गाह-बगाहे आती रही। यह शिकायत भाजपा शासित दूसरे राज्यों के भी आम देखा गई है कि राज्य ईकाई में सिरफुटीव्वल के बावजूद नेता और कार्यकर्ता राष्ट्रीय चुनावों में मोदी हैं मोदी हैं पर एकजुट हो जाते हैं। इससे पहले हरियाणा में भी यही दिखा, जब भाजपा के अधिकांश मंत्री चुनाव हार गए। मंत्रियों के अलावा भाजपा अध्यक्ष तक की दुर्दशा बताती है कि राज्य में नेतृत्व को लेकर किमत चुकना गहरा असंतोष था। कहा जा रहा है कि भाजपा कार्यकर्ताओं का एक बड़ा हिस्सा रघुवर दास के बजाय सरयू राय के पीछे लामबंद था। ऐसे आंतरिक असंतोष को लेकर भाजपा नेतृत्व को गंभीर आत्ममंथन करना होगा, अन्यथा भविष्य में उसके लिए और मुश्किलें बढ़ सकती हैं।

हार के कारणों पर थोड़ी और गहराई से विचार करने पर और कुछ पहलू भी सामने आते हैं। पीएम मोदी ने अपने चुनावों में जातीय एवं क्षेत्रीय कारकों को एक हद तक कमजोर किया है। वह राष्ट्रीयता से जुड़ा माहौल बनाकर स्थानीय अस्मिता को भी राष्ट्रीय धारा की ओर मोड़ने में काफी हद तक सफल हुए, मगर इनका लाभ लोकसभा चुनाव में ही अधिक मिलता दिखा है। ऐसे में भाजपा की हार का एक बड़ा कारण प्रदेश स्तर पर मोदी जैसे नेताओं का अभाव है जो राज्य की मजबूती से कमान संभाल सकें। झारखंड के गैर आदिवासी मुख्यमंत्री के रूप में रघुवर दास का दायित्व था कि वह ऐसा परिेश्र बनाते जिसमें सभी तबकों को लगता कि वह सभी जातियाँ-समुदायों के नेता हैं। इस तरह के लक्ष्य से काम करने वाली सरकार का चरित्र भी थोड़ा भिन्न होता है। ऐसे में सरकार एवं संसदन के बीच पूरी तरह समन्वय भी कायम रहता है और इससे उस असंतोष की चिंगारी भी नहीं भड़कती जो अक्सर सत्ता के ख़्वाब को स्वाह कर देती है।

(लेखक राजनीतिक विश्लेषक एवं वरिष्ठ पत्रकार हैं)

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‘रेंजिस्टेंस’ शब्द इस्तेमाल किया था। गांधी जी को ‘पैसिव रेंजिस्टेंस’ या निष्क्रिय प्रतिरोध की भावना से प्रेम था। गांधी जी ने इसकी जगह पहले अंग्रेजी का सिविल डिसओबिडिएंस शब्द सोचा, लेकिन सबके परामर्श से सत्याग्रह शब्द चुना। गांधी जी से सीखा जा सकता है कि आंदोलन की संरचना के लिए नाम, मर्यादा, अहिंसा और ध्येय की भूमिका महत्वपूर्ण है।

राजव्यवस्था का जन्म और विकास ही अराजकता हटाने के लिए हुआ है। राजव्यवस्था संविधान के बंधन में है। आंदोलनकारी संविधानप्रद अभिव्यक्ति की स्वतंत्रता का अधिकार पाते हैं। लेकिन इस मौलिक अधिकार में भी लोक व्यवस्था के बंधन हैं। सुप्रीम कोर्ट ने इसीलिए दंड प्रक्रिया संहिता की धारा 144 को वैध ठहराया। डॉ. राममनोहर लोहिया ने इस धारा को सुप्रीम कोर्ट में चुनौती दी थी। संप्रति धारा 144 पर हल्ला है। कई जाने-माने लोग यह ज्ञान दे रहे कि धारा 144 तो गैर कानूनी है और उसका लगना आपातकाल की आहत है। यह हास्यास्पद है।

डॉ. बीआर आंबेडकर भी आंदोलनकारी थे। उन्होंने प्रदर्शन आंदोलन के साथ लोकेशन से भी जनजागरण किया। उन्होंने 26 नवंबर, 1949 को संविधान सभा के अंतिम भाषण में कहा था, ‘यदि हमें लोकतंत्र को यथार्थ रूप में बनाए रखना हो तो हम सामाजिक आर्थिक लक्ष्यों की पूर्ति के लिए दृढ़तापूर्वक संवैधानिक रीति अपनाने। अवज्ञा आंदोलन का परित्याग करें। असंवैधानिक रीति अपनाना न्यायसंगत नहीं है। ये नीतियां अराजकता के अतिरिक्त और कुछ नहीं हैं।’ आचार विहीन आंदोलन और अराजकता पर्यायवाची हैं। डॉ. आंबेडकर ने इन्हें अराजकता कहा था। आंदोलनों का कोई आचार शास्त्र तो होना ही चाहिए।

(लेखक उत्तर प्रदेश विधानसभा के अध्यक्ष हैं)

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सुख-दुख

मनुष्य जीवनपर्यंत तमाम दुखों से जूझता रहता है। इन दुखों से मुक्ति पाने एवं सुख की ओर कदम बढ़ाने में मनुष्य तमाम उपाय करता है। इसके बावजूद प्रायः सफलता मिलनी मुश्किल प्रतीत होती है। यह भी एक विडंबना है कि दुखों से पीछा छुड़ाकर कुछ ही लोगों को सुखों की प्राप्ति हो पाती है। साथ ही यह भी तय नहीं कि सुखों की अवधि कितनी लंबी रहेगी और इसके बाद जीवन में दुःख फिर कभी दस्तक ही नहीं देंगे। सुख रूषी मृगमगीचिका की तलाश में अधिकांश लोगों की झोली अतृप्ति, असंतोष, अभाव, असफलता और उनसे उपजे अवसाद से ही भरती होती है। लोग भटकते तो सुख की भी स्वयं ही तलाशने बैठे हैं, परंतु कभी-कभार ही इसमें सफलता मिल पाती है। प्रत्येक व्यक्ति की यही पीड़ा और वेदना है। सुख की तलाश में भटकते लोग वह भूल जाते हैं कि दुःख कहीं बाहर से नहीं आता, बल्कि उसका स्रोत प्रायः हमारे भीतर ही होता है। चाहे हम कितना भी दुखों के कारणों को कहीं बाहर ढूंढना चाहें, लेकिन उनके लिए कहीं न कहीं हम स्वयं जिम्मेदार होते हैं। ऐसे में यदि समस्या स्वजनित है तो उसके समाधान के लिए उपाय भी स्वयं ही तलाशने होंगे। ये समाधान परिस्थितियों को बदलने से नहीं, मन:स्थिति को बदलने से संभव होते हैं। दुखों से मुक्ति पाने के लिए इस दृष्टिकोण को गहराई से आत्मसात करना होगा। हमें समझना होगा कि अपने सत्य उत्पन्न हुई समस्याओं के लिए मैं स्वयं उत्तरदायी हूँ। बाहर जो घटना दिखता है, वह भीतर की छायामार्त है। हमें स्वयं से जुड़ी वास्तविकताओं को समग्रता में स्वीकार करना होगा। सुख हो या दुःख, आनंद हो या विषाद, यश हो या अपयश ऐसे ही तमाम भावों को समझकर उनका सही मर्म आत्मसात करना होगा।

याद रखें कि जीवन में अहम परिवर्तनों को केवल वही मूर्त रूप दे सकते हैं जो स्वयं जिम्मेदारी लेना जानते हों। इसमें दूसरों पर निर्भरता भी कायम होती नहीं हो सकती। यानी अपने जीवन में बदलाव लाना है तो यह किसी अन्य के माध्यम से नहीं, बल्कि अपने प्रयासों से ही संभव है।

आशा शर्मा

दुष्प्रचार है आंतरिक सुरक्षा के लिए समस्या

आंतरिक सुरक्षा के समक्ष नई समस्या शीर्षक आलेख में सी उदयभास्कर ने राष्ट्रीय सुरक्षा की आवश्यकताओं को समझे बिना सरकार को नागरिकता संशोधन कानून तथा राष्ट्रीय नागरिक रजिस्टर के मुद्दों पर घेरने की कोशिश की है। क्या लेखक की पता है कि जहाँ-जहाँ कश्मीर जैसी पथरबाजी उत्तर प्रदेश या दिल्ली में हुई, वह स्वतः स्फूर्त नहीं थी। उनका प्रारंभ बाहर से आए पेशेवर गुंडों ने किया। वे पथर फेंकना और आगजनी कर गायब हो गए। मेरा प्रश्न है कि जबकि सर्वोच्च न्यायालय दोनों मामलों में संवैधानिकता तय करने के प्रश्न को अपने हाथ में ले चुका है, फिर उन्हें सड़कों पर विरोध, और वह भी सार्वजनिक संपत्ति जलाने वाला हिंसक विरोध करने की हसरत क्या है? क्यों नहीं शांत रहकर कोर्ट के निर्णय की प्रतीक्षा करेंगे? रामजन्यभूमि पर क्या यही लोग रामभक्तों को धैर्य से प्रतीक्षा का उपदेश नहीं दे रहे थे? उच्चतम न्यायालय ने जामिया मिलिया की याचिका ठुकराते हुए ठीक ही कहा कि पहले हिंसा बंद की जाए, उसके बाद ही सुनवाई होगी। विरोधी लोग न्यायपालिका को तो सुनें, अनुपालन करें। आश्चर्य की बात है कि लेखक ने भी इस बिंदु का उल्लेख भी नहीं किया है। वह यह बता भी नहीं बताते हैं कि घुसपैठियों को देश में बनाए रखने से उत्पन्न आंतरिक सुरक्षा के खतरे से कैसे निपटा जाएगा?

अजय मिश्रल, मेरठ

सराहनीय फैसला

जब आजादी की लड़ाई लड़ी जा रही थी तो हिंदू, मुस्लिम, सिख, बौद्ध, जैन सभी ने तन, मन, धन से अंग्रेजों के खिलाफ लड़ाई लड़ी। तब उन्होंने नहीं सोचा कि यह देश

मेलबाक्स

बंटंगा, वह भी पंथ के आधार पर। सभी ने एक ही सपना देखा था कि हमारा देश आजाद होगा। हमारा अपना शासन होगा। देश तरक्की के पथ पर चलेगा और हमारी संतानें सुखी रहेंगी। इस आंदोलन में उत्तर, दक्षिण, पूर्व, पश्चिम अर्थात् सभी क्षेत्र के लोग शामिल हुए। देश आजाद हुआ व दुर्भाग्य से पंथ के आधार पर पाकिस्तान अलग हुआ। पाकिस्तान मुस्लिम देश बना, जबकि भारत पूर्व की भांति सभी के लिए समान रहा। पंथ के आधार पर पाकिस्तान बनने से वहां के अल्पसंख्यकों पर अत्याचार शुरू हो गए। फलतः हिंदू, सिख, जैन बौद्धों से अधिकारित ने उसी समय पाकिस्तान छोड़ दिया। वैसे लोग जो अशिश्नित थे, ग्रामीण, गरीब पृष्ठभूमि से थे, उन्हें समझ नहीं आया कि क्या हो गया। ऐसे लोग पाकिस्तान में रह गए। इसमें अधिकांश लोग सफाई का कार्य करते वाले थे। इसी वजह से उनको रोका भी गया। बाद में इन पर अत्याचार शुरू हो गया। पंथ परिवर्तन करना, पढ़ने लिखने से रोकना, जबरदस्ती सफाई व मजदूरी करवाना आदि अनेक प्रकार के अमानवीय कृत्य इन पर किए गए। क्या उनके पूर्वजों ने आजादी के साथ सुख समृद्धि के सपने नहीं देखे थे? जब पूरी दुनिया मानवाधिकार की चर्चा कर रही हो तो फिर पाकिस्तान, बांग्लादेश व अफगानिस्तान में दूसरे मजहब के लोगों को जलाशय की जिंदगी से उबरने का अधिकार नहीं होना चाहिए क्या? नेहरू-लियाकत समझौता हुआ था कि दोनों देश अपने अल्पसंख्यकों को समानता के आधार पर रखेंगे। हमने खयाल रखा, उन्होंने रखा क्या? फिर वे लोग कहां जायेंगे? सरकार का फैसला सराहनीय है।

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सवाल बेवजह नहीं

उत्तम मामले में अभियुक्त को दी गई सजा ईसाफ की मिसाल बन सकती है। फिर भी हर बार की तरह सवाल करने वाले तो हर नुकड़ पर मिलेंगे जिसकी वजह बेवजह नहीं है। झारखंड में महिला की लाश मिली, सुराग मिले, हत्यारा मिला फिर भी न्याय न मिला। सुदूरतों और गवाहों की बैसाखी पर खड़ा न्याय हत्यारोपी के पक्ष में झुक गया, जबकि निर्भया कांड आज भी कानून की डोर से बंधे तारीखों के झूले में हिकलौते खा रहा है। सात साल में देश के कानून ने अभियुक्तों को विकल्प दर विकल्प दे कर पीड़िता के अभिभावकों को मुकदर के हवाले छोड़ दिया है। अदालतों की सीढियों पर चढ़ते-फिसलते पीड़ित के थके माता-पिता मुजरिमों की कतार में खड़े दिखाते हैं। उम्मीदों के कंटीले रास्ते पर चलना ही ईसाफ की राहटी नहीं हो सकती है। न्यायिक फैसलों में थोड़ी सी भावनाओं की अहमियत मिले तो शायद कुछ शुक्र मिले। सजा के खिलाफ मिलने वाले विकल्पों और राहतों की हद और मियाद तय होना वक्त की मांग है।

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

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नतीजों के संदेश

झारखंड में विधानसभा चुनावों के नतीजे अप्रत्याशित तो नहीं हैं, लेकिन मौजूदा दौर में चल रही राजनीतिक उथल-पुथल के बीच जाहिर है कि इसे एक महत्त्वपूर्ण संदेश के रूप में देखा जाएगा। राज्य में पिछले पांच साल से सत्ता पर काबिज भारतीय जनता पार्टी को करारी शिकस्त का सामना करना पड़ा है और उसे उम्मीद से भी कम सीटें मिलीं। जबकि चुनावों से पहले प्रचार के दौरान भाजपा के लगभग सभी बड़े नेताओं ने राज्य में एक बार फिर पार्टी की सरकार प्रचंड बहुमत के साथ बनने का दावा किया था। लेकिन नतीजे में जो तस्वीर उभरी है, उससे साफ है कि झारखंड के मतदाताओं की आम राय भाजपा की सत्ता के खिलाफ रही। सन 2014 में जहां गठबंधन के भीतर पार्टी को इक्कासी में से अकेले सैंतीस सीटें मिली थीं, वहीं इस बार वह महज पच्चीस सीटों के आसपास सिमट गई। जबकि कांग्रेस, झारखंड मुक्ति मोर्चा और राष्ट्रीय जनता दल के गठबंधन ने आसानी से सरकार बनाने के लिए पर्याप्त बहुमत का आंकड़ा पार कर लिया। लोकसभा चुनावों में भाजपा को जहां इक्क्यावन फीसद वोट मिले थे, वहीं इस चुनाव में वह घट कर तैंतीस फीसद रह गया। सवाल है कि तमाम दावों के बावजूद आखिर ऐसा क्या हुआ कि राज्य में भाजपा की सत्ता को वहां के मतदाताओं ने खारिज कर दिया!

गौरतलब है कि बीते एक साल के दौरान यह पांचवा राज्य है, जहां भाजपा सत्ता से बाहर हो गई। जाहिर है, जिस दौर में भाजपा की ओर से देश भर में एकछत्र राज के दावे किए जा रहे थे, क्षेत्रीय पार्टियों के महत्त्व को कम करके आंका जा रहा था, उसमें उसे मुख्य चुनौती क्षेत्रीय पार्टियों से ही मिलती दिख रही है। महाराष्ट्र में जहां मुख्य रूप से राष्ट्रवादी कांग्रेस पार्टी और शिवसेना के साथ की वजह से उसे सत्ता गंवानी पड़ी, वहीं अब झारखंड में झारखंड मुक्ति मोर्चा के महागठबंधन ने उसके सामने चुनौती पेश की। ऐसा लगता है कि यह केवल सत्ता के लिए राजनीतिक प्रतिद्वंद्विता का मसला नहीं है। पिछले कुछ सालों के दौरान जिस तरह विकास के लिए काम करने का दम भरते हुए भी ऐसे विवादों को मुख्य मुद्दे के रूप में पेश किया गया, जिनका आम जरूरतों से कोई सरोकार नहीं था और जो अप्रत्यक्ष रूप से सहज जीवन को बाधित करते थे, उस पर शायद लोगों ने गौर किया। आखिर रोजगार, घटती आय, अर्थव्यवस्था की बदहाली, छिनती जमीन और शिक्षा आदि सवालों को कब तक परदे के पीछे ढक कर रखा जा सकता था? आर्थिक मंदी के असर से राज्य में बड़ी तादाद में कारखाने बंद हुए और भारी पैमाने पर लोगों का रोजगार छिन गया। सरकारी नौकरियों में बहाली या तो रुक गई थी या फिर बेहद दयनीय अवस्था में चली गई। रोजमर्रा की जरूरतों से जुड़े ऐसे तमाम मुद्दों ने धीरे-धीरे ही सही, आम जनता के बीच जगह बनाई और उसका असर जनमत पर पड़ा और वह सत्ता विरोधी लहर में बदला।

जनतांत्रिक राजनीति की दुनिया में कई बार कुछ सामान्य और सहज घटनाक्रमों का विश्लेषण भी विशेष अर्थों में किया जाता है। झारखंड विधानसभा चुनावों के नतीजों को इसी संदर्भ में देखा जा सकता है। संसद और विधानसभा में सीटों की संख्या के लिहाज से अपेक्षया छोटा माने जाने वाले झारखंड के नतीजे शायद इतने महत्त्वपूर्ण नहीं माने जाते, अगर देश में कुछ खास मसलों पर बड़ी उथल-पुथल नहीं मची होती। लेकिन हाल में नागरिकता संशोधन कानून और राष्ट्रीय नागरिकता रजिस्टर तैयार कराने के सवाल पर उठे राजनीतिक तूफान ने साधारण लोगों तक को आंदोलित किया है, उसमें इन नतीजों को एक खास संदेश के तौर पर देखा जा रहा है।

आग और सवाल

ठीक एक पखवाड़े पहले दिल्ली के अनाजमंडी इलाके में हुए भयानक अग्निकांड की त्रासद यादें अभी शांत भी नहीं पड़ी थीं कि सोमवार तड़के महानगर के किराड़ी इलाके में एक रिहायशी इमारत में लगी आग ने नौ लोगों की ज़िंदगी छीन ली। अनाजमंडी इलाके में हुए अग्निकांड में तैतालीस लोगों मारे गए थे। इस घटना के बाद लगा था कि अब तो सरकार और लोगों दोनों की आंखें खुली होंगी और भविष्य में ऐसे बड़े हादसों से बचाव के लिए इंतजामों पर ध्यान दिया जाएगा। पर किराड़ी का हादसा बता रहा है कि लोगों की जान सस्ती है और जिस हालात में हम रह रहे हैं, उसमें ऐसे हादसों से कोई नहीं बचा सकता। हालांकि दमकल विभाग ने ढाई घंटे में आग पर काबु पा लिया गया, वरना संभव है कि यह अग्निकांड और भी कितनी ज़िंदगियां लील लेता। किराड़ी इलाके में जिस इमारत में आग लगी, उसके भूतल पर कपड़े का गोदाम था और बाकी तीन मंजिलों पर लोग रहते थे। शुरुआती जांच में आग का कारण शॉर्ट सर्किट होना बताया जा रहा है। भले ये बिजली के कारण लगने वाली आग हो, लेकिन सच्चाई यह है कि यह भी अब तक के सारे अग्निकांडों की तरह ही लापरवाही की आग है।

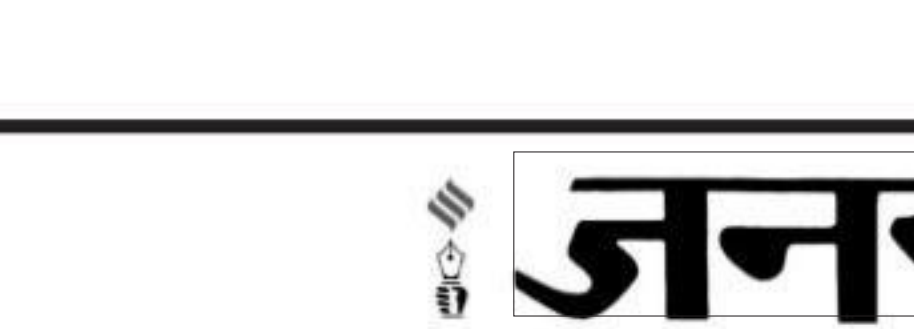
राजधानी दिल्ली में शायद ही कोई महीना ऐसा गुजरता हो जब कहीं किसी इलाके में आग लगने की घटना न होती हो। अग्निकांडों की इन बढ़ती घटनाओं से ऐसा लगता है कि इस समस्या को अब एक सामान्य स्थिति का दर्जा दे दिया गया है और इसीलिए लापरवाही कायम है। आग लग गई, बुझा दी गई, मारे गए लोगों को मुआवजा देकर शांत करा दिया, और फिर सब कुछ पहले की तरह पटरी पर लौट आया। आग में जली इमारतें दोबारा से खड़ा हो जाती हैं, कारोबार पहले की तरह चलने लगते हैं, मारे गए लोग भी जल्द ही भुला दिए जाते हैं, लेकिन सवाल वहीं के वहीं रह जाते हैं, वे लपटों में नहीं झुलस पाते, बल्कि ज्यादा गंभीरता के साथ खड़े होते हैं और जवाब मांगते हैं। पर जवाब दे कौन? आधे से ज्यादा दिल्ली की बसावट ऐसी है कि आग लगने पर मौके पर पहुंचने में दमकलकर्मियों तक के हाथ-पांव फूल जाते हैं। पुरानी दिल्ली तो बसी ही छोटी-छोटी और तंग गलियों में है और यही संकरे इलाके बड़े व्याव्यायिक केंद्रों में तब्दील हो गए हैं। घरों में ही फैक्ट्रियां चल रही हैं, गोदाम बने हुए हैं, लेकिन आग जैसे हादसों से निपटने का कोई सुरक्षा इंतजाम नहीं है। गली, चौराहों पर बिजली के तारों का जंजाल हादसों का सबसे बड़ा कारण है। आखिर ये सब किसे देखना है? लेकिन सरकार को लगता है सरकार ने सबको मरने के लिए छोड़ दिया है। यही कारण है कि कभी जूता और पटाखा फैक्ट्री में आग लगती है तो कभी कागज का गोदाम धधक उठता है।

हर अग्निकांड की जांच में सबसे पहले यही निकल कर आता है कि संकरे और भीड़भाड़ वाले इलाकों में चलने वाले उद्योग जानलेवा बने हुए हैं। ज्यादातर हादसे शॉर्ट सर्किट के कारण हो रहे हैं, खुले और लटके तार चौबीसों घंटे मौत को न्योता देते रहते हैं। पर न बिजली विभाग, उद्योग विभाग को इसकी फिक्र है, न ही उद्योग चलाने वालों को। बार-बार यही सवाल उठता है कि आखिर रिहायशी इलाकों में गोदाम, फैक्ट्रियां आदि चल कैसे रहे हैं? इसमें कोई दो राय नहीं कि सरकारी तंत्र की मिलीभगत से ही रिहायशी इलाके व्यावसायिक गतिविधियों का केंद्र बने हुए हैं। सरकार का निगरानी तंत्र तो है, लेकिन लापरवाह है। यदि ऐसा नहीं है तो स्पष्ट है कि सरकार ऐसे कारोबारियों पर मेहरबान है। इसीलिए दिल्ली आग के ढेर पर बैठी है।

कल्पमेधा

युद्ध एक ऐसा धंधा है, जिसमें मनुष्य सम्मान से नहीं रह सकता।

- मैकियावेली



अरविंद कुमार सिंह



साइबर अपराधियों के बढ़ते होसले की मुख्य वजह यह है कि देश में साइबर अपराधों को रोकने और अपराधियों को दंडित करने के लिए कठोर तथा प्रभावी कानूनों का अभाव है। यह दुर्भाग्यपूर्ण है कि देश में अभी भी साइबर अपराध गैर जमानती नहीं है। इसके लिए अधिकतम सजा तीन साल है।



देश के इकसठ फीसद कारोबारी और अन्य श्रेणी के संस्थानों का विकास साइबर हमले से बुरी तरह प्रभावित है। इस वजह से इन संस्थानों को भारी आर्थिक नुकसान भी उठाना पड़ रहा है। यह खुलासा एक आइटी विश्लेषक कंपनी ने किया है। यह स्थिति इस बात को रेखांकित करने के लिए पर्याप्त है कि देश के पनच्यान्वे फीसद कारोबारी और संस्थान डिजिटलीकरण की राह पर तो चल दिए हैं, लेकिन साइबर हमले से निपटने के लिए पुख्ता सुरक्षा तंत्र विकसित नहीं कर पाए हैं। आंकड़े बताते हैं कि पिछले दो वर्षों के दौरान छियालीस फीसद संगठनों ने साइबर हमले झेले हैं। बीस फीसद संगठनों ने तो बीते एक वर्ष में कभी भी साइबर हमले से बचने का मूल्यांकन नहीं करवाया। सतर फीसद संगठनों ने साइबर सुरक्षा को लेकर बचाव का रास्ता अख्तियार किया। सिर्फ अठारह फीसद कंपनियों ने ही डिजिटलीकरण के शुरुआती चरण में साइबर सुरक्षा की व्यवस्था की।

साइबर अपराधों के बढ़ते होसले की मुख्य वजह यह है कि देश में साइबर अपराधों को रोकने और अपराधियों को दंडित करने के लिए कठोर तथा प्रभावी कानूनों का अभाव है।

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साइबर अपराधों के बढ़ते होसले की मुख्य वजह यह है कि देश में साइबर अपराधों को रोकने और अपराधियों को दंडित करने के लिए कठोर तथा प्रभावी कानूनों का अभाव है।

रुचि गर्ग

कई विश्वविद्यालयों से शिक्षा प्राप्त करने वाली एक अनुभवी शिक्षिका ने अपनी कक्षा के बच्चों से उनका पसंदीदा रंग पूछा। बच्चों द्वारा बताए गए रंग को उन्होंने सभी बच्चों में समान मात्रा में बांट दिया और उनके प्रयोग से कक्षा को एक रंगोली बनाने को कहा। कक्षा में कुल चालीस बच्चे हैं, जिनमें से बीस बच्चों ने पीला रंग चुना और बाकी सभी बच्चों ने अलग-अलग रंग चुने। मसलन, हरा रंग पांच बच्चों के पास, लाल रंग चार बच्चों के पास। इसी प्रकार अलग-अलग रंग बच्चों ने चुने। पीला रंग पसंद करने वाले बच्चों ने अपनी रंगोली अलग से बनाने की मांग रखी। शिक्षिका के काफी समझाने पर भी जब वे नहीं माने तो शिक्षिका ने पीला रंग पसंद करने वाले बच्चों को समूह अ और अलग-अलग रंग पसंद करने वाले बाकी बच्चों को समूह इ में बांट दिया और उन्हें उनकी रंगोली बनाने के लिए एक घंटे का समय दिया। दोनों समूहों ने अपनी रंगोली बनाना शुरू किया। पीला रंग पसंद करने वाले बच्चों के समूह अ ने खुद को और भी छोटे-छोटे समूह में बांट लिया और चार अलग रंगोलियां बनाईं। उन्हें इस काम में बीस-पच्चीस मिनट लगे।

साइबर अपराधों के बढ़ते होसले की मुख्य वजह यह है कि देश में साइबर अपराधों को रोकने और अपराधियों को दंडित करने के लिए कठोर तथा प्रभावी कानूनों का अभाव है।

मौसम का मिजाज

भारत का राजनीतिक मौसम कैसा भी हो, उसकी चिंता इतनी गहरी नहीं कही जा सकती, जितनी चिंता वैश्विक पर्यावरणीय परिवर्तनो को लेकर की जानी चाहिए। इधर भारत में जहां पिछले डेढ़ दो दशक में पर्यावरणीय परिवर्तनों ने मौसम चक्र को सीधे तौर पर प्रभावित करना शुरू कर दिया है, वहीं विश्व के अन्य प्रमुख हिस्से भी इस पर्यावरणीय दुश्चक्र में घिरेते नजर आने लगे हैं। नवंबर, दिसंबर और जनवरी- ये तीन महीने निर्विवाद रूप से शीतकालीन मौसम के लिए पहचाने जाते हैं। इनमें से भी दिसंबर मध्य से लेकर जनवरी माह के प्रथम सप्ताह तक का दौर तीखी और चुभोने वाली ठंड का दौर होता है। विश्व के कई भागों में इस दौरान हाइ कंपा देने वाली ठंड पड़ती है। बर्फ और तेज ठंड के लिए रूस विशेष रूप से प्रसिद्ध है। दिसंबर मध्य से लेकर अंत तक जिस रूस में सामान्य रूप से पारा माइनस 6 से 7 डिग्री तक चला जाता है। वहां इस वर्ष 18 दिसंबर को 6 डिग्री सेल्सियस तापमान होना चौंकारने वाला और कुछ अर्थों में चेतावनी देता लगता है। ये सारे परिवर्तन पर्यावरणीय असंतुलन के परिणाम ही हैं, जिन्हें मानव द्वारा ही महज कुछ एक दशक में तैयार किया गया है।

अपने यहां भारत में भी सारे ही मौसम करीब एक से सवा माह के अंतराल से आगे बढ़ चुके हैं। ऐसा पिछले कुछ वर्षों के मौसम चक्र से स्पष्ट मालूम होता है। यह मौसम परिवर्तन असमान रूप से असामान्य परिणाम के साथ नजर आए हैं। इनमें सूखा और अतिवृष्टि, दोनों ही के परिणाम से भारत रूबरू हुआ है। पर्यावरणीय असंतुलन या कहे बिगड़े मौसम चक्रों का क्रम कैसे फिर से सही क्रम में आएगा? संभवतः यह पर्यावरणविदों, मौसम वैज्ञानिकों के लिए भी अबूझ पहेली ही होगा।

बहरहाल, लगातार बिगड़ते मौसम चक्र देश और



साइबर अपराध रोकने की चुनौती



राष्ट्रीय अपराध रिकार्ड ब्यूरो (एनसीआरबी) के आंकड़ों पर गौर करें तो देश में साइबर अपराध बीते दो वर्ष में दोगुना हो चुका है। वर्ष 2015 में साइबर अपराध के 11592 मामले दर्ज हुए थे, जबकि 2017 में यह संख्या 21796 पहुंच चुकी है। यानी तकरीबन अट्ठासी फीसद की वृद्धि हुई है। इनमें बड़ी संख्या संस्थानों और संगठनों पर हुए साइबर हमलों, वेबसाइट हैकिंग और अवैध लेन-देन की है। भारतीय प्रतिभूति एवं विनिमय बोर्ड (सेबी) साइबर हमले को नाकाम करने के लिए मौजूदा फ्रेमवर्क को मजबूत बनाने और साइबर सुरक्षा को अभेद्य बनाने की दीर्घकालीन रणनीति तैयार करने की बात कह चुका है। लेकिन साइबर हमले कम होने के बजाय बढ़े रहे हैं। इससे संस्थानों, संगठनों व विशेषकर बैंकों को लेकर लोगों में नाराजगी बढ़ी है। पिछले साल अमेरिकी कंपनी एफआइएस द्वारा वैश्विक स्तर पर किए गए एक सर्वेक्षण में पाया गया कि देश के अठारह से छत्तीस वर्ष के आयु वर्ग के युवा उपभोक्ता बैंकों की कार्यप्रणाली से नाखुश हैं। उसका कारण यह है कि भारतीय बैंक अपने ग्राहकों की अपेक्षाओं की कसौटी पर खरे नहीं उतर रहे हैं। इसमें कोई दो राय नहीं कि बैंकों के समक्ष कई तरह की चुनौतियां हैं, जिनमें एक सबसे बड़ी चुनौती साइबर अपराध रोकने की है। लेकिन बैंक इसमें नाकाम रहे हैं। सरकार के आंकड़े बता रहे हैं कि पिछले तीन वित्त वर्ष में बैंकों से जुड़े साइबर अपराध के 43204 मामले सामने आए हैं जिसमें अपराधियों ने 232.32 करोड़ रुपए का चूना लगाया है। वित्त वर्ष 2014-15 में डेबिट कार्ड, क्रेडिट कार्ड और इंटरनेट बैंकिंग से जुड़े साइबर अपराध के 13,083 मामले सामने आए जिनमें 80.64 करोड़ रुपए की चपत लगी। इसी तरह वित्त वर्ष 2015-16 में मामलों की संख्या बढ़ कर 16,468 तक पहुंच गई। पिछले वित्त वर्ष में कुल 13,653 मामले सामने आए जिनमें 72.68 करोड़ रुपए की चपत लगी।

साइबर अपराधियों के निशाने पर सबसे ज्यादा क्रेडिट कार्ड रहे हैं। एक अध्ययन के मुताबिक देश में आइटी एक्ट के तहत पंजीकृत साइबर अपराधों के मामले में 2011 से अब तक तकरीबन तीन सौ फीसद तक की वृद्धि हो चुकी है। इस अध्ययन में कहा गया है कि अगर साइबर अपराध पर नियंत्रण नहीं पाया गया तो साइबर हमलावर न्यूक्लियर प्लांट, रेलवे, परिवहन और अस्पतालों जैसी महत्त्वपूर्ण जगहों पर हमले कर सकते हैं जिससे कई गंभीर समस्याएं खड़ी हो सकती है और जनजीवन व सारे काम ठप पड़ सकते हैं। कुछ साल पहले भारत सहित दुनिया के ज्यादातर देशों में हैकरों ने साइबर हमला बोल कई देशों की सरकारों की नौद उड़ा दी थी।

पिछले एक दशक में भारत में साइबर अपराध अट्ठासी गुना बढ़े हैं। साइबर अपराधों के मामले में गिरफ्तारी में भी दस गुना बढ़ोत्तरी हुई है। साइबर अपराध के मामले में अमेरिका और चीन के बाद भारत तीसरे नंबर पर है। आज भारत की बड़ी आबादी डिजिटल जिंदगी जी रही है। अधिकांश लोग बैंक खाते से लेकर निजी गोपनीय जानकारी तक कंप्यूटर और मोबाइल फोन में रखने लगे हैं। इंटरनेट उपयोग करने के मामले में दुनिया तेजी से आगे बढ़ रही है। इंटरनेट पर जिस तेजी से निर्भरता बढ़ी है, उतने ही ज्यादा खतरे भी बढ़े हैं। यही वजह है कि हैकिंग की वारदातें भी तेजी से बढ़ रही हैं। भारत की ही बात करें तो यहां ऐसी अनेक देशी-विदेशी कंपनियां हैं जो इंटरनेट आधारित

साइबर अपराधों के बढ़ते होसले की मुख्य वजह यह है कि देश में साइबर अपराधों को रोकने और अपराधियों को दंडित करने के लिए कठोर तथा प्रभावी कानूनों का अभाव है।

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इंद्रधनुषी सौंदर्य

दूसरी ओर, बाकी सभी रंगों वाले समूह इ के बच्चों ने शुरुआत के बीस-पच्चीस मिनट केवल चर्चा में ही लगा दिए कि किस रंग का कहां और कितनी मात्रा में प्रयोग किया जा सकता है। इसके बाद उन्होंने रंगोली का एक खाका तैयार किया और उसमें रंग भरना शुरू कर दिया। एक घंटा पूरा हो गया, लेकिन अभी उनका काम पूरा नहीं हुआ था। शिक्षिका ने एक घंटे के बाद दोनों समूहों को कार्य रोकने को कहा और बारी-बारी से उनसे चर्चा करने लगी। शिक्षिका ने समूह अ द्वारा बनाई गई चार रंगोलियां देखी और उनका अनुभव जानना चाहा। इस समूह के अधिकतर बच्चे समय से पहले कार्य पूरा कर लेने और चार रंगोलियां बनाने पर काफी खुशी जाहिर कर रहे थे। हालांकि इसी समूह के कुछ बच्चों को रंगों की कमी का एहसास भी था। फिर शिक्षिका ने समूह इ से उनके अनुभव पूछे। समूह के अधिकतर बच्चों को पीला रंग न होने की कमी महसूस हुई, क्योंकि अगर पीला रंग होता तो उनकी रंगोली और अच्छी बनती।

फिर शिक्षिका ने दोनों समूहों को एक दूसरे की रंगोली देखने को कहा। जब समूह अ ने समूह इ की रंग-बिरंगी रंगोली देखी तो उनकी आंखें चमक गईं, क्योंकि वह रंगोली अपना संदेश ज्यादा बेहतर और स्पष्ट तरीके से दे पा रही थी। दूसरी तरफ समूह अ द्वारा बनाई गई रंगोलियां भले ही चार थीं, मगर अलग-अलग टुकड़ों में थीं। सामूहिक रूप से उनके द्वारा किए गए कार्य का कोई अर्थ समझ नहीं आ रहा था। शिक्षिका ने इसके बाद बच्चों को अगले सप्ताह स्कूल में होने वाली रंगोली प्रतियोगिता के बारे में बताया, जिसमें हर कक्षा को अपनी एक रंगोली बनानी होगी। शिक्षिका ने बच्चों से कहा कि हमारी कक्षा से भी एक ही रंगोली जाएगी और यह आपको चुनना है कि वह कौन-सी रंगोली होगी। आप उसका अनुभव जानना चाहा। इस समूह के अधिकतर बच्चे समय से पहले कार्य पूरा कर लेने और चार रंगोलियां बनाने पर काफी खुशी जाहिर कर रहे थे। हालांकि इसी समूह के कुछ बच्चों को रंगों की कमी का एहसास भी था। फिर शिक्षिका ने समूह इ से उनके अनुभव पूछे। समूह के अधिकतर बच्चों को पीला रंग न होने की कमी महसूस हुई, क्योंकि अगर पीला रंग होता तो उनकी रंगोली और अच्छी बनती।

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दुनिया की अर्थव्यवस्था को भी प्रभावित कर सकते हैं। इस आशंका को भी निर्मूल नहीं कहा जा सकता। विगत एक दशक में मौसम चक्रों में आ रहे असामान्य परिवर्तन हम सबके लिए खतरे की घंटी ही है। जिसे सुन कर समय पर संभलना और उससे बचाव के उपाय धरातल पर धारण करना हमारे और भावी पीढ़ियों के लिए बेहद जरूरी और वर्तमान समय की सबसे जरूरी मांग नजर आता है।
● *अंबरीश भावसार, झाबुआ, मप्र*

संदेह की दीवार

देश में नागरिकता संशोधन विधेयक के लोकसभा

साइबर अपराधों के बढ़ते होसले की मुख्य वजह यह है कि देश में साइबर अपराधों को रोकने और अपराधियों को दंडित करने के लिए कठोर तथा प्रभावी कानूनों का अभाव है।

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

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और राज्यसभा से पास होने के बाद हर जगह इसका व्यापक विरोध हो रहा है। कारण केवल पाकिस्तान, अफगानिस्तान और बांग्लादेश से आए उन अल्पसंख्यकों को नागरिकता देना है, जो प्रताड़ित होकर यहां आए हैं। इसमें मुसलमान शामिल नहीं किए गए हैं। ऐसे में सवाल ये है कि क्या मुसलिम समुदाय के प्रति यह किस्म तरह का बर्ताव है? विरोध इसका नहीं कि तीन देशों के अल्पसंख्यकों को नागरिकता दी जा रही है, बल्कि इसका है कि उन्हीं स्थितियों में आए मुसलमानों को नागरिकता क्यों नहीं? क्या वे लोग उन देशों में सत्ताएं नहीं गए? फिर वे अपना देश छोड़ कर क्यों आए?

सवाल है कि प्रताड़ना या फिर सताने की परिभाषा क्या एक ही है? आखिर ऐसा क्यों हुआ कि पहले जो यह विरोध केवल पूर्वी भारत में सीमित था, लेकिन धीरे-

सकते हैं। कुछ साल पहले भारत सहित दुनिया के ज्यादातर देशों में हैकरों ने साइबर हमला बोल कई देशों की सरकारों की नौद उड़ा दी थी।

पिछले एक दशक में भारत में साइबर अपराध अट्ठासी गुना बढ़े हैं। साइबर अपराधों के मामले में गिरफ्तारी में भी दस गुना बढ़ोत्तरी हुई है। साइबर अपराध के मामले में अमेरिका और चीन के बाद भारत तीसरे नंबर पर है। आज भारत की बड़ी आबादी डिजिटल जिंदगी जी रही है। अधिकांश लोग बैंक खाते से लेकर निजी गोपनीय जानकारी तक कंप्यूटर और मोबाइल फोन में रखने लगे हैं। इंटरनेट उपयोग करने के मामले में दुनिया तेजी से आगे बढ़ रही है। इंटरनेट पर जिस तेजी से निर्भरता बढ़ी है, उतने ही ज्यादा खतरे भी बढ़े हैं। यही वजह है कि हैकिंग की वारदातें भी तेजी से बढ़ रही हैं। भारत की ही बात करें तो यहां ऐसी अनेक देशी-विदेशी कंपनियां हैं जो इंटरनेट आधारित

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