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Ecological Farming

The article "Increasing wholesome food production.." by Mr. Bhanwar Dan Bithu is a timely reminder of the imperative of ecological methods of farming, which also assumes a special significance against the background of the UN's FAO declaring the year 2015 as the "International Year of Soils". The organization's Dir-Gen Mr. Jose Graziano De Silva had rightly observed that the key to food security lay not in increased food production (through "big" ways) but through "sustainable farming", while stressing the fact that soil health is the key to climate change & biodiversity!

The prevailing agricultural paradigm engendered by the much-vaunted Green Revolution is heavily based on costly external inputs, which is far removed from our glorious cow-bull-neem-plough-based one, which is pushing our farmers into a debt or rather a death trap. Acc. to Govt. figures, more than 3 lakh farmers have ended their lives after adopting this industrial pattern (esp. after the failure of Bt Cotton seeds) which is inherently violent to the eco-system. Most regrettably, those have been instrumental in promoting or advocating such systems are being celebrated as heroes out in the service of humankind! Natural farming has been dismissed as a "romantic" idee fixe incapable of meeting rising food demands, though on the contrary it would be highly instructive and humbling to study the phenomenal success-story of Cuba's conscious transformation to a local organic farming nation in response to a grave economic crisis around the same time as India faced, in 1990!!

Chemical fertilizers release N₂O (Nitrous Oxide aka Laughing Gas) which is 300 times more polluting than CO₂, besides reducing the soil fertility - this when it takes 500 years to form an inch (2.5 cms) of fertile top soil! The pesticides, tractors, hybrid and worse the GM seeds are all devastating our soils and beings innocently dependent on it. We can't continue like this with our head buried in the sand like an ostrich deluding ourselves that we are achieving progress on other fronts, for as the wise Chief Seattle had said: "We do not inherit the earth from our ancestors but borrow it from our children"

— Chintamani Venkata Krishna Manoj, Hyderabad (Telangana)

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Quote-Unquote

"What is a life time adventure for you is a daily routine for us"

Indian Army



Serious education is needed in our tradition. We must have scientists of that tradition; we must have students...

Dr. Mohan Bhagwat

RSS Chief



I urge political parties to take a resolution for 2016 that they will let Parliament function and work for the benefit of poor.

Narendra Modi

Prime Minister



All I can say is that no flag can be levelled equal to the national flag. The national flag would be respected. That's our endeavour.

Dr. Nirmal Singh

J&K Deputy CM



"Everybody's worried about stopping terrorism. Well, there's a really easy way: stop participating in it."

Avram Noam Chomsky

Linguist

Control Pollution, Don't Politicise it

"One of the tests of leadership is the ability to recognize a problem before it becomes an emergency."

— (Arnold H. Glasow)

Delhi, the national capital, is one of the most polluted cities in the world. There is now enough of evidence to prove that pollution raises the cost of living and also adds to the health risks by increasing the incidence of cardiovascular disease, hypertension, diabetes, respiratory diseases and lung cancer. Bad air also affects growth of lungs in children and aggravates sufferings of the elderly people. The odd-even formula being tried by the Delhi government after The Supreme Court of India recognised the gravity of the problem and while deliberating necessary remedial measures asked the Union of India and the state governments to accelerate priority measures to cut toxic vehicular emissions and air pollution may have become subject of controversy, but it has surely helped attract the attention of people at large towards the momentous issue and also in stressing inevitability of their participation in making any meaningful effort in controlling pollution. Supreme Court has also acknowledged that Air Pollution is a serious concern With Severe Public Health Consequences. It has in the meantime banned the sale of diesel SUVs till April 2016. It is not just the number of vehicles only that is complicating the problem of pollution. But the vehicular pollution is the most visible form, hence attracts attention in similar proportion. Vehicles on roads, besides contributing to pollution, cause tremendous hardships for all sections of society including those who drive these vehicles. Not only has average travel time in Delhi increased manifold for even shorter distances, uncertainty of reaching destinations has multiplied and is also intense. Time taken at crossings is also increasing. Besides traffic signals, there are several bottle necks created due to faulty design of flyovers and traffic advisories that add to the chaos. All this has given rise to social problems also. Road rage is on rise that has at occasions resulted into serious crime like killings on minor provocations. The state and central governments are making noises but haven't yet come up with a concrete action plan. Studies show that installation of Metro has substantially lowered levels of carbon monoxide and nitrogen dioxide. This reduction has been almost 30% (assessed by a monitoring station in the vicinity of ITO) and was probably due to reduction in vehicular traffic because of availability of the Metro for the commuters as an convenient alternative. Problems of Delhi are further complicated by a "toxic blend of geography, growth, poor energy sources and unfavourable weather that boosts its dangerously high levels of air pollution". The experts hence recommend all-round solutions instead of just focusing on vehicular pollution.

It seems that almost everybody is aware of the gravity of the circumstances. But still the solution is not in sight. Those in charge are still not in mood to tackle the situation with the seriousness it deserves. Response to steps like odd-even formula is clear indication of the fact that political leaders are interested more in politicisation of the issue instead of solving the problem. All of us need to realise, before it is too late, that some drastic measures are required to be taken to put the worsening situation under control. The most important aspect is to improve public transport system substantially. Commuters who use public transport already find the buses and metros overcrowded. Our public transport system is not capable of catering to an extra lot. That needs to be looked into and made readily available to the public in off route locations also besides ensuring convenience & affordability at the same time. Next logical step will be to put curbs on number of vehicles on road permanently. In short using private transport must be exceptional. Traffic police needs to be strengthened and trained professionally to handle emerging situation. Officers also need to be made responsible and accountable in a transparent way. Technology can come handy in these situations. All of us will have to face a little difficulty in the beginning. It is going to really tiresome for the public. Our generous population is so used to speeding off in individual cars that it will be a little difficult to curb their longing for private rides even if it is to safeguard their own good health. But we will have to do it for our own future generations. It may be a harsh remedy, but surely is better one.



Spurn western model of flawed lifestyle based on unconstrained consumption: SJM

12th National Convention of SJM concluded with a clarion call to the world leaders to prevent annihilation of human race and planet earth by rejecting the consumption intensive western model of development that has brought the entire world to edge in just 160 years of its existence.

Not only India but the whole world needs to shift back to sustainable development model which is not possible without sustainable pattern of consumption and life style the speakers urged in the convention.

Sustainable development was the theme of 12th National Convention held in the Sun City of Jodhpur, Rajasthan from 25th-27th December 2015.

Hanvant Aadarsh Vidyalya, Lal Sagar Jodhpur, the heritage site, came to life with more than 1500 delegates from all over India attending. A sizeable number of women delegates, about 30 percent of them all, were a welcome highlight. Young delegates, both male & female also participated in fairly large numbers.

Jodhpur unit of SJM had made elaborate arrangements for smooth, successful, expedient and comfortable conduction of the National Convention. The most important highlight of their planning was to keep the entire event polythene free and clean as an extension of Swach Bharat Campaign.

This was easier said than done. But the organisers stuck to the decision and all the delegates were more than happy to share their part of the responsibility to ensure its effective implementation.

The convention was inaugurated on 25th December at 11.00 A.M. Swami Maheshwaranand Maharaj of Jardan Ashram and Chief Guest Dr. R.K. Tyagi, Ex-chairman of HAL along with National Convenor of SJM Sh. Arun Ojha ji lit the lamp and paid obeisance in front of portrait of Bharat Mata. Rashtriya Sangathak Sh. Kashmiri Lal ji, National Co-convenors Sh. Saroj Mitra, Dr. Bhagwati Prakash Sharma, Prof. B.M. Kumarswami, Sh. R. Sundaram and Dr. Ashwani

Sustainable Development is the need of the hour is to revive time tested and well established Swadeshi Model to prevent imminent environmental catastrophe: SJM

Resolution**Pull Agriculture, Investment and IPR out of WTO**

The manner in which developed countries dismissed the interests of developing nations, in the just concluded ministerial level meeting of WTO held in Nairobi (Kenya), by not reaffirming the Doha Development Agenda in WTO, has made it explicitly clear that developed countries are not ready to heed to the genuine concerns of developing countries by reducing huge agriculture subsidies, which they provide to distort prices. Their dilly dally approach to correct the faulty and twisting formula of calculating subsidy provided by developing countries to ensure food security and their effort to link genuinely needed Special Safeguard Measures (SSM) to market access for their products, has made it clear that though, previous agreements reached at WTO have been harming the interests of developing countries, particularly Bharat; developed countries are not ready to address legitimate issues impacting their development.

As a result of flooding of our markets by the subsidised imported agricultural products Bhartiya farmers are not getting remunerative prices for their produce and agriculture has become a loss making activity. We have to struggle to ensure food security of poor Indian population. Union commerce Minister also has expressed her disappointment on the failure of forward movement of Doha Development Round.

This is an open fact that at the time of formation of WTO, developed countries forced Marrakesh agreement on developing countries against their wishes and interests. By inserting agriculture, investment, patents and services into the agreements- a discriminatory mechanism was created that favoured rich countries and was against poor developing countries. In the name of 'TRIPS' developing countries like India, were intimidated to change their patent laws to facilitate MNCs from developed countries, earn enormous royalty. That time, though it was conceded that essential medicines may get costlier, it was argued that farmers would get benefitted as they may export their produce to developed countries. But taking a U-turn developed rich countries, instead of reducing agricultural subsidies, increased them manifold, in the garb of green box. Double standard of developed nations is explicitly seen, as they themselves did not reduce their subsidies, instead they raised objection against India for procuring food grains directly from farmers, stating that India's subsidies exceed the limit (based on faulty and twisted formula).

Medicines manufactured by MNCs have become very costly after Marrakesh 'TRIPS' agreement. However, rich developed countries, in particular the USA has been pressurising Indian government to concede the flexibility available under that agreement like, preventing wrongful re-patenting by corporate, possibility of compulsory licensing, provision for pre-grant objections and compulsory sharing of clinical trial data. This effort to put an end to this flexibility available to India and other developing countries is being attempted through the joint working group and 'Think Tank' constituted during the visit of Prime Minister to USA.

It is crystal clear that Marrakesh agreement has not only ruined our agriculture and farmers but has also been threatening food security of nation. In addition to endangering public health, due to costly medicines, production capability of our pharmaceutical companies providing cheap medicines to over 200 nations, playing a crucial role in health care of not only the developing countries but also the poorer sections of society in rich developed countries, has also been facing disruption.

National Conference of SJM is of the considered opinion that under these circumstances government must comprehensively review these issues on the basis of experiences of last twenty years and informed debate about the impact of unequal and exploitative Marrakesh agreement. Serious efforts must be put in to take out Agriculture, Investment and IPR (particularly patents) from WTO to save farming sector, public health and industry. No new issues are accepted under pressure or manipulation by developed countries. The need of the hour is that, India takes initiative and leads the developing world to overhaul WTO.

National convention of SJM would like to remind the government that decisions at WTO are taken by consensus and emphasises that instead of expressing disappointments in media, government should cling to its principled stand during the negotiations. □

Mahajan joined them. Dr. Manmohan Vaidya, Akhil Bharatiya Prachar Pramukh of Rashtriya Swyamsewak Sangh along with. Kshetriya Pracharak Sh. Durga Das ji, Prant

Precharak Sh. Murali ji and Kshetriya Sanghahalak Manniya Kailash ji were also present on the occasion.

Inaugural function was con-

ducted in traditional manner. Even the stage prepared was exhibiting the rich cultural life of Marwar region of Rajasthan. Guests were welcomed with Shripal and Mar-

Resolution**Constitute National Commission for Education**

Education is the best means to develop the personality of a person, identity of the society and dignity of the nation. If education policy is framed with this objective in mind there is no reason why education will not be fruitful and result oriented. 12th National convention of Swadeshi Jagaran Manch expresses deep concern over the vast anomalies in the current education system due to repeated interference by different political parties and vested interest groups.

Persona of any individual stands out due to her/his integrity, morality along with personal behaviour. It is scientifically & psychologically well established globally that education in a person's mother tongue is the best way for the balanced development of body, soul and mind intellect. Yoga based education further helps in enhancement of internal qualities is also well recognised. Although NCERT has accepted yoga as an important part of the curriculum but it has not removed the incongruity of not using of mother tongue as a medium of education in first place.

A harmonious society is the best organised society. Role of education in achieving the desired harmony in the society is possible only when opportunity to receive quality education is available to every section of the society without distinction of caste, creed, religion or language. commercialisation of education and individuals, organisations and institutions involved in facilitation of FDI are not only helping outsiders to make inroads into our education sector but also are dividing society into two sections viz. rich and poor or have and have-nots'. In the name of minority rights, superfluous subjects are being taught to students. Need of the hour is to take corrective measures to eliminate these anomalies and make universal and inclusive education available easily to all. It is crucial requirement of present times.

In the comity of nations, if India has to gain its lost reputation, then the education system has to be based on the concept of "Vasudhev Kutumbakam", which means absolute universal brotherhood. The upheavals in political arena and changes in political establishments should not affect the education policies otherwise it will lose its importance. Swadeshi Jagaran Manch national conference therefore demands that government of India must take appropriate steps for its implement following suggestions:

1. Declining quality and standard of education as a result of promoting all students to next class up to 8th standard & making board exams optional for 10th class student needs to be reversed with immediate effect.
2. Digitalisation and declaration of information about basic infrastructure, student-teacher ratio and all other facilities available must be made compulsory for all the government and private schools, colleges, universities and other institutions of learning to eliminate corruption and irregularities.
3. Curriculum must include inclusive Swadeshi life style, moral education and R&D
4. This objective can be achieved only if an autonomous and self regulatory commission is constituted on the pattern of Bar Councils or Institute of Chartered Accountants on all levels from Village Panchayat to national level and is assigned the responsibility of framing education policy and also governing the education sector. □

wari Safa that gave a colourful dimension. Chairman of welcome committee Shree Purushottam Hisarya ji, a well known swadeshi industrialist welcomed the guest in his brief but graceful speech. He appreciated the efforts of SJM.

Speaking on the occasion Chief Guest Dr. RK Tyagi expressed his pleasure to have got the opportunity to get associated with SJM. He said that he has been watching SJM for last 24 years and has always found it consistent in its

working for the national interest irrespective of which party was in the government. He added that he will remember this day for rest of his life.

Summing up his personal experiences in four major sectors of Indian economy, with which he has remained closely associated during his long and cherished career spread over several decades, Dr. Tyagi was of the opinion that in spite of serious handicaps; India can emerge as a super power. Next 20

years are very crucial in that sense, he added. His speech highlighted present status future, opportunities and possible challenges in these sectors that include oil/energy sector, IT sector, Aviation sector and defence sector.

Having learnt a lesson from the 1990s, the Govt of India (GoI) has since laid emphasis on indigenisation of the defence industry with a number of measures initiated in this direction. The promulgation of the Defence Procurement Pro-

Resolution

National Development can be achieved through Made by Bharat Only

Swadeshi Jagran Manch expresses its profound concern over the transformation of the country into a market for imported goods through liberalisation of imports under the economic reforms being adopted by the country in last 24 years. Furthermore over-emphasized promotion of foreign direct investment (FDI) has led the ownership and control of 2/3rd of the organised manufacturing sector being overtaken by foreign multinational corporations. Steep rise in import has lead to a vicious cycle of over dependence on foreign inflows for bridging the consistent and high current account deficit forcing government to encourage FDI & FII in share markets even at the cost of national interest.

As a result of allowing 100% FDI through automatic route ownership of more than 2/3rd of the industrial production structure is now dominated by the transnational corporations in most of the industrial sectors such as cold drinks, toothpaste, shoe-polish, television, refrigerator, motor vehicles, cement, telecom, energy production etc. The question arises that who is going to control the means of production in this country? Will it be Indian companies or the transnational corporations? For example in the case of cement almost 100% ownership and control of manufacturing of cement was with Indian in 1999, when six European cement majors took over manufacturing of cement in south-east Asia and these European companies started dumping cheap cement from South Korea. Consequently, Tata begun to face problems and they sold the cement plant TISCO to LAFARGE of France. Then ACC and the Gujarat Ambuja cement were sold to a Swiss company Holcim. Hence almost 2/3rd of our cement manufacturing has gone into foreign hands. Even in the field of solar energy production by Indian firms is coming down and units are closing down due to FDI and import liberalisation. The Indian textile industry is losing its share in world market to even Bangladesh because of faulty policies.

India was self sufficient in the field of information technology and was well at par with those of the Motorola and Siemens before economic reforms were initiated. But today due to import liberalisation and ignoring the home-grown capacities against foreign technologies, India is fully dependent on the foreign technologies in 2G, 3G and 4G technology. Today just because of liberalisation of import and undue promotion of foreign direct investment, Bharat has a mere 2.05% share in world manufacturing whereas China has a 23% share and has pushed the United States to second position with 17.2% share in world manufacturing. In various industries such as ship-building our share in the world production is 0.01%, which is very dismal. It was a minimum of 1.4% in 2009. Needless to say Bharat is the 3rd largest steel producer of the world and has a long coast line of 6100 km.

On the other hand by providing an enabling environment with the proper policy support we were able to acquire 10% share in the world pharma manufacturing and came to be known to be as the pharmacy of the world and the only source of providing cheap medicines to the needy people of the world. Now under the pressure of Euro-American countries we are creating hurdles for native companies in the name of Intellectual property rights (IPRs).

Similarly several legal obstacles are being created for small and medium scale enterprises that it is becoming increasingly difficult for them to their job. In the next 5 years investment in the wind and solar energy is expected to be 10 lakh crores. Hence, from common consumer goods to infrastructure we need to promote domestically owned enterprises & brands under Made-By-Bharat campaign. Therefore Swadeshi Jagran Manch urges that, all industries, from solar energy and Information technology to the textile sector, should work together and form consortiums and should endeavour to roll out more "Made by Bharat" products and brands. Today, there are 400 major industry clusters and 7000 minor clusters in the country and there is a need to convert industry clusters into industry consortiums and to plan technology development cooperative societies along with technology development agreements for enhancing domestic participation & made by Bharat campaign.

The industrial clusters and industries such as IT, solar energy, textiles, electronics and semi-conductor etc. can beat foreign competition only by joining hands to promote made by Bharat products and brands with the help of made by Bharat forum and industry consortiums along with facilitating technology development co-operative associations and agreements. Swadeshi Jagran manch appeals government to adopt made by Bharat pathway instead of Make in India supported by import liberalisation and FDI promotion. □

Resolution**Sustainable Development—Need of the Hour**

Global warming and climate change are becoming increasingly ferocious with each passing year. World Meteorological Organization (W.M.O.) has recently stated that 2015 was the hottest year on record. If we make a list of 15 hottest years of the last 150 years, all the 15 years since 2000 appear in it. This only shows the seriousness of the problem of Global warming in the 21st century.

With increasing global temperature, extreme weather events such as heavy to very heavy down pour in limited areas, such as the one witnessed in Chennai and surrounding areas of Tamil Nadu during November and early December and severe famine situations as in rest of the country, are going to be more and more frequent. The Chennai flood, exposed the helplessness of human beings against the fury of nature and the failings of human institutions. If several cities are battered simultaneously, year after year, who will help whom?

The entire world has become a prey of its own folly. The unsustainable development model which originated in the west since 1850 and is mindlessly followed by the whole world today is to be blamed for this global climate crisis. The Western Development model is unsustainable because within a very short period of 160 years, since it began in 1850, it has brought the whole world to this tipping point. The global temperature has increased by just 1°C above pre-industrial revolution global temperature. If the climatic situation is going out of our control, even at + 1°C, what would happen, if global temperature rises to +2°C and beyond?

The Western Development Model is strongly based on its equally unsustainable consumption model. It is greedy and short sighted. The Living Planet Report-2014 prepared by W.W.F. clearly states that half of world's wild animals are lost since 1970 due to over hunting, over fishing, over-poaching and habitat loss. It further states that if the whole world is to adopt the level of consumption of resources as the United States, we need 4 earths to supply resources. This only proves the unsustainability of the western life style.

The Paris Climate Agreement that recently concluded with a lot of fanfare, miserably fails in emphasising sustainable development and sustainable life style, to the world community especially to the people in the developed countries.

What is the way out? Symbolic and patchy compromises with the current Western Development and life style model is not going to save the world at all. We need a Paradigm shift in the pattern of Development and life style to more benign and more sustainable pattern.

A living and time tested example of sustainable model of development and life style is the Bharathiya Model of Development, which can also be called Swadeshi Model of Development and Life style. The Swadeshi Model is holistic in the sense it gives equal importance to the materialist (Artha, Kama) as well as the spiritual aspects of life (Dharma & Moksha). It gives great respect and reverence to mother earth, in all her manifestations-animate and inanimate. Swadeshi life style advocates responsible consumption, keeping the requirements of the future generations of life in mind. Today not only India, but the whole world needs to revive and practice the sustainable development model and life style that Bharat practiced successfully for centuries.

The Jodhpur National Conference of Swadeshi Jagarana Manch urges the government to,

- 1) undertake widespread research into the various aspects of the Bharatiya Sustainable Development Model and Life Style through various research institutions and universities.
- 2) propagate the research findings widely among the so called experts and the universities.
- 3) Restructure the government's Development Priorities and Programmes accordingly.
- 4) accord top most priority for Renewable Energy sources as found in the INDC submitted by India to COP-21.
- 5) propagate and incentivise organic farming and animal husbandry.
- 6) Give top priority for afforestation with lot of indigenous species and particularly fruit bearing species, which can supply abundant food to the wild life and birds.

The Swadeshi Jagarana Manch (S.J.M.) also urges the Karyakarthis and the general public to adopt Environment friendly Production methods and life style. □

cedure (DPP) & its subsequent refinements specifying the offset criteria and opening the market to the private sector are some of the policies that have been formulat-

ed yet actualising procurement decisions into manufacturing have been rather slow, he added further.

Indigenised defence production is a significant factor that pro-

vides strategic independence to a nation thereby adding exponentially to national security, stressed Dr. Tyagi. Indigenisation provides security flexibility to a nation by re-

ducing continued reliance on external sources and frees a nation from peripheral pulls and pressures, be they political or otherwise, he continued.

Technology has become a key element of national security and has even been termed as a force multiplier. In order to deal with the broad spectrum of national security issues, putting together strategies has to be with a direct emphasis on technology. While economic strength is the main pillar of national power, it is important that the military capability of a nation be also enhanced in tandem, armed forces, equipped with state-of-the-art war-fighting platforms are essential.

We have to realise that a Transfer of Technology (ToT) as it exists today, offers only modern production techniques but does not help in obtaining modern technology to assist in design and development as the IPR continues to remain with the original equipment manufacturer. There is, therefore, a need for a change in policy to arrive at correct assessments and decisions across the spectrum of political leaders, bureaucrats and technocrats.

Dr. Tyagi was also emphatic in suggesting overhauling of institutions of public sector or otherwise and dismantling those which have lived their utility and creating new ones for the present and future requirements.

Swami Maheshwaranand Maharaj in his brief but stimulating *Ashirvachan* laid a lot of thrust on native dress language and culture. He said that every country in the world proudly exhibits their love and pride in their respective cultures and languages. But in In-



dia on the contrary, people feel shy in accepting their past. Through his typically simple and straight arguments Swami Ji explained the richness of Indian civilization and the powerful message it conveys through all its manifestations.

National Convenor Sh. Arun Ojha ji in his brief, crisp and loaded speech enthused delegates, at the same time filling them with hope and desire to put in extra effort to achieve the desired objective. Arun Ojha also presented a compiled report of the activities of SJM undertaken during the year 2015. Copies of written report were distributed to all the delegates. Giving a brief overview of published report Arun ji reminded how farmers were cheated while creating SEZs. Alluding to Land Acquisition Act, he said that an atmosphere was created to give an impression that development of the country had stopped due to delay in land acquisition. But the facts speak otherwise. Government data says that mere 8 percent projects in country were delayed because of land related issues. Remaining 92 percent projects got delayed due to other reasons like delay in sanctions, Naxal terror or failure to procure loans.

SJM opposed the land acqui-

sition bill both and nail both on the strength of logic and through protests on street that conducted at Jantar Mantar Delhi in a "Swadeshi Jan Sansad". He cited several other examples to show how SJM has remained consistent in its stand of opposing wrong policies of the government irrespective of the party in power. Arun Ojha further added that entire country is agitated and is in no mood to remain mute spectators. They have tried their options by some times voting incumbent governments out of power or by lending support to new parties or organisation or by active participation in different agitations. Successive government has tried to undermine the concourses of people by diverting their attention towards uninhibited consumerism, free market economy and unrestrained enjoyment.

SJM has in such situations taken upon itself the responsibility of giving proper direction to the anger of the people.

Other highlights of the convention included over 5 business sessions, a Jana Sandeshyatra, Hunkar Sabha, the public meeting and the concluding session.

Four resolutions were passed in these business sessions. There were also special talks on several



current issues of national importance. Subject of the resolutions adopted were: - 1. Sustainable Development - Need of the hour, 2. Pull Agriculture, Investment and IPR out of WTO, 3. Constitute National Commission for Education, 4. National Development can be achieved through Made by Bharat Only, topics; special Talks were organised on current issues like Nairobi meeting of WTO, current economic issues in the background of Make in India, Environmental issues in the back drop of Paris COP21 and global warming, solar energy, GM food crops and Chinese challenge. State convenors also shared with delegates the details of the activities in their respective states undertaken during the year.

Some books were also released in different sessions during the convention. On second day that is on 26th December evening an impressive cultural show was organised. Well known artists and students enthralled the audience with their special acts and traditional dances etc.

Swadeshi Sandesh Yatra

A grand 'Swadeshi Sandesh Yatra' was taken act on 2nd day of the National Convention from Umed Stadium to Gandhi Maidan. Passionate participants were welcomed on their way by the peo-

ple of Jodhpur with a lot of love and enthusiasm. They showered flowers on the yatri, presented pagris and delicacies. Several organisations like Rashtriya Shikshak Sangh, Bharatiya Shikshan Manda, Sojta Gata Vyapar Sangh, Jatori Gate Vyapar Sangh, Param Pujniya Madhav Gav Vigyan Pariksha Samiti, BJP Yuva Morcha, Shastri Nagar BJP Mandal, Medica Associate etc. Also welcomed the yatra and even joined them enroute. Pro-Swadeshi slogans were raised all along the way before converging into a grand public meeting at Gandhi Maidan.

Hunkar Sabha: The public meeting named Hunkar Sabha was another attractive feature that displayed the strong sentiment of people gathered to listen the SJM leaders. Hunkar Sabha was addressed by National Convenor

Arun Ojha. He explained how Swadeshi Jagran Manch was working hard for last 24 years to promote swadeshi life style based on time tested Indian value system swadeshi is not limited to an individual or family only, he added. But this concept is not only relevant put real sustainable alternative to all the problems created by western life style. Others who addressed the Hunkar Sabha included Rashtriya Sangathak Kashmiri Lal ji, National Co-convenor Prof. Bhagwati Prakash Sharma and Dr. Amita Patki.

In the concluding session National Convener Arun Ojha declared the names of Swadeshi Jagran Manch activists who have been assigned new or additional responsibilities.

● National

1. *Sb. Satish Kumar* – Akhil Bhartiya Sah-Vichar Mandal Pramukh (additional responsibility)
2. *Dr. Niranjan Singh* – Akhil Bhartiya Sah Prachar Pramukh,
3. *Sb. Sanjeev Maheshwari* – Akhil Bhartiya Sah Kosh Pramukh & Kshetra Sanyojak .
4. *Sh. Bhagirath Chaudhary* – Akhil Bhartiya Pramukh (Krishi Prakosth).



● Kshetriya

1. *Sh. Dharmendra Bhadoria*—Kshetra Vichar Mandal Pramukh,
2. *Sh. Manoj Dwadi*—Kshetra Sah-Sampark Pramukh
3. *Sh. Balram Nandwani*—Kshetra Sah-Sanyojak.
4. *Sh. Govindram Aggarwal*—Kshetra Vichar Mandal Pramukh (Uttar Kshetra).
5. *Sh. Rajkumar Mittal*—Sah-Kshetra Vichar Mandal Pramukh (Uttar Kshetra).

● State

1. **Karnataka**—1. *Sh. S.C. Patil*—Prant Sah-Sanyojak, 2. *Sh. N.R. Manjunath*—Prant Sah-Sanyojak, 3. *Sh. Mahadaivya*—Sah-Kshetra Sanyojak (Karnataka, A.P., Telengana)
2. **Andhra Pradesh**—1. *Sh. Janardhan (CA)*—Prant Sanyojak, 2. *Sh. Krishan Bhagwan*—Prant Sangathak.
3. **Madhya Pradesh**—1. *Sh. Arushendra Kumar*—Prant Sah-Sanyojak, 2. *Sh. Suresh Bijoliya*—Prant Sah-Sanyojak (Malva),
4. **Himachal Pradesh**—1. *Sh. Lalit Koushal*—Prant Sah-Sanyojak, 2. *Sh. Janakraj Modgil*—Prant Working committee member,
5. **Punjab**—1. *Sh. Dinkar Prashar*—Prant Sah-Sanyojak
6. **Haryana**—1. *Sh. Vijay Vats*—Prant Sanyojak, 2. *Sh. Santendra Sarot*—Prant Sah-Sanyojak,
7. **Avadh**—1. *Dr. Rekha Sharma*—Prant Mahila Pramukh
8. **Kashi**—1. *Sh. Sravesh Pandey*—Prant Sanyojak, 2. *Sh. Vijay Kumar Singh*—Prant Sah-Sanyojak,
9. **Rajasthan**—1. *Sh. Rajkumar Chaturvedi*—Anchalik Vichar Mandal Pramukh (Rajasthan, Gujarat, Maharash-



tra), 2. *Sh. Bhagwati Lal Jagotiya*—Prant Sah-Sanyojak, 3. *Sh. Dharmendra Dubey*—Prant Sanyojak, 4. *Sh. Shankar Lal*—Prant Sah-Sanyojak,

10. **Delhi**—1. *Sh. Sushil Panchal*—Prant Sanyojak, 2. *Sh. Kamal Tiwari*—Prant Sah-Sanyojak, 3. *Sh. Ravindra Solanki*—Prant Sah-Sanyojak, 4. *Sh. Vikash Chaudhary*—Delhi, Haryana Sangarsh Vahini Pramukh.

- ## ● National Council Member
- 1. **Punjab**—Sh. Gaurav Tandan, Sh. Jagmohan Singh, Sh. Madan Lal, Dr. Rakesh Sharma, Sh. Ranvir Kumar, Smt. Sushila Devi.
 - 2. **J&K**—Sh. Vipin Upadhyay, Sh. Charan Dev Singh Jamval.
 - 3. **Himachal Pradesh**—Sh. Onkar Singh

Jaiswal, Sh. Inder Thakur 4. **Bihar**—Sh. Yadunandan Prasad. 5. **Odisha**—Sh. Abhey Samant Rai, Sh. Himanshu Chauliya. 6. **M.P.**—Sh. Sriram Goyal. 7. **Uttar Pradesh (West)**—Sh. Amilesh Amit, Sh. Sarvesh Vajpayee.

National convenor Arun Ojha ji in his concluding remarks said that our society has been caught in the vortex of income disparity. Apologists for ‘trickle-down’ theory and free market believe that accumulation of capital in the hands of the wealthy classes is in the national interest because they invest it into production due to, which people get jobs and increase their incomes. But recent studies tear trickle-down theory. It is clear that ‘trickle-down’ has now been transformed into trickle-up theory.

Speaking about the Make in India policy, Arun ji recalled Late President A P J Abdul Kalam who had cautioned about the campaign saying though it’s “quite ambitious”, but “We need to ensure that we do not become the low-cost, low-value assembly line of the world. If we go on that path, the growth will come at



COVER STORY



a great price and pain to the people.”

His suggestion was that we need to do original research to design, develop and manufacture in India by using the ideas of the youth, the wisdom of the ages and the vibrancy of a democracy.

Various sectors of national life are being opened by the government for FDI. New announcements were made recently for 15 areas. The government releases data every year about the amount of foreign investment that comes into the country, but does not track how

much funds are taken out each year by these foreign companies. We are constantly seeking that information. According to rough estimates these transnational companies put their money only in those countries where they can earn three dollars for every dollar invested. Government must release these figures. We demand a white paper on this issue.

There is great emphasis on bringing foreign capital. No one is looking at deposits of our own people who have deposited Rs 90, 73,330 million in our banks. India will not require any FDI if even a

mere 10 per cent of Rs 907 333 crore is made available as investment in the form of risk capital to the industry-trading community.

The need of the hour is that the majority of Indian wake up, take the responsibility and begin a new journey. By marching in the right direction only we can create a new, prosperous and powerful country. Credit goes to our Prime Minister for labouring real hard to establish brand India throughout the world. We feel proud of it, but as long as we continue to measure prosperity in terms of GDP, we will not be able to build the India which revered Mahatma Gandhi, Pandit Deen Dayal Ji and Ji Rashtrhrisi Dattopant Thengadi had dreamed. The India of their dreams is a land where the last man in the queue does not enjoy the fruits of development and sense of well-being. □□

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Manage water resources

Indians are starving for water even after 66 years of independence. Indian agriculture remained dependent on monsoon rains and Indian population in cities, towns and villages are not getting enough water for drinking and other uses. Thousands of crore are being spent on completion of irrigation projects without much addition to irrigation facilities and farmers are still relying on ground water resources. Many major and medium irrigation (MMI) projects seem to remain under execution forever as they slip from one plan to the other with enormous cost and time overruns. As such, the investment in irrigation projects is rising but not raising proportionately the gross irrigated area. The capacity of the older irrigation systems to serve is also going down due to lack of maintenance. More than that, the difference between potential created and area actually irrigated remained large and whatever projects completed, the water is being diverted to industrial and urban sector marginalizing the need of agriculture sector. Thus the management of depleting water resources with reference to future water requirements is important. More important is the need to address the issues of water usage and related conflicts apart from water harvesting and recharging of ground water tables.

India is a water stressed country

India has about 4% of world water and as per the international norms, India is a water stressed country and not a water scare country. The per capita per year water availability in India is at 1588 m³ (2010) which is less than 1700 m³ (stressed status) but above 1000 m³ (scare status). This availability however, is not same all over India. It is high in major river basin areas like Ganga and Brahmaputra (above 2000 m³) and low in the basin area of Sabaramati (about 260 m³). Ministry of Water Resources has put total utilizable water at 1,123 billion cubic meters (BCM) as



Government should not take the ownership of water resources and disturb the natural flows of water courses or allow water exploitation at discretion. Nature has its own system and that need to be respected and acted upon if necessary within is natural options, pleads

Anil Javalekar



against the current use of 634 BCM, reflecting a surplus scenario. However, independent sources doubt this availability and their utilizable estimates are 654 BCM which are close to current use estimates. This availability shows the alarming situation for future and propose for a cautious approach.

Government efforts seems superficialities

Water being a state subject, several measures are undertaken by the respective State Governments which, inter-alia, include conservation of water resources through reservoir, traditional water bodies, rain water harvesting and artificial recharge of ground water. Ministry of Water Resources, River Development and Ganga Rejuvenation provides technical and financial assistance to the State Governments through various schemes and programmes namely Accelerated Irrigation Benefits Programme (AIBP), and Repair, Renovation and Restoration (RRR) of Water Bodies etc. Further, Ministry of Drinking Water and Sanitation and Ministry of Urban Development supplement the efforts of the State Governments in providing drinking water to the rural and urban areas respectively under various schemes and programs. However, the results are not encouraging and water crisis is becoming more serious.

Many Indian areas are water scare

Many of Indian parts are water scare. As is known, inland Water resources of the country are classified as rivers and canals; reservoirs; tanks & ponds; beels, oxbow lakes, derelict water; and brackish water. Uttar Pradesh occupies the first place with the total

Indian water resources are not evenly distributed

length of rivers and canals as 31.2 thousand km, which is about 17 percent of the total length of rivers and canals in the country. Most of the area under tanks and ponds lies in Southern States of Andhra Pradesh, Karnataka and Tamil Nadu. These states along with West Bengal, Rajasthan and Uttar Pradesh, account for 62 percent of total area under tanks and ponds in the country. Ganga-Meghna-Brahmaputra basin covers a land area of 33 per cent and accounts for 60 per cent of India's water resources, while the catchment of rivers flowing west is 3 per cent accounting for 11 per cent of the country's water resources. Thus Indian water resources are not evenly distributed and many areas are water scarce. This apart, real estate development has eaten up many of lakes and ponds in city and town areas.

Indian irrigation projects remained under construction

The world over, the irrigation sector is the largest user of water—almost 80 per cent of the water in the world is taken up by irrigation. India also uses 85 percent of its available water resources for irrigation purpose. The irrigated area in India is 34 per cent of the net area sown or the gross irrigated area is 80 million ha and is among the largest of irrigated agriculture in the world. India's irrigation development after independence is mainly in the form of large water storage based dams with government efforts and Government

money. Indian government irrigation investments increased during the plan period and Post-independence has seen more than 60% of irrigation budgets going for Major and Medium (M & M) projects. There were 4818 completed large dams and 375 large dams were under construction in India (National register for large dams-2009). Large number of major as well as medium projects was continuing for 30–40 years or even more. There was a spill over of 553 projects (182 major, 273 mediums, and 98 ERM projects) into the Eleventh Plan from previous Plan periods. The number of projects spilled over into the XII Plan works out to 337 including 155 major, 147 mediums and 35 ERM projects. As per working group (2011), there was a backlog of 571 projects.

Irrigation Projects still not creating sufficient storage

As per CWC statistics 2013, a total of about 253.4 billion cubic meter (BCM) of surface water storage have been created. India's per capita water storage capacity is 200m³, well below the world average of 900m³ per capita. The per capita storage of about 200 cubic meters in the country is miniscule as compared to per capita storages in countries like USA (5961), Australia (4717), Brazil (3388) & China (2486). There are about 20 major river water basins in India and after completion of major and medium irrigation projects in hand, the total expected storage capacity would be 304 BCM against total availability of 1869 BCM of water in the river basins.

Irrigation projects are not efficient

The doubts were always

raised for the potential created by the completed projects. The Comptroller and Auditor General (CAG) conducted a performance appraisal of AIBP for 1996–2003 based on a test check of 99 (out of the then 172) projects in 19 states covering around 59 per cent of the expenditure under AIBP and found that no potential was created in 57 projects in 16 states as of March 2003 even after 1–7 years of their inclusion in the programme. In 67 per cent of the projects, the potential created was less than 50 per cent of the envisaged irrigation potential. The utilization of irrigation potential was also unsatisfactory. In 71 per cent of the projects, the utilization was less than 50 per cent of potential created. The present level of efficiency of major and medium irrigation project has been assessed to be about 30%. The gap between the potential created and the potential utilized has been increasing over time.

Expenses are high

The Annual Capital Expenditure on major and medium irrigation projects has increased from Rs. 284638 lakh in 1990-91 to Rs. 2654223 lakh in 2006-07. Similarly, the Annual Working Expenses for major and medium irrigation projects also depicted an increasing trend from Rs. 245219 lakh to Rs. 960443 lakh during the same period. The Capital Expenditure on minor irrigation projects increased from Rs. 48858 Lakh to Rs. 302036 lakh and the annual Working Expenses for minor irrigation projects also increased from Rs. 97480 lakh in 1990-91 to Rs. 293271 lakh in 2006-07. However, Growth rate of irrigated area continues to fall from 4.23 % per

In 67 per cent of the projects, the potential created was less than 50 per cent of the envisaged irrigation potential.

year during the 1970s to 3.08% per year in 1980s and to 2.56% in the 1990s. The net area under irrigation by Government canals increased from 15.81 million hectares in 2000-01 to 16.51 million hectares in 2009-10.

More allocation of water to urban areas

The future conflicts will be more on water usage and major conflict will be not of agriculture and industry but within agriculture sector itself apart from supply of water to urban cities. Since the total available water is more or less constant, rising demands due to population and economic growth will strain the demand-supply balance. The Water Resources Group estimates that half of the demand for water will be unmet by 2030 if the current pattern of demand continues. In almost every dam and reservoir, originally built for irrigation, there are now allocations made for urban drinking water and industry, encroaching upon irrigation allocations (India Infrastructure Report 2011). This allocation will lead to more conflicts.

Need drastic change in Policy approach

First is the water usage policy. This is important because water usage is leading to socio-economic conflicts. The deepening of

wells, constructing of more and more dams, linking of rivers and supply of water through tankers is not the solution to Indian water problem. The need is to stop high water consuming agriculture, industries and construction activity. The cropping system need to be according to the geography, its soil pattern and natural water resource availability. Commercialisation of agriculture and inducing small and marginal farmers to take crops not suitable to their soil and water sources have already played havoc and brought water tables down everywhere. Further depletion of land and water sources will bring disaster to future socio-economic life.

Second, low water use efficiency and high wastage have aggravated the water problem and need solutions. One reason for this is low or no charge for water usage. The concept of free water seems not a desirable idea.

Third, water resources need to be conserved and preserved by all means. All efforts need to be actual and programmes should give positive results in real terms and not in political terms.

Fourth, safe water need to be ensured for drinking with its equitable distribution. Water contamination by any means need to be dealt severely.

Fifth, Costly water governance and extensive ground water resource exploitation need to be minimized. Government should not take the ownership of water resources and disturb the natural flows of water courses or allow water exploitation at discretion. Nature has its own system and that need to be respected and acted upon if necessary within is natural options. □□

Risk-taking Modi paves for faster growth; may bring peace in S Asia

India emerged as the fastest growing large economy in 2015 and a possible regional leader. Modinomics is doing some wonders for paving a possible faster growth in 2016. The positives have come from large promises of FDI from Japan, Germany and US. Global crude oil price fall has added to hopes.

As the year closes there are reports that oil is set to touch a low of \$ 20 a barrel. While it reduces energy expenses, it has its concerns too. Is India's love for solar and alternative power sources the reason for global price fall? India would have to be on guard and not budge or slow down on looking for non-oil energy sources. That India is not faltering is evident from the commitment it could have from Japan's Softbank on investment of \$ 20 billion in solar power. It promises to generate 20 gigawatt of solar energy. Will that have a singular effect on global oil prices? Experts do not deny it. The oil price fall is attributed to shrinking of western role in the ISIS-Daesh – largely headed by former Baath Party of slain Saddam Hussien - controlled oil fields in Iraq and Syria, in alliance with Turkey.

So if the Daesh changes tack from terrorism, it has the capacity to change the world economy and politics. Will 2016 see such a change? It is difficult to predict. But a significant Indian move by a visit of the external affairs minister Sushma Swaraj to Pakistan may be the harbinger for it. The way India has made the beginning for a civilian coalition with Pakistan and Afghanistan at the Heart of Asia meet; it has the potency to alter the mid-East politics and Talibanisation. It seems a little far-fetched but her meetings with Pak Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif and Afghan president Ashraf Ghani could usher in a new era of peace and prosperity in South Asia.

The way it plans to make the country a hub of international defence production with the help of France and Japan and some large Indian houses, it seems to



India's private sector is sadly not taking up the challenge that Modi is keen on taking. It still seems to be ensconced in the socialistic mindset of 1960s. It does not invest, keeps sitting over its reserves, and pries on public bank money never to return it, finds Shivaji Sarkar



change the world arms market scenario in the coming years. Initiatives are potent. It is criticized also as some say it would be a captive of world vendors. But one has to realize that by itself the country can neither invest such large amounts nor create the basic infra. This Make in India has also to boost its indigenous defence and aircraft industry in the public sector. That is likely to create not only a fine balance but also ensure a fair competition – a necessity for being the leader in the market.

The initiatives in the external and defence production arena show, instead of being cautious, India is on to a risk-taking, till now unknown. Businesses grow on a bit of adventurism. Should we see 2015 as a new dawn for India, where it moves out of the protection to take a leap? May be.

Yes, India has concern for its rupee. It has yet to find a mechanism to boost its strength. It has tottered as China cuts rates and devalues its currency. Economic advisors have not yet been able to find a formula to give falling rupee a news of life. This blunts some of the positive positioning. The benefit of low oil prices if could have been transferred to the consumers, the growth rate could have been faster.

This government is suffering the impact of poor Monmohan-mics vision. It needs to come out with a new economic policy and concept to fast track the nation 2016 onwards.

The government finances have problems. Reserve bank finds problem with declining corporate profitability – of course, after a five-year period of whopping profits, and low debt servicing capacity. It has led to tightening of norms to mon-



GDP growth has been powered by private consumption and public investment.

itor loans above Rs 10 lakh from earlier threshold of Rs 1 crore.

India has its share of problems for a lack of public policy on many spheres, inherited by the Modi government. Since the ushering in of green revolution, the country has not done much for its agriculture, which sustains at least 54 to 58 percent of the population – 80 crore to produce a GDP of 14 to 18 percent against 14 percent manufacturing GDP. Agriculture is not one entity. It is varied and complex. It includes myriad crops, finance, marketing, chemicals, land, property, labour, transport and so many others. It is the greatest private initiative all with private money.

If a proper policy initiative is taken it can change the economy for the better. Subsidise or not it can create a stable price regime that can sustain the industry and people alike. The country awaits Modi to bring in that vision – some dream he had created during his 2014 poll campaign.

India's private sector is sadly not taking up the challenge that Modi is keen on taking. It still seems to be ensconced in the socialistic mindset of 1960s. It, except for one or two houses, wants to remain a lackey. It does not invest, keeps sitting over its reserves, and pries on public bank money

never to return it.

So GDP growth has been powered only by private consumption and public investment. It is a concern. The proposed wage hike for government workers may impact plan for next fiscal.

India's eight core industries, representing major infrastructure sectors, grew at 2.3 per cent in the April-September period of the current fiscal, compared to a rate of 5.3 per cent in the same period of the previous fiscal - the fall in growth rate caused by lower expansion in electricity, coal and cement sectors and negative growth in steel and natural gas sectors.

Meanwhile, RBI Governor Raghuram Rajan cut the interest rate – something industry loves but common depositor considers a direct tax on them.

The common man also suspects the GST. They have seen every "tax reform" raising the rates. They do not want a central GST but an agreed rate across the states so that their expenses come down.

The people regale the increase in forex reserves to \$ 352 billion in November 2015 against \$ 270 billion in 2013. Net FDI has also increased to \$ 17 billion up from \$ 15.8 billion a year ago. So despite negative export growth, bad monsoon and inflation, India is apparently on a better course. □□

Early years of Swadeshi Jagaran Manch

SJM agitations with wide impact

Several agitations were taken up to for public education and putting pressure on government so as not to favour foreigners at the cost of national interest. Some were at national level and some at local or state level. Few notable ones were:

1. Agitation against Enron Project: The first important issue taken up by the SJM was the ENRON muddle. All kinds of vested interests - political, bureaucratic, professional and business - came together to promote the highly exploitative and potentially disastrous fast track power project at extraordinary speed. Economic Times editorially commented giving credit to the SJM for saving at least Rs 15,000 crore to the exchequer by its highly researched analysis of the Enron power project by SJM Maharashtra unit. Under public furore the Shivse-na-BJP government was forced to cancel the project. But soon it backtracked and renegotiated the dubious contract.

2. Matsya-Raksha Jalyatra: The problems affecting the weaker sections like the fishing community along the coastal strip were studied when SJM came to know of the imminent entry of large foreign fishing vessels in Bharatiya waters. A *Matsya-Raksha Jalyatra* from Gujarat to Kanyakumari and Odisha to Kanyakumari was organized in boats along the coast highlighting dangers to long term fishing and to the very survival of the fishing community due to competition of foreign fishing trawlers.

3. Pashudhan Bachao Padayatra: A *paidal* march was launched by SJM against the proposed huge abattoir Al-Kabir in Andhra Pradesh as this was likely to further deplete the cattle in the area. This got the enthusiastic response from the agricultural community and put pressure on state government to postpone the decision.

4. Agitation against compulsion of iodized salt: It was indeed shocking that the government banned the use of ordinary salt forcing the people to buy the iodised salt – iodine has to be imported- at nearly eight to ten times the price of

It will be instructive to review the circumstances that led to the formation of SJM (Quarter of a century after its formation) and its rapid spread and building up of a credible clout as well as impact during the first few years, says Ravindra Mahajan



the ordinary salt. After nearly three years of dithering by the government despite urging by senior SJM leaders, finally the SJM announced a March from Dandi in south Gujarat to the Sabarmati Ashram in Ahmedabad and then onwards to Delhi, to demand the immediate lifting of the ban. Reminiscent of Mahatma Gandhi's famous Dandi Yatra during the freedom struggle, the announcement shamed the government and forced them to announce lifting the ban the very next day.

5. Opposing FDI in retail trade: The SJM worked shoulder to shoulder with the trade association leaders to stop the pernicious and unnecessary measure allowing 100 percent FDI in the retail trade sector, which would force crores of small traders to fold up their shops and become franchises of a foreign company operating from the other end of the world.

SJM as facilitator for SSIs

Realising the need to constructively help the small and medium industries to update their technical and management skills to gear up for the competition in a free market environment, SJM Maharashtra unit organized a fair at Thane for cottage and small industries naming it SWODYAM.

This was later expanded nationally as a concept of Swadeshi Mela a few years later. Swadeshi industries were invited to show case their products and services in the industrial and cultural fair – the Swadeshi Mela. Apart from the participation of trade and industry, the people were also invited to be a part of this gathering by arranging student competitions and cultural events, seminars and lecture series by eminent leaders and experts, folk arts and fashion

shows, and educative exhibitions on important subjects. Students and women in large numbers took part in the various programmes incidental to the Swadeshi mela.

In a short span of only four years, SJM sponsored 34 Swadeshi Melas, attracting as many as over 90 lakh visitors and 7,000 exhibitors. A separate organization Center for Bharatiya Marketing Development was established to conduct these Melas.

Some of the important points made by Swadeshi Jagaran Manch-

1. To call Swadeshi narrow-minded is ridiculous. Bharatiya culture does not display clash of interest between individuals, families, villages/towns, states or nation. All benefit in common national endeavor due to their cultural compatibility. Clash of Interests is the philosophy of West while integrating of interests is Bhartiya Culture. Hence "Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam" is what we offer. Healthy family is the base of our social philosophy.
2. We do not profess aloofness from the world. For fresh wave of air we need to 'open the windows and not break the walls.' Exchange of knowledge is welcome, but assimilation should be need based and tuned to our ethos.
3. Competition based on values, giving impetus to the development is essential. Competition on level playing field between equals should be encouraged. But it cannot operate in condition of extreme shortages. We cannot allow exploitation and abuse of environment in the name of competition.
4. SJM opposes anti-people ac-

tions of American exploiters like MNCs who do not spare even their people. It even sympathises with common American people against their exploitation by ruthless MNCs and their associates. SJM is not against America or any other country, per say.

5. Some communists, cut off as they are from the national ethos, accused SJM that it is having Swadeshi movement at the behest of Bharatiya industrialists. They forgot that SJM had asked for Declaring Cost of Production on every pack obviating the possibility of exploitation through high prices.
6. SJM was aware from the beginning that opposing exploitation by foreign MNCs is only one aspect of what is nationally needed. It took steps by forming a group to formulate and indicative document showing the alternative for alternative Swadeshi Development Policy. This document "Bharat ka Abhyuday" (in Hindi and Rebuilding the Nation in English) was released in due course after detailed deliberations during several national level meetings.

Alround support for Swadeshi Jagaran Manch

Taking up the Swadeshi cause was the need of the hour and SJM received support from large number of national leaders from all walks of life.

The first national conference of SJM was held at Delhi in September 1992 in which ex-Judge of Supreme Court V.R.Krishna Iyer was chief guest and delivered a stirring address expressing hope that SJM will take cudgels on behalf of common people to resist the for-

Recollection

eign economic onslaught. The second national conference in Kolkata (4th & 5th November 1995) was inaugurated by renowned environmentalist Claude Alvares.

Among others former PM Chandrashekhar, George Fernandes, Maneka Gandhi, labour leaders S.R.Kulkarni, Roza Deshpande, thinker Maulana Wahiduddin extended their cooperation to SJM.

Impact of Swadeshi Jagaran Manch

It was reported that after Swadeshi Jagaran Abhiyan of SJM sales of foreign FMCG goods came down and this attracted attention abroad. Ford Foundation also reportedly instituted a study of Swadeshi movement in Bharat.

SJM during its anti-Enron stir organized a *marcha* on American Consulate in Mumbai which received a wide international publicity highlighting public opposition to Enron. Such a *marcha* on American Consulate was first of its kind with a good participation of agitating public and full coverage by media.

Though the entry of Enron project could not be prevented, the other foreign projects, equally or more costly, quietly withdrew in the face of local agitations backed up by SJM.

SJM also arranged demonstration against Arthur Dunkel (author of Dunkel draft) when he visited for a programme in Mumbai. Discussion of SJM was arranged with him by the organizers in which he parried questions about ill-effects of his proposals on majority of developing and under-developed countries and only stressed that global trade would go up. This demonstration and discussion too



received publicity bringing into public focus the anger of nationalists in Bharat and abroad.

The then government took some corrective policy decisions after *Matsya-Raksha Jalyatra* of SJM giving relief to the local fishermen community.

As could be expected the Swadeshi cause faced derision and ridicule in the first few years, while they patiently carried on the work despite all odds. Soon the economic situation turned bleak. Those who mocked at the very idea of Swadeshi reluctantly recognized the truth in the Swadeshi approach.

In general the public got a feeling that a Manch exists in country which is trying to oppose the onslaughts of foreigner in cahoots with their local accomplices. Media also sought SJM opinion on various issues, thoughtful and consistent as they were.

Lokmatparishkar

SJM always provided in a measured response to the situation involving uncalled for foreign investment or projects and also indicating an alternative course of action. It believed in *Lokmatparishkar*—preparing public mind through education with facts, analysis and implications for the right response.

Set-back to Swadeshi Jagaran Manch

SJM had also to put up with

a set-back when the Shivsena-BJP government renegotiated the controversial Enron project. BJP was an enthusiastic participant at the time of launching of SJM and had publicly opposed the project during the election campaign in 1995. Ironically the SJM analysis and warnings about fraudulent project and the equally fraudulent Enron Corporation were proved correct. Maharashtra State Electricity Board rode towards bankruptcy and then somehow wriggled out of the project commitments. Enron Corporation folded up under the weight of its various frauds and the some promoters were jailed. Nevertheless, the Swadeshi cause and national interests suffered and SJM lost its erstwhile clout.

Need for Swadeshi Jagaran Manch

SJM continued its work of *Lokmatparishkar* as this is the need of the hour. The thinking people all national sectors should dispassionately evaluate effects of the almost 25 years of globalization unleashed in the country since June 1991 and also the effects of WTO operating since 1995 and becoming effective in our country since 2005.

We are sure such analysis will reestablish the need for Swadeshi spirit and an organization like Swadeshi Jagaran Manch to guard national interest and mould the development process in the right channel with content really suited to the situation obtaining locally in tune with the needs, aspirations and the ethos.

Annexure No.1 - SWADESHI

Swadeshi is a sublime concept expressing the innate nature (SWA)

of the nation. It is seen that every nation, like an individual, has its own peculiarities expressed in its world view through the cultural values it cherishes most. If the actions, programmes & institutions of that nation reflect this ethos, they do thrive, otherwise degradation occurs.

Swadeshi is an all-encompassing concept valid for every walk of national life. It is expressed in myriad ways & some typical expressions are as below:

Swadeshi is

- practical manifestation of patriotism
- economic nationalism
- swadharma applied to one's immediate environment (as per Mahatma Gandhi)
- SWABHIMAN (self-respect), SAWALABMAN (self-reliance), SWA-TANTRATA (working with own models suited to one's situation), SAMARTHYA (National Strength—military, diplomatic, economic, will & character), SAMRUDHI (prosperity without social exploitation & environmental degradation) & SHANTI (peace - mental, social harmony & international)
- raising of **householder**, looking after family interests, to a higher pedestal of a **citizen** reflecting social responsibility, genuine love for fellow citizens & skill of implementing tasks on hand in the best national interest.
- working to reflect high national cultural ideas in every sphere of national activity which will eventually lead to highest national strength & glory.
- philosophically, to fashion own individual as well as national life

in tune with the principles of creation (collectively called RIT in our ancient literature). A subset of RIT as applicable to the social field is called DHARMA.

Dharma is not religion or certain rites or a set of beliefs or a way of worship but it constitutes the principles of sustenance & sublimation of human society. Dharma is a moral principle of universal harmony & should never be confused with cult religions.

Actions in tune with Dharma are beneficial for society & vice-versa. Dharma also variously means - the inner nature, obligations on the part of individual or the institution, a model conduct etc.

Swadeshi means all this & more. Thus, Swadeshi is a positive, and not a reactionary, concept reflecting the highest goals of national life, nay the human life.

If foreigners or even some nationals work against Swadeshi ethos, they need to be checked, just as to maintain health & full vigor the malignant microbes need to be checked.

Swadeshi is not some artificial concoction but a living reality in this country since time immemorial. Times & circumstance might have dimmed the spirit but it was alive all the time. When it thrived, the country prospered. The Bharatiya institutions like family, gurukul, annasatra, sanyasi pravachanas, isht puja, weekly bazars, panchayats etc. are very much alive & operational. Hence we do not have to start on a clean slate but just to water the roots & remove the outgrowth. New lines of concepts & work, to suit present or future requirements, need to be continuously tried as in the past.

Annexure No.2 - Defining Swadeshi Company & Goods

Prior to independence all goods imported from abroad were termed as foreign and by default anything that was not imported was simply called 'Swadeshi'. However at present, foreign producers advertise their goods as 'Made completely in India', creating confusion.

After extensive deliberations and sifting through debate in the then Congress on how to define Swadeshi goods, it was finally decided that in today's changed circumstances the practical way is to define a Swadeshi company. Then the goods produced by that Swadeshi company in Bharat will be Swadeshi goods for all practical purposes. The idea of a Swadeshi company, therefore, was broadly defined as per guidelines below:

2.1 Guidelines for definition

- 2.1.1 Compatible with national culture
- 2.1.2 Protecting economic independence in the process of development.
- 2.1.3 Efficient use of national resources, self-reliance, decentralization, use of appropriate technology, maintaining environmental balance, development of the most disadvantaged, *artha* based on *dharma*, priority to local resources etc. would be the main economic principles, based on which problems such as unemployment, foreign debt, reckless urbanisation, devastation of villages will be tackled.
- 2.1.4 The definition should be easy to understand and easy to apply.
- 2.1.5 It should be adequately flex-

ible to enable the changes as required from time to time. It should neither be over or under-reaching.

- 2.1.6 As far as possible, it should just not be applicable only to one nation but, as far as possible, for the whole world, benefiting the man, protecting the environment and easily acceptable to all nations. Goods in accordance the above definition will be easy to be recognized as Swadeshi.

The definition is thus divided in two parts

- 1 Comprehensive and basic definition of a Swadeshi company and
 - 2 National sentiments of Swadeshi, that should receive primacy of consideration.
- 2.2 Comprehensive basic definition Swadeshi Company covering four main attributes
- 2.2.1 *Ownership*: Minimum 51% shareholding should be by Bharatiyas. A company having majority holding in this company should have minimum 51% holding by Bharatiyas. e.g. Unilever holds major shares in Hindustan Lever (HLL) and HLL in Lipton, then each one of this company need minimum 51% shareholding by Bhartiya for the company to be considered as Swadeshi.
- 2.2.2 *Management*: Management including Manufacturing, Marketing should be in complete control of Bharatiyas. Crucial offices such as Managing Director, Technical Director should not be with foreigners. In special circumstances, we

may take help of foreign advisers for a specific limited period

- 2.2.3 *Use of profit*: Profit should be utilized within the country. A limited expenditure on non-available items can be allowed abroad.
- 2.2.4 *Head office*: HO should be in Bharat. Many companies who make profit in Bharatiya market maintain head office in foreign country, for manipulation of accounts. Such companies cannot be called 100% Swadeshi.

Companies fulfilling all four criteria will be called Swadeshi Company and its products manufactured in Bharat will be called Swadeshi Products for all practical purposes.

2.3 Natural sentiments of Swadeshi: In The following aspects should be given priority/preference.

- 2.3.1 *Swadeshi technology*: Swadeshi technology in Manufacturing with continuous improvements.
- 2.3.2 *Local products*: Scope for Swadeshi/local products. (the perimeter of locality should be flexible to suit the situation obtained on ground.)
- 2.3.3 *Swadeshi raw materials*: Use of local materials, renewable raw material be given preference over non-renewable ones. e.g. solar instead of coal or petroleum products wherever possible. Agro industry should get first priority.
- 2.3.4 *Environment compatibility*: Non-polluting technology/process should be preferred (e.g. bio degradable plastic), milking and not exploiting technology be insisted upon.

- 2.3.5 *Avoiding Imports*: Imports be avoided as far as possible. In case of critical items, such as space parts, high tech materials/goods, life-saving drugs etc. goods manufactured in India by foreign firms can be procured instead of import. Maximisation of Swadeshi in a given situation is the key objective.
- 2.3.6 *Prefer small and local*: Priority commences with village industry and progresses to small scale, co-operative, medium scale or to large scale industry in that order.

2.3.7 *Social responsibility*: Special consideration to products available from the organisations of blind, the physically handicapped and such other social organisations.

2.3.8 *Swadeshi approaches*: Swadeshi institutional approaches in management, co-operatives, trusteeship etc. are to be preferred

2.4 *Exceptions*: Exception in extraordinary situation as below may be acceptable.

2.4.1 *National Security*: Essential weapons, weapon delivery systems, state of art technology. These can be availed from wherever they are available.

2.4.2 In national calamity situations (e.g. floods or earthquake)

2.4.3 Responsibility towards underdeveloped nations. As a large country we can import from smaller neighbors in view of our interests (e.g. sugar from Mauritius, dates from Afghanistan, coconut from Shri Lanka) □□

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Road After Nairobi



Very first tweet of Indian Commerce Minister Nirmala Sitharaman after the conclusion of Nairobi (Kenya) Ministerial conference was that she is “Utterly disappointed a unanimous reaffirmation of DDA hasn’t happened”. USA and European Media celebrated Nairobi’s Ministerial Declaration as a victory of western negotiators and as ‘Financial Times’ titled its reporting as ‘Death of Doha and Birth of new WTO’.

Indian media also followed their western counterparts; and believed that now Doha Development

Agenda has no future and its now end of road for meeting the aspirations of India, China, Africa and other developing countries and road is wide open now for the developed world to have its way.

What is Doha Development Agenda?

India was among first few countries who signed Marrakesh Agreement, leading to the formation of World Trade Organisation (WTO). However, during initial negotiations in GATT, there were some issues on which there was no agreement. And then there were many problems and worries of developing countries arising out of initial agreement, in context of which Doha round of talks, popularly known as Doha Development Agenda (DDA) had been started after 2001. Doha agenda included issues like agriculture, non-agriculture market access (NAMA), trade related intellectual property rights (TRIPS), anti dumping and subsidies etc. According to the commitments made in WTO developed countries were supposed to end their agricultural subsidies.

However, contrary to their commitments, they rather increased their agricultural subsidies manifold. They did the same by reclassifying their subsidies, by placing most of their subsidies in ‘green box’: which were not supposed to be curtailed. It is sure, that if India gives market access to the agricultural produce of the developed countries, our agriculture may be badly affected. In view of different disputes, worries and problems, World Trade Organisation started facing a deadlock, and to end the deadlock, Doha Development Agenda was given importance. However, developed countries were not ready to discuss them and they tried to avoid discussion on DDA.

Now it is very clear, especially after Nairobi that developed countries are not ready to give any solution to the problems faced by developing countries. They are not concerned about farmers’ suicide in India due to non remunerative prices



If a sizable number of developing countries block their consent to the TFA and exert pressure on developed countries to heed to their concerns, balance may get tilted in favour of developing countries, believes

Dr. Ashwani Mahajan

for their produce. When 25 per cent of the world population suffering from hunger lives in India and Government of India is trying to ensure food security for poor, they are objecting to the food stock holdings by the government. To safeguard the interest of the farmers in the event of import surge (of agriculture produce), government wants a solution by way of Special Safeguard Mechanisms (SSMs), developed countries are trying to link them to the market access for their own produce. Rather they want to impose labour standards and environment standards of their choice on the exports from the developing countries; to somehow block their exports. They also want E-commerce included in the trade negotiations.

Road After Nairobi

It is true that developing countries have returned empty handed from Nairobi Ministerial Conference of WTO. Developed countries have done their best to ensure that Doha Development Agenda doesn't go ahead. However, this does not mean that the possibility of Doha Development Agenda has totally finished and that the developed countries have been able to take issues of their choice forward. Chair of the Nairobi conference, Kenya's Commerce Minister Amina Mohamed has clearly denied this conclusion that Doha round has finished and that new issues can be brought in. She clearly stated, quoting from the ministerial declaration that "There remains a strong commitment of all Members to advance negotiations of the remaining Doha issues". This conclusion of Nairobi will set the future agenda of WTO, she opined.

Bali was the First Mistake

It is notable that in the 9th ministerial conference at Bali (Indonesia) in December 2013, developing countries made their initial mistake by giving their consent to the Trade Facilitation Agreement (TFA) of interest to developed countries, separately from other issues and then later to include the same in Part-1A of WTO in Geneva in 2014; when other issues of interest of developing countries remained unresolved. Since Trade Facilitation Agreement was generally in favour of developed countries, Bali could have been used to solve other issues by linking them with TFA. An opportunity was thus wasted in Bali.

Developing countries have paid enough after the 'Marakesh Agreement'.

Next important mistake was made by India and China, that while participating in Green Room negotiations in Nairobi, on the extended day of the conference, by 'not saying no' for giving any concession to the US and EU negotiators supported by Brazil, Kenya and Director General of WTO Mr. Azevedo. At a time when India, China and African countries in big number were united, this could have easily been done.

This does not mean that opportunity is gone forever. Still there is a chance, if India, China and South Africa get united and convince other developing countries of Asia and Africa against the neo-mercantilist tendencies of US and

EU and thereby bring Doha Development Agenda back at the centre of the WTO. This has to be ensured that new issues are not allowed in any circumstances, either for studying or putting on the agenda of the General Council. Utmost care be made to ensure that Para 34 ("Any decision to launch negotiations multilaterally on such issues would need to be agreed by all members") of the ministerial declaration is followed in letter and spirit, that no new issues can be brought in unless agreed by all members.

Developing countries must not come under the mirage of the developed countries that they may take up issues of interest of developing countries if new issues are conceded. So far developing countries have paid enough after the 'Marakesh Agreement'.

Blocking TFA

Though, lots of discussion is going on the benefits of TFA and it is being suggested that all countries give their respective consent to the same, so that it may be implemented at the earliest. However, we must remember that the consent of number of countries is pending, which is coming in way of its implementation. If a sizable number of developing countries block their consent to the TFA and exert pressure on the developed countries to heed to their concerns, balance may get tilted in favour of developing countries. We must understand that due to huge subsidies by the developed countries, there is hardly any possibility of increasing exports of agricultural produce by the developing countries. Giving consent to the proposals of US and EU is likely to put developing countries at great loss. □□

‘Democratic’ Sonia Vs ‘Dictatorial’ Modi

The Congress party characterises Modi as a dictator and by implication, presents Sonia as a democrat. Whether a popular leader is a dictator or a democrat is tested by conduct. An unpopular dictator is an oxymoron. A dictator may become unpopular but no unpopular person can ever become a dictator. How a leader behaves when in position of power — particularly when his or her position is under threat — offers the most reliable test. A popular Indira Gandhi was tested twice. Once in 1969, when her senior colleagues dissented her individualistic style. She used State power, backstabbed the party and defeated the party nominee in the election for the President of India and captured the party with the help of the enemies of the party by forging an ideological alliance with them. This destroyed the democratic Congress party as the nation knew till then. She put the party under her virtual dictatorship. She changed the very paradigm of national politics from politics of ethics and character to politics of power and success. This brought out her dictatorial mind. The real dictator in her came out when the Allahabad High Court unseated her from Parliament and the Supreme Court made her a Prime Minister without voting rights in Parliament. She struck at the nation, imposed Emergency and, as Nani Palkhiwala said, defaced and defiled the Constitution, courts, Parliament, Opposition, media, and the people at large and put the whole nation under total dictatorship. It is 40 years since and still now, no one in the Congress or from the family of Indira Gandhi has sincerely regretted the Emergency. On the contrary, Rajiv Gandhi, after he got four-fifths majority in the Lok Sabha in 1984, even tried to justify the Emergency. And that Congress party and Sonia Gandhi, claiming to be the proud daughter-in-law of Indira Gandhi, are trying to brand Narendra Modi as dictatorial — by implication, claiming to be democratic. Is it not time then that one compared the democratic credentials of Sonia and Modi?



Whether a popular leader is a dictator or a democrat is tested by conduct.

How a leader behaves when in position of power — particularly when his or her position is under threat — offers the most reliable test, believes,

S Gurumurthy





Look at how the ‘dictatorial’ Narendra Modi conducted himself when, just three years before he became the Prime Minister, he was under tremendous pressure from the Opposition, media and even the courts. Sonia Gandhi and her party had accused him of being the merchant of death. The UPA, which had made the CBI its Alsatian, used the agency to target him in the Sohrabuddin case. The sordid story was exposed by The New Indian Express (see articles titled, Fixing Shah, by Fabrication, CBI Betrays Court, Bails Out Congress and Interrogating The Media — published in August 2010). The media was applauding every effort to fix and get rid of him. Yet, there was no FIR against him. No complaint had been filed in any court against him. No court had issued him summons. No court had ordered his examination by police. But the Special Investigation Team (SIT) on Gujarat riots summoned him for examination like police would summon any one at their discretion. He was as popular in Gujarat as he is now all over the country. He was a powerful and performing Chief Minister of Gujarat. Also he was seen as the rising national leader within the BJP when the SIT summoned him. But

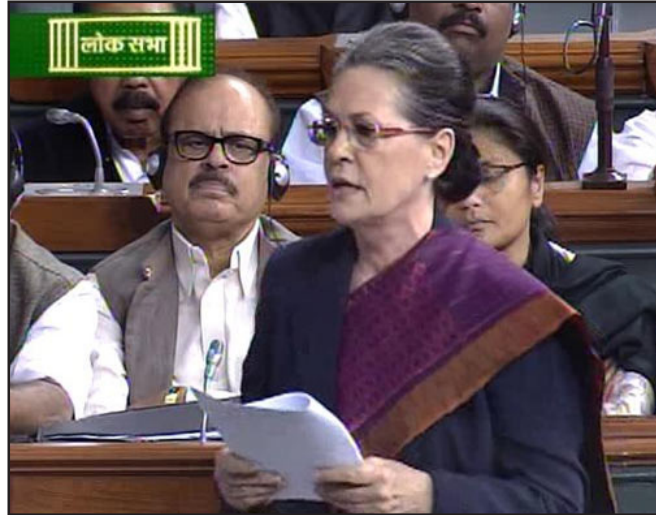
How the ‘democratic’ Sonia behaved after the National Herald case caught up with her.

he did not use his party to drum up support for him in the Assembly nor did his party stall Parliament. The Gujarat Assembly functioned and so did Parliament. He could have gathered a million people to give him a great ovation when he went to the SIT office to put pressure on the investigation and on the instigators of the case against him. He respected the summons and drove to the SIT office in his car. He walked down the lane leading to the SIT alone. He was grilled by the SIT for over eight hours. He answered their questions. Satisfied with his answers, the SIT finally exonerated him. But his adversaries would not leave him. They charged the SIT with favouring him. Finally, the Supreme Court had to exonerate him twice — once, when the UPA was in power and next time, a few months ago. This is ‘dictatorial’ Modi’s behaviour.

Now compare how the ‘democratic’ Sonia behaved after the National Herald case caught up with her, her son and her family loyalists. Here is the National Herald case in brief. In November 2012, Dr Subramanian Swamy exposed how Sonia Gandhi and Rahul Gandhi have grabbed properties of National Herald worth thousands of crores through a convoluted criminal strategy. After that, this newspaper carried a detailed article, National Herald Affair: It’s Fraud All The Way (TNIE, November 8, 2012), explaining the fraud. In January 2013, Dr Swamy filed a criminal complaint against Sonia, her son and family loyalists, including Motilal Vohra, the Congress party treasurer, charging them with conspiracy, fraud, cheating, and criminal breach of trust to rob the shareholders and the public of thousands of crores. All this happened when the UPA was in power. Rahul Gandhi threatened to file a defamation suit against Dr Swamy. Swamy challenged him but Rahul ran away. In June 2014, a Delhi criminal court took cognisance of the offence and issued summons. Forthwith, Sonia Gandhi and other five accused, including Rahul, filed petitions in the Delhi High Court to quash the criminal proceedings. They kept delaying the hearing till they thought they got the judge they felt comfortable with. One judge recused himself and so did the next. The matter went to the third judge, who Sonia and her co-accused did not like, and he too recused himself. All the accused petitioned to have the matter heard by the second judge who had recused himself earlier. The case was posted before the

very judge, who Sonia and her co-accused felt comfortable with. It is that very same judge, who decided on December 7, 2015 that the lower court has rightly ordered their trial and summoned them, and asked them to appear before the metropolitan magistrate. Still, hell broke loose. The very next day the Congress president was seen instigating her MPs to stall Parliament. When the Speaker asked them why they were disturbing the House, they shouted they saw in the National Herald case “political vendetta” and “democracy in danger”. When the Speaker asked them to spell out what they want and offered to allow them to raise the issue and speak in the House, they ran away from speaking in the House. Obviously, they only had instructions to stall the House. The same theatrics were repeated in the Rajya Sabha. Not that they did not talk in the House. They couldn’t. Why?

It needs no seer to say that the prosecution on the National Herald fraud was an act of the judiciary and the Modi government had had nothing to do with it. There was no CBI or Income Tax or the Enforcement Directorate in the picture which could link the prosecution to the government. It was the private complaint of Dr Subramanian Swamy on which the magistrate held that Sonia, Rahul and the four family loyalists had created a trust company fully controlled by them as a cloak or sham of a special purpose vehicle to convert public money and to ac-



Congress president was seen instigating her MPs to stall Parliament.

quire control over thousands of crores of assets of National Herald. The court held that the accused acted as a consortium to achieve the nefarious purpose and asked them to face trial. This was the prima facie assessment of the court under the law. The government had no role in this process at all. It was between Sonia Gandhi and her co-conspirators on the one hand and Dr Subramanian Swamy on the other, with the court playing the neutral and judicial role. This order was passed in June 2014. Did Sonia or Rahul or any of the accused or the Congress party even hint that the magistrate had acted outside the law? Stop Parliament? In contrast, they all went to the Delhi High Court to quash the order and summons of the magistrate. The judge, whom they were comfortable with, decided on

December 7 that they better face the criminal case as the magistrate had rightly decided.

The very next day, the ‘democratic Sonia’ ordered her party to stall Parliament. Even as she was overseeing the closure of Parliament for the day on December 8 and her son was on a flying visit to Tamil Nadu to offer relief to the flood-affected people,

their lawyers were standing before the magistrate and pleading that Sonia, Rahul and the other accused were “keen to appear before the court”. Where is vendetta then, Madam Sonia? The court has granted them 10 days and directed them to appear on December 19. It remains to be seen whether the ‘democratic’ Sonia and Rahul will walk alone and appear before the court like Modi did before the police or gather a huge crowd for theatrics and disturb the court like the Gandhis disturbed the Shah Commission.

A caveat: Obviously stressed by the court notice on charges of swallowing thousands of crores of properties of National Herald by using the Congress party, Sonia Gandhi said, “Why should I be scared of anyone? I am Indira Gandhi’s daughter-in-law.” She said this after personally directing the Congress party to halt Parliament on Tuesday. This is ‘democratic’ Sonia, the daughter-in-law of Indira Gandhi, the saviour of democracy in India, charging Modi with ‘dictatorship’. There cannot be a more cruel joke on democracy. □□

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No one gives a damn for farmers.

One thing has become crystal clear. All these years, in the midst of electoral slogans like *Garibi hatao* and *Yeh Garibo ki sarkar hai* it is the affluent sections of the society who have been continuously pampered. The widening gulf between the rich and the poor is an outcome of deliberate economic policies that have largely ended up benefitting the rich.

At a time when agriculture is passing through a terrible distress, with an unprecedented spurt in farmer suicides witnessed particularly in 2015, I had expected the NDA government to rescue the beleaguered farming community with an economic package. After all, if the industry can get economic bailout package at the drop of a hat, and get tax exemptions to the tune of Rs 42-lakh-crore in ten years, between 2005 and 2015, I thought it was a payback time to help farmers minimize their economic hardship. But nothing like this happened. Once again, 60-crore farmers have been given the boot.

Instead, beginning New Year, 47-lakh Central government employees and another 52-lakh pensioner will get a bonanza. The 7th Pay Commission report, which has been accepted by the government, will entail an additional annual financial burden of Rs 1.02- lakh- crore. In reality, it will be several times more, not less than Rs 3-lakh core by a conservative estimate, when similar pay hikes have to be also given to State government employees, autonomous bodies, universities and public sector units. Finance Minister Arun Jaitley says the additional burden on the country's fiscal situation is 'manageable'. He has no problems with the hike in salaries.

But the government has all kinds of problems when farmers have to be given a legitimate rise in the farm prices. Only a few months back, in an affidavit filed before the Supreme Court, the additional solicitor general Maninder Singh had expressed government's inability to provide 50 per cent profit over the cost of production to the farmers as recommended by the Swaminathan Committee. He had said that "prescribing an increase of at least 50 per cent on cost may



Knowing that an economic security to the farming population is the crying need of the times, the Farmers Income Commission should be able to indicate an assured monthly package that a farming family should receive every month, demands
Dr. Devinder Sharma



distort the market. A mechanical linkage between Minimum Support Price (MSP) and cost of production may be counter-productive in some cases.”

This was an electoral promise Prime Minister Narendra Modi had made. But soon after coming to power, Modi government had refused to give a remunerative price in the form of enhanced MSP for paddy and wheat. At a time when DA for employees is raised by 13 per cent in a year, price of wheat and paddy is raised by a paltry Rs 50 per quintal, which translates into an increase of 3.6 per cent, not enough to even offset the additional burden of inflation at that time.

Look at the blatant discrimination. The minimum wage of a *chaprasi* under the 7th Pay Commission has been raised from Rs 7,000 to Rs 18,000 – an increase of a whopping 260 per cent. Compare this to what an average farmer in India earns. You will be shocked to know that in the last 45 years, between 1970 and 2015, the basic salary plus DA of a government employee has been raised by an average of 120 to 150 times, that of professors/lecturers by 150 to 170 times whereas the minimum support price (MSP) for wheat has been raised by only 19 times in the same period.

Given this huge income disparity, which is deliberate, it is futile to expect younger generation to take to farming. The income disparity is glaring. While the minimum wage for an employee has now been enhanced to Rs 18,000 per month, what an average farmer family earns in a month as per the NSSO 2014 report is a paltry Rs 6,000, of which Rs 3,078 comes from farming. Nearly 58 per cent



The farm incomes is low because successive govts have deliberately kept farming starved of resources.

farmers have to rely on non-farming activities like MNREGA to supplement their monthly incomes. The farm incomes is low because successive governments have deliberately kept farming starved of resources and denied economic price to farmers. If only farmers were to get a rise in income (in the form of MSP) in parity with other sections of the society, the wheat price, which was Rs 76 per quintal in 1970, should now have been Rs 7,600 per quintal.

Procurement price (or the market price) is the only mechanism through which a farmer is able to earn. His net return depends on the market price that he is able to fetch for his produce. There is no other source of income, including DA and emoluments that he can count on. Compare this with the government employees. Every six months they get DA, which is increasingly being merged with the basic salary. At the same time, if the 7th Pay Commission is to be believed, of the 198 total allowances they used to get, 108 allowances have been retained and enhanced. This includes an allowance for hair cutting for CRPF employees, and also an allowance for family planning which basically means an allowance for buying condoms. Employees will receive an increase of 63 per cent in allowances.

If farmers were to given at least

four monthly allowances that the employees get – housing allowance, travel allowance, education allowance for children, and medical allowance – I am sure lakhs of farmer suicides could have been averted. Several studies have shown that health expenses alone costs a farming family 40 per cent of its monthly budget. Such is the plight, that I have often heard farmers saying say they can't even afford to fall sick.

I am not against the giving a higher salary to the government employees. What is being missed is that one section of the society is being pampered at the cost of the masses. My suggestion therefore has always been to constitute a National Farmers Income Commission that is mandated to ensure parity in incomes between the farming sector and the organized sector. Knowing that an economic security to the farming population is the crying need of the times, the Farmers Income Commission should be able to indicate an assured monthly package that a farming family should receive every month. Till then, the recommendation of the 7th Pay Commission should be held in abeyance. This is what the 2nd National Convention of Farmer Organisations held at Bangalore in November – in which 60 major farmer unions participating under the banner of *Kisan Ekta* – had resolved. □□

Siphoning off rural savings to urban areas

The Government wants to extricate the poor from the clutches of money lenders. It has started the Jan Dhan Yojana to make banking services available to every citizen of the country. This will not be successful despite the good intentions. The Yojana will actually impoverish the poor by transferring their savings to the cities.

The poor people are being encouraged to park their savings in the banks under the Jan Dhan Yojana. Indeed, every citizen of the country must have access to banking services such as depositing, withdrawing or transferring money. Jan Dhan Yojana also provides a life insurance cover of Rs 30k and an accident cover of Rs one lac. The account holder can also avail of an overdraft facility of Rs 5,000. This facility can be availed, however, only if the account has been active, that is, the person has made some deposits and transactions in the account. Large numbers of poor people have opened accounts to avail of these facilities. The Government reckons that the benefits that will accrue from the deposits made by the poor people in their bank accounts will be more than the costs incurred in providing insurance cover and loans.

Making banking accessible by the poor is most welcome. However, this access to the banking sector does not ensure that benefits will accrue to the accountholders. This can be explained by an example. The British rulers of India established a huge network of rail lines in the country. They connected the hinterland to the ports. These rail lines were used to transport timber, indigo, cotton and other materials for exports to England. Trade flourished. But India became poorer by the day. The British buyers paid low prices for the goods exported from India and charged high prices for the goods imported by India. Increased connectivity thus became a curse for the country. Now, establishment of the rail network was not to blame. The problem lay with the politics of foreign trade.



The framework in which the banking system of the country operates is likewise poised against the poor and the rural areas. The system collects the savings from the rural areas and supplies the money to the metropolitan cities, explains

Dr Bharat Jhunjunwala



The economic framework within which trade took place was poised against India and the rail network became an instrument of impoverishing the country. The same rail network is now beneficial for the country. It is being used to promote trade and travel within the country. So the impact of the rail network depended upon the overall framework. If the framework was bad, rail would contribute to enhancing that bad.

The framework in which the banking system of the country operates is likewise poised against the poor and the rural areas. The system collects the savings from the rural areas and supplies the money to the metropolitan cities. As a result, the Jan Dhan Yojana will only lubricate the transfer of resources from the poor to the rich. Proof lies in the Credit-Deposit Ratio of the banks. The Credit-Deposit Ratio gives the ratio of credit given and deposits collected. If a bank has given loan of Rs 100 lacs and collected deposits of Rs 50 lacs then the Credit-Deposit Ratio is 2. A high Credit-Deposit Ratio means bank is bringing money from outside and providing to local people. A low Credit-Deposit Ratio means the bank is collecting money locally & supplying outside.

In rural Punjab, for example, the Credit-Deposit Ratio for rural areas was 61 percent. Say, a bank in rural Punjab collected deposit of Rs 100. It had to park about Rs 27 out of this in Government Securities as per Reserve Bank of India regulations. The bank was left with Rs 73 to lend. It lent only Rs 61 in the rural area. The balance Rs 12 was sent to the head office and from there to Chandigarh. Thus the Credit-Deposit Ratio for Chandigarh was 106. The Banks, therefore, are working like a huge siphon. They are collecting money from the rural areas and small towns and it to businessmen in the urban areas.

The Jan Dhan Yojana will smoothen this transfer of resources from the rural to the urban areas. People in rural areas will get attracted by the benefits provided under the Yojana and put their money in the banks. The banks will then send that money to the urban areas. The Yojana provides an overdraft facility of Rs 5,000 to the account

Benefits of insurance cover to the account holders have been provided only for a period of five years.

holder only *if* the account is “active,” meaning thereby that the account holder has generally put some money in the account. The overdraft facility seems to provide more money to the people than deposited by them. An account holder may make his account “active” by depositing and withdrawing Rs 500 a few times. Then he can borrow Rs 5,000. It can be claimed that this will lead to flow of money from the urban areas to the rural areas. This is not exactly correct. The Government has actually taken a calculated risk in the hope that more money will be deposited and less will be withdrawn through overdraft. Note also that the benefits of insurance cover to the account holders have been provided only for a period of five years. It will be reviewed thereaf-

ter. Perhaps, the Government has calculated that people will develop the habit of depositing money in the banks in these five years. The long term benefits from the development of this habit will be more than the short run costs of giving out insurance claims.

The Jan Dhan Yojana takes on this negative complexion because there are fewer and fewer business opportunities for the poor by the day. Businesses such as handlooms, candle making, and bread and biscuit making have been totally taken over by big manufacturers. Therefore, the poor people do not have any reason to borrow from the bank; and the banks do not find the poor “bankable.” Most money borrowed is used for consumption purposes. One Village Pradhan told me that most borrowed money is being used to buy liquor. Some persons have used the money to build a pucca house. But no one has used the borrowed money for productive works such as buying a tractor. Production by automatic machines is so much cheaper that small businesses simply cannot compete. Labour is becoming increasingly redundant.

The present flow of money from the poor to the rich can only be reversed if we reserve certain sectors for the small businesses; or impose heavy taxes on big industries. Heavy tax on large scale bread manufacture, for example, will enable smaller bread manufacturers to survive, that will generate demand for credit among them, and encourage the banking sector to serve them. Without such an enabling framework, the Jan Dhan Yojana will only establish one more route for transferring the wealth of the poor to the rich. □□

Steel industry braces for tense 2016

The over USD 100 billion Indian steel industry is preparing to face tough 2016. Hoping rising domestic demand in the New Year, it tries to counter predatory pricing and import glut that haunted the sector in 2015. Amidst subdued demand and the spectre of China flooding global markets with cheaper products, analysts envisage a rough year ahead for the industry worldwide but expect India to remain more profitable than its Asian peers helped by higher domestic economic growth and rising demand. The year 2015 was marked by deflation of commodity prices globally bringing down steel prices. In the Indian context, the drop was steeper than that of other raw materials, leading to severe pressure on operating margins of steel plants. Besides, weak demand in major steel producing countries such as China, Japan and South Korea led them to focus on exports at aggressive prices, including on India, adversely impacting the domestic industry. It led to prices of some products hit a ten-year low in Indian market.

The combination of predatory pricing and import glut have jeopardised billion of dollars in loans raised by the domestic steel companies for capacity expansion, a situation that has a major bearing on the financial health of some of the largest banks in India. The steel sector is a major contributor to the Non- Performing Assets or bad loan woes of the public sector banks saddled with gross NPAs of around Rs 3 lakh crore. □

Court summons bureaucrats

The special ACB court in Hyderabad issued summons to five government officers accused of causing a loss of Rs 500 crore to the state exchequer by reducing the government's stake in a joint venture with Raheja Corporation. Advocate T Sriranga Rao, a city-based lawyer, has challenged before the court the clean chit given by the Anti-Corruption Bureau to these bureaucrats as well as the top officials of Raheja Corporation over "dilution" of APIIC stake in the Raheja Mindspace project. The court issued summons to the IAS officers K Ratna Prabha, B P Acharya and L V Subramanyam, IPS officer M Gopi Krishna and former joint secretary (IT&C department) B S Murthy besides Neil Raheja and B Rabindranath, top officials of Raheja Corporation. They are to appear before the court on February 12, 2016. The court then asked ACB to register an FIR against Ratna Prabha, B P Acharya, Gopi Krishna, B S Murthy, Neil Raheja and B Rabindranath.

Student loan can't be rejected

The Madurai Bench of the Madras High court has ruled that an educational loan cannot be rejected merely on the grounds that the employment opportunity was poor and there was stiff competition during the campus interviews. The ruling was given by Justice K.Ravichandra Babu while disposing a petition filed by B.Tamilselvan who sought to quash the order of the manager of the State bank of India's Narayanapuram Branch rejecting the loan application for his son.

"The Bank is not justified when it gives the ground that the student does not have employment opportunity and there is stiff competition for jobs,"

the judge said. The petitioner, whose son is pursuing B.E civil engineering course at a private college in this district, had sought a loan to the tune of Rs.3.10 lakh from the State bank of India branch. The Judge observed there could not be any bar for granting educational loan which was repayable with interest. Besides the petitioner had given sureties, it was noted. The objective of providing education loan was to help people without money pursue their education and "that would be defeated" if loan was not given, the Judge said, asking the bank to consider the loan application if that student was otherwise eligible.

Barak -8 LRSAM test-fire a success

The Indian Navy has achieved a major milestone in boosting its anti-air warfare capability with the maiden successful firing of Barak-8 long range surface-to-air missile(LRSAM) from destroyer INS Kolkata in Arabian Sea near Andaman and Nicobar Islands. The missile, jointly developed by India and Israel, can hit an incoming hostile aircraft or missile at a range of more than 80 km and at a height of 16 km. US, France, Britain and Israel are the only other countries in the world to have this capability.

After undergoing some more tests, these missiles costing more than Rs 2,700 crore will be fitted on all future warships to provide them a sound anti-air warfare net. Moreover, the Barak-8s will form a protective shield around battle carrier groups with the aircraft carrier playing the lead role. In lay man term, it means the enemy will find it difficult to target the aircraft carrier as the LRSAMs will neutralise incoming missile or aircraft at long range. While the Indian Navy conducted two successful tests of this missile on

Formation of JV firms with Rlys, states cleared

The Union Cabinet has approved the formation of Joint Venture (JV) companies with Railways and States to fast track infrastructure projects. The Cabinet also discussed the Civil Nuclear Agreement with Australia, signed last month, and approved certain administrative arrangements for the successful implementation of the accord. This apart, the Cabinet Committee on Economic Affairs (CCEA), on its part, approved a '5000-crore subsidy package for promoting the project on installation of solar panels on roof top.

Cabinet also cleared several MoUs with several countries in various fields including tax info exchange, IT and electronics, recycling construction waste, education and conservation of migratory birds. The tax pacts were with Maldives and Slovenia, IT and electronic MoU was with Jordan, education pact with Canada and recycling conservation pact with Norway were the agreements approved by the Cabinet.

The JVs with Railways and the States envisage financial participation of the states as well as faster decision making process to ensure speedy implementation of rail projects in respective States. The companies would be formed with equity participation of Railways & concerned State Governments, according to a release. □

two successive days, Israel test fired the weapon system from one of its ship in Israel, officials said here.

No-fail-till-Class 8 policy be revoked

A Centre-appointment panel has recommended revocation of the 'no-detention policy' under which students could not be failed in exams till class VIII as part of the Right to Education. Rajasthan education minister Vasudev Devnani-led panel held a meeting with education ministers in Delhi to finalize the report in this connection. She had sought opinion of 22 education ministers of whom 18 favored revoking the policy. The panel has sought modifications to the policy and introducing state level compulsory exams for classes V and VIII.

"Clearing these exams are mandatory for promotions to the next level. Students, who fail to achieve the required learning level, will be given one more opportunity to clear the exam. In case they fail to achieve the learning level again, they have to repeat the respective class," said Devnani. The panel has suggested the policy should be applicable to classes I to IV, VI and VII subjected to required learning levels.

No quid pro quo deal with Italy

The External Affairs Ministry has dismissed suggestions of a quid pro quo deal between India and Italy in which New Delhi allegedly will go easy on the marines issues in return of Rome's support to its bid for membership in the nuclear export control regime. Italy, a member of all four nuclear exports control group, had in October blocked India's application to join a key missile and UAV technology control committee. It is believed that this was done by Italy in protest of India's arrest of two of its marines who are facing trial in India for killing two Kerala fisher-

men in Indian waters. Out of the two Italian marines one— Massimiliano Latorre— is in Italy on medical grounds since September last year while Italy is making efforts in both Supreme Court and international arbitration court to allow Salvatore Girone, the other marine, also to return. News reports claimed India and Italy are quietly working out an agreement under which Italy will commit to withdrawing objections to India's membership to four key export control regimes.

Intolerance talk 'Politically Manufactured'

The decline in number of complaints received by the National Commission for Minorities in the last couple of years clearly indicates that the talk about intolerance was "politically-manufactured propaganda", Union Minister Mukhtar Abbas Naqvi said. The Union Minister of State for Minority Affairs said the Narendra Modi Government has kicked out "power brokers and middlemen" and is now working to ensure all-round empowerment of minorities. "Hundreds of crores have already been disbursed to various states for this purpose," he said.

"There are people who kept talking of intolerance but the ground reality is different. The number of complaints received by the National Commission for Minorities related to such incidents has fallen which exposes this politically- manufactured propaganda," Naqvi told reporters here. Naqvi alleged that some "so-called political champions of secularism" had tried to create an atmosphere of fear to defame the Modi Government but the people have rejected these "ill designs". Sharing data, Naqvi said that in the year 2012-13, the number of complaints received by the NCM was 2,127 while in 2013-14 this number was around 2,638. In 2014-15, the number of such complaints came down to 1,995 and in the current fiscal, it is around 1,461, he said. □□

1 million arrived in Europe by sea

Over a million refugees and migrants have reached Europe by dangerously crossing the Mediterranean Sea in 2015, nearly half of them from Syria, the UN Refugee Agency said. "We crossed the threshold overnight of a million arrivals in Europe by sea in 2015," said Adrian Edwards, spokesperson of the UN Refugee Agency (UNHCR). "The vast majority of those attempting this dangerous crossing are in need of international protection," the UN agency said. There were 10,00,573 arrivals by perilous sea in 2015 with 84 per cent of the arrivals coming from ten countries only. The one-million milestone also marks an almost five-fold increase over the number of migrants who came to Europe in 2014, when the UN recorded 2,16,000 arrivals. 2015 also registered a whopping 3,735 missing persons and deaths of people trying to cross into Europe on unseaworthy boats and dinghies in a desperate bid to escape the prolonged violent conflicts and economic crises at home. Of the total sea arrivals in 2015, 58 per cent were men, 25 per cent were children and 17 per cent were women. □

China tries employees of US firm

Ten employees of a US company which supplied foreign fast food outlets in China including KFC and McDonald's have been tried over a substandard meat scandal, a court official said.

A court in Shanghai's Jiading district held a two-day trial, said the official, who declined to be named. Employees of Illinois-based OSI Group subsidiary Shanghai Husi Food are accused of mixing out-of-date meat with fresh product at a factory shut down by authorities in 2014. The firm's customers in China previously included global fast food chains, among them McDonald's and KFC. The court also tried employees of another OSI unit in the northern province of Hebei on the same charges of producing and selling inferior products, according to prosecutors. The court named the accused but did not give their company positions. Media reports say they include both Shanghai Husi's general manager and the head of the factory in the city. All the names appeared to be ethnically Chinese but it was not clear whether any might be foreign nationals. The verdict will be given at a later date. The controversy came to light after an investigative report by a Shanghai television station showed workers on the production line scooping meat off the floor and putting it back into processing machinery.

Indian-Origin researcher knighted

An Indian-origin cancer research expert has received a Knighthood from Queen Elizabeth II for his "influential" work on prevention and treatment of cancer in the annual New Year's Honours list published. Harpal Singh Kumar, who is the chief executive of Cancer Research UK (CRUK), has been honoured for services to cancer research and being "hugely influential in promoting research into the prevention, early diagnosis and treatment of cancer, and cancer care." "CRUK's income and research spend

are at an all-time high. Under his leadership, it has been instrumental in pushing the government to take further measures to reduce smoking and to ban sunbeds for under-18s," Kumar's citation reads.

"He also chaired the Independent Cancer Taskforce and authored the NHS Cancer Strategy 'Achieving World Class Cancer Outcomes. A Strategy for England 2015-20', published in July 2015," it said. Kumar leads this year's honours list of Indian-origin names, covering fields of entrepreneurship, financial services and community service.

Jihadists holding 3,000 yazidis hostage

Jihadists in Iraq and Syria are holding over 3,000 Yazidi hostages, a Yazidi activist once imprisoned by the ISIS said. "At this moment there are 3,400 people in detention who are Syrian or Iraqi," Nadia Murad Basee Taha told Greek President Prokopis Pavlopoulos during a visit to Athens. Taha was abducted by ISIS fighters in August 2014 from her village in Iraq and held for three months, during which time she was used as a sex slave. She managed to escape to Germany and on December 16 told the United Nations Security Council that ISIS "has made Yazidi women into flesh to be trafficked in." The Yazidis are neither Muslims nor Arabs and follow a unique faith despised by the ISIS. The Kurdish-speaking minority is mostly based around Sinjar mountain in northern Iraq. In 2014, ISIS jihadists massacred Yazidis, forced tens of thousands of them to flee, and captured thousands of girls and women as spoils of war.

Death sentence for blogger murder

Two students were awarded death penalty and six persons including outlawed Ansarullah Bangla Team chief received various jail terms by a Bangladesh court for killing secular blogger Ahmed Rajib Haider, nearly three years after he was hacked to death near his

China tests rail car-based missile

China claims that it has conducted scientific tests of a rail car-based long-range missile capable of hitting targets across the US. "Scientific tests in the Chinese territory (have been) conducted according to the plan," Defence Ministry spokesperson Col. Yang Yujun told a monthly press briefing. He was responding to a question in the US media about China conducting a test of rail car-based long-range missile DF-41 capable of hitting targets throughout the US. The canister ejection test of a DF-41 missile from a rail-mobile launcher was detected on December 5 in western China, US website Free Beacon had reported.

This month marks a significant milestone for Chinese strategic weapons developers and demonstrates that Beijing is moving ahead with building and deploying the DF-41 on difficult-to-locate rail cars, in addition to previously-known road-mobile launchers, the website reported quoting US officials. □

home in Dhaka. Special Trial Tribunal-3 Judge Sayeed Ahmed pronounced the verdict in presence of seven of the accused. One of the death row convict is on the run. The judge sentenced former private university students Md Faisal Bin Nayem alias Dweep and absconding Redwanul Azad Rana to death. They were also fined 10,000 Taka each.

Maksudul Hasan alias Anik was given life term with a fine of Taka 10,000. Md Ehsan Reza alias Rumman, Nayem Sikdar alias Iraj and Nafis Imtiaz were given 10-year jail with Taka 5,000 fine each. Sadman Yasir Mahmud was given three years in prison and Taka 2,000 in fine, the Daily Star reported. These students had vowed to kill "atheist bloggers", the investigation officer said in the charge sheet. They targeted Rajib "for his blog posts under the nick of Thabababa" and carried out the murder in two separate groups.

Mufti Jashimuddin Rahmani, the chief of banned militant outfit ABT, was given five years of jail and Taka 2,000 in fine with two months of additional imprisonment in default. Haidar, also an activist of Shahbagh movement, was hacked to death on February 15, 2013 near his house at Mirpur. His body brutally mutilated. He was the first of five bloggers killed so far.

2 mn more children slide into poverty

Another two million UK children will be living in poverty in 15 years time if the Government continues its current policies, a new analysis has said. The calculations by Landman Economics and the Fabian Society however suggest that the incomes of the richest will increase significantly over the same period.

The study of policies introduced since the 2015 general election and their impact over the long-term if left unchanged found that the proceeds of any growth will overwhelmingly be distributed to the country's richest, the report's authors say.

They point out that cuts to in-work benefits scheduled to come in with the new Universal Credit

system will reduce the income of the poorest workers, and that the National Living Wage will do little to offset these cuts. The total number of people in poverty is expected to rise by 3.6 million with 1.9 of that increase being children. This amounts to 22 per cent of all people living in poverty, up from 20 per cent.

The incomes of the bottom 10 per cent in society are expected to rise by only £90 by 2030 - while the incomes of the top 10 per cent are expected to be £14,500 higher. Previous analyses and official figures have shown some Government policies having a detrimental effect on the welfare of the poorest.

UN Sustainable Development Goals

UN has ushered in the ambitious 2030 Sustainable Development Goals that aim to end poverty, hunger and assure gender equality while building a life of dignity for all over the next 15 years. The 15-year cycle of the anti-poverty Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) came to an end with 2015 paving the way for the SDGs, an even more ambitious set of goals to banish a host of social ills by 2030. The official ushering in of the new 15-year cycle takes place over a 24-hour period, coming into effect in each region of the planet at the stroke of midnight Thursday.

India is seen as critical for the success of the SDGs, given that improving the lives of 1.4 billion Indians would make a major dent in the goal of improving the lives of all humanity. Even before the SDGs came into effect, India told the UN that it is already implementing the new goals in the form of several initiatives launched by the Indian government. "In fact, most if not all the initiatives launched by Prime Minister Modi can be related to one or more of the SDGs. Ambitious programmes launched by the Indian government like 'Make in India', 'Digital India', 'Smart Cities' and the 'Skills India' initiative aim at boosting economic development and manufacturing in the country and help lift millions out of poverty. □□

Developing countries left in lurch

Doha Round has just narrowly escaped being junked altogether by WTO under the pressure & manipulation by the Developed West. The ministerial declaration, adopted after some delay and amid much acrimony didn't abandon the DDA, but the reaffirmation was not unanimous. The declaration noted that many members reaffirm the DDA while others do not but that "nevertheless, there remains a strong commitment of all Members to advance negotiations on the remaining Doha issues". This is the first ministerial declaration has acknowledged sharp differences on something so core – the very nature of a round. In fact, the Nairobi ministerial also leaves a window open for the inclusion of new issues – investment, competition, transparency in government procurement, to name just three – that developed countries have been pushing for and developing countries have been resisting. India has expressed its disappointment with the declaration.

Issues crucial for India stalled

What did the developing countries – especially India – get out of the WTO ministerial meeting at Nairobi? The prime concerns of India viz. Special Safeguard Measures and Public Stock-holding (not to mention the key question of domestic subsidy to agriculture in developed countries), there is no movement whatsoever beyond what was already stated in previous Ministerials and subsequent decisions years ago. The pompous repetition of those decisions could not hide the stagnating status quo. On both issues, the ministerial decisions only kick the ball further. On public stockholding, the decision is to start serious efforts in various WTO to negotiate and adopt a permanent solution.

At the ninth ministerial in Bali in 2013, a peace clause was negotiated which said that countries in danger of breaching the WTO limits on subsidies would not be liable to any action till a permanent solution to the problem is worked out. This solution was to be worked out by 2017. Initially, there was ambiguity about whether the peace clause would cease in that year, but last year India refused to agree to a protocol on a Trade Facilitation Agreement (TFA) till the peace clause was made indefinite – that is, till a permanent solution was found. This was agreed to in November 2014 and it was also decided that work on negotiating a permanent solution would begin.

There has been no progress on that.

On the issue of SSM also, all that has been decided is that developing country members will have the right to have recourse to a SSM; the contours of any SSM are to be negotiated. This means there has been no progress on this from the Hong Kong ministerial in 2005.

One ministerial decision that is extremely detailed relates to export competition and it sets out conditions for provision of subsidies and credits for agricultural exports. On the face of it, this favours developing countries which get time till end 2018 to eliminate their export subsidy while developed countries have to eliminate theirs immediately. But experts on agricultural negotiations insist that the ministerial decision is riddled with provisions that give a lot of flexibility to the developed countries and reduce flexibilities available to the developing countries.

India launches safeguard investigation

On 10 December 2015, India notified the WTO's Committee on Safeguards that it initiated on 7 December 2015 a safeguard investigation on Hot-rolled flat sheets and plates (excluding hot rolled flat products in coil form) of alloy or non-alloy steel having nominal thickness less than or equal to 150mm and nominal width of greater than or equal to 600mm. In the notification, India indicated as follows:

"All interested parties may make their views known within a period of 30 days from the date of the notice issued (i.e. 7 December 2015) by the Director General (Safeguards) to: **The Director General (Safeguards)** New Delhi. Any other party to the investigation who wishes to be considered as an interested party may submit its request so as to reach the Director General (Safeguards) on the aforementioned address within 15 days from the date of the aforesaid date of issuance of the notice by the Director General (Safeguards)."

A safeguard investigation seeks to determine whether increased imports of a product are causing, or is threatening to cause, serious injury to a domestic industry. During a safeguard investigation, importers, exporters and other interested parties may present evidence and views and respond to the presentations of other parties. A WTO member may take a safeguard action (i.e. restrict imports of a product temporarily) only if the increased imports of the product are found to be causing, or threatening to cause, serious injury. □□