

# Year of gig workers

India Inc must have robust on–boarding systems in place



HUMAN FACTOR  
SHYAMAL MAJUMDAR

It’s widely known as the “Uberification” of work. And various studies and surveys suggest that as much as 60 per cent of millennials are interested to work as gig workers who are more keen on flexibility and a better work-life balance. The changing business models of many companies also suggest that a growing num-

ber of people will be hired on an as-needed basis. So it is certain that the buzz around the gig economy is set to grow louder in the new year. But companies will be wrong to assume that only drivers or delivery boys or hotel roles such as bar staff will be part of the gig economy. Technology work such as software testing or web design, or legal work and auditing activities have already become part of the new ecosystem and will gain traction. The new year could also see more specialised jobs coming in as organisations choose to hire contingent workers to fill a skill requirement that is not typically available in the permanent workforce. So how are companies gearing up for this new environment? Are employers ready to handle the challenges of the inevitable shift in labour models? ‘Very few’ would be the answer to both the questions. This is surprising as most companies and their HR professionals

already know (unless they have cut themselves off from the real world) that a significant portion of their workforce would soon be made up of contractors and temporary workers, and that the gig economy presents advantages to both employers (cost savings) and employees (flexibility and freedom). According to a PwC report, *The future of work*, only about half the companies provide training to casual workers and a mere third offer them performance appraisals. And despite worries over such workers’ lack of engagement, less than half the employers bothered to include them in internal communications or considered them for recognition awards. That’s probably because most companies are not confident about the commitment levels and quality delivered by the outsiders. Also, they are not sure about how and from where to source this talent. After all, many of the talented independent professionals

often have client waitlists, spanning over several months. So the idea should be to build a gig-friendly branding so that such people want to work with you. There is economic logic, too. Gallup’s data finds that 21 per cent higher profitability comes from selecting the top 20 per cent of candidates based on a scientific assessment, and temporary talent is as important to the work as full-time talent. One of the problem is that most companies are still stuck in fixed yearly or annual performance reviews. But with people coming in for shorter-term opportunities, annual reviews may no longer be relevant, and the need is to move to more outcome-based objectives associated with specific tasks or deliverables. The feedback has to be fast as even temporary workers, especially those with higher skills, want to know whether their work has been to the satisfaction of their clients. So the leadership culture must shift to more collaboration and partnership. The other aspect is to address the concerns of full-time workers who should not feel threatened by the induction of freelance professionals. The immediate response from the full-time

employee would be resistance. So the need is to educate existing employees about the transformation — that the outsider is not coming in to replace him. This is important as in a blended workforce, there could be teams of permanent and freelance workers in different places working on the same projects. To ensure that they work seamlessly, there must be systems to ensure that each worker is connected to each other, with visibility of work documents and timelines. While full cultural integration between the two types of staffers may prove too idyllic at times to be credible, efforts have to be made to engage them as much as possible. The short point is that 2020 could be the year of the gig workers. For companies, it makes ample sense to adopt the new staffing module, as according to Mercer, the gig model offers more flexibility, reduced fixed costs, and the capacity to react much faster to market changes. It is also an opportunity to tap into a new international talent pool and access expertise on demand. Tomorrow’s winners would be companies who would have a robust on-board-ing system in place for gig workers.

## CHINESE WHISPERS

**Kalyan Singh missing from meet**  
Kalyan Singh was missing at the high-profile gathering in the midst of which Prime Minister Narendra Modi unveiled a 25-foot bronze statue of former prime minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee in Lucknow on December 25, the latter’s birth anniversary. A special CBI court in Lucknow has framed charges against Singh, former Uttar Pradesh chief minister, in the 1992 Babri Masjid demolition case. Singh, who was earlier exempted from facing trial in the case due to the Constitutional immunity he enjoyed as governor of Rajasthan, was summoned by the court after his tenure expired recently. Singh’s grandson and UP Minister of State Sandeep Singh was also not there at the event.

**Parallel march**  
A senior faculty member of Presidency University led a protest rally against the Citizenship (Amendment) Act, 2019, and the National Register of Citizens (NRC) in Kolkata, a video of which has gone viral on social media. The video shows Pradip Basu, dean of humanities and social sciences, raising slogans like “Burn the copy of NRC”, “Burn the copy of CAA”, and “Dump the Fascist regime”, to the cheers of the students rallying behind him. Basu said on Thursday the 4–km march from the Presidency University campus in College Street to Shyambazaar on December 24 was spontaneous and no flags of political parties or of student unions were raised in it. “I felt the need to protest and when the students approached me, I immediately agreed,” he said. An official of the varsity said the institute would not comment on the decision of an individual to join a protest march. “We have always stood for democratic traditions,” he said.

**Gearing up for B day**  
The Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) has started its internal consultations on Budget 2020. The party plans to reach out to all stakeholders and give its feedback to the Narendra Modi government and Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman (pictured). General Secretary (organisation) BL Santhosh is leading the exercise. “Any feedback and suggestion that helps the party and the government to increase its connect with the ground realities are welcome,” party’s spokesperson on economic affairs Gopal Agarwal said. The consultations started on December 19 and will continue till January 14. The plan is to hold 11 sectoral dialogues. The reports from these consultations after deliberation with BJP national working president J P Nadda would be forwarded to the government.

# State battles no indicator of national politics

It would be wrong to assume Modi government can be defeated after BJP’s performance in Jharkhand



YOGENDRA YADAV

There are two ways of misreading Jharkhand elections. The first mistake was made by the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) before the election: The assumption that the 2019 Lok Sabha victory would automatically translate into a triumph in assembly elections. This led to hubris, loss of allies and loss of elections for the BJP. The second mistake is the one that the non-BJP parties are likely to make post the election results: The assumption that the BJP’s loss in assembly elections will build up to the BJP’s eventual defeat in the next Lok Sabha election. This assumption leads to complacency, and can be fatal for the Opposition. It was natural for the BJP to make the assumption that it did after its spectacular success in the Lok Sabha elections, where it won 303 seats. After all, the BJP led in 63 out of 81 assembly constituencies in Jharkhand. In terms of vote share, it was head and shoulders ahead of any opposition party. Previously a victory of this scale in the Lok Sabha election would have ren-

dered the assembly election that followed within six months a foregone conclusion. This is exactly what happened after Narendra Modi’s first victory in 2014. But something has clearly changed. It began with the Odisha assembly elections held along with the parliamentary elections itself. While the BJP won eight out of 21 seats in the Lok Sabha, Naveen Patnaik’s Biju Janata Dal had a comfortable majority in the simultaneous assembly elections (113 out of 147 seats). But it looked like an aberration. Maharashtra and Haryana assembly elections established it as a trend. In both the states, the BJP’s seats and votes plummeted between the Lok Sabha and Vidhan Sabha elections. The result of the Jharkhand election puts a seal of confirmation on this new pattern. In retrospect, one can see that the assembly elections held in Gujarat and Karnataka and later in Telangana, Rajasthan, Madhya Pradesh and Chhattisgarh also fit into the same pattern. Although the BJP’s loss in terms of votes is not substantial when compared to the last assembly elections, the drop between Lok Sabha and assembly elections is breathtaking. Clearly, not only did the Modi magic not work, attempts to distract the voters through remote national issues like Kashmir or Ram Janambhoomi or NRC-CAA failed as well. The BJP will have to come to terms with a harsh reality: Whenever its state governments are put to test, they fare very badly. The BJP would need to think afresh about its incumbency in Uttar Pradesh, and in taking on formidable opponents in Delhi and West Bengal.



RISE OF THE PHOENIX Jharkhand Mukti Morcha Chief Hemant Soren addressing a gathering after his win in the Jharkhand assembly election

The immediate reaction to the Jharkhand verdict indicated that the anti-BJP parties could fall for the opposite error. Many opposition leaders and commentators seemed to assume that this was the beginning of the end of the Modi regime. Many leaders claimed that the verdict was the people’s reaction to this government’s economic policies, its communal agenda or even the National Register of Citizens. Nothing could be further from the truth. It is fanciful to assume that the voter sitting in a Palamu village was responding to the debate around the

Citizenship (Amendment) Act. As of now, there is little reason to believe that PM Modi’s personal popularity or the acceptance of some of his controversial policies like Kashmir has suffered a serious setback. Such an assumption would be politically suicidal and lull the opposition into political complacency. Political scientists call it “ticket-splitting” and view this as a sign of voters’ sophistication. For the first two decades, Indian voters voted the same way in the Lok Sabha and the assembly elections, irrespective of the level of competition. In the next

two decades, 1970s and 1980s, they voted in the assembly elections as if they were choosing their prime minister. The pattern reversed in the 1990s and 2000s -- the voters cast their vote in the Lok Sabha election as if they were choosing their CM. Now, we seem to have finally arrived in an era where voters look at the specific level and their local choices before deciding who to vote for. In normal times this would be seen as an indication of the Indian voter coming of age. But we live in unusual times. This game of electoral competition is being played out when the institutional edifice of our republic is being taken apart. In this context, any weakening of the regime should bring some relief. But this relief could be illusory. Faced with declining support at the state level, the Modi regime could use the “ticket-splitting” logic to concentrate on retaining support at the Centre. This is likely to be accompanied by greater concentration of powers for the central government and the reduction of state governments to glorified municipalities. Given the rather weak capacity and imagination of regional parties, including those in power, the regime could well succeed in continuous dismantling of the republic even while ceding political space at the state level. In sum: State battles are no substitute for taking on the Modi regime at the level of national politics. *By special arrangement with ThePrint*

The author is the national president of *Swaraj India*. Views are personal

## INSIGHT

# CAA, NRIC and the uncertain climate



ANAMITRA ANURAG DANDA & BAPPADITYA MUKHOPADHYAY

We are going through a crisis over the Citizenship Amendment Act (CAA) and the National Register of Indian Citizens (NRIC). There is a lot of confusion and one fears such confusion might degenerate into chaos, loss of lives and damage to property, besides the loss of productive time that is happening already. Broadly, three groups are protesting: The first is against inclusion of illegal migrants; the second against exclusion; and the third against discriminatory inclusion. Protesters in Assam belong to the first group; they fear they would be saddled with over 12 million primarily Hindu refugees as citizens. The rest-of-India-protests are in two groups. One thinks that our Constitution, which espouses secularism, is now compromised because of the CAA and therefore, CAA allows discriminatory inclusion. The third group raises the more serious concern regarding the NRIC. For a country that is notorious about record keeping, this burden of proof on the residents is going to make many Indians, especially the poor, illegal. However, while a non-Muslim will have a high chance of eventually being accepted as an Indian citizen, the same is not true for Muslims without “appropriate documents”. This is the

exclusion argument. However, India needs to be future ready and arguments against migrants have to be stronger than what it is currently. Economic argument against immigration, legal or otherwise, has two parts to it: One, the argument of scarce resources, and the other, competition in the labour market. For an emerging economy where many of the “legitimate citizens” are deprived of basic welfare schemes, the scarce resources will be stretched further if more dependents are added. This was why Aadhaar was emphasised – to prevent leakages. Dealing with refugees necessitates proper use of Aadhaar, the way it was meant to be. The labour market argument seems rather bizarre given that most of the jobs that illegal migrants manage to bag are the informal sector jobs that are not the ideal benchmark of jobs to base critical policy decisions. The next set of arguments is based on voting rights. The accusations regarding “vote bank politics” are particularly severe when it comes to certain states that share international border with Bangladesh. How will CAA and the supposed NRIC solve this? If every person who has a valid voter card is included in the NRIC, then those who are voting now and yet should not have that right, will continue to do so. The only way to address this problem would be to perhaps draw up an entirely new citizenship criteria, not with retrospective effect but with a cut-off on the date of a relevant enactment coming into force. Then the argument of harassment of many Indians, especially the poor and the marginal, irrespective of faith, does not exist. While there is no clarity as to how NRIC will be implemented or funded, the bigger question that goes a-begging is what should be India’s policy towards migrants and refugees. It is pertinent to note that India is not a



UNITED VOICES Broadly, three groups are protesting: The first is against inclusion of illegal migrants; the second against exclusion; and the third against discriminatory inclusion

signatory to the UN Refugee Convention, 1951, and the Protocol of 1967, and that displacement in India and its neighbourhood will, in all likelihood, rise manifold due to extreme coastal water levels (ECWL) exacerbated by global warming. Irrespective of models used to assess global and national population exposures to ECWL, it is estimated that millions of people would be vulnerable by the year 2100, and nearly half as many by mid-century, under high greenhouse gas emissions scenario (RCP 8.5). Even for RCP 4.5, sea levels projected by 2050 are high enough to threaten land, currently home to millions, to a future permanently below the high tide line. Call these migrants or refugees, millions of these are sure to find their way into India given its geographical size and the size of the economy. Lost in this mayhem is the most crucial issue of refugees and illegal immigration. A closer look at the issue suggests that the appropriate policy to handle refugees may not be a simple binary of exclusion versus inclusion. This could also be an opportunity to address the issue of imminent sea-level-rise-induced displacement.

Global warming is causing the sea level to rise and is displacing hundreds of thousands annually in Bangladesh. It is fair to assume that by the middle of the century, many of them will swarm our borders and eventually perhaps enter India. The estimates of “climate refugees” will run into millions. What are we to do then? It is unconceivable that India will absorb a major portion of these refugees irrespective of their religion. Should we not be preparing ourselves to deal with the impending situation collectively with our neighbours and the global community? Rather than the binary of inclusion versus exclusion, we could have thought of a transit status for the illegal migrants. That would have paved a leadership position for us to determine how the world must share the burden of such climate refugees. Sadly, as the current narrative goes back and forth between those pro- and those anti-CAA-NRIC, the opportunity to take leadership on a looming crisis is being lost.

Danda is with Observer Research Foundation, Kolkata; Mukhopadhyay is with Great Lakes Institute of Management, Gurgaon

## LETTERS

### Discuss and debate

The last few weeks have seen major protests against the Citizenship Amendment Act (CAA) across the country. Opinion is divided on the amendment. Whatever the case, the Supreme Court has accepted the pleas challenging the CAA and would pronounce the verdict over its constitutional validity in due course. The ruling dispensation believes that those who are protesting the amendment have fallen prey to a misinformation campaign. Though this is a matter of discussion, it also needs to be accepted here that fishing in troubled waters by political parties is not uncommon. It is important that the legislative process in our country be more transparent. The Parliament should devote more time for discussion and subsequent passing of bills, particularly when the bill is to amend certain provisions of an existing Act. The standing committee should be utilised in finalising a draft Bill after thorough analysis. Reference of all Bills seeking amendment in various Acts to standing committee should be made part of standard procedure. The draft Bill along with recommendations of the committee should be put in the public domain to enable meaningful discussion and to educate all stakeholders about the nuances of the proposed Bill. The government then might bring in the Bills for final discussion and passage in Parliament. The government is free to accept or reject the feedback, but the process would ensure that the common man would come out educated and is less susceptible to influence. **Sanjeev Kumar Singh** Jabalpur

### Work on the suggestions

Your editorial “Reviving economic growth” (December 25) highlights the suggestions from the International Monetary Fund (IMF) for reviving the current abysmal rate of economic growth. Indeed, if we are serious about achieving the \$5 trillion target we have to work on constructive suggestions made by the IMF. The goods and services tax (GST) has the primary objective to bring in all industry and trade into the tax net but political wrangling in the successive council meetings seems to have put this on the back burner while issues raised by different states and business sectors are coming centre stage. It is crucial to concentrate on a strong audit trail so that habitual and ingenious evaders are forced to pay the due taxes. This is a wider national cause and any buoyancy in the collections will benefit both the Centre and the states. That the ease of doing business will improve is another advantage. Of course, trade liberalisation is a long overdue need for supporting growth and employment. Ironically — despite stated policy and many public announcements at the highest level — we seem to be drifting towards protectionism rather than concentrating on measures to liberalise trade and get into more trade agreements and regional cooperation mechanisms. **Krishan Kalra** Gurugram

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## NRC and CAA: Lies, truths and half-truths

Detention centres exist in India, despite the prime minister's claims to the contrary

In January 2018, the National Human Rights Commission (NHRC) sent a mission from Delhi to look at the conditions inside Assam's detention centres. The mission had three men, Mahesh Bhardwaj, Indrajeet Kumar and Harsh Mander. Their terms were to see if due process was followed in Assam in declaring individuals foreigners, what conditions these people were being locked under, what would happen to those whose appeals were rejected and what the role of the foreigners tribunals was.

The mission found that people were being held in jails for several years. Husbands separately from wives "in a twilight zone of legality, without work and recreation, with no contact with their families, and with no prospect of release. In the women's camp, in particular, the women wailed continuously, as though in mourning."

As of September last year, 1,037 people had been locked up in this fashion. Many of them are unaware of the process that brought them there. Children have been born in these camps and remain there. The NHRC mission's report added that because the state did not differentiate between detention centres and jails, they were treated as prisoners but denied the benefits given to criminals under jail rules like parole and waged work. The mission said that for those who cannot prove their citizenship "each day is unchanging in its monotony. Early morning they wake up, stand up for the counting, have breakfast, then lunch and go inside ward after having early dinner at 4pm. For many years, the entire day they do nothing,

because the detention centre doesn't have even television or access to newspaper and library."

It has much more of this sort of thing, and it is so damning that the NHRC did the thing that we expect India's institutions to do in these times: It chose not to publish the report. NHRC Chairman, retired Justice H L Dattu, is a good and pleasant man who gives a patient hearing to all who go before him (I have gone twice), but he is in a sinecure and will not disturb it by getting into the nasty business of human rights.

Anyway, it is puzzling that the prime minister should claim there are no detention centres in India for people declared foreigner.

His exact words at a recent speech in Delhi were: "*Jo Hindustan ki mitti kay mussalmaan hai, jinke purkhe Ma Bharati ki santaan hai... un par nagarika qanoon aur NRC, donon ka koi lena dena nahin hai. Koi desh ke mussalmaan ko na detention centre mein bheja ja raha hai, na Hindustan main koi detention centre hai. Yeh safed jhooth hain, yeh badiraade vaala khel hai, ye naapaak khel hai* (Neither the citizenship law nor the NRC have any implications for the Muslims of India, whose forefathers are sons of Mother India. No one is sending Muslims of this country to detention centres, nor is there any detention centre in India. This is a lie, it is a game with evil intent, an unholy game)."

It is not a lie and this is not a game. The detention centres exist and they are full and they are bringing disrepute to India. They have been covered by publications such as *The Economist* but more continue



AAKAR PATEL

## Can US-China decoupling work?

The US and China have thus achieved a "Phase One" trade agreement: Washington will lower some of the additional tariffs it had previously imposed on Chinese imports and has cancelled the new tariffs it was about to introduce. Beijing, for its part, has agreed to increase its purchases of US agriculture and industrial products, liberalise access to the Chinese market in some sectors, and strengthen intellectual property protection.

The Trump administration will have to wait for a new phase of negotiations to try to achieve its goal of bringing structural reforms in China's economic and trade policies — which might prove to be quite elusive: President Xi Jinping is not more intent today than he was before to alter in any significant way the country's model of state-run capitalism.

So what will be officially signed early January is a ceasefire, which does not mean any respite in the US-China confrontation for strategic and technological prominence. The message from the Trump administration initiatives over the last two years remains one of a policy that can be summarised in three words: "Contain and Decouple", and which is acquiring a worrying momentum.

The latest developments involve the White House proposal that technology sales in the US from countries seen as "foreign adversaries" — read China — would be vetted by the secretary of commerce for security reasons. And Beijing has decided that all government offices and public institutions will have to remove all foreign IT and software equipment and replace them with Chinese domestic within the next three years. While Washington has put various Chinese companies on its "entity list", read trade blacklist, Beijing has set its own list of "unreliable entities" to punish companies — i.e. US companies — considered "harmful" to Chinese interests. And a defence policy bill now awaiting Mr Trump's approval would prohibit using federal funds to purchase buses

and rail cars from Chinese companies — with BYD Motors, a leading maker of electric cars and buses, the clear target of this latest initiative.

Add to that the Trump administration's pressures on US companies to move their activities out of China, the increasing restrictions on Chinese investments in the US, and on US technology transfers, the reduction of US visas for Chinese students, the unrelenting pressure on US allies to ban Huawei from their 5G development projects, and you get some notion of an across the board policy of containment and decoupling.

If this trend continues unabated, there is an increasing risk to see the global economy breaking up into a US-centred economic, business and technology sphere and a China-centred one, with many countries as collateral victims and struggling to avoid an impossible choice between the two camps. Such an outcome would represent a radical reversal of the economic evolution over the last 40 years. It would mean the disruption of almost all supply chains and major negative consequences on technology, financial and products flows, and on an already damaged international trade system. In other words, all the drivers of growth for the global economy are today under threat.

The irony is that this containment and decoupling strategy is not only likely to fail but that — if ever it were to succeed — it would, in fact, harm the US interests and global position. It is likely to fail because it underestimates the extent to which important segments of the US economy are dependent on the supply of Chinese products and services for which there is no substitute in many cases. Creating such substitutes will take time, be costly, and would require either creating dependencies on new external sources or an expansion of the American manufacturing base that is unlikely to happen. It will fail, also, because success of such a strategy would require that the European Union align itself totally to the US contain and decou-



CLAUDE SMADJA

being built around the nation. One is not sure why the prime minister said what he did. Perhaps, he was ignorant of the fact that they exist. Or perhaps he misspoke or misremembered. Whatever the case, he seemed to be softening in the face of dogged resistance on the streets from millions.

But two days later, he again appeared to have hardened. The Cabinet approved the funding of a population register that has been amended to align it to the National Register of Citizens (NRC). And in his next speech, the prime minister spoke darkly of the duties of the protestors. Instead of addressing the fact that over two dozen had been killed by the police — which lied about not having opened fire on them — he asked the protestors to introspect. Why the change again in tone?

Perhaps he received information from the grassroots that this was a good issue worth pushing further and electorally beneficial. Or perhaps he had an epiphany himself about this. The fact is that we are preparing for an industrial scale brutalisation of India's Muslims.

It will interest readers to know that the government of Assam has submitted an affidavit in the Gauhati High Court, which lays bare the manner in which the foreigners tribunals function. They are the work of part-time workers, on two-year contracts, incentivised to declare maximum people foreigners. Those who have a low rate are not given a contract extension. The courts have been complicit in this and because it is deemed a civil process, the scope to appeal the verdict has been narrowed to the point of meaninglessness. It is truly Kafkaesque and indeed that is exactly how *The Economist* described it.

There is a certain casualness with which India is going about doing this and that is astonishing. The prime minister's incorrect statement regarding detention centres and his turnaround indicate this casualness. It is astonishing because we have received a taste of the sort of backlash the NRC will produce on the streets and in universities across the nation. It is an issue that is absolutely black and white and, therefore, easy for people to take a position on.

Internal resistance to the NRC and the CAA from our courts, the NHRC and the various organs of the state, the foreign service, the Indian Administrative Service, the Indian Police Service and ministries and departments has been none and not much should be expected from them. It is on the street that we will see the resistance. Unlike the Babri verdict, the citizen's register touches people individually. Like with divorce and polygamy and temple entry, this is a matter where the individual can demonstrate resistance or indeed martyrdom. Mr Mander has announced that if a religion-based NRC is pursued, he will declare himself a Muslim and go to jail with his countrymen. There will be others like him as we enter 2020 and begin the population register process.

It will not be easy for the government to ram the mass incarceration of Muslims through. One hopes that the prime minister understands this, as he pursues an action that has already brought and will further bring to India a deserved infamy and disrepute.

ple goal. However, despite all the misgivings towards the rise of China's and Beijing policies — and the labelling of China as a "systemic rival" — the Europeans have no intention to cut themselves from China's economic dynamism and the huge potential that its market and resources represent. Getting tougher on Beijing, yes, strengthening European competition capabilities against China, yes, but decoupling, no.

But even if the Trump administration's goal of containment and decoupling were to be achieved, and even if this would slowdown the rise of China in the next few years, the US would end up being the real loser from this policy in the medium and long term. Already the US initiatives have created a number of problems for American companies; and the tightening of export and transfer of technology is leading Beijing to accelerate its drive towards self-sufficiency in critical domains such as semi-conductors, or prominence in the AI domain. While the US has still an edge over China in the overall technology power balance, this edge is eroding in many domains faster than many anticipated. China will keep the advantage of its 1.4 billion population and of its proximity with the Asean, the most economically dynamic region of the world with its 800 million population, more and more closely interconnected with China. The Asean countries will hate having to choose between China and the US. But whatever their suspicion towards Beijing, these countries will have to opt for China if push comes to shove, bringing their own dynamism to the momentum that will continue to drive the Chinese economy and technology.

An anti-China mood has now swept Washington. But frustration and impulses don't make an effective strategy. We hope that some people around President Donald Trump, in the business circles and in Congress realise that; and that this happens sooner rather than later, before the damage to the global economy becomes irreparable.

*The writer is president of Smadja & Smadja, a strategic advisory firm; @ClaudeSmadja*

## Time running out for PSBs

Business is rapidly shifting to private banks

The Indian banking sector is showing signs of a turnaround after many years. The latest "Report on Trend and Progress of Banking in India 2018-19", released this week by the Reserve Bank of India, showed that the overhang of stressed assets has declined and fresh slippage in assets quality got arrested. Consequently, the consolidated balance sheet of scheduled commercial banks expanded at a higher pace for the first time since 2010-11. Further, the financial performance of the banking system improved and public sector banks (PSBs), after a gap of three years, reported profits at the net level in the first half of the current financial year.

But PSBs still have plenty to worry about. Apart from holding the larger share of non-performing assets (NPAs), they are rapidly losing business to banks in the private sector. For instance, during the period under review, private banks attracted 77 per cent of incremental term deposits. The average share of private banks in incremental term deposits improved from 19 per cent during 2011-15 to 81 per cent during 2016-19. Despite accounting for less than a third of the banking assets, private banks contributed 69 per cent to incremental growth in credit in 2018-19. The share of private banks is rising steadily in outstanding credit as well. The reasons for this shift are not very difficult to understand. Banks in the private sector are comparatively efficient and able to garner more funds with better services and attractive deposit rates. However, higher deposit rates are not affecting their margins. Private-sector banks maintain higher net interest margins than what PSBs do. Here's another example that marks the difference. PSBs accounted for over 90 per cent of the amount involved in fraud during the year, "mainly reflecting the lack of adequate internal processes, people and systems to tackle operational risks", noted the central bank in its report.

The trend of the rising share of private banks is likely to continue for a variety of reasons. Higher NPAs will remain a constraint for PSBs and the government is not in a position to indefinitely keep infusing large sums of capital. On the other hand, even though there have been problems in some private banks, they are still better placed. Top management can be swiftly changed, and private banks are in a much better position to raise capital and expand their balance sheets.

However, it is important to note that the shift in favour of private banks will also lead to a fair bit of value destruction in PSBs. At a broader level, inefficiencies in PSBs will also affect the flow of credit into the system and remain a drag on economic growth. Therefore, it is important for the government to introduce governance reforms and enable PSBs to compete with the private sector. In its latest report on India, the International Monetary Fund also highlighted the need for reforms in PSBs. It has rightly noted that in absence of reforms, mergers would not address the underlying issues and could potentially result in larger and weaker banks. Mergers could also divert attention from the core business and affect lending capabilities. Time is running out fast for PSBs and the government (read taxpayers).

Disclosure: Entities controlled by the Kotak family have a significant shareholding in *Business Standard*

## Private mining, finally

Decision to auction coal blocks to commercial miners is overdue

The government will finally open up the coal sector with a large offer of over 200 blocks to commercial miners, and bidding for 40 blocks is likely to begin this financial year. According to the government, the 200 blocks being prepared for sale could produce as much as 400 million tonnes a year; if even a fraction of that is achieved, India's coal import bill would be considerably reduced. It is worth noting that it would not be eliminated, since India has no real reserves of the coking coal needed by its iron and steel plants. But at least the 125 million tonnes of thermal coal that is imported might now be produced at domestic sources. This is a long overdue measure, and it is welcome that the government has finally moved to enable commercial mining of coal. The legal requirements were put in place four years ago, but the obvious follow-up of auctioning the blocks did not take place. As a result, India has been dependent for too long on two different sources of thermal coal — Coal India Ltd, a state monopoly which is plagued by bottlenecks and inefficiency; and captive mining, which has been surrounded by much controversy over the past decade. It is to be hoped that the auction of these coal blocks in tranches will open up the market for thermal coal properly.

The government needs to keep the lessons of the past in mind when it is designing these auctions. Extracting the maximum revenue possible is not necessarily a good idea from the point of view of overall welfare — past coal auctions may have revealed high prices, but also led to a great deal of coal being left in the ground because some blocks were under-exploited. There are other pitfalls of the auction process. For example, the rules of the game should be made amply clear in advance. They should not be changed at a later date, because this undermines the sanctity of the auction process. Renegotiating the terms of the auction after it has been concluded is similarly problematic. It can lead to legal challenges — and, if predicted, can lead to uneconomic bids being made by those players most confident of winning a renegotiation process.

The medium- and long-term dynamics of the coal sector should also play into the expectations and planning of the auction process. At the moment, there is an all-round economic slowdown, which will affect the prices being paid. It should also be clear that thermal power plants in particular are not quite the booming businesses they were a decade ago. Many are in danger of becoming stranded assets, and long-term power purchase agreements are capped at quite a low level, thanks to technological change and market forces. It is also very important to think carefully about how an expansion of thermal coal extraction capability can be financed. There is limited private sector or global capacity available in the sector. Many funders have turned away from it. It would be dangerous for a big new expansion of thermal coal capacity to be funded entirely by the state-owned banking sector, following an unwritten mandate to that effect by New Delhi. This would present the very real danger of future bad debts.

## Toolkit for policy-makers



### BOOK REVIEW

A K BHATTACHARYA

In 1970, when Vijay Kelkar had earned his PhD in economics from the University of California, Berkeley, Ajay Shah was probably in the early stages of his primary school education before he, too, bagged a doctoral degree in economics from another noted university in California in 1990. The age difference of almost two decades between the two well-known economists, however, has made no difference to the quality and impact of their collaboration in economic research in later years.

Indeed, by the end of 2019, the two had completed their collaboration as co-authors of this magisterial book, *In Service of the Republic: The Art and Science of*

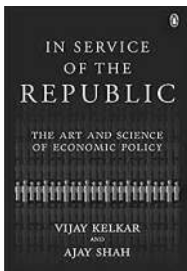
*Economic Policy*, which should go down in history as an authoritative toolkit on the art of policy-making. Rarely have economists from two generations come together to co-author a book that is likely to make a deep impact on the way economic administrators should approach tricky questions on governance.

When should governments intervene to introduce a policy or fix an existing one? What should the state do when there are market failures? How and why market failures take place? And how should policy be guided to address them? These are some of the key questions the book under review addresses. The answers they provide should not come as a surprise to those who have followed the writings of Messrs Kelkar and Shah over the last many years, as also the policy actions they have initiated, either as part of the government or as members of various official committees.

The book was originally supposed to be a monograph, based on the C D Deshmukh Memorial Lecture Mr Kelkar had delivered in January 2017. The lecture

was titled "Reflections on the Art and Science of Policymaking", in which Mr Kelkar had also announced that it was part of an ongoing work with his colleague, Ajay Shah, and that the two were planning to write a monograph on these issues.

What was planned as a monograph two years ago is now a book of over 425 pages. The difference in the title of Mr Kelkar's lecture and that of the book deserves to be noted. The book's title retains the central issue of the lecture, but adds a new dimension. The role of the republic the book dwells on is what makes the policy toolkit relevant and timely. In its entire analysis, the book frowns on the idea of a robust state that is supremely confident of its knowledge of what is good for the people. It argues that a liberal democracy



**IN SERVICE OF THE REPUBLIC: The Art And Science Of Economic Policy**  
**Author:** Vijay Kelkar and Ajay Shah  
**Publisher:** Penguin  
**Price:** ₹699  
**Pages:** 425

what will work for the Indian economy and the people. An excellent section on the roll-out of the Goods and Services Tax regime in the last two years and the implementation of the health policy is an example of how the authors' prescriptions on policy-making can bring about positive outcomes on the ground.

In another section, the authors suggest

that the state's power to use coercion can be a double-edged weapon. There are occasions when such coercion helps governance, if used judiciously and when based on a correct assessment of the nature of the problem. There are also occasions when the use of coercion can lead to sub-optimal and even counter-productive outcomes. The authors, therefore, argue that, ideally, the state should stay away from interfering if it is not required or there are no market failures. Freedom, they say, works pretty well in most situations and if the people, including market participants and economic agents, are left to themselves, the overall outcome is not a cause for concern. Yes, the state must intervene, but under specific circumstances such as in redistribution efforts to address certain kinds of market failures.

This is not a book that should scare non-economists. There are no tables, no complex discussion on econometric models, nor any regression exercise. Reading the book may make you wonder if it is primarily written for those civil servants and even some of our current political leaders who have a short attention span and insist on PowerPoint presentations or short notes that should

have their thoughts summarised in briefpoints.

Most policy-making challenges are analysed after summarising the key issues and the recommendations in brief points. You almost get a sense that the book is a by-product of a PowerPoint presentation. However, the style and structure followed have no adverse consequences for readers. The reading pleasure or accessibility are not a casualty. The added advantage is that the structure of the book will be an invitation to the civil servants and the political leaders — the real target audience of this laudable exercise. The authors' message at the very start of the book should make everyone sit up and take appropriate policy action. Instead of getting drawn into the current political debate on whether the Indian economy can become a \$5-trillion one in 2024, it notes that if India wants to repeat the growth surge witnessed between 1999 and 2011, it needs to fix its policy-making within a finite window of opportunity with a young workforce. "We must get rich before we get old," the authors note with a warning that policy-makers can hardly ignore.

*Ajay Shah is a columnist with Business Standard*



## Govt is responsible for the suspicion over NPR

CAA rules & home ministry reports are clear that NPR is the 1st step towards NRC; so govt denying any link not convincing

IT IS ENTIRELY possible, as the government argued after the Cabinet cleared the proposal to go ahead with the National Population Register (NPR) on Tuesday, that the NPR is the same thing the UPA had started when it was in power, that there was no proof of citizenship being asked for—that is what the National Register of Citizens, NRC, would do—and what the Cabinet had cleared was just the collection of routine data from those normally resident in an area; indeed, no one was going to be forced to give any documents to prove what they told those conducting the NPR census. Since the results of the exercise were, in fact, going to be used for various government welfare schemes, the NPR exercise has been clubbed with the 2021 Census.

If there was an air of suspicion, a belief that NPR was just a precursor to NRC, even after two senior ministers gave strenuous clarifications at the post-Cabinet media briefing, the government has only itself to blame. For one, the Cabinet clearance came even as the countrywide agitation over the Citizenship Amendment Act (CAA)—and its link with the NRC—was going on. So, the argument went that, with the countrywide agitations forcing the government to say that there was no plan to go ahead with the NRC, it decided to go ahead with the NPR, which was nothing but a step towards the NRC; since the prime minister had said there was no discussion on NRC despite the home minister repeatedly saying NRC would follow the CAA, this added to the suspicion over the government’s intent.

And, though the government said, after the Cabinet clearance, that there was no connection whatsoever between NPR and NRC, there is enough evidence to show this isn’t quite correct. Apart from various statements on the connection between the two by various NDA ministers in Parliament over the years, even the rules of the Citizenship Amendment Act of 2003 talk of a ‘population register’ (the NPR) and how citizenship can be struck down during the verification process; the rules talk of the power to ask people to furnish any information in connection with the determination of citizenship, and clearly mention the National Register of Indian Citizens. So do most annual reports of the ministry of home affairs, regardless of whether the UPA or the NDA was in power. The 2014-15 one—NDA era—says that “as a first step towards creation of a National Register of Indian Citizens the government has decided to create a National Population Register”. Even the 2008-09 report—of the UPA era—says “after the NPR is so made ready, it would be possible to create National Register of Indian Citizens (NRIC) independently as a subset of NPR”.

The UPA did not go ahead with the NRIC even as it pushed the NPR, possibly because, as the home ministry’s 2005-06 annual report put it, “verification of the citizenship of each individual... is extremely cumbersome as the document base for proving citizenship is not readily available in the rural areas”. No one can doubt India needs to identify its illegal immigrants, especially since this has important security ramifications, but if the exercise results in genuine citizens in either rural areas or the poor—and less literate—also finding it difficult to prove citizenship, the NDA needs to think very carefully before taking the next step after NPR. And, since the CAA has made it clear that Hindu/Buddhist/Christian/Sikh/Jain illegal immigrants will find it easier to get citizenship, it is only natural that Muslims will be worried about being singled out. Instead of issuing bland denials, and then springing a nasty surprise on the nation, the BJP would be well-advised to come up with solutions to the problem of proving citizenship, or promise that the NRC is not going to be implemented.

## Evaluating GST correctly

Sluggish collections also due to rate cuts and poor GDP

THE OCTOBER GST collections were encouraging, having risen 6% year-on-year (y-o-y) to ₹1.03 lakh crore, albeit on a soft base and in a very festive month; collections in August-September were very weak, and fell 4% y-o-y. On a cash-accounting basis, October GST collections are estimated at just ₹95,000 crore, implying an FY20 run-rate, so far, of around ₹90,100 crore. That, then, pushes up the asking rate for the rest of FY20 to ₹1.4 lakh crore per month. At the current run rate, there could be a shortfall of ₹52,000 crore in CGST + IGST, and ₹1.2 lakh crore in SGST collections.

It is clearly crunch time. Not only is government staring at a shortfall in GST and direct tax collections, the compensation cess deficit in 2019-20 could be, by one estimate, as high as ₹63,200 crore. The monthly run-rate for cess collections—used to ensure state-government revenues continue to rise by 14% a year—is currently around ₹43,300 crore while the required rate is ₹55,900 crore. That is worrying because it means the states may not have enough to spend at a time when they need to. Even otherwise, the slow nominal rate of GDP growth—just 6.1% y-o-y in Q2FY20—would hurt tax buoyancy.

Given this, it is natural to ask for a hike in GST rates and/or a reduction in the exempted goods and services. But, as ex-CEA Arvind Subramanian argues, the poor performance has to be seen in the context of a rapidly slowing economy. For April-October 2019, the total collections—including CGST, IGST, SGST, and compensation cess—were ₹7.02 lakh crore, and grew 3.4% year-on-year. That isn’t so bad given GDP growth has decelerated for six consecutive quarters and the 4.5% in Q2FY20 is a six-year low. Indeed, the government had budgeted for an 11% nominal GDP growth in FY20, but as of now, it would seem the final number will be closer to 6-7%. Keep in mind that corporate taxes grew 0.8% in April-October, and personal income taxes at just 6.7%.

Also, it must be appreciated that the levies themselves have been reduced across almost 500 goods and services; in two-and-a-half years and across 19 meetings, GST rates have been tweaked some three dozen times. The weighted average effective GST rate has fallen from 14.4% in July 2017 to 11.6% in September. So, while the collections seem below expectations, raising rates or cutting exemptions is probably not a good idea when consumption demand is so weak. The rates can always be revisited a year or two down the line, after growth stabilises and starts ticking up. Having one rate may not be politically feasible, but certainly the five slabs can be pared to three first, and maybe to two later.

## MentalBLOCK

India needs more awareness campaigns and better infrastructure to counter mental health disorders

LANCET PSYCHIATRY study finds that, as of 2017, over 197 million—or one in seven—people in India suffered from a mental health disorder, a sharp increase from the 150 million reported in the 2016 National Mental Health Survey. At 4.7% in 2017 the contribution of mental disorders to India’s disease burden, measured in terms of Disability Adjusted Life Years (DALYs) is double the 2.5% in 1990, making mental disorders the second largest contributor (14.5%) to years lived with disability (YLDs). A majority (91 million) suffer from depressive and anxiety disorders. Even more worryingly, the study found a positive association between socio-economic indicators such as per-capita income and mean education and the prevalence of adult-onset depression and anxiety.

Precious little, however, is being done to equip the country’s healthcare infrastructure to cope with this burden. The study finds that there are two mental health professionals and 0.3 psychiatrists for every 100,000 of the population—while the latter number, by some estimates, is 0.75, even that is abysmally short of the global average of four. The revised Mental Health Act, 2017, mandated that mental disorders be covered under health insurance schemes, but only 19 states have formed a board in compliance with the regulations. Moreover, high treatment gap for mental disorders, poor evidence-based treatment, and gender-differentials in treatment remain. Given the impact of mental illness on the quality of life and the high economic cost of an increasing mental health burden—the World Health Organization estimates India’s losses due to mental health conditions between 2012 and 2030 at over \$1 tn—there is a desperate need to spread awareness and strengthen the healthcare infrastructure.

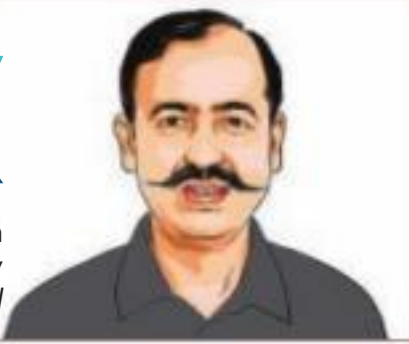
### GOODS AND SERVICES TAX

EFFECTING A REFORM AS BIG AS THE GST REQUIRES ONE TO BE PATIENT. STAKEHOLDERS MUST HAVE A GIVE AND TAKE APPROACH, AND REALISE THAT THERE IS ALWAYS A BETTER WAY OF DOING THINGS

# Compensating for the growth slowdown

SANJEEV NAYYAR

Author is CA & founder esamskriti.com  
Twitter: @NayyarSanjeev  
Views are personal



be funded by a GST compensation cess (GSTCC) levied on certain commodities (e.g., tobacco products, motor vehicles, etc). The intent was to create a GST compensation fund that would fund the estimated revenue loss for the first five years of GST, i.e., July 1, 2017, to June 30, 2022.

How did it work in 2017-18 and 2018-19?

Finance minister Nirmala Sitharaman stated in the Rajya Sabha on December 12, that in 2017-18, the total cess collected was ₹62,596 crore, of which ₹41,146 crore was released to the states. The remaining ₹15,000 crore was accumulated in the cess fund. In the next year, ₹95,081 crore was collected and ₹69,275 crore released to states, but “cess accumulated in the fund was zero”. How the cess accumulation in 2018-19 became zero is not clear.

According to an August 30, 2018, amendment “fifty per cent of such amount, as may be recommended by the Council, which remains unutilised in the Fund, at any point of time in any financial year during the transition period shall be transferred to the Consolidated Fund of India as the share of Centre, and the balance fifty per cent shall be distributed amongst the States.”

The same amendment also provides that in years of the shortfall, 50% of the surplus amounts taken from the GSTCC account by the Centre and states would be returned. For example, if surplus taken in 2018-19 by Centre and states was ₹100 crore each, they would return ₹50 crore to the GSTCC account.

Why should cess surplus in any year not be fully adjusted against subsequent deficits in the GSTCC account?

The states’ GST shortfall was also funded by a special coal cess, renamed as ‘GST compensation cess’. Cess amount is substantial and increases India’s energy costs. It is subsumed under GSTCC and accounted there.

Next, is the issue of 14% revenue protection.

Can the states highlight, on what basis the revenue was calculated in the base year of 2015-16? According to a National Institute of Public Finance and Policy Working Paper by Sachidananda Mukherjee, “In the pre-GST regime it was not possible to separate revenue on account of VAT, CST and entry tax into two baskets—items under GST and out-of-GST items. Second, GST subsumes various taxes and cesses, which were earlier used to be collected by local governments/authorities. In the absence of information on state-wise revenue collection from these taxes and cesses, it will be difficult to estimate the revenue under protection for States”.

Mukherjee’s paper shares state-wise growth rate in VAT, entry tax, and central sales tax (CST) for 2012-2016 and 2015-16.

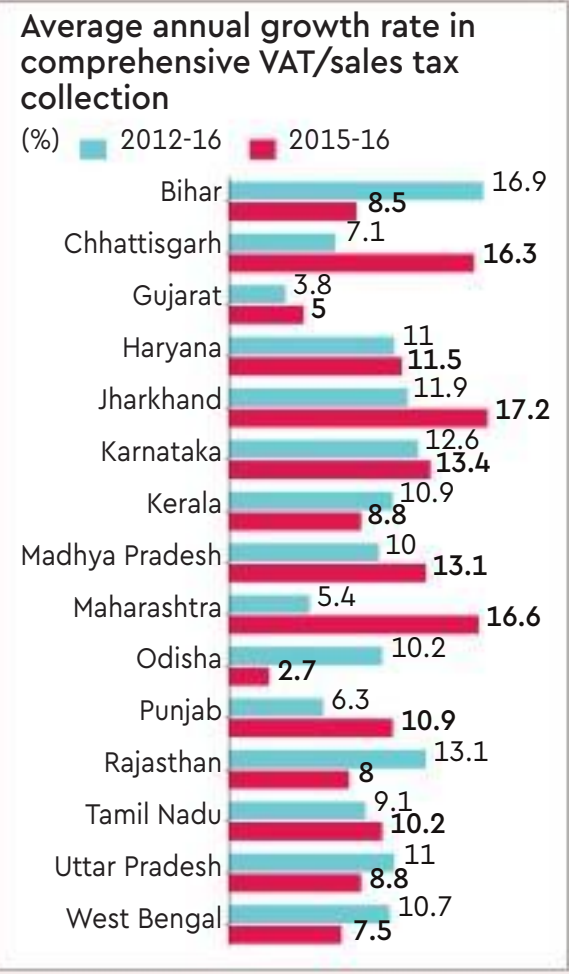
During 2012-2016, Bihar, and in 2015-16, Chhattisgarh, Jharkhand, and Maharashtra had growth rates over 14%. To be fair to states, the above excludes taxes collected by local government and authorities. However, the accompanying graphic indicates a trend.

Can the GST Council be transparent, put numbers in the public domain, so there is an informed and healthy debate?

Another interesting point Mukherjee made is, “The benefits of 14% assured growth in revenue collection under GST will differ across states. States like Gujarat and Punjab have had low rates of growth and the assurance of 14% would imply augmentation of revenue while states like Bihar might not get the same deal”.

So, should the 14% assured increase in revenues be related to the actual growth in state-wise revenues? This becomes an incentive for states to improve tax efficiency.

Next, is the central government bound by law to pay a 14% assured increase to states even if cess collections are inadequate?



## Beyond the compensation mess

States are right in pushing the Centre to pay their dues on a timely basis, but they would also need to look at other measures to increase tax revenue

BIPIN SAPRA

Tax partner, EY  
Views are personal



THE LAST COUPLE of months have seen much debate between the Centre and the states, wherein the states, especially the opposition-ruled ones, have been complaining about the non-release of compensation cess by the Centre. It is crucial to understand what exactly the compensation cess is.

Compensation cess was introduced as a relief for the loss of revenue states would incur due to the implementation of GST. Since the states have given up their powers to collect certain taxes on goods and services, they were guaranteed a 14% tax revenue growth in the first five years after GST implementation. The compensation cess was to be provided to states till July 1, 2022. States’ tax revenue as of FY16 was taken as the base year to calculate this 14% growth. Any shortfall was supposed to be compensated by the Centre, using funds specifically collected as compensation cess.

Under GST law, compensation cess is levied over the 28% GST on luxury cars, and demerit goods like aerated drinks and tobacco. Further, the compensation cess is not payable by exporters and those who have opted for compensation levy. States are required to be compensated bi-monthly from the accumulated funds in this account.

During these past months, there has been a hue and cry by various states—Delhi, Punjab, Kerala, and West Bengal, to name a few—regarding the release of compensation cess for the months beginning August, 2019. In the first year of GST implementation, FY18, the compensation cess collection was ₹62,596

crore, out of which ₹41,146 crore was paid to the states. The remaining value was accumulated. In the subsequent year, collection from compensation cess was ₹95,081 crore, and ₹69,275 crore was released to states.

In the current fiscal, the government has already collected cess of ₹55,467 crore till October 31, 2019, just 1.5% more than what was collected in the same period last year. In fact, just two days before the GST Council meeting on December 18, the Centre had released ₹35,298 crore to the states and union territories. FM Nirmala Sitharaman has assured that the Centre will not back out on its promise of GST compensations. The delays in passing on the money to the states are due to slippage in collections under GST.

Given that the states have a constitutional right to the compensation, they tend to be complacent in trying to collect GST revenue. The states should support the Centre in the implementation of GST to curb tax evasion. This will ensure that the government’s tax revenues—and, therefore, automatically that of the states—go up. For example, the decision, taken in the recent GST council meeting, to block the e-way bill facility on non-filing of two consecutive GSTR-1 returns should definitely go a long way in increasing tax compliance. Similarly, a standard operating procedure, with regard to action to be taken on non-filing of GSTR-3B (monthly tax return), will be issued for tax officers. States need to ensure that state tax officers implement such measures diligently, so that the tax

revenue collections of both the central and state governments increase.

In addition, states also need to look at other measures to increase tax revenue in their respective territories. Besides the effective implementation of the recent proposals of the GST council meeting, states should support the Centre on other critical proposals such as e-invoicing to curb the fraudulent availment of input tax credit. Also, states should take a cue from the Centre and introduce amnesty schemes under VAT/Entry tax, so that any blocked revenues that are under litigation would also flow into their coffers. These measures will also help the states reduce dependency on the Centre.

The recent GST council meeting saw certain interesting suggestions given by the states to the Centre to ensure timely release of funds to the former. One of these, was that the Centre should give a share of cesses and surcharges, including the super-rich tax levied on people earning over ₹2 crore a year to the states. While states already get a 42% share in the Centre’s tax revenue, they do not get a share of the surcharges and cesses levied for specific purposes. While all these concerns voiced by the states are valid, it is only a matter of time, i.e., till July 1, 2022, before the states will need to stand on their own feet to meet their tax revenues.

To conclude, while the states are right in pushing the Centre to pay their dues on a timely basis, they would also need to look at other measures to increase tax revenue.

### LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

#### On UP protests

BJP ruled Uttar Pradesh had witnessed large scale violence resulting in the death of 24 civilians mostly due to bullet injuries from firearms is saddening. Rather than responding to the legitimate questions being raised from different quarters, chief minister of the state Adityanath had set the template for his state police to use excessive force against protestors with his controversial comment. The much admired argumentativeness of our democracy appears to have been at stake in BJP ruled states like UP with rulers riding a rough shod over the constitutionally guaranteed right of citizens to assemble and protest peacefully. It is time the UP government shed its adversarial strategy towards protestors and order an impartial probe in to the charges of alleged police brutality. — M Jeyaram, Sholavandan

#### On student violence

The attack on the convoy of Karnataka CM BB Yediyurappa in Kannur by activists of the Student Federation of India and Democratic Youth Federation of India is deplorable. The protesters took the cops by surprise as they blocked the chief minister’s car and attacked it with sticks and bricks. A group of Youth Congress workers and the Kerala Students Union (KSU) also held a separate protest. The outfits were infuriated over the incidents in Mangaluru recently during the anti CAA protest. The Kerala government must be held culpable for this unsavory episode. — NJ Ravi Chander, Bengaluru

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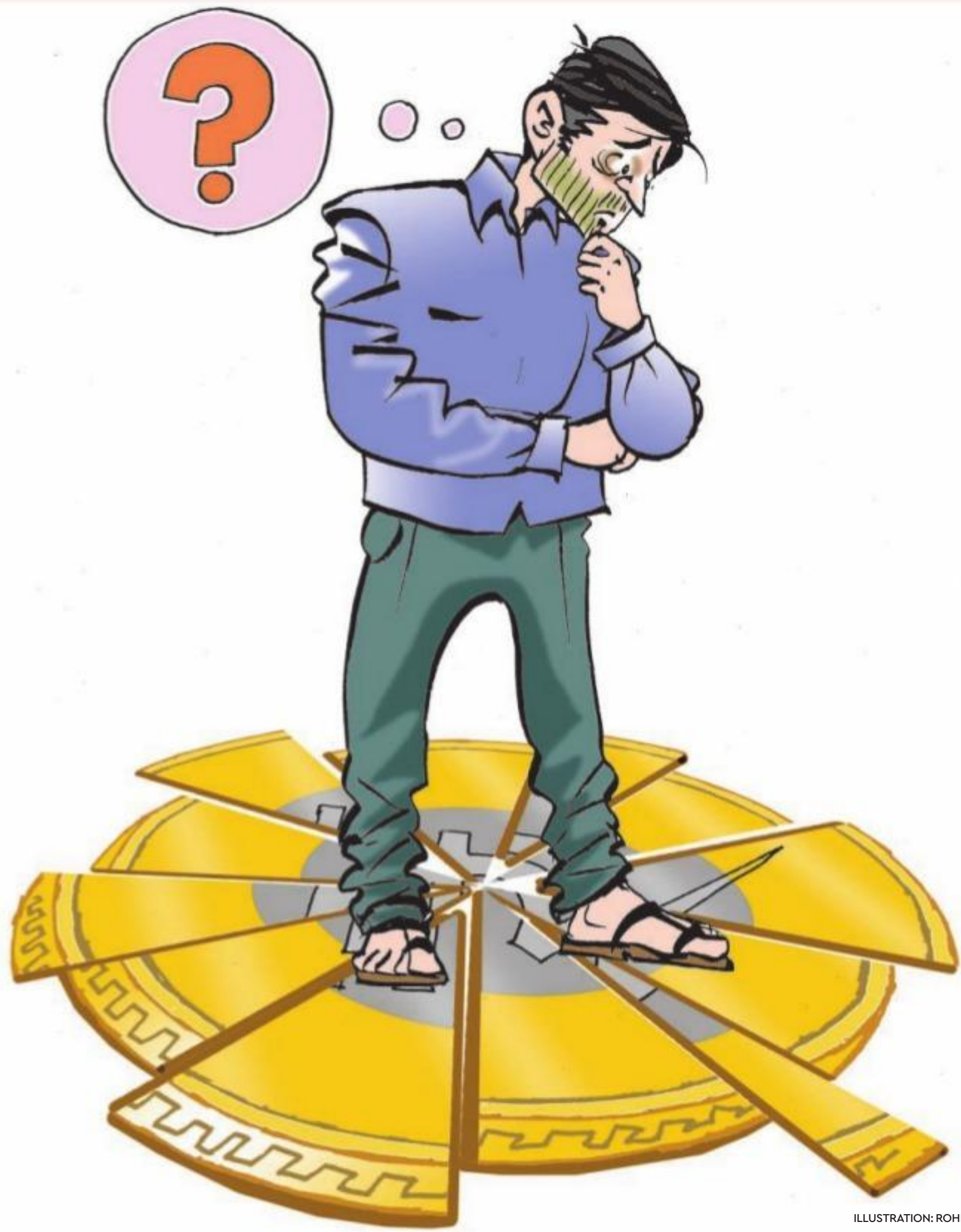


ILLUSTRATION: ROHNIT PHORE

## S CHANDRASEKHAR

The author is professor, Indira Gandhi Institute of Development Research, Mumbai.  
Chandro@igidr.ac.in

### INDIAN STATISTICAL SYSTEM

# Getting the numbers right

We need to strengthen the institutional capacity of the statistical system and address the shortage of personnel. Then we need to invest in the statistical system in a manner it leads to sizeable revenue streams

IT IS ESTIMATED that the statistical systems of Australia and the US spend, on average, \$18 and \$11 per person per year, respectively, on collecting data. These estimates are from the report of the Task Force on the Value of Official Statistics, published in 2018, by the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe. In contrast, the ministry of statistics and programme

implementation (MoSPI), of the government of India, has a budget of less than ₹8 per Indian per year. Not only is the Indian statistical system severely underfunded, it is also understaffed. Large investments, both in terms of financial and human resources, are required to strengthen the system.

These investments are important if the Prime Minister's vision for a digital

India has to become a reality. In this new digital world, much has to change: the way data is collected, the way data is analysed, and the way it is consumed. The system needs to broaden its scope beyond its traditional role of keeping account of economic activity in the economy. There is demand for providing real-time business intelligence for informed policymaking.

For this, we need to ensure a stepped increase in the budget of the MoSPI, linked to progress not in terms of expenditure outcomes, but in terms of improvement in quality of official statistics. To ensure that increased budgetary allocation is not a case of good money spent without any tangible improvements, we have four specific suggestions.

The first is to strengthen the institutional capacity, and there are three things that need to be done. On a priority basis, we need to address the shortage of personnel, in particular the Subordinate Statistical Service, and staffing of the departments of economics and statistics of state governments. We need to develop and agree upon a system for scoring of statistical capacity of state statistical systems and departments of the central and state governments. We need funding for establishing an inter-university centre led by Indian universities in collaboration with the National Statistical Systems Training Academy. The primary objective would be to assist in leapfrogging the statistical system. An immediate task at hand for the centre would be to clearly articulate the relevance of surveys to fill critical gaps, a reasonable time-frame for establishing the

**We need to ensure increasing MoSPI's budget, linked to progress not in terms of merely expenditure outcomes, but in improvement of the quality of official statistics**

accuracy of administrative data, and use machine learning in analysing big data.

Investing in statistical system can also lead to sizeable revenue streams and this brings us to our second suggestion. It is a fairly straightforward exercise to monetise data sets collected by the government of India. To name a few databases that can be easily sold are database on companies maintained by the Registrar of Companies and the ministry of corporate affairs, export-import data maintained by the Directorate General of Commercial Intelligence and Statistics, and the National Remote Sensing Centre's satellite images. Today, the private sector does a much better job of repackaging, selling such data in an easy-to-use format, than the government. In our view, selling data will automatically increase accountability and improve data quality. Furthermore, an added benefit of making high quality granular data available would be an increase in employment opportunities in data analytics.

The third suggestion is to develop standards. It is important to harmonise definitions and develop taxonomy for each sector. This helps in reducing the cost of data collection, and also improves the ease of doing business. This is particularly important in cases of issues that are cross-cutting across department or ministries. For instance, the Public Health Department and the Women and Child Department should have a common database. An excellent example where data standardisation has happened is on account of the efforts of the Reserve Bank of India. The current practice of developing new management information system every time a new programme is launched needs to be discontinued. This can be avoided if we have a common data architecture, based on accepted definitions, for each and every sector.

The fourth suggestion is to improve returns to expenditure by ensuring that it reaches the targeted population. We need to use technology to map expenditure flows to output to outcomes. It will be important to geotag expenditure in every programme. This can be a feature of the Public Financial Management System. By geotagging, we can aggregate expenditure data and the outcomes at PIN code or village level while preserving the confidentiality of names of beneficiaries of programmes. The release of such data will allow various stakeholders to develop metrics for measuring return on government spending, and suggest areas for improvement. These could eventually lead to significant cost savings.

The cliché 'data is the new oil' was surely not in vogue when the Constitution of India was debated and finalised. However, the framers did realise the importance of inquiries, census, surveys, statistics and vital statistics. These find

mention in the Seventh Schedule that deals with demarcation of powers via the three Lists, viz. Union List (Entries 69 and 94), State List (Entry 45) and Concurrent List (Entries 30 and 45). The framers dwelled on the need for having uniform data across the nation. During the Constituent Assembly debates, Prof Shibban Lal Saksena, a member of the Assembly, said, "(W)ithout proper land records, it is impossible to maintain uniform statistics for the

whole country and it is a very important thing which must be provided for... If that is not done, you cannot have any statistics on a countrywide basis on a uniform basis, and agricultural progress will be handicapped." This quote is just an example of the quality of discussion that took place on the importance of data for development. Somewhere in the last seven decades we have forgotten our way and unfortunately got stuck in a rut. Now is a good time, as any, for the Prime Minister and the finance minister to revitalise and restore faith and fund the Indian statistical system.

### ELECTRIC VEHICLES

## The future of mass commute?

### PANKAJ M MUNJAL

The author is chairman & MD, HMC, a Hero Motors Company



E-bikes and e-scooters are the answer, but need a safe cycling infrastructure

WITH GLOBAL WARMING and environment becoming major concerns, governments across the world are putting increased thrust on the need for phasing out petrol/diesel vehicles. While electric vehicles (EVs) have been in the pipeline for decades, it is only now that these are emerging as a viable alternative to petrol/diesel vehicles. Support from governments backed by ambitious targets as well as evolution of battery technology has enabled this shift. In China, 1.1 million electric cars were sold in 2018—more than half the total world sales.

With the ambitious target of shifting a bulk of its vehicles to electric fleet by 2030, India has launched policy measures and incentives to promote electric and hybrid cars. Earlier this year, the government announced ₹10,000 crore in outlay for the second phase of the FAME (Faster Adoption and Manufacturing of Hybrid & Electric Vehicles) scheme to be invested towards developing charging infrastructure.

Major manufacturers across the world are now investing in electric and related technologies. Ford plans to have 13 EV models by 2020 at an investment of \$4.5 billion. Tesla plans to build 1 million EVs by 2020. In India, Mahindra & Mahindra and Tata Motors have already launched electric cars, and Maruti Suzuki is fleet testing its first electric car. However, lack of infrastructure is a major concern.

At the same time, while electric cars are clean, they do not solve the problem of congestion and remain outside the economic reach of a large section of population. Electric bicycles, on the other hand, offer both an affordable and a sustainable mobility solution; they can also address traffic woes. And then there is no range anxiety—if one loses battery charge, she can always pedal back easy with gear shifts.

India largely runs on two-wheelers, with about one-third of households owning one. In comparison, just 11% households own a car. E-bikes are also a rapidly emerging global trend—these essentially are an evolved version of bicycles, fitted with an electric motor to enable motorised pedalling along with manual pedalling. Given that two-wheelers account for as much as 75% of vehicular pollution in India, e-bikes can be an eco-friendly alternative to conventional two-wheelers. For this, the government must initiate policies for those people who currently use bicycles and are planning to upgrade to motorcycles or conventional scooters.

According to a report by Persistence Market Research, the global e-bike market is projected to register a CAGR of 4.7% during the 2017-22 period. Here again, China is leading. Also, in Europe, government subsidies and favourable policies are ushering in an impressive growth in e-bikes—France registered 90%-plus growth in the sales of e-bikes in recent years, thanks to a government subsidy on its purchase.

E-scooters are also an attractive option for people who struggle with last-mile transport connectivity issues. California-based start-ups Bird and Lime pioneered an interesting concept of shareable dockless e-scooters, and the success of the idea propelled these start-ups to spread to more than 100 cities. People struggling with traffic congestion, those needing short but costly taxi rides from public transport to work/home, or those walking to work/home have found e-scooters flexible, affordable and enjoyable to use. While this concept is yet to find ground in India, the need for flexible, last-mile transport solutions makes this a prospect.

The Economic Survey 2019 points out the limited availability of charging infrastructure coupled with lack of fast-charging facilities are major impediments to increased adoption of EVs in India. The project to make EVs a functioning reality of Indian roads needs the creation a massive infrastructure of charging stations across cities, residential buildings, parking spots, and community spaces.

While e-bikes have caught the attention of a small group of health-conscious and tech-savvy Indians, the absence of safe biking infrastructure hampers its growth in India. It must be underlined that countries which have provided government support—in the form of subsidy or infrastructure building—and imposed implementation of strict environmental rules have witnessed the steepest growth rates in e-bikes. India not only needs to encourage people to turn to e-bikes through subsidies and incentives, but also build safe cycling lanes across cities.

## TIKTOK

AMERICA IS GOING to have to reckon with an internet that is becoming less American. Some US lawmakers on both sides of the partisan divide have said they are worried about TikTok, the app that lets users record and share short skits or dance routines to music. The app quickly became popular in the US and some other countries, and that has generated anxiety about TikTok's ownership by the Chinese internet company ByteDance.

The US is conducting a national security review of TikTok, and a foreign investment committee is considering whether ByteDance should be forced to unwind an acquisition that brought the TikTok app to the US. The US Navy this week alerted personnel not to use TikTok on government-issued smartphones because of a cybersecurity threat that the Navy didn't detail.

TikTok has been on a mission to alleviate worries about its Chinese ownership by ramping up its outreach to US politicians. It has also taken steps and considered structural changes to create separation between the app and China. Some of these efforts seem like pointless window dressing.

I don't know whether TikTok is a genuine threat. I don't know whether it is harvesting Americans' data for the mother country. There have been news reports that TikTok scrubs material on its app outside of China that is considered unpalatable by the Chinese government and therefore helps spread a sanitised view about China outside the country's borders. TikTok now

## When the internet gets less American

The popularity of Chinese-owned TikTok raises concerns about security and values

SHIRA  
OVIDE

Bloomberg

says that it doesn't house data on US users in China and that the Chinese government doesn't censor its global video app.

The discussion about TikTok in US political circles has become caught up in the broader tug of war between the US and China, but the fundamental issue is real. This isn't the first non-American internet service to get big in the US. But this the first time, truly, that Americans have had to consider what it means to have a popular consumer internet service that isn't owned by an American company. I suspect it won't be the last time.

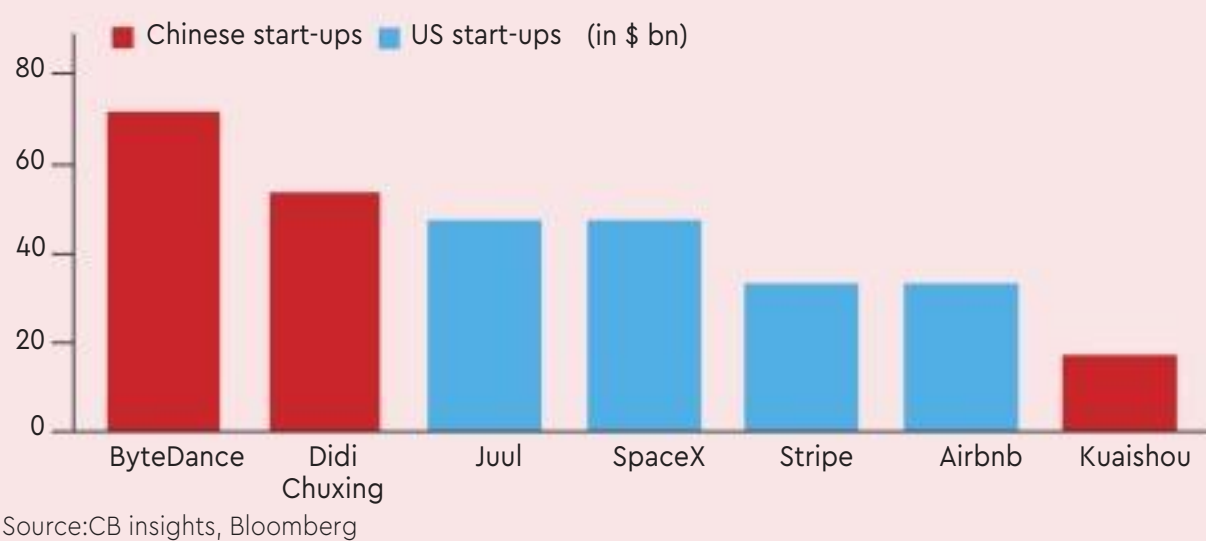
This is not new ground for most other countries. Facebook and its Instagram and WhatsApp apps; Google and its YouTube service; Netflix; Twitter; and other digital services from US companies have become

prevalent in many parts of the world. Foreign governments have at times chafed at the internet dominance by American companies for both justifiable and bogus reasons and have sought to make those companies comply with local laws and norms.

It's mostly understandable for governments outside the US to have those worries about American internet services. It's likewise mostly understandable for the US to consider the implications when an internet service from a company in China or Russia gains traction in America. What I wonder is whether what's happening now is a declaration that an internet company cannot operate in the US if it comes from a country with which the US has fundamental and unresolvable disagreements over government policies or values.

### We are the world

Chinese technology companies are among the world's most valuable start-ups



Source: CB Insights, Bloomberg

There has been anxiety in technology circles for years that the world is being divided into two or more versions of the internet. There is the US version, mostly freewheeling and free, that had become something of a global default. There's the Chinese version, a parallel world in which activity and speech are tightly controlled by the government and from which foreign internet companies are largely barred. Some people also talk about a European internet and maybe an Indian internet, again with standards for behaviour and company conduct that aligns with government priorities.

On the one hand, I am an American and I'd rather live in an American-style internet than one mirroring Vietnam, where what happens online is commandeered by

an authoritarian government. On the other hand, tax regimes differ from country to country, in reflection of different government's policy priorities. Should internet policy be so fundamentally different than tax policy? (There are legitimate technical reasons why it's harder to have country-by-country internet services.)

Facebook, Google, Apple and Netflix have had to grapple with the balance between sticking to their American-honed principles while also complying with different standards and laws in all the countries where they operate. That may mean the companies have to push back when they believe their principles are compromised too much, and it may mean the companies should not do business in some places where the rules are fundamentally

at odds with what their leaders and home country citizens believe.

There are not necessarily easy answers. US internet companies do fail to strike the right balance outside of America's borders, and do and should face scrutiny from the media, US lawmakers and other outsiders when that happens.

ByteDance should face the same scrutiny when it sets foot outside China's borders. ByteDance and TikTok leadership will have to figure out how to be a Chinese company that doesn't always operate by Chinese internet norms. That isn't something China's internet companies have been forced to grapple with until recently. That country's popular internet companies including Tencent, Weibo, Douban and Baidu have mostly been used in China or by the Chinese diaspora. That is starting to change with TikTok and other apps such as the TikTok-like app called Kuaishou or Kwai.

Chinese internet companies, and American citizens and politicians, face a similar challenge. They have to care how the rest of the world thinks and behaves after being insulated from those realities for a long time.

I don't know the right way to deal with this in the US, but it's long overdue for Americans and US political representatives to take seriously—truly seriously; not in hyperbolic panic—how we should feel about digital hangouts incubated in a country that may not share what we consider American values.



TELLING NUMBERS

Good Governance Index:  
TN on top among big states

ON WEDNESDAY, the Ministry of Personnel, Public Grievances and Pensions launched the Good Governance Index (GGI) that assesses the status of governance and the impact of various interventions undertaken by states and UTs over a period of time.

The assessment spans ten sectors. Within these sectors are over 50 indicators, with states given scores based on their performance. The states and UTs have been divided into big states, Northeastern and hill states, and UTs.

In the composite rankings, which takes into account performance in all sectors, Tamil Nadu tops the list of big states with a score of 5.6, followed by Maharashtra (5.4), Karnataka (5.1), Chhattisgarh (5.05), Andhra Pradesh (5.05), Gujarat (5.04), Haryana (5), Kerala (4.98), Madhya Pradesh (4.85) and West Bengal (4.84).

Among the Northeastern and hill states, Himachal Pradesh has the highest score at 5.22, followed by Uttarakhand, Tripura, Mizoram, Sikkim, Assam and Jammu & Kashmir (before bifurcation). Among the UTs, Puducherry has the highest composite score at 4.69, followed by Chandigarh (4.68), Delhi (4.39), Daman & Diu (4.33), Andaman & Nicobar Islands (4.12), Dadra & Nagar Haveli (3.12) and Lakshadweep (2.97).

How it was worked out

The 10 sectors covered are: agriculture & allied sectors, commerce & industries, human resource development, public health, public infrastructure and utilities, economic governance, social welfare and development, judicial & public security, environment, and citizen-centric governance. Within these sectors, the 50 indicators include foodgrains production, meat and milk production, ease of doing business, access to potable water, sex ratio at birth and the availability of police personnel.

The indicators have been assigned different weights based on their importance, data reliability and other factors. The weights assigned to each indicator are aggregated to obtain a value for that particular sector. These values then become the score for a sector after they have been multiplied with sector weights.

By that yardstick, Tamil Nadu, the highest ranked big state overall, has the highest scores in judicial and public security, and public infrastructure. It has the second highest score for public health and is among the top five for sectors including economic governance, environment and human resource development. Maharashtra, on the other hand, is among the top five big states in judicial and public security, economic governance, public infrastructure and public health. Karnataka is ranked one in economic

governance. Among the Northeastern and hill states, Himachal Pradesh is among the top five in agriculture and allied sectors, commerce and industries, human resource development, public infrastructure, economic governance, social welfare and development, judicial and public security, and environment.

**SUSHANT SINGH**  
NEW DELHI, DECEMBER 26

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The poet and his poem

Faiz's poem, *Wa-yabqa-wajh-o-rabbik*, a Quranic verse from Surah Rahman meaning, literally, 'The face of your Lord', is popularly known by its refrain, "*Hum Dekhenge*". In South Asia, the mythology around the poem and one particular rendition by the Pakistani *ghazal* singer Iqbal Bano (an audio recording is available on YouTube) is embellished by every new protest, which recalls the revolutionary verse.

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formed sharply into the communist day of revolution.

The religious symbolism in the poem, which was written in 1979, is to be read in the context of Pakistan under the military dictator General Zia-ul-Haq. Zia had deposed Prime Minister Zulfikar Ali Bhutto in a coup in 1977, and declared himself President of Pakistan in September 1978. Zia's dictatorship soon took a powerful religious turn, and he used conservative Islam as an authoritarian and repressive tool to tighten his grip over the country. In *Hum Dekhenge*, Faiz called out Zia — a worshipper of power and not a believer in Allah — merging the imagery of faith with revolution.

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held in the day and, in the evening, there would be a concert.

The 1986 concert was given by Iqbal Bano. Hashmi recounts that the hall — with a capacity of either 400 or 600 — was full even before she came on stage. (From Hashmi's account, it appears that the popular story of 50,000 people being in the audience is untrue.) There was commotion after all seats were taken, so the doors were opened and people streamed in, packing the hall completely.

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The poet Gauhar Raza has written of a Pakistani friend who attended the concert. Raza's friend had received a late-night call from someone he knew well in the Pakistani armed forces. The caller advised Raza's friend to not stay at home for the next two or three days. He took the advice, and in the days that followed, many of those who were present at the Lahore auditorium were questioned, and some were detained. His home was visited in the middle of the night by the military police.

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SIMPLY PUT QUESTION & ANSWER

Why a scheme for groundwater

Atal Bhujal Yojana has been launched amid growing concerns over the country's groundwater resources. A look at the extent of depletion of these resources, and how the scheme will seek to address such issues

**HARIKISHAN SHARMA**  
NEW DELHI, DECEMBER 26

ON WEDNESDAY, Prime Minister Narendra Modi launched the Atal Bhujal Yojana, or Atal Jal, a day after the Cabinet approved it. Atal Jal is a World Bank-funded, central scheme aimed at improving groundwater management. It was approved by the World Bank Board in June 2018.

The idea first came up in 2015, in view of depleting groundwater resources. The government announced its intention to start a programme for management of groundwater resources in the Budget of 2016-17, with an estimated cost of about Rs 6,000 crore.

How scarce is water in India?

India accounts for 16 per cent of the world's population living in less than 2.5 per cent of the global area, and has just 4 per cent of the global water resources. According to the Central Water Commission (CWC), the estimated water resources potential of the country, which occurs as natural runoff in the rivers, is 1,999 billion cubic metres. Of this, the estimated utilisable resources are 1,122 billion cubic metres per year — 690 BCM per year surface water and 432 BCM per year replenishable groundwater. With the population rising, demand for water will increase manifold in coming years. According to the CWC, per capita availability in the country will decrease from 1,434 cubic metres in 2025 to 1,219 cubic metres in 2050.

By CWC benchmarks, a water-stressed condition happens when per capita availability is less than 1,700 cubic metres, and a water-scarcity condition when per capita availability falls below 1,000 cubic metres. Some river basins are facing a water-scarcity condition. Among these are the basins of the Indus (up to the border), Krishna, Cauvery, Subarnarekha, Pennar, Mahi, Sabarmati and east-flowing rivers, and west-flowing rivers of Kutch and Saurashtra including Luni. Water scarcity is most acute in the basins of the Cauvery, Pennar, Sabarmati and east-flowing rivers, and west-flowing rivers of Kutch and Saurashtra including Luni.

**What is the groundwater situation in particular?**

According to 'Water and Related Statistics



Villagers of Shahapur, Thane, look for water in a well in June 2019. Deepak Joshi

2019', a report published by the CWC, the annual replenishable groundwater resources in India (2017) are 432 BCM, out of which 393 BCM is the annual "extractable" groundwater availability. Fifteen states account for about 90 per cent of the groundwater potential in the country. Uttar Pradesh accounts for 16.2 per cent, followed by Madhya Pradesh (8.4%), Maharashtra (7.3%), Bihar (7.3%), West Bengal (6.8%), Assam (6.6%), Punjab (5.5%) and Gujarat (5.2%). The current annual groundwater extraction is 249 BCM, the largest user being the irrigation sector. This is why the government has called for alternatives to water-intensive crops such as paddy and sugarcane.

Compared to the decadal average for 2009-18, there has been a decline in the groundwater level in 61% of wells monitored by the Central Ground Water Board (CGWB), according to a reply by the Jal Shakti Ministry in Parliament recently. Among the states where at least 100 wells were monitored, the highest depletion has been in Karnataka (80%), Maharashtra (75%), Uttar Pradesh (73%), Andhra Pradesh (73%), Punjab (69%).

What is the role of the CGWB?

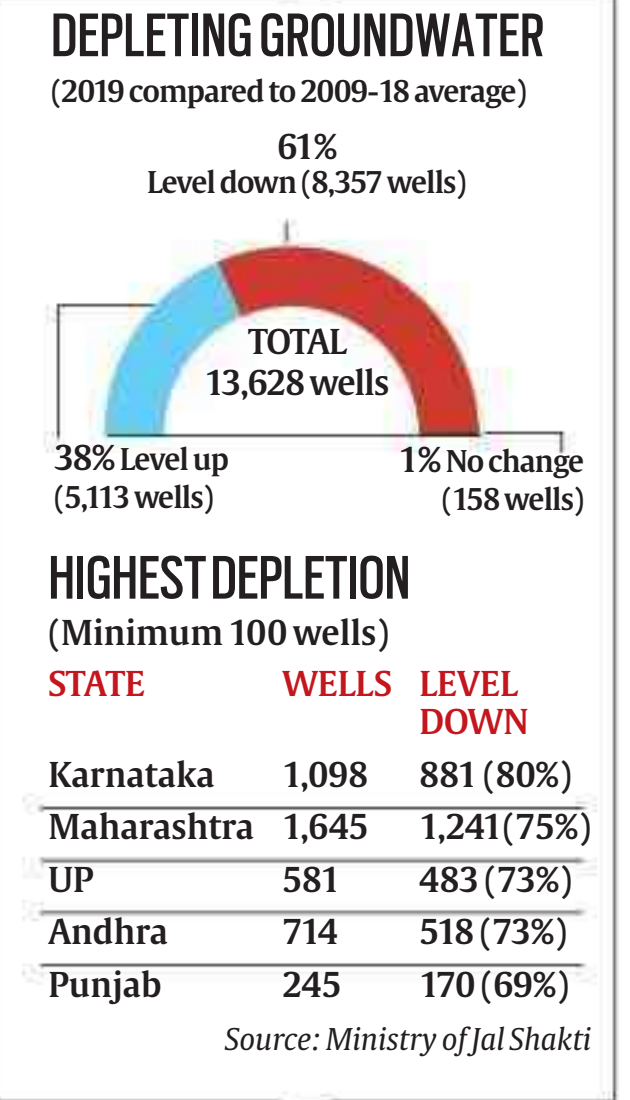
The Board monitors water levels and quality through a network of 23,196 "National Hydrograph Monitoring Stations"

— 6,503 dug wells and 16,693 piezometers — in January, March-May, August and November every year. A piezometer is a device placed in a borehole to monitor the pressure or depth of groundwater.

The CGWB has classified the country's assessment units (blocks, *taluks*, *mandals* etc) into safe, semi-critical and over-exploited in terms of groundwater resources. The number of over-exploited units has increased to 1,186 in 2017, from 839 in 2004. In the north, more than 60% of the assessment units in Delhi, Punjab, Haryana and Rajasthan are either over-exploited or critical. During the Monsoon Session of Parliament, the Jal Shakti Ministry had said 14% of the country's assessment units are semi-critical, 5% are critical, and 17% are over-exploited, as of 2017.

How much of this does the new scheme seek to address?

For now, the Atal Bhujal Yojana will be implemented in seven states - Gujarat, Haryana, Karnataka, Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra, Rajasthan and UP over five years from 2020-21 to 2024-25. It is expected that it will benefit about 8,350 gram panchayats in 78 districts. According to Jal Shakti Ministry sources, if the scheme meets its objectives in water-stressed areas, it will be extended to other parts of the country.



How will these objectives be met?

The focus will be on arresting the rate of decline of groundwater levels as well as water consumption. The scheme will seek to strengthen the institutional framework and bring about behavioural changes at community level for sustainable groundwater resource management. It envisages community-led Water Security Plans.

There has been a Groundwater Management and Regulation scheme to manage the country's groundwater resources since 2013. The new scheme is an updated and modified version. Concepts such as 'Water User Associations' and Water Budgeting will be introduced. Better performing districts and panchayats will get more funds.

Where will this money come from?

Of the Rs 6,000 crore, Rs 3,000 crore will be contributed by the World Bank as loan while the other half will be provided by the central government in the form of central assistance. All of it — the World Bank component and central assistance — will be given to the states as grants.

The story of Faiz's Hum Dekhenge — from Pak to India, over 40 years

**SUSHANT SINGH**  
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# THE EDITORIAL PAGE

## WORDLY WISE

THE FACT THAT POLITICAL IDEOLOGIES ARE TANGIBLE REALITIES IS NOT A PROOF OF THEIR VITALLY NECESSARY CHARACTER. — WILHELM REICH

The IndianEXPRESS

FOUNDED BY

RAMNATH GOENKA

BECAUSE THE TRUTH INVOLVES US ALL

## CROSSING A LINE

By being seen to make a partisan point, questioning campus protests, Army chief does damage to his reputation and office

WHEN THE ARMY chief, General Bipin Rawat, took a position on the ongoing students' protests against the new citizenship law at a public event in the national capital on Thursday, he overstepped an important line. Despite the exception and aberration, it is a line that has, by and large, held in India's constitutional democracy, dividing the polity from the military, and underscoring civilian supremacy. That its armed forces are neither an extension or instrument of the ruling party, nor a dominant player in the polity, and that, for the most part, the military abides by an apolitical ethos, a voluntary restraint, a culture of neutrality, marks India out from less evolved democracies in its neighbourhood and beyond. General Rawat's criticism of the protests, therefore, his publicly expressed conviction that protesters are "leading masses and crowds to carry out arson and violence in cities and towns", and his stern pronouncing of judgement "this is not leadership", are conspicuously improper. The fact that the general, only days away from retirement, chose to wade into a sensitive political issue playing out live across the country, and in doing so, echoed the point of view of the ruling regime, says disquieting things.

General Rawat's comments reinforce attempts by the Narendra Modi government in the last few days to criminalise the protests. The reality is that these protests have been and they continue to be mostly spontaneous, mostly leaderless, and mostly peaceful. There have been a few disturbing incidents of violence and arson but across several cities and states, students and young people have turned out peacefully on the streets in large numbers to speak up against a discriminatory law and for the Constitution's letter and spirit. On the other side, the government has seemed utterly lacking in the ability to either listen to them, or to talk to them. It is trying to mask this inability and failure by unleashing the police lathi charge and arbitrary detention, the suspension of internet and imposition of Section 144. In Uttar Pradesh, it has done much worse. Here, the conduct of the Adityanath government is fast turning into a textbook case of how not to deal with a protest in a democracy. The UP government has taken political and administrative imperviousness to a shocking level, with those killed crossing 20, police putting out "reward posters" for "miscreants" and "suspects", issuing notices and warnings of property attachment and detaining local civil society leaders who have, on evidence, little to do with the violence.

Beyond the immediate events, the backdrop for General Rawat's intervention is also made of a more general tendency by the ruling regime to paint all criticism and political opposition as unpatriotic, if not pro-Pakistan, and to put the figure of the soldier to political and electoral use. By being seen to make a partisan point in this moment, by appearing to fall in political line, General Rawat does damage to both his own reputation and to his high office.

## POWER AND THE SENA

Uddhav Thackeray's leadership skills will be tested as he attempts to steer party away from Hindutva camp

THE ASCENT TO office in the company of the NCP and Congress seems to be forcing the Shiv Sena to rethink some of its core ideals. Recently, party chief and Maharashtra Chief Minister, Uddhav Thackeray, responding to a taunt from BJP leader and former CM, Devendra Fadnis, said in the legislative assembly that the Sena "probably made a mistake by mixing politics and religion" and "took a hit for it". This is a major departure for the Sena, which had embraced Hindutva as its ideological compass in the 1990s.

As Thackeray has explained, Hindutva was the ground on which the Sena and BJP built an alliance that lasted for nearly three decades. It is too early to say that Thackeray and the Sena have taken a step towards abandoning Hindutva, but his remarks do suggest that the compulsions of heading a "secular" coalition government have forced a churn in the party. The first sign was when the party agreed to a common minimum programme, the preface of which states that the alliance is committed to "uphold the secular values enshrined in the Constitution". The Sena's position on the Citizenship Amendment Bill (CAB) also shifted even as the bill was debated in Parliament — its MPs voted in favour of CAB in the Lok Sabha but walked out when the bill was introduced in the Rajya Sabha. Thackeray was unambiguous, however, in condemning police action on the anti-CAA protests in Jamia Millia Islamia — he compared it to the Jallianwala Bagh massacre. Sena leaders stayed away from the anti-CAA mobilisations in Maharashtra, but it could be said that the massive rallies were peaceful also because of the party's tacit support.

The contradictions in Thackeray's attempt to balance coalition compulsions with the long-held beliefs of cadres will surely soon come to the fore. His challenge as a leader, moreover, is not restricted to the ideological sphere. He will need to instill in the Sena cadres the values of a constitutional democracy, which include accepting the restraints of the rule of law, and allowing political rivals to express their views. The recent incident of Sena workers tansuring the head of a BJP supporter in Mumbai for a social media post lampooning Thackeray is a reminder of the party's disgraceful legacy of physically targeting its critics.

## WALKING HOME

On his final journey, Ram Dass has become 'nobody', a condition to which he aspired all his temporal life

WHITE GURU GUY back from India with kundalini chakra on fire. LSD freak who gave it away too freely. Magic mushroom researcher who turned his own body into an organic chemistry lab. Such are the stereotypes that Ram Dass, disciple of Neem Karoli Baba of Kainchi Dham and fellow traveller of Timothy Leary of Harvard, discarded throughout his eventful life. He was one of the very few icons of the counterculture era who adapted to a rapidly changing world, and became a proselytiser of decency and humanity in everyday life.

From Leary's "turn on, tune in, drop out" to Dass's own exhortations to "be here now" and to "treat everyone you meet as if they are God in drag," you see the trajectory of the counterculture as it swept down from LSD towards the contemporary nirvana of spiritual wellness. While hot yoga and levitation powered by transcendental meditation fail to inspire, and Carlos Castaneda is stuck fast in the country of the quaint, Ram Dass remains a comfort for hearts and minds bruised by life.

Dass, who has died aged 88, was born Richard Alpert, the son of a Jewish railroad company director in Boston. He was an alumnus of Tufts and Stanford, taught psychology at Harvard, flew a Cessna and drove a Mercedes. After he was kicked off campus along with psychedelic co-conspirator Leary, he came to India and was strongly influenced by Neem Karoli Baba, a humour-loving guru who was interested in the here and now, and who valued happiness. His teacher named him Ram Dass, and he is the link in the chain of being that drew the young Steve Jobs and Mark Zuckerberg to Kainchi Dham in Uttarakhand. Dass touched innumerable lives before leaving this plane of existence. As he always said, "We're all just walking each other home."

# Bad in law, poor in history



ATUL NANDA

CAA neither redresses 'errors' of Partition nor does it address religious persecution. It attacks secularism

THE VERITABLE CHAOS into which the Citizenship Amendment Act (CAA) has plunged the nation is just the beginning of the far-reaching and dangerous consequences it threatens to have on India's constitutional character.

The rationale for the CAA has its roots in two sources — Partition and the alleged religious persecution of non-Muslims in Islamic countries. The emotional argument is that such non-Muslims have no other place that they may claim as home as a matter of right and India would be remiss in not remedying this injustice. While a legislative crusade against religious persecution may seem attractive, the rhetoric of the present central government in support of the law is both legally misconceived and historically flawed.

Even a cursory look at the Act exposes the lacunae in the government's argument that the legislation seeks to remedy the errors of Partition. Those errors were quite adequately taken care of when the Constitution brought about Article 6, recognising and restoring the rights of persons who migrated to India from Pakistan in those unhappy times.

The government (through Parliament) has been deliberately selective about the choice of countries to which the Act will apply — Pakistan, Bangladesh and Afghanistan — while ignoring others such as Sri Lanka, Myanmar, China and Bhutan. This makes the intent to deny protection to Muslims patently clear, even though it is a universally acknowledged fact that Muslims are no more safe from religious persecution than other communities. Instances of such persecution abound, as in the case of the Ahmadi and Shia sects in Pakistan, Taslima Nasrin in Bangladesh, and indeed Salman Rushdie in practically every Islamic country. The CAA fails to recognise the powerful truth that religious persecution is not necessarily premised on the religion of the victim.

One must also worry about the eventual legal effects of the amendment. Under the earlier citizenship regime, "an illegal migrant" was denied access to citizenship even through the process of naturalisation under Section 6 read with Third Schedule of the Citizenship, 1954. An illegal migrant was de-

The list of non-Muslim communities excluded from the definition of illegal migrants does not even require that they be of Indian origin. This again makes a mockery of the 'persons of Indian origin protection' set out in the objects of the Act. All they have to be is 'from Afghanistan, Bangladesh or Pakistan'. What does 'from' mean? A citizen? A resident? A passenger in transit? This may lead to many an undesirable element slipping through the cracks, causing even national security to be sacrificed at the altar of religious jingoism.

fined under Section 2(b) as one who was without the necessary passport or travel documents as specified therein. Hence, whether or not a person was an illegal migrant was simply an outcome of the existence of requisite travel documents or the lack thereof. The CAA has shredded this definition by introducing the parameter of religion. Parliament has effectively decreed that a Muslim will remain an illegal migrant, whereas any non-Muslim will not, irrespective of lack of travel documents.

The list of non-Muslim communities excluded from the definition of illegal migrants does not even require that they be of Indian origin. This again makes a mockery of the "persons of Indian origin protection" set out in the objects of the Act. All they have to be is "from Afghanistan, Bangladesh or Pakistan". What does "from" mean? A citizen? A resident? A passenger in transit? Given no requirement of being of Indian origin or having to prove any such origins means that an alien could simply apply on the terms of the CAA, prove entry on/before December 2014, and be eligible for citizenship. On the other hand, a Muslim of possibly Indian origin would be denied such a benefit. This may lead to many an undesirable element slipping through the cracks, causing even national security to be sacrificed at the altar of religious jingoism.

If the government does not seek to execute a political programme, and wants merely to protect the rights of those who are victims of religious persecution, then why doesn't India have an effective policy/legislation for victims of religious persecution seeking asylum? Such a policy/legislation would suffice to serve the purpose, as is the case in most countries. The routine law of citizenship through naturalisation could then take over in due course.

What then is the legal imperative, much less the rationale, to elevate a refugee to a citizen merely because he is a non-Muslim while denying the same right to a Muslim?

The idea of citizenship is contained in Part II of the Constitution under Articles 5 to 11. The fact that these Articles were drafted, debated, redrafted and re-debated over a period of two years, culminating in their final form only on August 12, 1949, shows what a

vexed question it was then too.

Unfortunately, the incumbent Union government has, through its brute majority in Parliament, managed to sneak into the constitutional charter what the founding fathers rejected more than 70 years ago. The introduction of religion-specific parameters for granting of citizenship was attempted by some members of the Constituent Assembly and completely rejected by the majority. Panjabrao Deshmukh had proposed a definition of citizenship to include one "who is naturalised under the law of naturalisation and every person who is a Hindu or a Sikh by religion and is not a citizen of any State wherever he resides". The law of naturalisation is nothing but Section 6 read with the Third Schedule, which has now been amended. The argument even then was that while Muslims have Pakistan, neither the Hindu nor the Sikh has any other place and hence he should get Indian citizenship. This sordid logic was raised not just for the primary issue of citizenship but even the troubling subject of citizenship for persons (read Muslims) who had initially migrated to Pakistan but then returned to India.

Fortunately for young India, this divisive refrain was drowned out by saner voices. It was birth, circumstance and domicile and not religion which would define citizenship. Pandit Thakur Das Bhargava was perhaps the strongest proponent of the disconnection of religion from citizenship when he said "...If a Muslim comes to India and bears allegiance to India and loves India as we love her, I have nothing but love for that man. If any nationalist Musalman who is afraid of the Muslims of East Pakistan or West Pakistan comes to India he certainly should be welcomed. It is our duty to see that he is protected. We will treat him as our brother and a bona fide national of India."

That, in essence, is the ethos on which we have built a secular and progressive India. The danger of the CAA is that it says if you are a Muslim, you do not conform to the idea of being an Indian. And that, my friends, would no longer conform to what we know as India.

The writer is advocate general of Punjab

## A MORE PROGRESSIVE ACT

J&K RTI law provided a time-frame for disposal of appeals



RAJA MUZAFFAR BHAT

ONE OF THE reasons given by the Narendra Modi government for making Article 370 redundant was that the "special status" had deprived the people of Jammu and Kashmir of various rights that the rest of India enjoyed, as central laws were not applicable in the state. That assertion is inaccurate for many reasons. But I want to focus on the claim that the Right to Information Act (RTI) was not applicable to the state.

To put the record straight — I was unable to do so earlier as I was detained for three months — the J&K state legislature enacted the legislation for RTI in 2004, a full year before the national legislation. It was a carbon copy of the Freedom of Information Act 2002, passed by the Atal Bihari Vajpayee-led NDA government. However, the 2002 law was not operationalised by the government as RTI activists had pointed out several shortcomings with it.

In its 2004 Lok Sabha election manifesto, the Congress had promised to come up with a strong access to information law. This was enacted in 2005 during the UPA I government. As J&K had seen much corruption and misgovernance, a group of us in Kashmir had launched a movement to mobilise public opinion in favour of ensuring the applicability of the central law to the state. We urged the then state government, headed by Ghulam Nabi Azad, to amend the J&K RTI Act 2004 to include provisions contained in the RTI Act 2005.

The J&K RTI Act 2009 was almost a carbon copy of the central RTI Act 2005. But, on some counts, it was more progressive. In the central law, there is no time-frame to dispose of the second appeal filed when it reaches the state or the Central Information Commission. But under the 2009 J&K law (now repealed), the State Information Commission (SIC) was required to dispose of the second appeal within four months.

I even wrote to the then Chief Justice of J&K High Court, B A Khan. The J&K High Court division comprising the then Chief Justice B A Khan and Justice J P Singh sought a response from the government. Subsequently, the J&K government brought an RTI amendment bill in 2007 and another one in 2008. But, the amendments were not at par with the national RTI law and our struggle continued.

Around October 2008, when the dates of that year's assembly elections were announced, we started lobbying the political parties in the state for a strong RTI law. We were able to persuade the National Conference leader Omar Abdullah and CPM leader M Y Tarigami to make RTI a part of their parties' election manifesto, which they did. The National Conference won the election, and soon after taking charge, the government enacted the RTI law with all the amendments we had campaigned for.

The J&K RTI Act 2009 was almost a carbon copy of the central RTI Act 2005. But, on some counts, it was more progressive. In the central law, there is no time-frame to dispose of the second appeal filed when it reaches the state or the Central Information Commission. But under the 2009 J&K law (now repealed), the State Information Commission (SIC) was required to dispose of the second appeal within four months. This time-bound provision ensured a better justice delivery mechanism, and is the reason for the least penden-

cies of appeals before the SIC as compared to the Central Information Commission and some other state commissions.

As someone who gave several years of his life advocating for the J&K RTI Act 2009, its repeal feels like a personal loss. J&K is now governed by the RTI Act 2005. How it will be implemented is still unclear. Most likely, the state will not have a SIC as union territories don't have the power to establish them. In 2006, Puducherry established a SIC. But, it was wound up on July 20, 2007, on the direction of the Union Home Ministry. The matter is pending before the Madras High Court.

On November 28, the J&K administration constituted a committee headed by the secretary, general administration department, to examine if it will be clubbed with the CIC for RTI related matters or whether it would have a separate information commission. If it does not, appellants and complainants will need to make the long journey to the CIC in New Delhi. Faced with this, many might give up on their right to information.

The J&K Law Commission has recommended the constitution of a J&K SIC. But the final decision is awaited. Even if the SIC is set up, the central law has been watered down so much over the past few months that it would not have the same effect as that of the J&K RTI Act 2009.

The writer is an RTI activist, based in Kashmir

## DECEMBER 27, 1979, FORTY YEARS AGO

LOK DAL CANDIDATES AT LONG LAST, THE Lok Dal central office announced the final state-wise break-up of its Lok Sabha candidates. In all, there are 301 Lok Dal nominees, including five candidates who have not been allotted party symbol. Some days ago, when the Lok Dal released what it called the "final list", there were 319 contestants. With a score of candidates retiring, the final figure now comes to 301. Among the Lok Dal candidates, there is only one Harijan who is fighting for a general seat. The party has put up 47 SC candidates and 16 ST candidates for reserved seats. There are 33 Muslims, five Christians and nine women in the Lok Dal list.

BORBORA STAKES CLAIM THE LEADER OF the Janata-Congress group, Golap Borbora, formally staked his claim to forming a government in Assam, now under President's Rule. Borbora talked to Governor L P Singh and told him that he could form the new government in coalition with the Congress. Meanwhile, the Assam Congress legislature party leader Sarat Chandra Sinha said his party would go ahead with the formation of a viable government with the Janata Party's support.

MGR vs KARUNANIDHI THE CURRENT PARLIAMENTARY election in Tamil Nadu is significant in more than one

way as it will, besides sending 39 members to the Lok Sabha, decide the future pattern of working of the All India Anna DMK (AIADMK) and the Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam (DMK), which dominate the political scene in the state. The election campaign presents a picture as though only two candidates — the chief minister and AIADMK leader M G Ramachandran and DMK President M Karunanidhi — are in the field. The national parties — Congress (I), Janata and the Communists — appear as mere dummies. With the AIADMK wishing to destroy Karunanidhi for all time, the DMK's political survival depends on the outcome of the election.



# THE IDEAS PAGE

## The perils of misinformation

Contrary to what some political parties and people say, the NRC is restricted to Assam. There is no talk at any level regarding the extension of the exercise to the rest of India



MUKHTAR ABBAS NAQVI

SOME POLITICAL PARTIES and people with narrow political interests are spreading misinformation amongst a particular section of society about the Citizenship Amendment Act, NRC and the government's decision to update the National Population Register (NPR). This is a futile attempt to hide the mountain of truth by using bushes of lies.

That the Narendra Modi-led government is committed to inclusive empowerment and prosperity is evident from its policies. "Development without discrimination" has been the credo of this government, which has been working to ensure the happiness and prosperity of all, irrespective of religion and region. Thirty-one per cent of the two crore beneficiaries of the government's housing project for the poor are from the minority community. People from minority communities are the most numerous in 39 cent of the 6 lakh villages that have been provided electricity by this government. More than 33 per cent of the 22 crore farmers who have benefited under the government's "Kisan Samman Nidhi" scheme belong to minority communities. About 37 per cent of the more than 8-crore beneficiaries of the Ujjwala Yojana are also from minority communities. The government has provided easy loans for economic activities to about 21-crore people under the Mudra Yojna — more than 36 per cent of the beneficiaries are from minority communities. People from minority communities have also benefited significantly from welfare schemes pertaining to water, electricity, roads, education, and employment opportunities. In the past 70 years, minorities, especially Muslims, were left behind with respect to economic development and education. They have benefited the most as a result of the Modi government's welfare policies.

It is unthinkable that a prime minister who has provided houses and electricity to the poor without discrimination would want them to be homeless or do anything that jeopardises their future. That's why Modi has given a clear message about the CAA and NRC. He has made it clear that "the Citizenship Amendment Act is about providing citizenship and not taking away the citizenship of any person". And the NRC, undertaken for the first time in Assam in 1951, is limited to that state. The PM has made it clear that there is no question mark over or threat to the citizenship of any Indian Muslim from the CAA or NRC.

The CAA aims to provide citizenship to minorities facing religious persecution in Pakistan, Bangladesh and Afghanistan. It will provide citizenship to only those who want it. As far as giving Indian citizenship to Muslims from other countries is concerned, the Indian Citizenship Act 1955 already has a provision for that purpose. Any foreign national, including a Muslim, can apply for and gain Indian citizenship under Section 5 of this Act. In the past five years, this government has provided citizenship to more than 500 Muslims from other countries.

Minorities, who constituted about 24 per cent of Pakistan's population at the time of Partition, have been reduced to just 2 per cent of the population as result of the atrocities

perpetrated on them. But the earlier Indian governments did not take any steps to mitigate their hardship. The CAA will provide dignity to those facing humiliation in Pakistan, Bangladesh and Afghanistan. It has nothing to do with the Indian Muslims.

While minorities are facing injustice in Pakistan, they are equal partners in India's development. The Modi government's schemes for socio-economic and educational empowerment of the minorities have been effective instruments for this purpose. In the past five years, the government has provided scholarships to more than three crore students from minority communities, 60 per cent of whom are women. The employment of more than 8 lakh youths from minority communities has been facilitated by skill development schemes such as Seekho aur Kamao, Ustad, Nai Manzil, Garib Nawaz Employment Scheme and Nai Roshni. About 50 per cent of these beneficiaries are women. In the past two years, more than 2.65 lakh artisans and craftsmen have been provided employment through the Hunar Haat scheme.

The UPA government could identify only 90 districts of the country for the development of minority communities. Under the current government, development programmes for minorities have reached 308 districts and 1,300 blocks. In the past five years, 33 degree colleges, 1,398 school buildings, 4,0201 additional class rooms, 574 hostels, 81 ITI, 50 polytechnics, 39,586 anganwadi centres, 398 sadbhavna mandaps, 123 residential schools and 570 market sheds have been developed under the Pradhanmantri Jan Vikas Karykram.

While Pakistan has become a hell for minorities, India is a heaven for minorities. This reality is unacceptable to some forces who are involved in a conspiracy to weaken the country's "Unity in Diversity".



C R Sasikumar

It is unthinkable that a prime minister who has provided houses and electricity to the poor without discrimination would want them to be homeless or do anything that jeopardises their future. That's why Modi has given a clear message about the CAA and NRC. He has made it clear that 'the Citizenship Amendment Act is about providing citizenship and not to taking away the citizenship of any person'. And the NRC, started in Assam in 1951, is limited to that state. The PM has made it clear that there is no question mark over or threat to the citizenship of any Indian Muslim from the CAA or NRC.

Let us now go into the NRC issue. The NRC process was first undertaken in Assam in 1951. In the 1970s, the state witnessed agitations and there were demands to accelerate the NRC process. In 2013, the Supreme Court asked the government to update the NRC. The NRC process is still going on in Assam and is limited to the state. A draft NRC list was published on August 31. Those people who didn't find their names in the list are being helped by the government through NRC service centres and tribunals.

There is no talk at any level regarding the extension of the NRC to rest of India. But some people have started a political drama on the issue. Some political parties and people with prejudiced mindsets are fomenting trouble amongst a particular section of society for their narrow political gains.

These people and political parties are trying to spread misinformation on the National Population Register (NPR) and Census as well. The Census and NPR are regular exercises. The people of the country should understand that those who have been defeated through democratic process are trying to hijack loktantra (democracy) through gun-datantra (anarchy).

Every section of society in India is an equal partner in the country's development and prosperity. It is our national duty to ensure that people who are spreading misinformation do not succeed in their nefarious designs.

For us, the soil of India is our faith; there is no threat to the social, religious, constitutional and other rights of any citizen of the country. This is the reality and truth, the rest is propaganda. Let us work together to defeat those who spread misinformation and fear.

The writer is Union Minister for Minority Affairs

### WHAT THE OTHERS SAY

"For both secular liberals and Christians, there are lessons to be drawn from what might be seen as a prophetic alliance between Pope Francis and Greta Thunberg on the most urgent issue facing the world: the climate emergency." — THE GUARDIAN

## Restructuring isn't always reform

Done right, Railway restructuring could be a game changer. Else, it will only create a bigger mess than it claims to clear



AJAY SHUKLA

THE RAILWAY MINISTER, Piyush Goyal, has recently announced the policy decision of "restructuring" of the organisation. He has thereby put the onus (of mismanagement?) on the structure of the officer cadre, and hence also on the officers. The stated aim is to end "departmentalism" — unification of services will "expedite decision making", "create a coherent vision" and "promote rational decision-making". It is an unusual admission — that hitherto decision-making in the Railways was incoherent and irrational — and this coming after he has been the minister for over two years. Or is it an abdication of responsibility for the past? And for future actions as well — till the decision is fully implemented?

Reportedly, a comprehensive plan for execution of the decision would be worked out by a committee of secretaries, and perhaps a group of ministers. If true, it is a very strange — no, incoherent — way of proceeding, that so disruptive a policy should be decided without firming up a blueprint of action and examining its future implications.

Restructuring of the Railways has been on the agenda for decades. Committees — Prakash Tandon 1994, Rakesh Mohan 2001, Sam Pitroda 2012 and Bibek Debroy 2015 — have done this exercise in past. Is it just the familiar family ghost that visits the corridors of Railway Board with indeterminate periodicity and with the predictable outcome of nothing?

While the details of the plan are not yet available, it would nonetheless be worthwhile to discuss what we know of the decisions. The size of the Railway Board is proposed to be reduced from the present eight to five. This is a good decision in itself, but also raises the question — why were two additional posts of members added to the Board as recently as April 2019? Whose irrational decision was that? What is the methodology by which decisions are being taken?

### LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

#### WHO IS A REFUGEE?

THIS REFERS TO the article, 'From refugee to citizen' (IE, December 26). The numerous citations in the article indicate that the CAA's primary purpose is to fulfill the Congress's promise via the BJP — not protection of minorities. The cut-off date mandated by the act, December, 31, 2014, means that immigrants who entered India as recently as five years ago would be under its purview. This belies the premise of the article that this Act seeks to aid people persecuted during Partition. The author refers to promises dating back to 1950's. The population of the country then was roughly one-fourth of what it is today.

Raunak Singh Maini, Delhi

#### TIGER DOES WELL

THIS REFERS TO the editorial, 'The right count' (IE, December 26). It's heartening that India's wild tiger population has increased by more than 30 per cent in four years. This is an "historic achievement". More tigers are breeding in protected areas but there are worrying signs of tigers not able to disperse outside the protected areas and find their own territory. Tigers are extremely territorial and its range could sometimes be as large as 200 sq km, so they need quite a bit of space. Habitats are increasingly being encroached upon by developmental projects such as roads, canals and railways. Conflict between humans and tigers is also a threat to the tiger population.

Vandana, Chandigarh

#### CHIEF'S TASKS

THIS REFERS TO the editorial, 'Towards jointness' (IE, December 26). Creating the post of a chief of defence staff is a long due defence reform and will provide direction to the three armed forces. It would, however, have been better if the government made it a five-star rank rather than four-star — the existing rank for chiefs of the three services. But there are tougher challenges as integration between the forces would be a tough task. A new department of military affairs has been created. It's critical that

The decision that posts of some 27 general managers would be raised to the "apex" level (secretary?) and hence at par with the board members is doubly problematic. Will the IAS lobby agree to create so many secretary-level posts for Railway officers — unless they are given the top positions? Is that the aim? The panel of secretaries may well make such a recommendation, but will the finance ministry agree? It is claimed that Railway officers have welcomed the decision. How could they, when they do not even know what is in store for them? They were certainly not consulted. Of course, that was not even necessary because democracy gives the right to the elected — even to be dictatorial!

Secondly, the Railway Board is the governing body and the general managers are subordinate to the board. How would the board control the GMs of equal rank? Or is it a ploy to make board members dispensable, and hence pliable, because once the GMs and members are of equivalent grade, an uncomfortable member can easily be shunted to some remote corner as GM. In the present set-up, the minister can do nothing to an unyielding member except to suffer in silence, and at worst, sabotage his foreign trips and post-retirement aspirations.

Coming to the basic objective of the policy decision — of ending "departmentalism" — prima facie, this sounds well intended. However, departmentalism is just a word and means nothing for the rail users, or for the national economy. Every large organisation is bound to have many departments. Even after the merging of cadres, departments will continue to exist, they would continue to quarrel, and it is the minister's job to settle these disputes. He cannot remain a bystander, passing judgements.

The minister should also understand that the problem is not departments but the composition of the same, and their role in the Railway organisation. This should be seen from the perspective of the national economy rather than as an issue pertaining to the Railways in isolation.

If the restructuring is done with such national priorities in mind it can be a game changer, not only for the Indian Railways, but for India as a nation. Or else, it may only create a bigger mess than it imagines it is solving.

The writer is former Member Traffic, Railway Board

### 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](mailto:editpage@expressindia.com) or sent to The Indian Express, B-1/B, Sector 10, Noida-UP 201301.

that a proper link between armed forces and the civilian bureaucracy is established.

Bal Govind, Noida

#### TAXING WELFARE

THIS REFERS TO the article, 'State incapacity and NRC' (IE, December 26). The article rightly notes that India lacks the administrative structure to conduct a pan-India NRC. The simple fact of births and deaths not being registered in the country should have alerted the government to this reality. Poor medical facilities and meager rations are the lot of the poor in this country. How can the country accommodate refugees?

Prateek Mitra, Noida

#### TAXING WELFARE

THIS REFERS TO the article, 'For people to spend more' (IE, December 26). There is a need for communication connectivity between various stakeholders of the economy like banks, telecom, automobiles and other industries. Banks can provide the loanees' preference graph to industries, thus helping them to plan their production preferences. Innovative ideas related to EMI, deferred billing and hire purchasing arrangements could also be made.

Afshin Rizvi, Lucknow

## THE Urdu PRESS

### POWER OF PROTESTS

WRITING ABOUT THE protests against the Citizenship Amendment Act, the *Inquilab* on December 17 condemns the police action against students. "The police not only entered the Jamia campus without permission but went into the library and bathrooms and targeted students violently. The students and civil society went to Delhi police's headquarters and registered strong protests against this action. The police was forced to release the students." The editorial notes, "the Jamia administration also says that the police entered the campus without permission and attacked students, who were not participating in the demonstration. University, students and the police are all part of society and students have a right to protest peacefully and be heard".

*Munsif's* editorial on December 17 is titled, 'Police terrorism in Jamia Millia'. "The Jamia students were protesting peacefully for three days. But after two buses caught fire in a locality outside the university, police claimed that the protestors had set the buses on fire. But there are videos on social media that show Delhi police personnel sprinkling petrol on the buses. After that the police went to the Jamia campus. It appeared as if terrorists had entered the University in police uniforms".

The editorial notes, "the police behaved in a most barbaric manner with women students and also with people praying in mosques. The Jamia Vice Chancellor said the students were not alone and "I stand with them".

*Inquilab's* editorial on December 19 is titled, "The power of peaceful protests". "The Citizenship Amendment Act is not acceptable to large sections of India's population. Objections are not limited to any section, political party, university or a specific school of thought. It was ignorance of this that led to this bill being tabled and passed in Parliament. The government should have tried to gauge the opinion of all sections of society. But it did not feel it necessary to do so. This was exactly like demonetisation, when even ministers knew nothing about the move." It also points out that, "Democracy is not about slapping a parliamentary majority on people, it is about understanding sentiments of those opposed to it. The soul of democracy is to understand what people really want and not just imposing one's own idea. Just getting bills passed is not democracy." The editorial finds it "sad that the ruling party has put all these norms on the back-burner".

*Urdu Times* on December 20 notes: "Bechaini par awaam ki bechaini" (People are restless about the restlessness). "The country

is in a terrible state and people are angry about the CAA. There are restless people on the streets everywhere." It points out that "in 27 days, government has made contradictory statements on detention centres. On November 27, a Union minister informed Rajya Sabha about many such camps. Twenty eight deaths have occurred in Assam's camps... But on December 22, Prime Minister Narendra Modi talked of detention camps as a rumour"

### COSTS OF NRC

THE AIMIM'S PAPER *Etemad* focuses on the costs of a national NRC in its December 17 editorial. "Amit Shah had announced in Parliament that the NRC will be conducted all-India. The point is: Is it possible?" The editorial notes that the "NRC in Assam under the supervision of the Supreme Court took about five years. Rs 1,300 to 2,000 crore were spent. More than 50,000 government servants were deployed. But this massive exercise came to nothing as the Assam government 'rejected' the NRC. India's population is 130 crore. Won't an NRC for the entire country be an expensive proposition?... In certain border states with a porous border, if there are infiltrators, such an exercise is understandable. But what is the logic of an all-

India NRC? How wise is it to hassle an entire country for political gains? Why not have welfare schemes for the same money?"

*Siasat* on December 26 calls the "NPR a new trap". "The Centre, instead of working transparently to find out what people feel, is only interested in tripping people in its net," it says. The editorial also argues that "after sensing the anger on CAA and NRC, the government is laying a new trap called the NPR. Though the Census and NPR happen each decade, but this time it has aroused fears and doubts in people. The government says that the NPR is not connected with the NRC. But after hearing its contradictory orders, one can say that its claims are not correct."

### JHARKHAND ELECTION

THE BJP'S LOSS in the Jharkhand assembly polls has been commented upon extensively. *Siasat* on December 24 has an editorial, "Jharkhand for BJP is the writing on the wall". *Etemad* on the same day makes virtually the same comment: "Results in Jharkhand are the writing on the wall for the BJP".

*Munsif* on December 25 asks "Could this be the signal of a new change (nayi tabdeeli)?"

Compiled by Seema Chishti



## बिज़नेस स्टैंडर्ड

वर्ष 12 अंक 267

## चेत जाएं सरकारी बैंक

**भारतीय** बैंकिंग क्षेत्र में कई वर्ष बाद बदलाव के संकेत नजर आ रहे हैं। भारतीय रिजर्व बैंक द्वारा जारी ताजा रिपोर्ट ‘ट्रेंड एंड प्रोग्रेस ऑफ बैंकिंग इन इंडिया 2018-19’ यह बताती है कि बैंकों की ऋणग्रस्त परिसंपत्तियों में कमी आई है और परिसंपत्तियों की गुणवत्ता में गिरावट भी थमी है। यही कारण है कि वर्ष 2011-12 के बाद पहली बार अनुसूचित

वाणिज्यिक बैंकों की समेकित बैलेंस शीट में सुधार देखने को मिला है। इसके अलावा बैंकिंग जगत का वित्तीय प्रदर्शन भी सुधरा और तीन वर्ष के अंतराल के बाद सरकारी बैंकों ने चालू वित्त वर्ष की पहली छमाही में शुद्ध मुनाफा कमाया।

परंतु सरकारी बैंकों के लिए अभी भी चिंतित होने की पर्याप्त वजह है। न केवल

फंसे हुए कर्ज (एनपीए) का ज्यादा हिस्सा उनके पास है बल्कि वे निजी बैंकों के हाथों तेजी से कारोबार भी गंवा रहे हैं। उदाहरण के लिए समीक्षा अवधि के दौरान साविधि जमा में हुई वृद्धि में निजी बैंकों की हिस्सेदारी करीब 77 प्रतिशत रही। निजी बैंकों में इसका स्तर 2011-15 के 19 प्रतिशत से बढ़कर 2016-19 में 81 फीसदी हो गया। बैंकिंग परिसंपत्तियों में एक तिहाई से भी कम भागीदारी के बावजूद निजी बैंक वर्ष 2018-19 में ऋण में हुई वृद्धि में से 69 फीसदी के हिस्सेदार रहे। कुल बकायें में भी निजी बैंकों की हिस्सेदारी बढ़ रही है। इस बदलाव की वजह समझना कठिन नहीं है। निजी क्षेत्र के बैंक अपेक्षाकृत किफायती हैं और वे बेहतर सेवाओं और आकर्षक जमा दर के साथ ज्यादा

राशि जुटा रहे हैं। इतना ही नहीं, उच्च जमा दर उनके मार्जिन पर असर नहीं डाल रही है। निजी क्षेत्र के बैंक सरकारी बैंकों की तुलना में अधिक विशुद्ध ब्याज मार्जिन रखते हैं। यहां भी दोनों में बड़ा अंतर है। वर्ष के दौरान सामने आए धोखाधड़ी के मामलों में से 90 प्रतिशत सरकारी बैंकों में हुए। केंद्रीय बैंक की रिपोर्ट में कहा गया है कि पर्याप्त आंतरिक प्रक्रिया के अभाव और प्रक्रियात्मक जोखिम से निपटने में सक्षम लोगों और तंत्र की अनुपस्थिति से ऐसा हुआ।

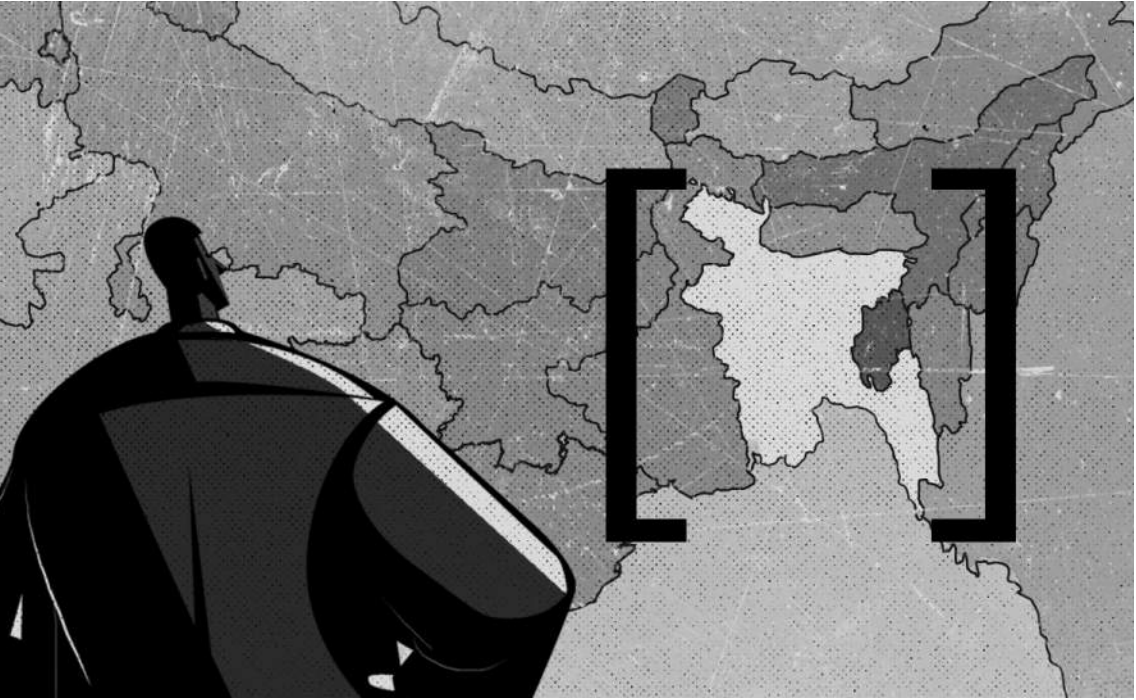
निजी बैंकों की बढ़ती हिस्सेदारी का सिलसिला आगे जारी रहेगा और इसकी कई वजह हैं। बढ़ा हुआ एनपीए सरकारी बैंकों के लिए बड़ी बाधा बना रहेगा और सरकार ऐसी स्थिति में नहीं है कि वह अनंत काल

तक इन बैंकों में भारी-भरकम पूंजी निवेश करती रहे। दूसरी ओर, भले ही कुछ निजी बैंकों में समस्याएं रही हैं लेकिन वे अभी भी बेहतर स्थिति में हैं। वहां शीर्ष प्रबंधन आसानी से बदल सकता है और निजी बैंक पूंजी जुटाने तथा बैलेंस शीट विस्तार के मामले में भी बेहतर स्थिति में हैं।

बहरहाल, यह बात ध्यान देने वाली है कि निजी बैंकों के पक्ष में हो रहा यह बदलाव सरकारी बैंकों के मूल्यांकन को भी कम करेगा। व्यापक स्तर पर देखें तो सरकारी बैंकों की कमियां तंत्र में ऋण की उपलब्धता को भी प्रभावित करेंगी और आर्थिक वृद्धि को बाधित करेंगी। ऐसे में सरकार के लिए यह आवश्यक है कि वह संचालन संबंधी सुधार लागू करके सरकारी बैंकों को निजी बैंकों के

साथ प्रतिस्पर्धा के लायक बनाए। भारत से जुड़ी अपनी ताजा रिपोर्ट में अंतरराष्ट्रीय मुद्रा कोष ने भी सरकारी बैंकों में सुधार की आवश्यकता पर जोर दिया है। उसका कहना सही है कि सुधारों के अभाव में वित्त से जरूरी मुद्दे हल नहीं होंगे और बड़े और कमजोर बैंक सामने आने की आशंका बढ़ जाएगी। विलय होने से मूल कारोबार से भी ध्यान हट सकता है और ऋण क्षमता प्रभावित हो सकती है। सरकार (पढ़ें करदाताओं) और सरकारी बैंकों के हाथ से समय बहुत तेजी से निकल रहा है।

*(अस्वीकरण: कोटक परिवार के नियंत्रण वाली संस्थाओं की बिज़नेस स्टैंडर्ड में महत्वपूर्ण हिस्सेदारी है।)*



अजय मोहंती

# भारत के लिए बांग्लादेश की सामरिक अहमियत

हमारे पूर्वी समुद्री तट पर एक अहम देश बांग्लादेश है। भारत की हिंद-प्रशांत क्षेत्र की आकांक्षाओं को मद्देनजर रखते हुए बांग्लादेश के साथ मैत्रीपूर्ण संबंध भारत के हितों के लिए महत्त्वपूर्ण हैं। बता रहे हैं प्रेमवीर दास

भारत और बांग्लादेश वर्ष 1971

से लंबी दूरी तय कर चुके हैं। दोनों देशों के संबंध शेख मुजीबुर्रहमान के समय में अत्यंत मधुर थे। लेकिन जिया-उर-रहमान और उनकी पत्नी बेगम जिया के कार्यकाल में संबंध खराब हुए। हालांकि अब मुजीब की बेटी शेख हसीना के शासनकाल में संबंध फिर से प्रगाढ़ हो रहे हैं। इस तरह दोनों देशों के बीच संबंधों ने एक लंबी दूरी तय की है, जिनमें कई उतार-चढ़ाव आए हैं।

अब दोनों देशों के संबंध बेहतर हो रहे हैं, इसलिए यह सुनिश्चित करने की हरसंभव कोशिश की जानी चाहिए कि दोनों देशों के संबंधों में यह बेहतरी लगातार जारी रहे। विदेश मंत्री एस जयशंकर हाल के महीनों में हिंद-प्रशांत क्षेत्र से संबंधित भारत की आकांक्षाओं पर कई बार जोर दे चुके हैं। बांग्लादेश इसी हिंद-प्रशांत क्षेत्र में स्थित है, जिसे निश्चित रूप से प्रमुखता में सबसे ऊपर रखा जाना चाहिए। इसी संदर्भ में हमें हाल की घटनाओं के नतीजों को देखना चाहिए, जो बांग्लादेश के दो वरिष्ठ मंत्रियों के हमारे देश की यात्रा रद्द करने का नतीजा हैं।

पिछले कई दशकों से हमारे सीमा विवाद के मुद्दों का इतिहास हर कोई जानता है और अब समुद्री सीमा के सौहार्दपूर्ण तरीके से समाधान के बारे में ज्यादातर भारतीयों को नहीं पता है। दोनों देशों के बीच कई वर्षों

से न्यू मूर द्वीप को लेकर विवाद रहा है। यह द्वीप उच्च ज्वार में पानी में डूब गया था, लेकिन पानी उतरने पर काफी स्पष्टता से दिखाई देने लगा। बांग्लादेश ने इस द्वीप पर अपना दावा किया और इससे अपनी समुद्री सीमा और विशेष आर्थिक क्षेत्र निर्धारित किया। वहीं भारत ने कहा कि वह उसके क्षेत्र में आता है। दोनों के दावों के पीछे यह आकलन था कि न्यू मूर के आसपास समुद्र में तेल एवं गैस के भंडार हैं।

एक समय भारत ने इस द्वीप के आसपास अपने नौसैनिक और एक जहाज तैनात कर दिया था। दोनों देशों के बीच काफी कड़वाहट और कटुता जैसी स्थिति पैदा हो गई थी। यह मसला 2014 में अंतरराष्ट्रीय मध्यस्थता के जरिये सुलझा। इसमें भारत में न्यू मूर द्वीप और उस करीब 80 फीसदी पानी पर अपना दावा छोड़ दिया, जिसका उसने दावा किया था। इस तरह दोनों पड़ोसी देशों के बीच अच्छे संबंधों के बीच आने वाली एक बाधा दूर हो गई, इसलिए अब देशों में दोनों देशों के बीच थू-सीमा और समुद्री सीमा से जुड़े मुद्दों का समाधान हो गया है।

हिंद-प्रशांत क्षेत्र में हमारे हितों के लिए बांग्लादेश महत्त्वपूर्ण क्यों है ? बांग्लादेश बंगाल की खाड़ी में अंडमान द्वीप समूह के उत्तर में करीब 600 मील दूरी पर स्थित है, जहां चटगांव और काँक्स बाजार जैसे प्रमुख बंदरगाह हैं। ऐसे में बांग्लादेश हमारी पूर्व

समुद्री सीमा पर एक महत्त्वपूर्ण तटीय देश है। बांग्लादेश और म्यांमार के बंदरगाह बुनियादी ढांचा विकास के रूप में चीन के साथ सुरक्षा संबंध हैं। इसमें दोनों को सैन्य एवं नौसैन्य साजोसामान की आपूर्ति भी शामिल की जानी चाहिए, जिसमें दो सबमरीन प्रमुख हैं। चीन के जंगी जहाज बहुधा चटगांव आते-जाते रहे हैं। अगर यह संबंध आगे और मजबूत होता है तो यह भारत के लिए नुकसानदेह होगा।

बांग्लादेश चीन के बेल्ट एंड रोड इनिशिएटिव का समर्थक है। चीन लंबे और दुरुह मलक्का जलडमरूमध्य के रास्ते से बचने के लिए अपने युनान प्रांत को हिंद महासागर से जोड़ना चाहता है। उसे इसके लिए बांग्लादेश के चटगांव तक पहुंचने की जरूरत है। अगर ऐसा होता है तो हमें चीन की नौसेना और जहाजों की बंगाल की खाड़ी और अंडमान द्वीपसमूह के आसपास मौजूदगी बढ़ी हुई देखने को मिलेगी। भारत और बांग्लादेश के बीच मौजूदा सकारात्मक माहौल ने सभी संभावित नकारात्मक कारकों को पीछे धकेल दिया है। लेकिन ऐसा कुछ नहीं किया जाना चाहिए, जिससे स्थिति बिल्कुल विपरीत हो जाए।

नौसेना प्रमुख ने इस महीने की शुरुआत में खुलासा किया था कि चीनी अनुसंधान जहाज हमारे विशेष आर्थिक क्षेत्र में घुस आए और उन्हें जाने के लिए कहना पड़ा। ऐसी

इसलिए भारत के हितों के लिए बांग्लादेश के साथ मैत्रीपूर्ण संबंध अहम हैं। अच्छी बात यह है कि बांग्लादेश प्रत्येक आर्थिक और सामाजिक पैमाने पर अच्छा प्रदर्शन कर रहा है। इनमें से कई में वह भारत से भी आगे है। दोनों देशों के बीच असहमति के क्षेत्र भी बहुत कम हैं।

इसी पृष्ठभूमि में हमें हाल के घटनाक्रम को देखना चाहिए। पाकिस्तान के अलावा बांग्लादेश को हिंदू अल्पसंख्यकों को प्रताड़ित करने वाला कहने से बांग्लादेश में अच्छा संदेश नहीं गया है। इसमें कोई चोंकाने वाली बात नहीं है कि उसने अपना मौजूदा रख ही दोहराया है। अच्छी बात यह है कि शेख हसीना ने खुद कोई टिप्पणी नहीं की। यह बताता है कि वह भारत के साथ संबंधों को कितनी अहमियत देती हैं। हालांकि बड़े मंत्रियों के दौरों को रद्द कर वांछित ‘संदेश’ दे दिया गया।

उम्मीद है कि इनसे बयानबाजी को कम करने में मदद मिलेगी क्योंकि हिंद-प्रशांत क्षेत्र में स्थित और भारत के लिए महत्त्वपूर्ण देशों में बांग्लादेश को सबसे शीर्ष पर रखा जाना चाहिए। भारत के नजदीकी पड़ोसी देशों में बांग्लादेश ही एकमात्र ऐसा देश है, जो ‘दोस्त’ कहलाने लायक है। अगर इस दज्ज में बदलाव हुआ तो यह हमारे हितों के लिए मददगार नहीं होगा।

*(लेखक पूर्वी नौसेना कमान के पूर्व कमांडर इन चीफ हैं। वह राष्ट्रीय सुरक्षा सलाहकार बोर्ड के सदस्य भी रह चुके हैं।)*

# निकाय अफसरों और पार्षदों पर कितना चलेगा अदालत का डंडा

**देश** में शायद ही कोई ऐसा शहर हो जहां पानी की आपूर्ति या सीवरेज प्रवाह की संतोषजनक व्यवस्था हो। नगरपालिकाओं के अधिकारी आमतौर पर आम नागरिकों की शिकायतों के प्रति असावेदनशील होते हैं और कभी कोई आवश्यक कदम उठाने में शीघ्रता नहीं दिखाते। यहां तक कि प्रदूषण नियंत्रण बोर्ड भी अपनी जिम्मेदारी से बचते हैं और पर्यावरण संबंधी कानून इसलिए नहीं लागू किए जाते हैं क्योंकि ऐसे मामलों में कहीं न कहीं स्थानीय बाहुबली शामिल होते हैं और कानूनी प्रक्रिया का क्या नतीजा निकलेगा, यह तय नहीं होता। परंतु अब सर्वोच्च न्यायालय ने कहा है कि नगरपालिका पार्षदों और नगर निगमों के प्रमुख अधिकारियों पर फौजदारी मुकदमा चलाया जा सकता है। यह निर्णय कर्नाटक प्रदूषण नियंत्रण बोर्ड और बेंगलूरु तथा अन्य नगरपालिकाओं के सात आयुक्तों ( जो अलग-अलग समय पर पद स्थापित रहे) के बीच 14 वर्ष से चली आ रही कानूनी लड़ाई में दिया गया। यह मामला था कर्नाटक प्रदूषण नियंत्रण बोर्ड और बी हीरा नाइक के बीच का।

यह निर्णय भी महत्त्वपूर्ण है क्योंकि इसमें कंपनी शब्द की व्याख्या की गई है और इसके दायरे का विस्तार करते हुए वैधानिक संस्थाओं को इसमें शामिल किया गया है। अदालत ने जोर देकर कहा कि नगर निगम के सरकारी विभाग होने की दलील दी जाती है लेकिन ऐसा नहीं है। बल्कि यह एक कॉर्पोरेट संस्थान है। चूंकि धारा 47 के तहत सभी निगम संस्थान कंपनी की परिभाषा के अधीन आते हैं इसलिए नगर परिषद भी इस दायरे में शामिल हैं। ऐसे में हर उस व्यक्ति का उत्तरदायित्व बनता है जो अपराध घटित होते वक्त प्रभारी रहा हो और कंपनी के कारोबारी आचरण के लिए जिम्मेदार रहा हो। सजा से बचने के लिए उस व्यक्ति को यह साबित करना होगा कि अपराध बिना उसकी जानकारी के हुआ या उसने अपनी तरफ से उचित सतर्कता बरती थी। जाहिर है जो पद पर रहे हों उनके लिए इसे साबित करने का बड़ा बोझ था। नगर पार्षदों की बात करें तो अब उनकी जवाबदेही कंपनी अधिनियम तथा नेगोशिएबल इंस्ट्रुमेंट्स ऐक्ट के तहत निर्देशकों

**अदालती आईना**

**बड़ा सवाल यह है कि क्या निरामकों में इतना साहस होगा कि वे शहरों के नामियों- गिरामियों और संस्थाओं के खिलाफ अभिराोग चला सकें**

की जवाबदेही से अधिक है।

उच्च न्यायालय ने इन अधिकारियों पर अभियोग समाप्त करते हुए कहा कि वे विभागों के प्रमुख थे, न कि किसी कंपनी के कार्याधिकारी। ऐसे में अभियोजन को सरकार की मंजूरी भी आवश्यक थी। सर्वोच्च न्यायालय ने कहा कि उच्च न्यायालय गलत था और इन पर कार्रवाई के लिए सरकार की मंजूरी की आवश्यकता नहीं। बोर्ड ने आरोपित आयुक्तों को उपचारित सीवेंज छोड़ने की मंजूरी प्रदान करने पर पता चल जाता है कि उस फैसले का जमीनी अमल न के बराबर हो रहा है। उसके बाद आया एम सी मेहता का मामला जिसमें अदालत अभी भी आदेश जारी कर रही है। सन 1996 में एमआईटी से स्नातक करने वाली पहली महिला इंजीनियर अलिम्त्रा पटेल ठोस इज्जीनियर अलिम्त्रा पटेल ठोस इज्जीनियर को लेकर अदालत गई। साल दर साल आए अदालती आदेशों के बावजूद हालात और खराब ही हुए हैं। हाल में सरकार ने इस विषय पर 850 पृष्ठों का एक शपथ-पत्र दिया है। न्यायाधीशों ने कहा कि कागजों का यह बंडल अपने आप में ठोस कचरा है।

अब तक प्रदूषण फैलाने वालों के खिलाफ सबसे प्रमुख कारक सामाजिक कदम और क्षतिपूर्ति के होते थे। कर्नाटक का फैसला प्रदूषण बोर्डों को यह अधिकार देता है कि वे नगर निकायों के अधिकारियों के खिलाफ कदम उठा सकें। जनहित याचिकाओं में दिए जाने वाले निर्णयों की तुलना में आपराधिक प्रक्रिया अधिक प्रभावी साबित होगी। बहरहाल, यह प्रबंधन या परिवार के फिर् से चुन लिए जाने, सर्वसम्मति से चुनाव न होना और एजीएम में सार्थक चर्चा के अभाव से इसके साफ संकेत मिलते हैं। अब सवाल यह उठता है कि शहरी सहकारी बैंकों के संचालन में भात क्यों एक प्रभावी तंत्र बनाने में विफल रहा है, जबकि समाजवादी अर्थी तरह से समझ लिए गए हैं। इसकी वजह सहकारी संपठनों की राजनीतिक संस्थाएं हैं और उनकी समस्या को सुलझाने के लिए राजनीतिक इच्छाशक्ति की जरूरत है। लिहाजा सहकारी बैंकों में सुधार के लिए राजनीतिक इच्छाशक्ति अहम है।

*आरुषि गुप्ता, फरोदाबाद*

### कानाफूसी



##### गोवंश सुधार

मध्य प्रदेश के गोपालकों के पास अब अवसर है कि वे अपनी गाायों के लिए बेहतर साथी तलाश कर सकते हैं। दरअसल प्रदेश के पशुपालन विभाग ने 200 से अधिक उन्नत नस्ल के सांडों का डेटाबेस तैयार किया है। इस डेटाबेस में उनके बारे में सूचनाओं को अलग-अलग खाकों में बांटा गया है। इनमें पहली जानकारी उनकी नस्ल को लेकर है। दूसरी श्रेणी में उस नस्ल की गायाों की दुग्ध उत्पादन क्षमता तथा दूध में वसा की मात्रा है और तीसरी जानकारी बीमारियों के बारे में है। विभाग का कहना है कि इस डायरेक्टरी को नियमित अंतराल पर अद्यतन किया जाएगा और इसे इंटरनेट पर भी डाला जाएगा ताकि लोग इसका लाभ उठा सकें।

##### नए वर्ष का तोहफा

महाराष्ट्र में नई सरकार बन चुकी है। प्रदेश की नई सरकार ने न केवल क्रिसमस के अवसर पर होटलों को सुबह पांच बजे तक खुला रखने की इजाजत दी बल्कि नए वर्ष पर भी होटलों को इसी तरह खुला रखने की अनुमति प्रदान की गई है। मुख्यमंत्री उद्धव ठाकरे के बेटे आदित्य ठाकरे ने वादा किया है कि आने वाले दिनों में होटलों को 24 घंटे खुला रखने की इजाजत होगी और यह मुंबई को वैश्विक शहर बनाने की दिशा में उठाया गया पहला कदम होगा।



### आपका पक्ष

#### सोशल मीडिया का सदुपयोग जरूरी

संविधान द्वारा प्रदत्त मौलिक अधिकारों में हमें अभिव्यक्ति की स्वतंत्रता मिली हुई है। आज सोशल मीडिया के बढ़ते चलन से हर कोई अपनी बात रखने लगा है। लेकिन सोशल मीडिया का सकारात्मक उपयोग बढ़ने के साथ-साथ इसका नकारात्मक उपयोग बढ़ने से यह सरकार के लिए गले की फांस बनता जा रहा है। इससे निपटना सरकार और प्रशासन के लिए बड़ी चुनौती बन गई है। सोशल मीडिया का दुरुपयोग कई रूपों में किया जा रहा है। इसके जरिये सामाजिक और धार्मिक उन्माद फैलाने के अलावा राजनीतिक हित के लिए गलत जानकारीयां और भ्रम फैलाया जा रहा है। इससे समाज में हिंसा को बढ़ावा मिल रहा है। सोशल मीडिया की भूमिका सामाजिक समरसता को बिगाड़ने और सकारात्मक सोच के बजाय समाज को बांटने वाली सोच को बढ़ावा देने वाली हो गई है। विश्व आर्थिक मंच ने अपनी जोखिम रिपोर्ट में बताया है कि



सोशल मीडिया के जरिये झूठी सूचना का प्रसार उभरते जोखिमों में से एक है। लेकिन सवाल है कि एक प्रगतिशील समाज और देश के लिए यह कितना उचित है कि वह आए दिन गलत सूचनाओं को बनाए और साझा करे ? सोशल मीडिया की वजह से फैल रही नफरत से देश संघर्ष कर रहा है। लेकिन यह भी सच है कि भारत में सोशल

**सोशल मीडिया में अफवाहों के प्रसार पर रोक लगाने के लिए कानून बनने चाहिए**

मीडिया के जरिये कई सकारात्मक कार्यों को भी अंजाम दिया गया है। वर्ष 2011 में अन्ना आंदोलन को मजबूती प्रदान करने और निर्भया कांड के बाद एक सफल आंदोलन

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@bsmail.in पत्र/ईमेल में अपना डाक पता और टेलीफोन नंबर अवश्य लिखें।

#### सहकारी बैंकों में नए प्रबंधन की दरकार

सहकारी बैंकों की सहकारिता पर एक अध्ययन में यह पाया गया कि बैंकों के सहकारी चरित्र में गिरावट आ रही है। इन बैंकों की एजीएम में कम उपस्थिति, नए सदस्यों से स्वीकार करने में कई तरह की रोक टोक वाले दस्तूर, नए प्रबंधन के चुनावों में कम वोटिंग होना, एक ही प्रबंधन या परिवार के फिर् से चुन लिए जाने, सर्वसम्मति से चुनाव न होना और एजीएम में सार्थक चर्चा के अभाव से इसके साफ संकेत मिलते हैं। अब सवाल यह उठता है कि शहरी सहकारी बैंकों के संचालन में भात क्यों एक प्रभावी तंत्र बनाने में विफल रहा है, जबकि समाजवादी अर्थी तरह से समझ लिए गए हैं। इसकी वजह सहकारी संपठनों की राजनीतिक संस्थाएं हैं और उनकी समस्या को सुलझाने के लिए राजनीतिक इच्छाशक्ति की जरूरत है। लिहाजा सहकारी बैंकों में सुधार के लिए राजनीतिक इच्छाशक्ति अहम है।





दैनिक जागरण

नम्रता से पेश आने में कुछ भी खर्च नहीं होता

## सेना प्रमुख की खरी बात

सेना प्रमुख जनरल बिपिन रावत के इस सीधे-सपाट बयान पर हंगामा खड़ा किया जाना हैरान करता है कि लोगों को गलत दिशा दिखाने वाले नेता नहीं कहे जा सकते। आखिर इसमें गलत क्या है? क्या सेना प्रमुख के बयान पर बेवजह बिफर रहे लोग उनके मुख से ऐसा कुछ सुनना चाह रहे थे कि लोगों को गलत दिशा दिखाने वाले भी नेता कहे जाने चाहिए? सेना प्रमुख तो साधुवाद के पात्र हैं कि उन्होंने राजनीतिक गेटियाँ संकते और हिंसा का माहौल बनाते नेताओं को आईना दिखाया और बिना किसी लाग-लपेट यह भी कहा कि हमने देखा है कि कॉलेज और विश्वविद्यालयों में जो विरोध प्रदर्शन हो रहे हैं उनमें हिंसा हो रही है। यदि उन्होंने हिंसा और आगजनी करती भीड़ का नेतृत्व करने वालों को सही नेतृत्व की संज्ञा देने से इन्कार कर दिया तो विपक्षी नेताओं को मिर्ची क्यों लग रही है? कहीं इसलिए तो नहीं कि वे खुद भी उन नेताओं में शामिल हैं जो हिंसा और अराजकता के लिए लोगों को भड़काकर सड़कों पर उतार रहे हैं? यदि नहीं तो फिर उन नेताओं की गिनती करके बताएं जो आगजनी और पत्थरबाजी की निंदा कर रहे हों? जिन्हें यह लगता है कि सेना प्रमुख विरोध प्रदर्शन की आलोचना कर रहे हैं उन्हें उनके वक्तव्य को फिर से सुनना और समझना चाहिए। उन्होंने विरोध के नाम पर फैलाई जा रही हिंसा और अराजकता की आलोचना की है। ऐसा करना तो हर भारतीय का धर्म है। नागरिकता कानून के विरोध के बहाने जो अराजकता हुई उसने देश की आंतरिक सुरक्षा को लेकर भी सवाल खड़े किए।

आखिर कोई यह सोच भी कैसे सकता है कि आंतरिक सुरक्षा पर असर डालने वाली व्यापक हिंसा पर सेना प्रमुख मौन रहें? किसी भी सेन्य अधिकारी से यह अपेक्षा क्यों की जानी चाहिए कि वह इस भय से आंतरिक सुरक्षा पर असर डालने वाली घटनाओं पर बोलने से बचे कि कुछ नेता उसके बयान की मनमानी व्याख्या करके हाय-तौबा मचा सकते हैं? बिपिन रावत से तो यह अपेक्षा बिलकुल भी नहीं की जानी चाहिए, क्योंकि वह राष्ट्रीय सुरक्षा को प्रभावित करने वाले हर मसले पर बेबाकी से बोलने के लिए जाने जाते हैं। यह हास्यास्पद है कि जो नेता सेना प्रमुख को यह नसीहत दे रहे हैं कि उन्हें संभलकर बोलना चाहिए उन्हें सबसे पहले यह देखना चाहिए कि वे खुद कितना संभल कर बोलते हैं? अगर कोई विपक्षी नेता यह कहता है कि नागरिकता कानून के विरोध में अराजकता नहीं फैलाई गई तो यह निरा झूठ ही नहीं, देश की आंखों में धूल झाँकने की कोशिश भी है। बिपिन रावत ने इसी कोशिश को इशारे से बेनकाब किया है।

## हिमाचल की उपलब्धि

हिमाचल प्रदेश बेशक छोटा राज्य है, लेकिन इसकी उपलब्धियां छोटी नहीं हैं। प्रदेश कई क्षेत्रों में बेहतर प्रदर्शन कर दूसरे राज्यों के लिए प्रेरणास्रोत बना है। सीमित आर्थिक संसाधनों के बावजूद हिमाचल ने बड़े राज्यों को चुनौती पेश की है। विकास की दौड़ में आगे रहने की जित और शासन-प्रशासन के गंभीर प्रयासों ने प्रदेश को इस मुकाम तक पहुंचाने में अहम भूमिका निभाई है। प्रदेश की सरकारों का दृष्टिकोण विकास के साथ बेहतर शासन देने के लिए प्रयासरत रहा है। शिक्षा, स्वास्थ्य के क्षेत्र में प्रदेश को मिले पुरस्कार इस बात की पुष्टि करते हैं कि प्रदेश में जनता की अपेक्षाएं पूरी करने की हरसंभव कोशिश की जा रही है। अब केंद्र सरकार द्वारा देश में राज्यों के शासन का आकलन करने वाला सुशासन सूचकांक (जीजीआइ) जारी किया, जिसमें हिमाचल प्रदेश ने पर्वतीय व पूर्वोत्तर राज्यों में पहला स्थान हासिल किया है। समग्र रैंकिंग में प्रदेश ने शीर्ष पर रहकर प्रदेशवासियों को गौरवान्वित होने का अवसर दिया है। अलग-अलग श्रेणियों में भी प्रदेश का प्रदर्शन बेहतर रहा है। मानव संसाधन विकास क्षेत्र, सार्वजनिक क्षांचागत क्षेत्र व न्यायिक एवं जन सुरक्षा क्षेत्र हिमाचल प्रदेश को सर्वश्रेष्ठ आंका गया है। अब आवश्यकता उन क्षेत्रों पर ध्यान देने की है, जहां प्रदेश अपेक्षाकृत पिछड़ा है ताकि स्थिति को और भी बेहतर बनाया जा सके।

कृषि एवं सहयोगी क्षेत्र, वाणिज्य एवं उद्योग क्षेत्र, जनस्वास्थ्य क्षेत्र व सामाजिक कल्याण एवं विकास क्षेत्र में काफी कुछ किया जाना जरूरी है ताकि इस दौड़ में हम किसी से पीछे न रहें। प्रदेश में उद्योगों को बढ़ावा देने के लिए सरकार बेहतर प्रयास कर रही है। ग्लोबल इन्वेस्टर्स मीट के दौरान हुए 93 हजार करोड़ से अधिक के एमओयू इस बात की पुष्टि करते हैं कि निवेशकों का विश्वास जीतने में सरकार सफल रही है। इसी तरह कृषि व सहयोगी क्षेत्र में किसानों-बागवानों को सुविधाएं दी जा रही हैं। कोई भी पुरस्कार या उपलब्धि इतारने का मौका देती है, साथ ही और बेहतर करने की प्रेरणा देती है। साथ ही यह मंथन के लिए प्रेरित करती है कि जहां हम चूके हैं, उन कमियों को कैसे दूर किया जाए। उम्मीद है कि शासन-प्रशासन इस दिशा में प्रयासों को तेजी देंगे। आर्थिक संसाधन प्रदेश के विकास की गति में रोड़ा न बनें, इसके लिए भी आय सृजन के अवसरों की तलाश करनी होगी और उन्हें भुनाना होगा।

**सुशासन सूचकांक में हिमाचल प्रदेश का पूर्वोत्तर व पर्वतीय राज्यों में अव्वल आना बड़ी उपलब्धि है। इससे भविष्य में बेहतर करने की प्रेरणा मिलेगी**

# नागरिकता कानून को सही संदर्भ में देखने से इन्कार



डॉ. एके वर्मा

आखिर देश हित की हर बात को मुस्लिम विरोध के चश्मे से क्यों देखा जा रहा है? क्या देश हित और मुस्लिम हित में कोई अंतर्विरोध है?

नागरिकता संशोधन कानून यानी सीएए, राष्ट्रीय नागरिकता रजिस्टर यानी एनआरसी और राष्ट्रीय जनसंख्या रजिस्टर यानी एनपीआर से जुड़े मसलों को गड़ड़-मड़ड़ करने से भारतीय लोकतंत्र असहमति, विवाद और संघर्ष के मकड़जाल में फंस गया है। देश में बेचैनी का आलम है। जहां तक एनपीआर की बात है तो यह कांग्रेस सरकार में 2010 में भी बना और 2015 में मोदी सरकार में संशोधित हुआ। एनपीआर को नागरिकता कानून, 1955 के अंतर्गत बनाया गया। मोदी-2 सरकार ने जुलाई 2019 में ही एनपीआर को अपडेट करने का नोटिफिकेशन जारी किया था। इतना ही नहीं बंगाल और केरल सहित सभी राज्य भी इसका नोटिफिकेशन कर चुके हैं। इसके बावजूद इन राज्यों सहित अन्य राज्यों में एनपीआर का विरोध समझ से परे है और एनआरसी तो अभी दूर की कौड़ी है। अनेक दलों द्वारा नागरिकता कानून को मुस्लिम विरोधी और संविधान विरोधी ठहराने की कोशिश की जा रही है। क्या वास्तव में ऐसा है? यदि सीएए या कोई भी कानून मुस्लिम या संविधान विरोधी हो तो उसे सर्वोच्च न्यायालय में चुनौती दी जा सकती है। सीएए को तो दे भी दे गई है। आखिर इसके बाद भी सीएए के विरोध के लिए हिंसा और सड़क पर प्रदर्शन क्यों?

प्रत्येक कानून का एक संदर्भ और उद्देश्य होता है। सीएए का भी विशेष संदर्भ और उद्देश्य है। सांप्रदायिक आधार पर विभाजन

से पाकिस्तान और बांग्लादेश मुस्लिम बहुल राज्य बने जिन्होंने इस्लाम को अपना राजधर्म घोषित किया। इससे वहां गैर-इस्लामिक लोगों मुख्यतः हिंदू, सिख, बौद्ध, जैन, पारसी और ईसाइयों पर अत्याचार होने लगे। इन देशों में उनकी संख्या लगातार घटती गई। पाकिस्तान में हिंदुओं की जनसंख्या 12 से घटकर 2 प्रतिशत और बांग्लादेश में 22 से घट कर 8 प्रतिशत हो गई है। मोदी सरकार ने 2015 और 2016 में दो अधिसूचनाएं जारी कीं जिनमें कहा गया कि बिना वैध दस्तावेजों के गैर-कानूनी रूप से रह रहे ऐसे हिंदू, सिख, बौद्ध, जैन, पारसी और ईसाई लोगों को देश से नहीं निकाला जाएगा। वर्तमान सीएए उसी तीन वर्ष पुरानी अधिसूचना को कानूनी जामा पहनाने का प्रयास है। इसमें उक्त तीन देशों के मुस्लिमों को शरीक करने का कोई औचित्य नहीं बनता। खुफिया ब्यूरो के अनुसार इससे तत्काल 31,313 लोगों को नागरिकता मिलेगी, लेकिन गृह-मंत्रालय के अनुसार इससे गैर-कानूनी रूप से रह रहे लाखों लोगों को लाभ होगा।

यदि पड़ोसी देशों के मुस्लिम समाज के कुछ लोगों जैसे अहमदिया और बहाई का पकिस्तान या बांग्लादेश में उत्पीड़न होता है और यदि वे भारत आना चाहते हैं तो नागरिकता कानून में इसके लिए प्रावधान है। इसी के तहत मोदी सरकार ने पिछले छह वर्षों में 2830 पाकिस्तानी, 912 अफगानी और 172 बांग्लादेशियों को भारतीय नागरिकता दी है। राजनीतिक दलों ने भ्रम और भय यह



अवधेश राजपूत

पैदा किया कि सीएए भारत में अल्पसंख्यक को मुस्लिमों को लक्ष्य करता है। सीएए तो पाकिस्तान, बांग्लादेश और अफगानिस्तान के नागरिकों के लिए है। देखा जाए तो सीएए का विरोध दलितों और महिलाओं का विरोध भी है, क्योंकि इन तीनों देशों में उत्पीड़न का शिकार ज्यादातर दलित और महिलाएं ही हैं।

यूरोपियन यूनियन संसद की मई 2019 रिपोर्ट के अनुसार पाकिस्तान में प्रति वर्ष एक हजार लड़कियों का अपहरण कर उन्हें मुसलमान बनाया जाता है। भारतीय नेताओं और दलों को अल्पसंख्यकों के प्रति अपनी संवेदना का दायरा कुछ बढ़ाना चाहिए और सीएए के परिप्रेक्ष्य को समझना चाहिए जिसमें राजनीति से इनर एक मानवीय पहलू भी है। अलबत्ता यह जरूर है कि मुस्लिमों को भड़काने के लिए एनआरसी का कनेक्शन काफी है, क्योंकि असम का अनुभव बताता है कि लाखों लोग असम एनआरसी से बाहर रह गए। असम का मसला अलग है और सर्वोच्च न्यायालय के आदेश पर वहां एनआरसी बनाया गया जिसमें बांग्लादेश से आए बहुत से उत्पीड़ित

अल्पसंख्यक छूट गए। अब सीएए में 31 दिसंबर 2014 तक आए अवैध घुसपैठियों को छूट देकर बंगलादेशी हिंदुओं, सिख, बौद्ध, जैन, पारसी और ईसाइयों को नागरिकता दी जा सकती है। असम में जो हिंसक प्रदर्शन हुए उसके पीछे 'स्थानीय-जन बनाम बाहरी घुसपैठिये' विवाद रहा जिसमें मूलतः आर्थिक-राजनीतिक हितों का मुद्दा सबके मन में हावी था कि कहीं 1997 से घोषित बांग्लादेशी 'डी-वोटर्स' देश की नागरिकता हासिल कर स्थानीय लोगों पर वर्चस्व न बना लें।

प्रत्येक देश को अपना राष्ट्रीय नागरिकता रजिस्टर (एनआरसी) बनाने का अधिकार है। भारत में प्रथम एनआरसी 1951 तत्कालीन गृहमंत्री सी राजगोपालाचारी के नेतृत्व में बना, लेकिन उसके बाद से आज तक उसका नवीनीकरण नहीं किया गया जबकि असम में एनआरसी 2014 में सर्वोच्च न्यायालय के आदेश पर और उसकी देखरेख में बना। वह भी ध्यान रहे कि पाकिस्तान, बांग्लादेश और मलेशिया आदि अनेक देशों में भी 'एनआरसी' व्यवस्था लागू है। आखिर भारत में 1951 के

## असमंजस के लिए कौन जिम्मेदार

आजकल देश में नागरिकता संशोधन अधिनियम (सीएए) और नागरिकों का राष्ट्रीय रजिस्टर (एनआरसी) को लेकर जो कुछ चल रहा है उसे देख कर अंग्रेजी के प्रसिद्ध साहित्यकार और नाटककार विलियम शेक्सपियर के प्रसिद्ध नाटक हेमलेट की जानी मानी लाइन-टू बी और नॉट टू बी की याद आती है। इसका संदर्भ उस बात से है जो देश के गृहमंत्री अमित शाह पिछले कई महीनों से कह रहे थे और जो प्रधानमंत्री नरेंद्र मोदी ने इसी महीने की 22 तारीख को दिल्ली के रामलीला मैदान में कहा। इन दोनों नेताओं की बातों को सुनकर असमंजस यह होता है कि एनआरसी नाम की कोई चीज है (जैसा कि गृहमंत्री ने संसद के भीतर-बाहर बार-बार कहा) या फिर हम एक सपना देख रहे थे, जैसा कि प्रधानमंत्री ने देश के सबसे चर्चित मैदान में भरी सभा में कहा। उनके अनुसार एनआरसी के बारे में तो अभी कोई बात तक नहीं हुई। यह मानना असंभव नहीं तो अत्यंत कठिन अवश्य है कि गृहमंत्री के एनआरसी पर एक से अधिक बयान गलत या फिर झूठ हैं। इसके साथ ही प्रधानमंत्री द्वारा सार्वजनिक तौर पर की गई घोषणा पर विश्वास करना भी ठीक नहीं होगा। आखिर देश असमंजस की इस स्थिति में कैसे पहुंचा और इसके लिए कौन जिम्मेदार है?

असम में एनआरसी तो एक पुरानी ऐतिहासिक विरासत है जिसे उच्चतम न्यायलय ने एक नया जीवनदान देना उचित समझा। जैसे-जैसे असम में एनआरसी का काम चलता गया उसके नए-नए पहलू सामने आने लगे। इस सिलसिले में सतारूढ़ दल को महसूस हुआ कि इस प्रक्रिया को उसके 1996 के लोकसभा चुनाव के घोषणा पत्र में किए गए वादे को पूरा करने के लिए इस्तेमाल किया जा सकता है। इसके पीछे यह इरादा था कि जो लोग देश में गैरकानूनी या अवैध तरीकों से आए हूय हैं और जिन्हें सामान्यतः घुसपैठिया भी कहा जाता है उन्हें खोजकर निकालना और देश से बाहर भेजना। इस प्रक्रिया को 1996 के घोषणा पत्र में डिटेक्शन, डिलीशन और डिपेटेशन कहा गया था। अवैध रूप से आए लोगों को खोजने के लिए तो एनआरसी एक बना-बनाया तरीका था। इसके बाद गैर-कानूनी तरीकों से देश में आए लोगों के नाम को एनआरसी से हटाने या सम्मिलित न करने और अवैध घोषित करने के लिए एक कानूनी तरीके की जरूरत समझी गई। यह तरीका बना नागरिकता अधिनियम में संशोधन करके। संशोधन में लिखे जाने



वाले शब्द अत्यंत महत्वपूर्ण थे। फैसला यह हुआ कि जो हिंदू, सिख, बौद्ध, जैन, पारसी और ईसाई समुदाय के लोग अफगानिस्तान, बांग्लादेश या पाकिस्तान से अवैध रूप से भारत में आए हैं उन्हें भारतीय नागरिकता प्रदान की जाएगी, अगर वे भारत में कम से कम पांच साल से रह रहे हों।

कभी-कभी होता यह है कि जो कहा गया या लिखा गया वह उतना महत्वपूर्ण नहीं होता जितना वह जो नहीं कहा या लिखा गया। नागरिकता कानून में संशोधन में भी ऐसा ही हुआ। जिन समुदायों के नाम इसमें लिखे गए उनसे अधिक महत्वपूर्ण वह समुदाय था जिसका नाम नहीं लिखा गया। वह समुदाय कौन सा है, यह बताने की तो आवश्यकता नहीं होनी चाहिए, लेकिन पारदर्शिता के नाते यह समझना

होगा कि वह समुदाय है मुस्लिम। इसका औचित्य बताया गया कि ये तीनों देश अधिकृत रूप से इस्लामी देश हैं। इसलिए इन देशों में मुसलमानों का धार्मिक उत्पीड़न नहीं हो सकता। यह औचित्य कहां तक ठीक है या नहीं, इसका फैसला जनता स्वयं करें, लेकिन यह याद रखने की बात है कि इस्लाम में भी कई उप-समुदाय हैं जिनमें से कुछ आपस में एक-दूसरे का बहुत विरोध करते हैं। यह भी कहा जा रहा है कि अगर एनआरसी है भी तो उसमें और नागरिकता संशोधन अधिनियम में कोई रिश्ता नहीं है। रिश्ता है तो कैसे और अगर नहीं है तो ये दोनों लागू कैसे किए जाएंगे, यह देखना पड़ेगा। उदाहरण के लिए असम के आंकड़ों को लेकर देखते हैं कि यह काम कैसे होगा।

असम में एनआरसी हुआ और लगभग 3.3 करोड़ लोगों के नाम उसमें आए और लगभग 19 लाख के नहीं आए। जिन 19 लाख के नाम नहीं आए उनमें से लगभग 13 लाख हिंदू, सिख, बौद्ध, जैन, पारसी और ईसाई हैं और शेष छह लाख मुसलमान। कानूनी ट्रिब्यूनल के तहत ये सब 19 लाख लोग फॉरेन नेशनल ट्रिब्यूनल यानी विदेशियों के लिए गठित विशेष अदालतों में अपने नाम एनआरसी में शामिल करने के लिए याचिकाएं द सकते हैं। नागरिकता कानून यानी सीएए का असर या काम यहाँ से आरंभ होता है। इस संशोधन के कारण इन 19 लाख में से जो 13 लाख हिंदू, सिख, बौद्ध, जैन, पारसी और ईसाई हैं और जो 31 दिसंबर 2014 से पहले भारत में प्रवेश कर चुके थे उन्हें तो अवैध प्रवासी नहीं गिना जाएगा और इस कारण भारत में पांच साल रहने के बाद वे भारतीय नागरिकता के हकदार होंगे, लेकिन जो छह लाख बाकी बचेगे उन्हें अवैध प्रवासी गिना जाएगा और इसीलिए उन्हें ट्रिब्यूनल का सहारा लेना पड़ेगा। वहाँ जो होगा सो होगा। अब तक जो अनुभव असम में गठित इन ट्रिब्यूनल का हुआ है वह तो उत्साहजनक नहीं लगता। आगे क्या होगा, यह कहना कठिन है, लेकिन दो बातें तो स्पष्ट हैं। एक तो यह कि 1996 के घोषणा पत्र में किए गए वादे को पूरा करने के लिए एनआरसी और सीएए, दोनों की आवश्यकता है और दूसरी, सीएए धर्मनिरपेक्ष नहीं है। धर्मनिरपेक्षता भारत के संविधान का अभिन्न और अटूट हिस्सा है। प्रश्न यह उठता है कि क्या संविधान में ऐसा परिवर्तन, इस तरीके से करना देश की जनता को स्वीकार है?

(लेखक आइआइएम अहमदाबाद के प्रोफेसर, डीन और डायरेक्टर ईचार्ज रहे हैं) **response@jagran.com**



ऊर्जा

वाणी का महत्व

वाणी व्यक्तित्व का आभूषण है। वाणी से ही व्यक्ति के गुणों की पहचान होती है। गीता में तीन प्रकार के तपों की चर्चा है। इनमें शारीरिक तप, मानसिक तप तथा वाचिक तप शामिल हैं। वाचिक तप का अंश वाणी के प्रवाह से है। इसके संबंध में कहा गया है कि उद्देग उत्पन्न न करने वाले वाक्य, हित कारक तथा सत्य पर आधारित वचन एवं स्वाध्याय वाचिक तप हैं। वास्तव में वाणी को संयम में रखने वाला व्यक्ति शिक्षर पर पहुंचता है। इसके विपरीत अनियंत्रित वाणी वाले व्यक्ति को जीवन में सफलता तो दूर अक्सर तिरस्कार का सामना करना पड़ता है। जो व्यक्ति सदैव मीठा बोलता है उसके मित्रों और शुभचिंतकों का दायरा बढ़ता जाता है। मृदुभाषी होने की स्थिति में लोगों के सहयोग और समर्थन में वह अत्यधिक ऊर्जा का संग्रह कर लेता है, जबकि कटु वचन बोलने वाला व्यक्ति अकेला पड़ जाता है। वाणी में आध्यात्मिक और भौतिक, दोनों प्रकार के ऐश्वर्य हैं। मधुरता से कही गई बात कल्याणकारक रहती है, किंतु वही कटु शब्दों में कही जाए तो अन्धरा का कारण बन सकती है। कल वाक्यों का त्याग करने में अपना और औरों का भी भला है। वाणी की शालीनता और शीतलता मनुष्य के व्यक्तित्व का आकर्षण बढ़ाती है। मधुर एवं कर्पाप्य वाणी बिगड़े काम बना देती है। मीठी वाणी सफलता के द्वार खोल देती है और तमाम उलझनों को सुलझा देती है। इसके उलट कर्कश वाणी से समस्याएं और गहराने लगती हैं। बने-बनाए काम बिगड़ने लगते हैं। इसीलिए हमें सदैव मधुवाणी को आत्मसात करना चाहिए। किसी मूर्तिकार को तरह हमें अपनी वाणी को तराशते रहना चाहिए। बोलने से पहले हमें शब्दों को तोल लेना चाहिए। हर शब्द में मिठास और शालीनता का रंग भरकर मुख से दूसरों के बीच रखना चाहिए। आपको वाणी ऐसी होनी चाहिए कि अगर कोई सुने तो वाह-वाह करे। संत काव्य में कहा भी है कि 'ऐसी वाणी बोलिये,मन का आपा खोय। औरन को शीतल करें,आपहु शीतल होय।' इसे जीवन का मूल मंत्र बना लेना चाहिए।

नरपत दान चारण

**विरोध का कारण वोट बैंक की राजनीति**

नागरिकता संशोधित कानून पर कांग्रेस की मानसिकता का विश्लेषण सुरेंद्र किशोर ने 'अपने ही वादे से मुकरती कांग्रेस' शीर्षक लेख तहत किया। हमारे देश की राजनीति अब स्वार्थ और अवसरवाद की राह चल पड़ी है, इसलिए इसके लिए तो यह कहा जा सकता है कि, कसमें वादे प्यार वफा सब बातें हैं, बातों का क्या...। मोदी सरकार को नागरिकता संशोधन बिल कुछ इस तरह पेश करना चाहिए कि इस पर किसी को अंगुली उठाने का मौका न मिलता, जैसे जम्मू कश्मीर से धारा 370 हटाने के लिए किया था। पूर्व प्रधानमंत्री राजीव गांधी ने 1985 में छात्र संगठन से असम समझौता किया था। उन्होंने भी इस समझौते के तहत 25 मार्च 1971 के बाद हमारे देश आने वाले शरणार्थियों या दूसरे लोगों को एनआरसी के जरिये देश से बाहर निकालने का फैसला लिया था, लेकिन अफसोस इस पर किसी सरकार ने काम नहीं किया था, मोदी सरकार ने भी शायद राजीव गांधी के अश्रू कांम को पूरा करने के लिए नागरिकता कानून को हरी झंडी दे दी, इसलिए कांग्रेस को तो इसका विरोध नहीं करना चाहिए। अनेक राजनीतिक पार्टियां क्यों इस बिल का विरोध कर रही, यह तो वो ही अच्छी तरह जानें, लेकिन मोदी सरकार को नागरिकता कानून बनाने की क्या जरूरत थी? क्या हमारा देश धर्मशाला है? इस कानून के तहत पाकिस्तान, अफगानिस्तान और बांग्लादेश के शरणार्थियों के प्रति ही क्यों हमदर्दी दिखाई गई, श्रीलंका और ब्रांग्लादेश को हनआरसी के जरिये देश से बाहर निकालने का इसमें शामिल क्यों नहीं किया गया? मोदी सरकार को इस कानून की कमियों को दूर करने के उपाय अपनी दृष्टीमंता को छोड़कर करने चाहिए, ताकि इससे देश के लिए कोई नुकसान न हो पाए। देश के हरेक धर्म के लोगों को देश की धर्म-संप्रदाय की संकीर्ण राजनीति से हमेशा

**मेलबाक्स**

बचकर रहना चाहिए, धर्म-संप्रदाय पर राजनीति करने वाला का मकसद लगभग अपना वोट बैंक ही होता है।

राजेश कुमार चौहान, जालंधर

**सही सूचनाएं बेहद जरूरी**

राष्ट्रीय जनसंख्या रजिस्टर (एनपीआर), जो 2021 की जनगणना का हिस्सा है, तैयार किया जाना प्रारंभ हो रहा है। इसमें प्रणणक लोगों से मुख्यतः आर्थिक सवाल पूछते हैं, जैसे घर में कुकिंग गैस, बिजली, फ्रिज, स्कूटर, कार, जैसी चीजें हैं या नहीं? इनके उत्तर के आधार पर परिवारों और उस क्षेत्र की आर्थिक समृद्धि का आकलन किया जाता है एवं खुशहाली लाने की योजनाएं बनाई जाती हैं। सूचनाएं यदि सत्य नहीं हों तो आकलन गलत हो जाएगा और योजना गड़बड़। अतः सूचना सही देने की जिम्मेदारी सभी नागरिकों को निभानी चाहिए। दुनिया के विकसित तथा कई विकासशील देशों में गलत जानकारी देने पर दंड का प्रावधान है। भारत में इस प्रकार की व्यवस्था बेहद जरूरी है, क्योंकि यहाँ अक्सर गलत सूचनाएं दी जाती हैं। काफी संख्या में लोग खुद को निर्धन दिखाना चाहते हैं कि बाद में सरकारी मदद, खुद मिल रही हो तो उसे पाते वाली श्रेणी में आ सकें। इसलिए सरकार को राष्ट्रीय जनसंख्या रजिस्टर में त्रुटिपूर्ण बात दर्ज करने पर सजा का प्रावधान करना चाहिए, ताकि आर्थिक सर्वेक्षण एकदम त्रुटिहीन हो। आम जनता को भी चाहिए कि इसमें सही सूचनाएं ही दर्ज कराएं। सही सूचना देने का लाभ जहां सरकार की योजनाओं के लिए लाभकारी होगा, वहीं खुद के लिए भी ठीक रहेगा, क्योंकि बहुत सी जानकारी अन्य सर्टिफिकेट में भी दर्ज होती हैं।

अगर हर जगह अलग-अलग जानकारी होगी तो भविष्य में कभी मिलान करने पर अंतर आएगा और कोई फासल इसी आधार पर रक सकती है कि नाम मेल नहीं खा रहा है। ऐसी समस्या खासकर नाम में अधिक आती है।

ajay.mittal97khandak@gmail.com

**झारखंड में हार से सवक ले भाजपा**

झारखंड में भाजपा की हार की मुख्य वजह झामुमो-कांग्रेस और राजद का एक मजबूत गठबंधन बनना है। झामुमो के अपने के लिए ग्रामीण और कांग्रेस को शहरी सीटें देकर अच्छा रणनीतिक प्रयोग किया। आजसू से भाजपा का गठबंधन टूटना भी ठीक नहीं रहा। हरियाणा व महाराष्ट्र की तरह यहाँ भी बागियों ने भाजपा को हराया। आखिर इतनी संख्या में बागी क्यों खड़े हुए? पार्टी में इतने व्यापक अंतर्गति के क्या कारण थे? भाजपा नेतृत्व को इन प्रश्नों के उत्तर तलाशने होंगे, अन्यथा आगामी चुनावों में भी पार्टी के लिए जीत हासिल करना मुश्किल होता जाएगा। साथ ही स्थानीय नेतृत्व को भी उचित रूप से तराशना होगा।

चंद्र प्रकाश शर्मा, दिल्ली

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

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



## भूजल का प्रबंधन

भूजल का गिरता स्तर और इसकी वजह से भविष्य में गहराने वाले भूसंकट के मसले पर पिछले कुछ सालों से लगातार चर्चा होती रही है। इस चिंता के मद्देनजर न केवल भारत, बल्कि वैश्विक पैमाने पर सम्मेलनों और सेमिनारों में आने वाले दिनों में पानी के अभाव को लेकर चेतावनी दी जाती रही है। लेकिन चिंता जताना और संकट का हल निकालना अलग-अलग बातें हैं। यह सही है कि सरकार की ओर से जल संरक्षण को लेकर कई कार्यक्रम संचालित हो रहे हैं तो उनका मकसद चुनौतियों से पार पाना ही है। लेकिन यह भी सच है कि स्थानीय हालात और जरूरतों के आधार पर अगर कोई पहलकदमी होती है, तभी इस संकट से पार पाने की उम्मीद की जा सकती है। इस लिहाज से देखें तो बुधवार को लखनऊ में प्रधानमंत्री ने जिस ‘अटल भूजल योजना’ को शुरुआत की है, वह इस दिशा में एक अहम कदम है। अगर यह योजना अपने बुनियादी स्वरूप में जमीन पर उतरती है तो इससे फिलहाल सात राज्यों के आठ हजार तीन सौ पचास गांवों को लाभ मिलने की उम्मीद है।

दरअसल, भूजल के स्तर को लेकर चिंता लंबे समय जताई जाती रही है, लेकिन इस गहराती समस्या से निपटा कैसे जाए, इसकी दिशा अभी पूरी तरह साफ नहीं रही है। न केवल वर्षा से जल के संरक्षण के पहलू पर कोई बड़ी कार्ययोजना जमीन पर नहीं उतर पाई है, न अन्य स्रोतों की वास्तविक स्थिति का आकलन करके उसके समाधान को लेकर ठोस पहल हुई है। हालांकि ‘अटल भूजल योजना’ की शुरुआत के करीब छह महीने पहले भी प्रधानमंत्री ने पानी की एक-एक बूंद के संरक्षण को लेकर जागरूकता अभियान शुरू करने पर जोर दिया था। यह अपने आप में यह बताने के लिए काफी है कि भूजल के स्तर और समग्र पैमाने पर जल की उपलब्धता को लेकर सरकार फिक्रमंद जरूर है, लेकिन शायद एक समग्र योजना के साथ जमीनी अमल अभी बाकी है। समस्या यह है कि भारी पैमाने पर पानी का बेलगाम उपयोग और उसकी बर्बादी करने वाले बड़ी कंपनियों और संस्थानों पर शायद ही किसी की लगाम है। यह गांवों और शहरों में वर्षा जल के संरक्षण को लेकर सजगता नहीं होने और इससे पैदा होने वाली समस्या से इतर एक पहलू है, जिसमें भारी मात्रा में पानी की बर्बादी होती है। सवाल है कि जल संरक्षण को लेकर जताई जाने वाली चिंता के मद्देनजर क्या इस समस्या के बुनियादी पहलुओं पर भी गौर किया जाएगा?

देश में ऐसे तमाम इलाके हैं, जहां भूजल का स्तर चिंताजनक पैमाने तक नीचे चला गया है। इसका एक बड़ा असर फसलों के उत्पादन के चक्र पर पड़ा है, जिसमें सिंचाई के लिए ज्यादा पानी की जरूरत वाली फसलें बुरी तरह प्रभावित हो रही हैं। हाल के दिनों में यह राय सामने आई है कि सिंचाई के लिए जल के बढ़ते संकट के मद्देनजर कम पानी की जरूरत वाली वैकल्पिक फसलें उगाने और सूक्ष्म सिंचाई की ओर कदम बढ़ाने की जरूरत है। हालांकि यह किसी से छिपा नहीं है कि हमारे देश में पानी के संरक्षण के कई पारंपरिक तौर-तरीके चलन में रहे हैं। लेकिन यह समझना मुश्किल है कि आखिर किन वजहों से हम उन परंपराओं से दूर होते गए। आखिर ऐसा कैसे मुमकिन हुआ कि अपने जीवन के स्रोत के रूप में पानी की अहमियत को गैण हो जाने दिया और नतीजतन आज भूजल के गिरते स्तर से लेकर प्यास तक एक बड़ी समस्या के रूप में हमारे सामने है। समाज और सरकार की जिम्मेदारी के बरकस पानी आज लगभग पूरी तरह बाजार के हवाले हो गया है। इतना तय है कि संकट का सही आकलन और उसके मुताबिक हल निकालने की कोशिश समय रहते शुरू नहीं की गई तो समस्या बेहद सकती है।

## सहूलियत की दर

वस्तु एवं सेवा कर यानी जीएसटी को लागू हुए करीब ढाई साल हो गए। अब तक इसमें थोड़े-थोड़े अंतराल पर कई बार बदलाव किए जा चुके हैं। इसके बावजूद करों में कटौती की मांग उठती रहती है। इसकी एक वजह यह है कि जीएसटी में करों के चार ढांचे रखे गए हैं- पांच, बारह, अठारह और अट्ठाई फीसद। जिन वस्तुओं पर कर की दर अट्ठाईस फीसद रखी गई है, उसे घटाने की मांग उठती रहती है। शुरुआत में कुछ वस्तुओं पर कर की दर बहुत ऊंची थीं, जिन्हें लेकर विवाद हुआ और उन्हें घटाना पड़ा। उनमें कई वस्तुएं कृषि क्षेत्र से भी जुड़ी थीं। पिछले काफी दिनों से माना जा रहा है कि जीएसटी की दरें स्थिर हो चुकी हैं, पर इनमें कटौती की मांग रह-रह कर उठती रहती है। इसका असर यह भी पड़ा है कि जीएसटी का संग्रह अनुमानित लक्ष्य तक नहीं पहुंच पा रहा है, जबकि राज्यों को केंद्र की तरफ से मिलने वाले करों के अंशदान का दबाव बना हुआ है। इस समस्या से पार पाने के लिए नीति आयोग के एक सदस्य ने सुझाव दिया है कि जीएसटी के कर ढांचे में बार-बार बदलाव उचित नहीं है, अगर जरूरत पड़े, तो इस पर साल में एक बार विचार किया जाना चाहिए। फिर कर ढांचों के चार के बजाय दो ही व्यावहारिक स्तर होने चाहिए। इसका मकसद कर संग्रह को बढ़ाना होना चाहिए। देखाना है, इस पर जीएसटी परिषद कहां तक अमल करती है।

जीएसटी लागू करने के पीछे सरकार का इरादा था कि इससे राज्यों की तरफ से लगने वाले अनेक करों से उत्पादकों और उपभोक्ताओं को मुक्ति मिलेगी। इस तरह वस्तुओं की कीमतें घटेंगी और कारोबार में सुगमता आएगी, मगर अभी तक जीएसटी की उलझनें समाप्त नहीं हुई हैं। इसे लागू करने के तीन साल बाद करों में स्थिरता आने और कारोबारियों, केंद्र और राज्य सरकारों को लाभ मिलने लगने की उम्मीद जताई गई थी। जिन भी देशों में जीएसटी लागू किया गया, वहां के यही अनुभव रहे कि इससे राज्यों को होने वाले नुकसान तीन साल के बाद बंद हो गए थे। मगर हमारे यहां तीन साल होने को आ रहे हैं और जीएसटी को लेकर उलझनें ही दूर नहीं हो पाई हैं। बार-बार करों में बदलाव से कारोबारियों की उलझनें तो बढ़ती ही हैं, राजस्व पर भी प्रतिकूल असर पड़ता है। ऐसे में कर ढांचों को लेकर एक बार अंतिम रूप से विचार करने और उनके ढांचे चार के बजाय दो करने का सुझाव उचित ही है।

करों का निर्धारण वस्तुओं के उत्पादन, उपभोग और विभिन्न आयवर्ग के उपभोक्ताओं को ध्यान में रख कर किया जाता है। जिन वस्तुओं का उत्पादन अधिक होता है और जिनका उपभोक्ता वर्ग अधिक है, उन पर सामान्यतया कर की दरें कम रखी जाती हैं। कृषि और डेरी उत्पाद उन्हीं में आते हैं, जिनका उपभोग गरीब से लेकर अमीर वर्ग तक करता है। इसलिए इन पर कर की दर पांच फीसद रखा जाना उचित है। मगर जिन वस्तुओं और सेवाओं का उपभोग संपन्न और विशिष्ट वर्ग करता है या जिनके उत्पादन में विशेष तकनीक और प्रसंस्करण प्रविधि आदि का उपयोग होता है, जिन्हें विलासिता की वस्तुएं कहा जाता है, उन पर कर की दरें ऊंची रखी जाती हैं। इस तरह जब सभी परोक्ष कर समाहित होकर केंद्रीय कर में शामिल हो गए हैं, तब करों के चार ढांचे रखने का कोई तर्क नहीं है। इसे अंतिम रूप से व्यावहारिक बनाने की सलाह उचित है।

## कल्पमेधा

### जिस समय हम समझते हैं कि हम नेतृत्व कर रहे हैं, उस समय अक्सर हम दूसरे के नेतृत्व में होते हैं।

– बायरन

### ब्रह्मदीप अलूने

### पाकिस्तान में पिछले कुछ सालों में न्यायिक सक्रियता से पाकिस्तान की सेना, खुफिया एजेंसी आइएसआइ और राजनीतिक दलों के नेता बेचैन हैं। हाल में पाकिस्तान के सैन्य प्रमुख जनरल बाजवा की उम्र विवाद को लेकर भी सेना और अदालत आमने-सामने रही। इस मामले में न्यायाधीशों पर अशोभनीय टिप्पणी की गई। यहां तक कि उन्हें भारत और अमेरिका का एजेंट बताने की कोशिश भी हुई।

नितियों, साधनों, कार्यों और दृष्टिकोण से सेना का सर्वसत्तावाद प्रजातांत्रिक व्यवस्था के बिल्कुल विपरीत होता है। ऐसे में न्यायपालिका की निष्पक्षता उसे स्वीकार नहीं हो सकती। सैन्य शासन की परंपराओं से अभिशप्त राष्ट्र पाकिस्तान में लोकतंत्र होने का दिखावा भले किया जाए, लेकिन पूर्व सैन्य तानाशाह परवेज मुशर्रफ को देशद्रोह के आरोप में फांसी की सजा देने के अदालती फैसले के बाद विरोध से समुची व्यवस्था की कलाई खुल गई है। 14 अगस्त, 1947 को अस्तित्व में आए पाकिस्तान ने तीन दशक से ज्यादा का सैन्य शासन देखा और भोगा है। 1956 में देश का संविधान लागू हुआ और इसे इस्लामिक गणतंत्र का नाम दिया गया। लेकिन गणतांत्रिक परंपराओं के स्थापित होने से पहले ही 1958 में पाकिस्तान में सेना द्वारा शासन पर नियंत्रण कर लिया गया। मार्शल अय्यूब खान पाकिस्तान के नए राष्ट्रपति बने और इस प्रकार पाकिस्तान के संसदीय लोकतंत्र को सेना ने अपने कब्जे में कर लिया। इसके बाद से लगातार

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# जनसत्ता

# मुशर्रफ को सजा से हैरान सेना

सेना पाकिस्तान की सुरक्षा और भारत विरोध के नाम पर अपना प्रभुत्व जमाए हुए है। आक्रामक और कूटनीतिक तरीकों से सेना का अधिनायकवाद मजबूत होता रहा और यह अब पाकिस्तान की नियति बन गया है।

वैश्विक दबाव के आगे पाकिस्तान को लोकतांत्रिक दिखाने की कोशिशें भी की गईं, लेकिन इतिहास में एक बार ही कोई निर्वाचित सरकार अपना कार्यकाल पूरा कर सकी। इस समय देश में इमरान खान की सरकार है और वे सेना द्वारा स्थापित प्रधानमंत्री कहे जाते हैं। इन परिस्थितियों में देश की न्यायपालिका के पूर्व सेना अधिकारी पर एक न्यायिक निर्णय से सत्ता और सेना परेशान और हैरान है। पूर्व सेना प्रमुख परवेज मुशर्रफ के खिलाफ देशद्रोह का मामला तीन नवंबर 2007 को पाकिस्तान में आपातकाल लगाने से जुड़ा था। उस समय मुशर्रफ ने अपने प्रभाव का इस्तेमाल करते हुए देश में आपातकाल घोषित कर संविधान को निलंबित कर दिया था।

समान व्यवहार और समान दृष्टिकोण से ही न्यायिक व्यवस्था मजबूत और विश्वसनीय होती है। लेकिन पाकिस्तान में सेना का संकल्पित सर्वाधिकार न्यायपालिका को स्वतंत्र न्यायिक निर्णय की आजादी नहीं देता। ऐसे में सेना ने अपने पूर्व अधिकारी को अदालत द्वारा दी गई कड़ी सजा को चुनौती देने में देर नहीं की। पाकिस्तानी सेना के प्रवक्ता मेजर जनरल आसिफ गफूर ने वाक्यादवा बयान जारी कर अदालत के फैसले की आलोचना करते हुए इसे जल्दबाजी में सुनाया गया फैसला बताया। मुशर्रफ का बचाव करते हुए सेना की ओर से कहा गया कि पूर्व सेना प्रमुख और पूर्व राष्ट्रपति जनरल परवेज मुशर्रफने मुल्क की चालीस साल तक सेवा की है। जिस व्यक्ति ने मुल्क के लिए जंग लड़ी, वो कभी देशद्रोही नहीं हो सकता है।

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सैन्य प्रमुख जनरल बाजवा की उम्र विवाद को लेकर भी सेना और अदालत आमने-सामने रही। इस मामले में न्यायाधीशों पर अशोभनीय टिप्पणी की गई। यहां तक कि उन्हें भारत और अमेरिका का एजेंट बताने की कोशिश भी हुई। इस मामले की सुनवाई के दौरान प्रधान न्यायाधीश न्यायमूर्ति आसिफ खोसा ने अपनी टिप्पणी में इसे निराशाजनक बताते हुए कहा था कि संवैधानिक संस्थाओं के बारे में ऐसी बातें नहीं होनी चाहिए। इसके पहले न्यायपालिका पाकिस्तान के पूर्व प्रधानमंत्री यूसुफ रजा गिलानी और नवाज शरीफ को भी कड़ी सजा सुना चुकी है। हालांकि पाकिस्तान के सुप्रीम कोर्ट ने खुफिया एजेंसी आइएसआइ और सेना को सियासत से अलग रहने का निर्देश दिया था। इसके बाद आइएसआइ पर तंज कसने के चर्चते हाईकोर्ट के जज शौकत अजीज सिद्दीकी को पद से हटा दिया गया था। इस घटना से यह साफ हो गया था कि आइएसआइ की

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## खुश रहने का हुनर

कक्षा में थे, इसलिए मैं प्रतीक्षा कक्ष में बैठ कर इंतजार करने लगा। दिमाग में कई बातें घूमने लगीं। एक समय हम भी बच्चे थे। उस समय हम खेल के मैदान में जाकर क्रिकेट या कबड्डी खेलते थे। साधारणतया उस समय सबके घरों में ही गरीबी का दौर था, इसलिए हम सिगरेट और माचिस की डिब्बी के छिब्बे इकट्ठा कर उनसे खेलते थे। छुट्टी के दिन गिल्ली-डंडा, छुपम-छुपाई, गुलाबे-डंडा, भंवरें और सरिया-गडावनी आदि

## दुनिया मेरे आगे

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खेल खेलते थे। कितना मजा आता था खुले मैदान में खेलने में। तेज थूप रहती थी, फिर भी पसीने में नहाते हुए मैदान में लौड़ते रहते थे। हमारे पास उन दिनों पैसे नहीं होते थे और खेलने के साधन भी पर्याप्त नहीं होते थे, फिर भी हम एक दूसरे के साथ मिल कर खेलते और खुश होते थे। जब तीन-चार महीने में एक बार हमारे माता-पिता कोई फिल्म देखने ले जाने की बात करते थे, तो सुबह से ही फिल्म देखने जाने का एक आकर्षण और जिज्ञासा हमारे मन में रहती थी। तब लगता था कि कब शाम होगी और हम फिल्म देखने सिनेमा हॉल में जाएंगे। उन दिनों फिल्म देखने जाना भी किसी बड़े उत्सव से कम आनंददायक नहीं था। हमारा बचपन कितने लड़कपन में गया, मालूम ही नहीं पड़ा। जबकि आज हम अपने

बच्चों को सारी सुविधाएं दे रहे हैं, फिर भी उनके चेहरे से खुशी नदारद है। कहां गई उनकी खुशियां? कौन चुरा कर ले गया उनका लड़कपन? अक्सर लगता है कि उनके प्रथम अपराधी हम पालकगण ही हैं। हमने ही खुद उन्हें मोबाइल और टीवी की दुनिया में धकेल दिया है। हमें दफ्तर जाना है तो बच्चों से कहा- ‘बेटा, हम दफ्तर जा रहे हैं, तुम थोड़ी देर मोबाइल पर खेल खेलना, फिर थोड़ा

टीवी देख लेना और उसके बाद पढ़ाई करने बैठ जाना’।

या फिर कभी-कभी हमें किसी

पाटी में जाना हुआ तब कहते हैं कि बेटा, तुम पढ़ोस के अपने दोस्त को अपने घर बुला लेना और टीवी पर कोई फिल्म देखते रहना।

बहरहाल, बेटे के स्कूल में बुलाने पर मैं उसके शिक्षक के कक्ष में गया तो उन्होंने मेरी जिज्ञासा को भांपते हुए कहा- ‘आपका बच्चा प्रतिभाशाली है। वह विद्यालय की हर एक गतिविधियों में बढ़-चढ़ कर हिस्सा लेता है। लेकिन मैंने गौर किया है कि फिर भी उसके चेहरे पर जो खुशी नजर आनी चाहिए, वह मुझे नजर नहीं आती’। मैंने कहा कि आप उसके क्लास टीचर हैं, इसलिए मैं आपसे ही निवेदन करता हूं। हम क्या करें कि हमारे बच्चे के चेहरे पर सच्चे दिल से

सुविधाएं बढ़ाए, ताकि सभी लोग सुरक्षित रह सकें। सरकार को इस पर जल्द ही कोई पहल करना चाहिए।

● *नीतीश कुमार पाठक, नई दिल्ली*

### भिक्षा से मुक्ति

दो वक्त की रोटी के लिए किसी के आगे हाथ फैलाना अपने जमीर को मारने जैसा लगता है। लेकिन ये किसी से छिपा नहीं है कि भिक्षावृत्ति के उदाहरण अक्सर सड़क किनारे, धार्मिक स्थलों के आसपास या चौक-चौराहों पर दिख जाते हैं। हमारे देश भारत में भीख मांगना और भीख देना पौराणिक कर्म

माना जाता है। यहां भिक्षा लेना या मांगना बुरा नहीं माना जाता, बल्कि इसे दान की श्रेणी में रखा जाता है। वास्तव में गरीबी, भुखमरी और आय की असमानता के चलते देश में एक वर्ग ऐसा भी है, जिसे भोजन, कपड़ा और आवास जैसी आधारभूत सुविधाएं भी प्राप्त नहीं हो पातीं। यह वर्ग कई बार मजबूर होकर भीख मांगने का विकल्प अपना लेता है। भारत में आय की असमानता और भुखमरी की कहानी तो विश्व स्तर की कुछ रिपोर्टें से ही जाहिर हो जाती है। लेकिन आज भिक्षावृत्ति ने एक व्यवसाय का रूप ले लिया है। इस काम में साधु वेश से लेकर फटे-चिथड़े पहने लोग लगे हुए हैं। गली-गली घूम कर, मुहल्लों में जाकर कभी चमत्कार से भरा आशीर्वाद देने तो कभी भीख के नाम पर भिखारी कुछ पाने की अपेक्षा रखते हैं।

पर बढ़ता है और यह स्थिति सेना के लिए मुफीद मानी जाती है। कुछ साल पहले तक सेना राजनीतिक अस्थिरता फैलाने के लिए राष्ट्रपति का सहारा लेती थी। जनरल जिया उल हक और परवेज मुशर्रफ जैसे तानाशाहों ने इसका भरपूर दुरुपयोग किया। साल 2008 में जरदरी ने राष्ट्रपति बनते ही इस स्थिति को उलट दिया और देश की व्यवस्था में एक बड़ा बदलाव कर दिया। एक संवैधानिक संशोधन से राष्ट्रपति की शक्तियां बहुत ही सीमित कर दी गईं और पाकिस्तान की चुनी हुई सरकार को भंग करना मुश्किल बना दिया गया। ऐसे में सेना न्यायपालिका की ओर देखती है जिससे लोकतांत्रिक सरकारों को काबू किया जा सके। साल 2018 में नवाज शरीफ पर प्रतिबंध लगाते हुए न्यायमूर्ति उमर अता बंदियाल के फैसले में कहा गया था कि भविष्य में किसी भी सांसद या लोक सेवक को अगर अनुच्छेद 62 के तहत अयोग्य ठहराया जाता है, तो उन पर यह प्रतिबंध स्थायी होगा, ऐसे व्यक्ति चुनाव में हिस्सा नहीं ले सकेंगे और न ही संसद के सदस्य बन सकेंगे। पाकिस्तान में सेना ऐसे न्यायिक निर्णयों को लोकतांत्रिक नेताओं पर लगाम लगाने के तौर पर पसंद करती है, लेकिन उसे अपने मामलों में कोई दखल स्वीकार नहीं है।

पाकिस्तान में कोई भी लोकतांत्रिक सरकार सेना की इच्छाओं की अनदेखी करने का साहस नहीं जुटा पाती है। नवाज शरीफ और बेनजिर भुट्टो ने ऐसा करने की कोशिश की थी और उन्हें सत्ता से बेदखल होना पड़ा था। बेनजिर भुट्टो की हत्या एक आतंकवादी हमले में साल 2007 में हो गई थी और ऐसा माना जाता है कि सेना के उच्च अधिकारियों ने उनकी सुरक्षा को लेकर जानबूझ कर लापरवाही की। यहां तक कि बेनजिर भुट्टो की हत्या में भी सेना और आइएसआइ की साजिश की बातें सामने आती रही हैं। जनरल जिया उल हक ने न्याय को

नजरअंदाज कर हत्या के एक मामले में जुरिफकार अली भुट्टो को फांसी पर लटकवा दिया था। पाकिस्तान सेना ने इन तानाशाहों का हमेशा समर्थन किया है।

परवेज मुशर्रफ को लेकर पाकिस्तान के विपक्षी दल और न्यायपालिका सख्त हैं। ऐसे में इमरान खान यदि सेना के साथ मिलकर मुशर्रफ को बचाने का प्रयास करते हैं तो देश में विरोधी दलों के स्वर बुलंद हो सकते हैं। बहरहाल, पाकिस्तान में सेना और न्यायपालिका आमने-सामने है। पाकिस्तानी सेना के प्रवक्ता ने मुशर्रफ के पक्ष में बयान देकर और अदालती फैसले की आलोचना कर अदालत की अवमानना की है और यह स्थिति पाकिस्तान का आंतरिक, राजनीतिक और संवैधानिक संकट बढ़ा सकती है।

● *अनु मिश्रा, बिटुना, सिवान*

● *कुमारी कविता, गोरखपुर, उप्र*

पाकिस्तान के पूर्व राष्ट्रपति अय्यूब खान

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