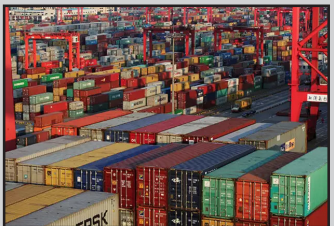



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GM Foods is dangerous for Health

I had already written in the past of my opposition to GM Mustard to your esteemed magazine. This time round, I am writing to mention about an eco-friendly alternative to GM Mustard that has proved successful. It is often claimed that we need to harness GM (genetically-modified) Mustard for the sake of raising productivity and especially in the face of climate change. However, cultivating GM Mustard is not the only way to achieve this. There are alternatives which are both ecologically and economically beneficial. One of them is the organic-cum-nursery spacing technique of SRI i.e System of Root Intensification. This is being practised in Odisha, Chattisgarh, Jharkhand, M.P., Bihar, where it is giving an average mustard yield of 31 quintals per hectare and a maximum of 57 quintals per hectare, all of which is estimated to have the capacity to substitute the current Rs.70000 crore rapeseed-mustard imports per year.

When there are such excellent harmless alternatives, why is GM mustard, which is mono-cultural, non-renewable (by virtue of it being based on a 'terminator' technology) & herbicide (glufosinate) tolerant (making it extra poisonous), sought to be pushed without adequate safety trials done for a moratorium period of minimum 10 years, as recommended by the apex court itself? In any case, contrary to the claims that the Bt. toxin in GM foods degrades, it is found to survive in the blood of pregnant women and fetuses! Likewise, Roundup, the other widely-used herbicide (made up of the chemical glyphosate that is used on soya & corn and considered to be a endocrine-disruptor & DNA-damager) is linked to the rise of superweeds & autism in USA; kidney failure in Sri Lanka & birth defects in Argentina. And not to speak of Roundup's deadly impact on honeybees, soil microbes & oceans.

The disastrous "Green Revolution" and subsequently Bt Cotton have shown to us that at what cost to the environment and small-farmer, has the much-vaunted "increase in productivity" been achieved. Former Cabinet Secretary T.S.R. Subramanian has recently shown deep penitence for having allowed the Bt Cotton to be introduced, and ruined cotton farmers! In the light of all this, do we have to add to this destruction by rushing to embrace GM Mustard? BJP's "nationalism" is put to litmus test with GM Mustard.

– C.V. Krishna Manoj, Hyderabad, Telangana

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Quote-Unquote



Let us begin 2018 with a message of positivity. I urge you to compile around five positive things from this year & share with me. With 'Positive India', share your positive moments from 2017.

Narendra Modi

Prime Minister



The United States has foolishly given Pakistan more than 33 billion dollars in aid over the last 15 years, and they have given us nothing but lies & deceit, thinking of our leaders as fools. They give safe haven to the terrorists we hunt in Afghanistan, with little help. No More!

Donald J. Trump

US President



This GM Mosquito after effects in Brazil has been a horrible nightmare. Bill Gates is making Indians into Guinea pigs.

Subramnium Swamy

BJP Leader



We have always held that Kashmir is an integral part of India.

Nitish Kumar

CM of Bihar

Need to end fiscal targeting obsession

Since NDA government took over the rein of power in 2014, successive budgets have shown definite resolve of the government to reduce fiscal deficit figures in the budget. Present government accepted the challenge of reducing fiscal deficit, trend of which had started by the UPA government in the last two years of their rule. In 2011-12 the fiscal deficit had reached 5.7 percent of GDP, which was reduced to 4.8 percent in 2012-13 and 4.4 percent in 2013-14. In 2013-14 and by the year 2016-17, it had come down to merely 3.5 percent of GDP; and in the budget 2017-18, this was targeted at 3.2 percent of GDP. However, due to slipping on GDP growth targets, structural adjustments like demonetisation and GST etc., it seems that finance ministry may not be able to reach at the revenue figures as projected in the budget 2017-18. Therefore, it seems that we may miss the target of fiscal deficit, as estimated in the budget 2017-18. However, it seems from the earlier budget speeches of the Finance Minister (FM) that he would continue to strive for lower figure of fiscal deficit, even in his budget proposals for the year 2018-19.

The last few budgets, especially of NDA government makes us to believe that perhaps fiscal targeting (about fiscal deficit as percent of GDP) has been the sole aim of the budget making; and all other variables are adjusted according to this constraint. Anybody familiar with budget making process knows that more than 90 percent of the budget is already fixed and there is hardly any chance of flexibility. We must understand that so far as expenditure on administrative services, police, defence, etc. is concerned, there is no possibility of any reduction, however every year there is a compulsion to raise these expenditures on account of salary and pension, inflation etc. Interest on public debt is yet another item which keeps on increasing due to ever rising public debt. Expenditure on social sectors like education, health, women and child development, drinking water, SC/ST welfare, minority welfare etc., which is required to be increased for welfare of masses, needs to be maximized, and cannot in any case be allowed to go down. Therefore lack of any flexibility in expenditure on different items in the budget makes it impossible to raise expenditure on desired services namely social and economic services, especially health, education and capital formation, without increasing the size of the budget. It is notable that because of self imposed constraint by the Finance Minister to keep the figure of fiscal deficit low, since budget 2014-15 till 2017-18 (3 years), size of the budget could increase from Rs. 16.63 lakh crore to Rs. 21.46 lakh crore only (29 percent increase). Worst victim of this inadequate increase have been capital expenditure, health, education and other social services. It is notable that Fiscal Responsibility and Budget Management (FRBM) Act was passed in 2003 and it was targeted that by 2008-09 fiscal deficit would be brought down to 3 percent of GDP. It is notable that, fiscal deficit reached 2.5 percent of GDP by the year 2007-08; however since then it kept on increasing and remained high till 2012-13.

Arguments in favour of targeting fiscal deficit are not far to seek. It's easily understood that more fiscal deficit would mean more public debt, which leads to more interest liabilities for the govt, making the task of budget making even more difficult in future years. If a part of fiscal deficit is financed by monetising (borrowing from Reserve Bank of India (RBI) and RBI in turn printing more currency notes), there is danger of inflation. Country has seen the spiralling inflation after the spells of monetising of debt. Though, drawbacks of high rate of fiscal deficit are well appreciated, we must not forget dangers associated with being extra responsible (fiscal policy). It is understood that if we try to keep fiscal deficit extra low, it would cause cut in government expenditure, worst victim of which would be capital expenditure and social sector expenditure. In the last few years of NDA government's acting responsible in fiscal policy making, has caused slow growth of capital and social sector expenditure, which is key to economic and social development. Given the risk of government revenue slipping the target of revenue as projected in the budget 2017-18 and also the possibility of falling short of resources even next year, there is an apprehension that finance minister may opt for lower capital expenditure and also lower expenditure on social sector like education and health. However, given the fact that the economy urgently needs a big push to increase the growth rates in GDP and also to improve the sentiments in the market, there is a dire need to increase the capital expenditure. Further there is a need to improve health and education services in short run as well as in the long run in order to achieve Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). For this finance minister has to come out of the obsession of keeping the fiscal deficit figure at low level.

Takeaways from a failed conference



On the completion of World Trade Organisation's (WTO) 11th Ministerial Conference (MC11) at Buenos Aires, India might have returned empty handed as a permanent solution to the issue of Public Stock Holding remained elusive due to the adamant attitude of US, despite the fact that it was on the mandated agenda of the MC11.

In the last ministerial conference, MC10, held at Nairobi in 2015, it was decided by all member countries unanimously that a permanent solution would be found by 2017. But the United

States went back on its promise and said it was not ready to give a permanent solution to PSH, at least this time, and by its adamant posture over new issues, the US became instrumental in causing the collapse of Buenos Aires MC11.

From the very beginning, the US made it very clear that this issue was not going to get resolved as its interest primarily was in a fast track work program on rule-making in e-commerce, investment facilitation and also limiting fisheries subsidies for illegal and unreported fisheries. Out of these issues, only fisheries subsidy was part of the Doha development Agenda. However, subsidy India wanted that this issue should be sorted out in such a manner that interests of our traditional fishermen do not get hurt. It may be noted that so far as rules of WTO are concerned, unless there is an 'explicit consensus' among member countries about inclusion of one or more issues, it can't be done unless all members agree. However, it is equally true that US and other developed countries have been able to get new issues included by way of pressure, lure or even 'arm twisting'.

Commerce Minister Suresh Prabhu in his speech at the Plenary session made it very clear that the public food stock holding issue is very dear to India, as it is not a matter of trade. It's a matter of life and death for more than 800 million people worldwide, a large proportion of whom live in India. Their food security depends upon the public distribution system, based on stock of food maintained by the government. In his later speeches, he stated that this issue is important for poor children suffering from malnutrition who are provided food by public programmes like 'Anganwadis'. School-going children are provided mid-day meals in schools, which fulfils their food needs. It thus increases enrolment ratios and reduces drop outs. He also said that improving food security is a global goal, and India is committed to take care of its needs.



Though there is no guarantee that issues of Doha Development level will be actually discussed, the developing world has been able to put its point of view across.

Dr. Ashwani Mahajan

The most important thing is that calculation of subsidy for public stock holdings for nations is flawed. On the one hand WTO rules are circumvented by developed countries. For instance, US provides a total subsidy of more \$60,000 per farmer and still doesn't face any hurdle and India which pays hardly \$108 per farmer faces objections. The US and other developed countries have cleverly shifted their subsidies to green box, which they are legally not bound to reduce. Further they are also allowed to give aggregate measure of support, which developing countries can't. Adding insult to injury, the formula for calculating subsidy has been made such that 1986-88 prices are taken as reference prices. According to this provision if during 1986-88 price of wheat was Rs 385 per quintal, and government is procuring wheat today at a price of Rs 1600, Rs 1215 would be considered as subsidy. From any angle this provision is absurd; still US is finding ways and means not to correct it. Therefore, a permanent solution to the issue of PSH is not a concession; it's merely correction of a wrong done previously.

About e-commerce, India's stand has been that it is an emerging area, and it can benefit the people in many ways. Therefore, it should develop further. However, Prabhu rightly pointed out that, "India's view is that gains from e-commerce must not be confused with gains from negotiating binding rules in this area. It is for this reason that we support continuation of the 1998 Work Programme with its non-negotiating mandate." India made it clear that different issues including e-commerce could

be discussed in WTO. But we need to follow a process, and can't circumvent the defined procedures to accommodate one or more members. Moreover, constantly changing technology in e-commerce calls for a wait-and-watch policy.

During MC11, Prabhu while addressing a press conference said it is advisable to first conclude the agenda mandated in MC10 Nairobi and then move on to other issues. Since, there is a limited scope in WTO to discuss issues, old issues will die down if we burden

"India's view is that gains from e-commerce must not be confused with gains from negotiating binding rules in this area. It is for this reason that we support continuation of the 1998 Work Programme with its non-negotiating mandate."

WTO with new issues. And this can't be allowed to happen. The issue of development as underlined in Doha Development Round is important, and that is related to unjustified subsidies given by developed nations, and this can't be sacrificed. Discussion on Doha Development Round is still pending and that has to be completed.

It was proposed to disallow subsidy for illegal and unreported fishing. The argument behind the proposal is to encourage sustainable fishing to avoid overfishing. However, India's concern is that

there is no mechanism of reporting by Indian traditional fishermen. Therefore, any agreement on Fisheries Subsidies must take into the consideration interests of traditional fishermen.

Denial of a solution to PSH, which was the primary concern of India due to the adamant attitude of the US, on the one hand and obvious opposition to the introduction of new issues by a majority of member countries, leading to an inconclusive MC11, underlines the fact that the Ministerial Conference at Buenos Aires actually failed. Legitimate concerns of developing countries like food security are not getting addressed and developed countries are trying to bind developing countries in a web of rules in e-commerce, investment facilitation etc. to serve the interests of their companies.

Indications from US's Trump administration are that Washington will follow 'America First' with utter disregard for WTO rules. If this attitude of US continues, multilateral institutions like WTO may lose their legitimacy. Indian representatives at WTO might be disappointed that they could not get a permanent solution; they should rather be proud for not getting cowed down by developed countries, as they had to be satisfied with formation of a 70-nation group that would discuss ways to evolve a consensus to bring e-commerce under the WTO ambit.

For the time being, thanks to India's tough stand, new issues have been kept at bay and issues of DDR are once again in focus. Though there is no guarantee that they will be actually discussed, the developing world has been able to put its point of view across. □□

Native seeds are key to Food Security



In recent years, enlightened Indian farmers have begun to rethink the suitability of farming practices that involve injecting poison into the earth via fertilisers, insecticides and pesticides, and create problems of soil fertility, soil texture, soil preservation and erosion. There is a pervasive sentiment that unless the current system of intensive and uncontrolled use of chemical inputs is reversed, soil quality will worsen and our centuries-old agricultural biodiversity will be lost forever.

Chemical inputs have permeated our food-chain with deleterious impact on public health, which have not been adequately studied scientifically. But the cumulative loss due

to growing expenditure on public health, insecticide resistance, crop-loss, bird-loss, pollution of ground water and pollinator decline runs into billions of dollars.

Indian farming practices improve soil humus and use its fertility to grow myriad crops on the same field; synthetic fertilisers cause hardening of soil and alkalinity. We need to return to zero-budget farming where farmers use their own 'desi' seeds, protect our seed autonomy by relying on grains saved from the last harvest and resist pressure to use corporate seeds. Corporate-dependence is behind farmer suicides in the BT cotton belt. We must also question why an India, that declared food self-sufficiency decades ago, is importing wheat, pulses, oil-seeds and chemical fertilisers.

Bharatiya Krishak Samaj (BKS), India's largest farmer organisation, is demanding a new policy on Seeds and Intellectual Property Rights. In the run up to World Soil Day (December 5), practicing farmers under the aegis of the BKS insisted that farmers have the first right on seeds, which the Government must recognise as paramount and ensure that all seeds remain in the hands of farmers. They must also have all rights to breed, sell, exchange and buy seeds. The Plant Variety Protection and Farmer's Rights Act must be strengthened to protect breeder rights, but farmers should not be forced to register their native varieties. On no account should multinational corporations be given breeder rights over farmer-evolved native varieties of seed. In fact, seeds should remain under the Essential Commodities Act, as over 60 per cent of Indian livelihood depends on them.

The Government should not permit patents over seeds, but should strengthen Article 3 (j) of the Patent Act, 1970, and multinational corporations that transgress Article 3 (j) and extract royalties from farmers by falsely claiming patents should be fined heavily and debarred from doing business in India. No patents should be granted on genetic resources, which should remain freely exchangeable by farmers. No patent should be given on genetic information and native traits,



For better agricultural performance, focus must be on inculcating better farming practices. Farmers must be encouraged to return to zero-budget farming, where they use their own desi seeds.

Sandhya Jain

or on varieties or traits stemming from traditional/classical breeding, regardless of whether they are in older or newly-bred varieties. Farmers should be legally granted rights over seeds, in perpetuity.

Farmers across the country are expressing alarm at the staggering loss of biodiversity; India once hosted over two lakh species of rice, but today grows barely 2,000 varieties. This loss is non-quantifiable; when pests or disease strike a crop, often the solution is found from the genetic material of wild strains of the plant. Hence, it is imperative that the Government sponsor moves to conserve India's rich biodiversity heritage across States.

India comprises 17 agro-climate zones; seed banks jointly owned by farmers and Government should store the native varieties of the respective area and provide seeds to local farmers at affordable prices. In fact, the Centre could consider expanding the Pradhan Mantri Paramparagat Krishi Yojana (PMPKY) to include participatory seed breeding with organic farmers, agriculture universities and regional agriculture departments. Each zone should have several decentralised breeding centres to multiply and breed native varieties. There is growing realisation that climate change is disrupting our agricultural produce. Only native seeds, that have proven resilient in the face of droughts, floods, climate change, can make our farms climate-proof; the seeds can also be sold through co-operative societies.

Dr Krishan Bir Chaudhary, president, Bharatiya Krishak Samaj, and former chairman, State Farms Corporation of India, suggests that seed banks, compost units,

cow shelters and processing units for seed and other farm produce should be set up in each village and block, to decrease dependence on multinational corporations and their chemical inputs. At a meeting of the Niti Aayog expert committee on agriculture, Chaudhary proposed that the Prime Minister's promise to double farm incomes by 2022 can be realised if the minimum support price (MSP) is converted into a reserve price, duly notified by the Government, below which produce cannot be sold. Currently, farmers are forced to sell much below the MSP.

India once hosted over two lakh species of rice, but today grows barely 2,000 varieties.

Having witnessed the spectacular failure of Bt Cotton, India's first Genetically Modified crop, the Centre should immediately ban Bt cotton seeds as they have failed to decrease pesticide use or increase production. They are directly responsible for unmanageable debt and 3.10 lakh farmer suicides in India since 1995, as admitted by Dr KR Kranthi, former director of the Central Institute for Cotton Research, Nagpur.

Indeed, the Ministry of Agriculture & Farmers Welfare should accept the Parliamentary Standing Committee on Science and Technology Report 301 on "GM crop and its environmental effect" 2017, and ban GM crops. It must pro-

mote safer, more effective and sustainable alternatives to Bt Cotton to ensure conservation of biodiversity by documenting and protecting indigenous varieties and organic producers. Herbicide Tolerant (HT) seeds and the HT GMO Mustard should be banned forthwith and never allowed to be commercialised.

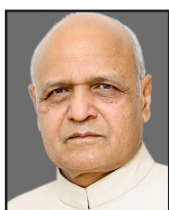
India must increase efforts to conserve its genomic integrity and ensure that GM crops do not intrude in centres of origin of any species, such as mustard, brinjal, sugarcane, rice, and others. On no account should the Government allow new genetic engineering technologies such as Oligonucleotide directed mutagenesis (ODM), Zinc Finger nuclease, CRISPR/Cas, in India.

Further, all information and patents related to the development of any new GMO, including raw data, should be made accessible to the public and independent scientists to analyse for at least one year. Any GM research being funded with public money must disclose all technology, genes and other raw data to the public.

Above all, in the light of the recent pesticide-related deaths in Maharashtra, Round-up and Basta must be banned immediately, in all forms. The Centre should consider creating an authority to check contamination and genetic pollution and impose costs under the polluter pays principle, and criminally prosecute genetic polluters for destruction of biodiversity and spreading poison on Indian fields. A beginning can be made by taking cognisance of Monsanto's contamination of cotton fields from Maharashtra to Andhra Pradesh. □

(The writer is a political analyst and independent researcher)

Electric Vehicles Policy: Avoid Myopic Lapses



Following lessons learnt from the myopic blunder committed by India in the sector of solar power, a vision and plan are required to create an industry consortium for electric vehicles before launching 100% electric vehicles in the country.

**Prof. Bhagwati
Prakash Sharma**

India has declared to have only electric cars in the country by 2030. This deadline to phase out fossil fuel based cars from Indian markets by 2030 is a decade ahead of the 2040 deadline, set by Britain to stop selling petrol and diesel cars. It is going to generate a market potential of above USD 1 trillion, and manifold more, if combined with multiplier impact in the downstream and collateral value chains, by 2030. The market for electric vehicle batteries alone would not be less than USD 300 billion. In case if we are able to facilitate and promote domestic value addition, producing the original equipments, components and assemblies, including the finished products, the resultant turnovers and incomes would generate immense derived demand for collateral manufacturing, turnovers, investments and so on to be manifold more. However, while embarking on this target of having only electric vehicles (EV) by 2030, if India would largely depend on foreign players, who would source completely knocked down kits (CKD) from outside and merely assemble their products to give an eye wash to make in India. Then India would loose this one time opportunity to kickstart growth, employment turnovers, income, demand and investments at a scale unprecedented so far.

India should not repeat the same myopic lapses, committed while implementing the targets for raising solar power capacity to 100 Gigawatt (GW) in the country, 3 years back, without conceiving the need and taking initiative then, to





put in place, the requisite manufacturing value chain in the country beforehand, to avail that opportunity ourselves 3 years back, which could kick start growth, through facilitating and promoting the manufacturing value chain, domestically instead of obliging china. It was also a one time opportunity of this decade to kick start economic growth and facilitate technology development for domestic solar power sector, including original equipment manufacturing and producing assemblies, along with accessories to avail a considerable share in the USD 100 billion (Rs 6.5 lakh crore) market generated for solar power sector in the country, that has evolved only, after, and solely due to the declaration of an ambitious plan by the government on solar palaver. India has rather myopically helped the Chinese economy to beg majority of orders, and fight its worst ever recession and thrive from the Indian solar power orders. The indigenous solar power sector was doing well earlier till 2012-13. It has lost the momentum and got marginalised only after India decided to embark in a big way on the path for raising solar power capacity without endeavoring or even thinking to

Lack of a clear and long term vision and policies to facilitate indigenous capacity building for all electric vehicles policy, ...

develop a domestic ecosystem for indigenous manufacturing. Rather, a solar power manufacturing consortium was the need of the hour, from the day government announced its ambitions targets for solar power generation capacity.

The situation got more aggravated because the government remained a silent spectator, to aggressive dumping by Chinese companies in the country. Domestic solar power sector vis-à-vis other countries was earlier growing well through exports to Europe. Domestic sector has badly suffered, especially because of abstaining by the Finance Ministry to impose anti-

dumping duties, even after clear surfacing of evidence of dumping by the Chinese in a 2014 enquiry, conducted by the Commerce Ministry. The Finance Ministry had then, opted against imposing anti-dumping duty, even after a strong case for the same. Besides, no efforts were made to create a vibrant solar power sector, comprising, original equipments, inputs and assemblies, at a time when the government had decided to embark in a big way on expanding solar power. Rather it continued to shower bounties for the alien suppliers by setting up a big target, without creating the requisite domestic value chain. It was just putting the cart before the horse, instead of vice versa.

Now, when the 'all EV target' is going to generate a USD 300 billion or Rs. 20 lakh crore market for the EV batteries alone by 2030, let other equipments, accessories and the vehicular industry be separate and manifold over this, as India would be 3rd largest car market in the world only by 2020. Hence, unless the government proactively accedes the need to put in place a robust and globally competitive ecosystem for domestic manufacturing value chain for electric vehicles, the Chinese, Euro-American and Malaysian companies would skim this USD 300 billion i.e. Rs. 200 lakh crore and almost above USD 1 trillion (i.e. Rs. 65 lakh crores) worth of the market for EV batteries for the vehicles and other components. Lack of a clear and long term vision and policies to facilitate indigenous capacity building for all electric vehicles policy, including uncertainty about technology options may prove to be most fateful against

grooming domestic capacities for 'Made by Bharat'. Mere making in India by the foreign MNCs out of the completely knocked down (CKD) kits, would be of no avail to kick start growth, generate employment, develop technologies and a robust domestic supply chain, for this purpose. Foreign MNCs like Tesla, Siemens etc. would reap all benefits by assembling imported kits from their own subsidiaries abroad in the name of make in India. Chinese companies have already begun to flex their manufacturing with unbelievable cost economies.

Chinese electric vehicle start-up the 'NIO' has launched its first mass produced model in December, 2017, the ES8. The ES8 starts at 4,48,000 Yuan (\$ 67, 700) is half the price of Tesla's 8.36,000 Yuan (\$1,26,400) Model X in China. Nio also enjoys considerable advantage of government subsidies for electric vehicles. No Indian player would be able to take considerable share in pie of the market for electric vehicles. The government should build an electric vehicle manufacturing consortium, with heavy fiscal support for developing precompetitive technologies. The battery manufacturing knowhow of ISRO, has to be made accessible to domestic players. In Europe and US all the technologies, developed are out of the government support extended liberally through industry consortium route.

Government of India is even yet to take call from the raw material supplies for 100% EV target. Even the government think tank, the NITI Aayog is also fully aware of the major supply chain constraints arising out of low mineral

reserves for Li batteries, absence of EV battery procedure, lack of requisite technology indigenously, a lack of government initiative or even any plan to build domestic capabilities for EV batteries and lack of initiative to promote any downstream manufacturing value chain. Even the coordination among various stakeholders, an high perceived risk beyond the capacity of the individual potential domestic investors, especially in lack of any raw material sourcing plans and higher interest rates lack of reserves for Lithium-ion components, such as Lithium, Cobalt and Nickel as well as constraints in getting processed functional materi-

has acquired mines abroad for cheap, consistent and dependable supplies. NITI Aayog itself has agreed that "India does not have reserves of some of the most important Li-ion components, including Lithium, Cobalt, Nickel, and Copper used in conductors, cables and busbars."

India has announced its decision to go for 100% EV ahead of other countries, but strangely, without forging deals for key raw materials, technology developments and domestic supply chain development. So now it could face tough bargaining. Proactive vision like that of China warrants the need to forge international partner-

The government should build an electric vehicle manufacturing consortium, with fiscal support for developing precompetitive technologies. The battery manufacturing knowhow of ISRO, has to be made accessible to domestic players.

als, used in anodes and cathodes are also a big challenge.

Country's Lithium requirements alone would be not less than 60,000 tones per year and most of the proven Lithium deposits are in the Lithium triangle of Chile, Argentina and Bolivia. So, unless long term supply contracts are forged with these nations, including joint ventures and lease rights for procuring Lithium at affordable prices the ambitious target of 100% EV would pose a challenge. Securing Cobalt would be a more grave challenge due to geographical concentration of its deposits and associates geopolitical risks. China is very proactive vis a vis India and

ships and joint ventures to secure access to key minerals in line with our proposed battery technology and roadmap ahead of disclosing our plans to achieve large scale domestic production of EV batteries. Atleast an industry consortium for complete supply chain and final vehicle manufacturing was to be put forth before declaring the target of 100% electric vehicles' target. No country would ever announce like this to help alien players to grab most part of the pie of electric vehicles.

India should have learnt a lesson from the myopic blunder committed in the area of solar power. In solar power, inspite of lapse of

3 years since our embarking on the world's most ambitious path of having 100 GW solar capacity, we could not harness domestic capacities to manufacture Silicon ingots, Silicon Wafering, PV cells, PV panels, Photo Voltaic central Inverters capable to convert the variable direct current (DC) output of a photovoltaic solar panel into a utility frequency alternating current (AC) of 5000 KVA that can be fed into a commercial grid or to be used by a local, off-grid electrical network. India could emerge as world technology leader in solar power with complete manufacturing value chain and accessories had we even made feeble attempts to facilitate development, promotion and protection of domestic players instead of favouring Chinese imports by abstaining from imposing antidumping duties. Even US had imposed up to 238% anti-

dumping duties on Chinese hardware. Japan and EU also slapped heavy antidumping duties on Chinese cheap dumping. Rather, before embarking upon the most ambitious target of 100 GW or Solar power, a second to none ambitious target in the world. India should have put in place a complete solar industry consortium comprising of companies capable to manufacture Silicon ingots, thin wafers out of these ingots, assemble photo voltaic cells and panels, produce PV central inverters and other accessories.

Most of the advanced nations out of economic patriotism use their proactive vision to use the opportunity to groom domestic industry to meet the indigenous needs of the market, before taking mega leap of this kind, instead of opting to oblige an alien country companies out of such a tech-

nology leap, and that to the enemy country of first order. So, India should not commit the same myopic mistake of blessing the Chinese and other foreign companies, while embarking on this revolution to transit from fossil fuel vehicles to electric vehicles in a big way. But, total lack of any vision and plan to groom the domestic players including the startups is not going to help. India needs to create an industry consortium for electric vehicles. This alone would help the country to kick start growth, employment, income and investments out of the new and emergent market out of our Transport Minister's announcement to bulldoze the fossil fuel cars. Or else if now again we would economically and technologically be blessing China, then the Chinese companies, the Chinese economy and its value chain alone would stand benefitted. □□

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Searching For Appropriate Model

Persistence of large-scale deprivation amidst accentuation of inequalities has often drawn attention to the need for an alternative development model. Two new factors have brought urgency to this. Firstly there is the many-sided ecological ruin including some irreversible threats led by climate change and its related threat of worsening disasters. Secondly there is the growing irresponsible behaviour by dominant sections leading to recent financial and economic crisis.

Efforts should therefore be made to identify some essential features of an alternative development paradigm. First and foremost, it is clear that the highest priority should be given to meeting the basic needs of all people in a sustainable way as well as protection of environment.

The preoccupation with GNP should be given up. As has been seen time and again, the growth of GNP can co-exist with increasing inequalities and even increasing deprivation of many significant sections of population. Even more prominently increase of GNP has co-existed with and also contributed to such extreme forms of ecological ruin as to create survival threats. A relatively neglected aspect is the co-existence of increasing GNP with increasing social disruption.

So setting aside narrow considerations of GNP growth we should take a broader view of creating a better world in which one of the main considerations will be whether people's basic needs are being met in a better way. A much higher priority has to be definitely accorded to meeting the food, clothing, shelter, health and education needs of people including the weakest sections.

This should be attempted on a sustainable basis which implies that long-term considerations of protecting the natural resource base should also get the highest priority. The biggest survival need, even more than food and shelter, is for clean air and water and this also is linked closely to protection of environment. A



It needs to be asserted strongly that protection of all forms of life should get high priority and their natural habitats should be protected. Earth is not just for human beings but for the mutual co-existence of all forms of life.
Bharat Dogra



very important aspect of environment protection relates to what can still be done to check climate change. This as well as ensuring better protection from extreme weather conditions should get a very high priority.

But all this is possible only if excessive concentration of wealth and income can be checked and more resources become available for real priorities. Therefore reduction of inequalities at all levels, at the international level and within various countries, is extremely important or else resources for high priority tasks may never become available.

While meeting the needs of weakest sections should certainly be emphasised, a related question can also be raised whether injustice exists only at the economic level. Clearly there are also various social aspects of injustice and inequality such as discrimination on the basis of caste, race, colour, gender, religion etc. and high priority should also be given to reducing and eliminating these social discriminations. The key concern should be to create a society based on equality and justice. Social harmony and cooperation can best grow in such conditions.

The true well-being of our society is closely tied up with the state of human relationships. When family and community ties are strong, there may be high levels of satisfaction even at low levels of income. On the other hand social disruption at the level of families and communities can greatly increase distress even in a phase of rising income. Hence continuing efforts to maintain social harmony and improve human relationships are needed.



Billions of dollars can be diverted from highly destructive weapons to meeting priority needs of development and environment protection.

Such efforts at social harmony should be linked to wider efforts for peace among various countries and at the national level, which can then lead to better success of disarmament. Elimination of all weapons of mass destruction should be emphasised as a priority goal. Billions of dollars can be diverted from highly destructive weapons to meeting priority needs of development and environment protection.

Distribution of resources between military and civil expenses, urban areas and rural areas, luxuries and necessities has to be in conformity with broad objectives of peace, justice, equality and environment protection. So everything cannot be left to market forces and some planning at national and world level is needed to ensure

that the necessary resources become available for real priorities.

Protection of rural communities is essential for food security, protection of environment and protection of livelihoods of a very large number of people. So a development model that necessarily involves displacement of rural communities and increasing concentration of people in mega cities cannot be accepted. Development should emphasise protection and strengthening of rural communities along with greater availability of more diverse livelihoods nearer to villages. In this context the protection of indigenous communities should be re-emphasised.

Decentralisation can open up creative ways for strengthening of rural communities. Corporate-led globalisation should be opposed and instead decentralisation should be increasingly emphasised with growing self-reliance and strengthening of rural communities.

Finally it needs to be asserted strongly that protection of all forms of life should get high priority and their natural habitats should be protected. Earth is not just for human beings but for the mutual co-existence of all forms of life. □□

Food sovereignty is need of the hour



We are in a period of transition. 2017 is giving way to 2018. But there is another transition at work. From the toxic rule of corporations that is killing the Earth, small farmers and people to the emergence of new paradigms and practices based on care for the Earth, the last species, the last child. The last three decades of my work have been shaped by creating democratic and just alternatives to unfair and undemocratic rules of GATT/WTO, which were written by the corporations, for creating monopolies over our seed and food.

Every rule of WTO that affects our daily bread was written by the Poison Car-

tel including Monsanto, the Merchants of Grain led by Cargill, and the junk food industry led by Pepsi, Coca Cola and Nestle.

James Enyart admitted that Monsanto and pharmaceutical giants wrote the Trade Related Intellectual property rights (TRIPS) agreement to create monopolies on seeds and medicines. The lead US negotiator at the start of the Uruguay Round who shaped what became the WTO Agreement on Agriculture, was Dan Amstutz a former vice-president of agribusiness giant Cargill. The Sanitary and Phytosanitary (SPS) agreement was drafted by the global food processing industry to displace sovereign food safety laws, criminalise local food systems and impose junk food on the people of the world through pseudo safety laws.

I started Navdanya, and Bija Swaraj, the seed freedom movement in 1987 when I first heard of GATT and patents on seed. After the Dunkel Draft of the GATT was leaked in 1991, I travelled the length and breadth of India to inform farmers about TRIPS and the Agriculture Agreement. We organised rallies in Hospet in Bengaluru, in Delhi to say “No” to the Agreement on Agriculture. The language of food sovereignty, Anna Swaraj, emerged as a response to WTO — that farmers, communities, societies, countries have the right and the duty to grow good food in ecological ways for health and well being for all. This was the message we took to Seattle.

At the Buenos Aires Ministerial MC, 11 northern countries tried to “pink wash” WTO to try and present corporate rule as women’s liberation. As in Seattle, we, as Diverse Women for Diversity, continue to say “the so-called “free-market” system is indeed a global war system, based on violence against nature, humanity, especially women and children.”

The Seattle Ministerial failed because of people’s power. Cancun failed. Hong Kong failed. And now the Buenos Aires Ministerial has failed. But corporations find new undemocratic ways to impose and spread their empire.



Two decades of corporate driven globalisation has destroyed the biodiversity and cultural diversity of our indigenous food systems.

Dr. Vandana Shiva

Two decades of corporate driven globalisation has destroyed the biodiversity and cultural diversity of our indigenous food systems, the health of people and the planet. More than 300,000 farmers have committed suicide since 1995. Most suicides are in the cotton area, and most debt is for illegal royalty collection because Article 3J of the Indian Patent Act does not allow patents of seed. We have witnessed the illegal spread and failure of GMOs like BT Cotton. In 1998, the same year when BT cotton was illegally introduced by Monsanto, Cargill and Co assaulted our healthy edible oil economy, manipulating a ban on desi oils like mustard to flood the Indian market with unhealthy GMO soya oil and palm oil. As many as five lakh kacchi ghanis were shut. We organised a “sarson satyagraha” to protect our indigenous oilseeds and edible oil economy.

A few years ago, a fake “yellow pea” dal started to get imported from Canada displacing our diverse dals, which we call the “The Pulse of Life”. The fake dal is only seven per cent protein compared to our chana and tur with 25-35 per cent protein. These unnecessary imports imposed by corporate cartels are a theft of our farmers’ livelihood and our nutrition. The CAG had assessed a Rs. 1,200 crore fraud in the yellow pea dal import when UPA imported two million tons. The NDA government is importing six million tons. The scam has to be bigger. Corporate imperialism goes hand-in-hand with government corruption. And people, especially the poor, pay the price with their very lives. Every fourth Indian is hungry, every second Indian child is

malnourished, and India now is at 100th rank on the Global Hunger Index. The spread of junk food has led to an epidemic of non-communicable chronic diseases. Corporate imperialism cannot co-exist with the “rights of mother earth” and human rights.

India’s National Food Security Act is an important law that is supposed to guarantee the Right to Food to the last Indian citizen. No democratic society and no democratically elected government should allow its citizens to go hungry. Food security and food sovereignty requires that the government procure food grains from farmers at fair prices based on just MSP, to provide food to the poor.

Farmers’ rights to fair prices are thus structural to the Food Security Act. The US has challenged India’s public stockholding for food security in the WTO. They want to force the Indian government to import toxic degraded GMO corn, soya, rice and wheat, sprayed with Monsanto’s Carcinogenic Round Up, traded by Cargill, for our PDS. Cash transfers replacing public procurement will achieve what corporations are seeking. The agrarian crisis will deepen. More farmers will commit suicide. More children will die of hunger.

The ecological crisis, the agrarian crisis, the food crisis, the health and nutrition crisis, the crisis of democracy and sovereignty are not separate crisis. They are one. And they are connected through food. As the Taitreya Upanishad tells us “everything is food”.

The web of life is a food web. When it is ruptured by chemicals and poisons that come from war, and rules of “free trade” that is a

war declared by corporations against the earth and humanity, biodiversity is wiped out, farmers are killed through debt, and people die either because of hunger or because of cancer, diabetes, heart problems, hypertension and other environment and food related chronic diseases.

Everyone is paying a very high price for corporate greed and dictatorship and collusion of corporate states to spread the toxic empire of corporations in the name of “reforms”. These corporate driven reforms have of course “transformed” India but in a destructive way. A 10,000-year-old agroecology tradition of growing and giving good food as the highest dharma is being destroyed by an industrial globalised agricultural model which came from the war and has unleashed a war against the earth, our farmers and our bodies. In this war waged by the corporate empire, our small farmers, our annadatas, are on the frontline in defending our national security and food sovereignty.

It is time to make a transition from corporate imperialism that is killing us, our farmers and life on earth, to earth democracy that sustains life. We need to “reform” the WTO rules of corporate globalisation. We need to “transform” our food and agriculture system through a Jaivik Kranti — a revolution for life — to stop farmers’ suicides, hunger, malnutrition and disease.

Let 2018 be a year when we sow the seeds of our food sovereignty through swadeshi bija and swadeshi bhoj.

Vandana Shiva trained as a physicist prior to dedicating her life to the protection of India’s biodiversity and food security. She is the author of numerous books and the recipient of numerous awards.

Agro-rural economy, subsidies to be focus of Modi's last full budget as India prepares for 2019



Lakhs of farmers committed suicide in the last two decades as a result of 'Manmohanomics'. The Modi government should bring out a blueprint for farmer welfare schemes and make its implementation effective. The direct subsidies paid to farmers by western countries are a case in point.
Shivaji Sarkar

The Gujarat elections are likely to change the focus of Indian economic policies. The last full budget of the Narendra Modi government may have larger focus on the agro-rural economy. While farmers and rural economy is likely to get a better attention, cut in income-tax also cannot be ignored. The rural-urban divide is in sharp focus in the Gujarat elections. The rural voters have swung to Congress. The BJP has got 72 percent of its lead from the urban seats and Congress gets 89 percent of leads from rural ones. It is in-

terpreted as discontent against their deteriorating economic conditions, falling prices of cotton, groundnut and other crops.

The government support to farmers is indirect largely through MSPs. No support is given for investment in crops. The farmers have to depend on loans or their own resources. Subsidies have been done away with except for some interest subvention. The phenomenon is not restricted to one state. It is an all-India phenomenon. Agricultural growth is an important driver of political fortunes in state elections. With eight states – Meghalaya, Mizoram, Nagaland, Tripura, Rajasthan, MP, Chhattisgarh and Karnataka - slated to go for polls in 2018, the policy changes are necessary.

BJP parliamentarian Varun Gandhi in an article in September, three months before the Gujarat elections, has suggested a national discussion on rural distress.

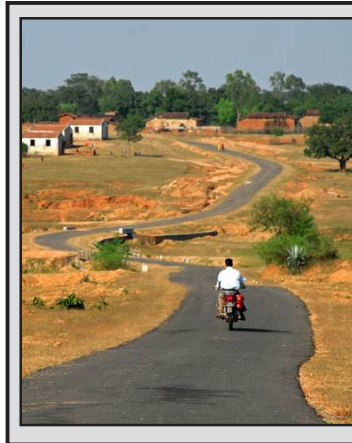
Congress won 55 of the predominantly rural seats in Gujarat about 10 more than the BJP. But it appears that the BJP still enjoys the confidence of the people for the image of Prime Minister Narendra Modi – the belief that corruption could be tackled by him alone and that he is responsive to the people's problems. Surat traders protest but vote for BJP as the GST rates on 198 items is reduced.

Another significant aspect is the Muslim votes. The BJP is stated to have got about seven percent more Muslim votes, now at 27 percent; and Congress lost about six percent, now at 64 percent. The national Muslim politics is bound to change or look for new moorings as BJP does not woo them and Congress ignores them. Sizeable number of Patidars chose to stay with BJP because of Modi. Most MLAs today are thankful to Modi more than their own popularity. The shift in non-urban vote base is obvious. This is likely to change the budgetary focus. Finance Minister Arun Jaitley has indicated that the government will analyse and address the results in the Gujarat districts that highlighted farmers' issues.

Higher spending for the farmers is not unlikely.

Rural Gujarat saw better times under Modi's administration. The average monthly per capita expenditure (MPCE) from the National Sample Survey Office (NSSO) shows that compound annual growth (CAGR) of MPCE in rural Gujarat was the highest under the period which broadly coincides with Modi's tenure. But during the past few years their income has come down to about Rs 7,000 a month more than the national average of Rs 6400. This is the crux of the future politics. Modi says he would double farmer's income by 2022 but that would be far less than the salaries of a government or factory worker or even an urban rag picker. Not surprisingly larger number of farm families is migrating to cities as they not only have lower income and higher input costs but also face cash crunch in the wake of note-ban.

Farmers almost everywhere in Bihar, UP, MP, Maharashtra, Punjab, Andhra or West Bengal are not getting the bare minimum prices for their products be it wheat, pulses or potato. Potato wafers prices have skyrocketed but farmer is not getting back even his input cost. The government owned NAFED is not making any purchase in states like Bihar owing to a dispute on sales tax with the state government since 2009. The Planning Commission in 2011 estimated that the size of agricultural work force would shrink to less than 200 million (20 crore) by 2020. About 30.5 million left farming from 2004-05 to 2010-11 seeking employment in secondary and tertiary sectors – meaning lowly jobs.



Rural Gujarat saw better times under Modi's administration. The average MPCE from the NSSO shows that CAGR of MPCE in rural Gujarat was the highest under the period which broadly coincides with Modi's tenure.

A Panjab University study showed that small – one to two hectare (ha) and marginal farmers – less than one ha, face a greater burden of debt. Over 50 percent of the loans are from non-banking sources— *mahajans*. Average land holding size decreased from 2.3 ha in 1971 to 1.16 ha in 2011. A farmer now earns Rs 2400 for paddy per ha and Rs 2600 for wheat per ha. Farm labourers earn less than Rs 5,000 a month. But despite this 54 to 58 percent people have direct or indirect employment in the farm sector – about 75 to 80 crore. All government policies since the first five-year plan typically are focused on weaning these people away to industry and other sectors. Sadly enough this has not succeeded as most labour intensive sectors have been highly automated, population increased and employment opportunities shrunk.

The Manmohanomics that is stated to have brought “reforms” have heaped woes on all kinds of workers. Real wages of industrial workers have not risen in proportion to those working in the organized government jobs. Large unemployment and social distress, often called jobless growth, has increased. Over 3.21 lakh farmers committed suicide in the last two

decades, as a consequence of Manmohanomics. It also saw continuous high inflation, except for 1998-2004, the prime ministership of Atal Behari Vajpayee. Since 2010, inflation has risen by over 50 percent eroding the wage gains as there has not been any change in income tax rates. The GST has increased prices. These reflect on lower purchasing power and consequent low growth.

The Modi government would have to present a drastically different budget as agriculture minister Radha Mohan Singh says the government will intensify farmer welfare schemes and ensure their effective implementation as well as the payment of MSP, which states are not paying. This also needs to aim at higher government expenses and drastically change the economic policies and drift away from Manmohanomics. The government has to look into the pattern of direct subsidies paid by the US and other western countries to farmers.

The February budget has to be a landmark for changing the course of the country, stem rural distress, plan for smart villages and direct government investment or subsidy in agriculture in tune with Deendayal Upadhyay's integral humanism or Gandhian socialism. □□

Graveyard for Farmers



Punjab, the food bowl of the country, is faced with a paradox of productivity. Ever since the launch of the Green Revolution in 1966, Punjab has been producing a record grain surplus year after year, and yet it has over the years turned into a graveyard of farmer suicides. There is hardly a day when reports of farmers committing suicide do not appear in Punjab newspapers.

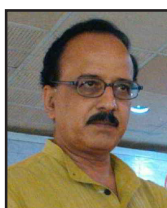
Take a look at the food procurement figures for 2017-18 marketing year. Of the total wheat procurement of 308.24 lakh tonnes, Punjab had contributed 117.06 lakh tonnes, thereby providing more

than 37 per cent of the country's wheat requirement. In case of rice, for which the procurement season is still in progress; Punjab has already contributed 174.35 lakh tonnes till Nov 28. This is 67 per cent of the total rice procurement of 258.18 lakh tonnes. In other words, Punjab continues to be the top contributor to the national food kitty. Whichever year, and the extent of climatic aberrations, Punjab has dutifully delivered food for the country.

Now hold your breath. A bumper grain production year after year belies the grave tragedy that has been worsening with each passing year. According to a survey conducted by the Punjab Agricultural University, as many as 16,000 farmers and farm labourers have committed suicide in the past 17 years, between the year 2000 and 2017. This comes to an average of 900 suicides per year. Of these, 83 per cent committed suicide buried under mountain of unpaid debt, and 76.1 per cent owned less than 2 acres of land. Every third farmer is below the poverty line. Still worse, nearly 66 per cent of these farmers and farm labourers who took their own lives were young. Surely, like all young, they too had a dream. But what made them to abruptly put an end to their lives?

Take the case of these two brothers — Roop Singh, 40, and his younger brother Basant Singh, 32. Both jumped into the Bhakra canal a few weeks back. They were residents of Patiala district in Punjab. Both the brothers together owned 2.5 acres of land and were cultivating another 30 acres on contract. But unable to generate any profits, the outstanding debt continued to swell. While the two sons ended their lives in November 2017, their father too had committed suicide some 10 years earlier, in 2008. Two generations of the family were consumed by the scourge of mounting farm debt.

The tragedy that struck the family in Punjab symbolises the agony that the



Intensive agriculture specially in cultivation of genetically modified Bt cotton, resurgence of white fly insect, failure of the crop varieties have led to immense debt and series of suicides among the farmers of Punjab, the food bowl of the country.

Devinder Sharma

entire farming community is living with. Those who have refrained from taking the extreme step are no better. They continue to somehow survive, living in acute stress, mental agony, depression and surviving hoping against hope. Still, the bigger question that remains unanswered is how can the food bowl turn into a hotbed of farmer suicides? How can Punjab be in the deadly grip of an unending agrarian crisis?

That such a tragic serial death dance is being enacted in a state which is considered to be the most prosperous as far as agriculture is concerned tells us clearly that the crisis is the outcome of an inherently flawed high crop productivity linked intensive farming model. I have heard agricultural economists and policy makers often shift the blame to low crop productivity, failure to go for crop diversification and lack of irrigation. In a State which has 98 per cent assured irrigation and where the per hectare yields of wheat and paddy match international levels I see no reason why then farmers should be dying.

As per the Economic Survey 2016, the per hectare yield of wheat in Punjab stands at 4,500 Kg/hectare which matches the wheat yields in United States. In case of paddy, the average yield is 6,000 Kg/hectare, quite close to the paddy productivity levels in China. With such high yields and with abundant irrigation available why farmers should be dying? To say that these farmers are lazy, drunkards and do not spend the loans for the purpose they take cannot be true. If it was so, I see no way Punjab could have topped global crop productivity; how Punjab could feed the entire

country with its grain surplus every year, and that too continuously for the past 50 years.

Punjab is in a terrible crisis because of the economic and development policies that encourages intensive agriculture. To meet its food requirements, erstwhile Punjab (including Haryana that later split) became the focal point of a highly intensive agriculture, beginning with wheat, rice and then followed with the shift towards cultivation of cotton as a cash crop.

What Punjab desperately needs is to move away from the intensive cropping system. If we have to save farmers, Punjab has to move towards an ecological sustainable farming system, implemented in a time bound manner.

While intensive farming played havoc with soil fertility necessitating more application of chemical fertilizers; excessive use and abuse of chemical pesticides has contamination the food chain as well as the environment. The result is that Punjab is fast turning into a cancer hub.

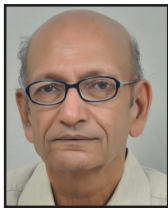
Still worse, as the PAU report points out, intensive cultivation of cotton subsequently turned it into a suicide crop. The genetically modified Bt cotton, and the resurgence of the white fly insect attack followed by the failure of the crop

varieties to withstand pink bollworm attack, added to the mounting debt. In fact, more than 80 per cent of the farm suicides have taken place in predominantly the cotton belt, comprising the six districts of Sangrur, Patiala, Mansa, Bathinda, Barnala and Faridkot. Incidentally, these six districts are also the constituency of the two political families – Prakash Singh Badal and Capt Amarinder Singh.

The tragedy is that we haven't learnt any lessons. While the Ministry of Agriculture and Niti Aayog are pushing for the same policies for the rest of the states, wanting them to ape Punjab's level of crop productivity, the resulting human tragedy is being simply glossed over. As if this is not enough, the effort now is to push Punjab deeper into the environmentally harmful web of agribusiness, which requires more intensive farming adding to more Greenhouse Gas Emissions. It's like moving from the frying pan literally into fire.

What Punjab desperately needs is to move away from the intensive cropping system. If we have to save farmers, Punjab has to move towards an ecological sustainable farming system, implemented in a time bound manner. It requires a shift in the research mandate of the PAU accompanied by policies and programmes that encourages farmers to shift without suffering any economic loss. Addressing the sustainability crisis without providing an assured monthly income will be meaningless. Punjab must take the lead by setting up a State Farmers Income Commission, with mandate to work out a mechanism to provide a guaranteed income linked to agro-ecological farming practices. □□

The withdrawal of WTO and globalization



WTO and globalization have curtailed economic sovereignties of many countries. It has failed to bring benefits to the people. The India government should realize these facts and start supporting domestic businesses of multinational corporations.

Dr. Bharat Jhunjunwala

The nineties saw the grand march of globalization. The World Trade Organization (WTO) was established in 1995. Two major changes were made. Till that time we were free to impose any level of import duty on goods imported into the country. We gave up that freedom and agreed not to impose import duties in excess of certain agreed rates. The large scale imports of goods from China taking place at present is a consequence of this provision of the WTO which we willingly accepted. The second major change was in the patents system. Till 1995 our companies were free to copy and make goods invented by any person as long as they did not use the same process of manufacture as used by the inventor. Our pharmaceutical companies grew by using this provision. They manufactured the drugs invented by multinational drug companies using alternate processes and made available those drugs in the international market at a fraction of the price charged by the Multinational Corporations who invented them. This freedom was taken away from us. The WTO provided that we could not manufacture a patented item using alternate processes. The benefits from WTO have been few, if at all. The major benefit from WTO was expected to accrue to our farmers. It was hoped that our farmers will be able to export their produce to the developed countries and get much higher prices for their produce. However, the developed countries managed to fudge the rules of the WTO and continued to provide subsidies to their farmers. Our farmers could not export their goods. In the result WTO, and the globalization ushered by it, has become largely a loss proposition for us; as it has for a large number of other countries. It has even become a loss proposition for the people of the developed countries like the United States of America. They find that their jobs are disappearing. Thus US President Donald Trump has taken a “stand aloof” attitude towards the WTO.

The recently concluded Ministerial Conference of the WTO which is the



highest policymaking body of the WTO, and is attended by the Ministers of the member countries, has ended with nothing to show. There were many new initiatives that could be taken if the member countries had benefitted from the WTO and wanted to deepen globalization. Only the trade in physical goods such as wheat, cars and computers is regulated by the WTO at present. However, the global economy is increasingly being dominated by the services—software, movies, health tourism, online tutorials and the like. Had globalization in goods been profitable for the people, the governments would have been willing to expand the scope of the WTO to include free trade in services. Another possible area of expansion would be e-commerce. Today a customer in India can buy goods on an e-portal located in the United States or China. It is difficult enough to manage e-commerce within the country. It is almost impossible to manage it across the borders. The WTO Ministerial could have taken some steps towards bringing e-commerce within its ambit. The failure of WTO to move ahead in framing rules for global trade in these areas means that globalization is retreating. People are not liking that multilateral agencies determine their domestic policies. The present retreat is not unique though. It has happened many times before.

Our Mughal rulers thought that by allowing the British to trade in India, they would be securing their own sea trade, which will be beneficial for the country. Similarly, we have agreed signed the WTO treaty because we thought that the benefits to us from WTO would be more than the costs. We would

get foreign investments and access to foreign markets for our exports.

The globalization under the Mughal rulers and the WTO are fundamentally similar. In both cases we ceded our sovereign rights willingly in the belief that the benefits will be more than the costs. In the former case, we found in course of time that the benefits to us from the British entry into India were less than the costs. Thus arose Mahatma Gandhi and we retracted from that globalization. Very much the same is happening with the WTO today as seen in the Ministerial not being able to make any

The true challenge is to inform the people of the benefits and costs of globalization so that they can make an informed choice and withdraw if so warranted.

advances. Large numbers of countries have found that the benefits of WTO are less. Thus they are making regional blocks such as North Atlantic Free Trade Association (NAFTA) between Canada, USA and Mexico; the European Union between 20-odd European countries; and our own efforts to forge a South Asia freed trade area. The United States has refused to recognize the authority of the International Court of Justice and walked out of the Paris Climate Change Agreement. The bottom line is that globalization succeeds only as long as it can provide more benefits than costs to the member

countries. We can, for example, today walk out of the WTO if we find it is not beneficial.

Retreat from globalization takes place even if it is forced upon a people. The British globalized India by opening our imports to British goods, allowing British companies to invest in India and the free movement of British natural persons to India. There took place a movement of capital, natural persons and technology—which are the markers of globalization. Similarly, Indian rulers of the Princely States, for example, ceded their authority to the British under duress. But the Indian people did not accept that ceding under the leadership of Mahatma Gandhi and the same was reversed. People are the ultimate sovereign and no power on earth than take their sovereignty away. The people will rise no matter how strong the forces of globalization are just as they rose against the British.

Thus there is no fear of globalization. The true challenge is to inform the people of the benefits and costs of globalization so that they can make an informed choice and withdraw if so warranted. The worry is that our intellectuals will get coopted and misinform the people of the true costs of present globalization. The recently concluded Ministerial indicates that the intellectuals have succeeded in exposing the fallacy of globalization and the clock has started ticking backwards. The Indian Government should wake up and start supporting domestic businesses instead of running after Multinational Corporations under the “Make in India” scheme which is doomed to failure in these conditions. □□

Author was formerly Professor of Economics at IIM Bengaluru.

Why a Dissent on Women Empowerment?

"The idea of perfect womanhood is perfect independence" Swami Vivekananda's statement in his lecture in Chicago, has been aspired to be achieved in the country in the 20th and 21st century. Hindu Marriage Act of 1956 and the subsequent incorporation of its amendments has been the stepping stone for the women of Indic community, in galvanising and equipping them with constitutional equal rights in personal laws. On the contrary, women from the minorities had silently borne the gender inequality in the personal laws, ostensibly in the name of religion.

However, the gender disparity in Muslim Personal law was questioned in the court by none other than those who had borne the brunt. The recent judgement of Supreme Court annulled the practice of instant Triple Talaq (talaq-e-biddat), giving a new lease of confidence to Muslim women. The Muslim women of our country need to be applauded for their fortitude and persistence in not bowing down to fundamentalism. The judgement which will go a long way in the emancipation of the Muslim Women has perturbed many. Trinamool Congress MLA Siddiqullah Chowdhury, at present the State Library and Mass Education Minister of West Bengal alleged that the Supreme Court Judges passed the order without having knowledge about Islam and its rituals. Many organisations like All India Muslim Personal Law Board (AIMPLB), Jamiat Ulema-e-Hind (JUH), Darul Uloom Deoband (DUD), Jamaat-e-Islami Hind (JIH) have expressed their displeasure over the judgement. Such has been the fear psychosis of empowering women in the community as a consequence of the judgement that many among them have perceived the judgement as a pre-empt to Uniform Civil code (UCC).

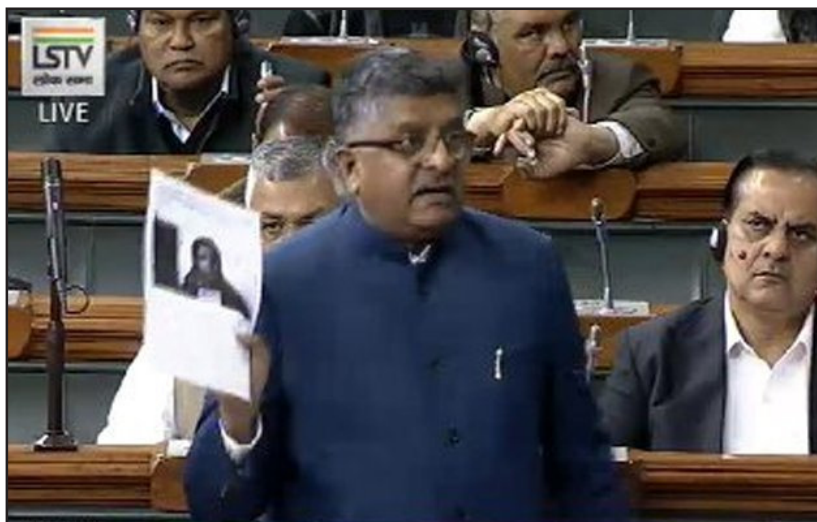


Introduction of Triple Talaq Bill needs to be taken as an intervention by the judiciary and the executive to give similar rights to women across the religious spectrum, a step forward to give an opportunity to each one to live a life with dignity in a secular country.
Dr. Geeta Bhatt



The challenges of protecting the right to equality among Muslim women and overcoming gender discrimination within the society has prompted the present political dispensation to introduce a Muslim Women (Protection of Marriage) Bill, 2017, in the Parliament. The bill proposes to hold instant Triple Talaq “illegal and void” and provides for a jail term of three years for the husband who practices it. It also proposes to give a Muslim woman right to ask for custody of children, maintenance for herself and her minor children from a court. The likes of Asaduddin Owaisi, President of the All India Majlis-e-Ittehadul Muslimeen (AIMIM) and a sitting member of Parliament have opposed the proposed bill and asked the Indian Muslims to unite in protecting the Shariat.

AIMPLB has stated in its press release that the bill will harm the interest of the Muslim women and their family. Most of the Urdu press has declared the bill as interference in the Islamic Sharia. All faiths and religions had some norms or practices which were detrimental towards the feminine gender, subjugated them to orthodoxy and deprived them of their rights in marriage, divorce, inheritance, adoption and succession. However, some had the cultural proficiency to debate, discuss, pre-empt critique of the social imperfections and chart a path of correction. Many social reformers like Raja Ram Mohan Roy, Ishwar Chand Vidyasagar, Swami Dayananda Saraswati, Jyotirao Phule to name a few championed for gender parity and opposed the bias towards women in the society. They realised that an empowered



Protection of Marriage Bill, 2017, in the Parliament proposes to hold instant Triple Talaq “illegal and void”

woman could contribute significantly to the larger goal of nation building not only as an individual but also by providing the right orientation and values to her family as its fulcrum. Sadly, the Muslim community could not come out of the shackles of fundamentalism and deep-rooted orthodoxy played a deterrent in introducing social reforms. If the clerics had the foresight to fathom the insecurity and duress Muslim women face, constantly living with the fear of their marital alliance ending by utterance of three words and had themselves engaged in reforms, these women wouldn't have knocked the doors of judiciary. Indian Muslims need to take a hue from Islamic nations like Pakistan, Tunisia, Afghanistan, Kuwait, Malaysia which have codi-

fied their personal laws and banned instant Triple Talaq.

It is interesting to note that many self-proclaimed liberals, academicians and woman activists who vouch for themselves as crusaders of women rights are also on the same page with AIMPLB and others who are opposing the bill on Triple Talaq. They argue that a woman is more vulnerable when her husband will be jailed and deprive her of financial security. By this logic, no married man should be jailed for any offence or heinous crime as his spouse or family will be burdened economically.

Muslim community is governed by uniform civil and criminal laws which are both religion and gender neutral and give them democratic rights as laid in our constitution. However, they have shied away for long in placing their personal laws within the same ambit. The intervention of the judiciary and the executive to give similar rights to women across the religious spectrum is a step forward to give an opportunity to each to live life with dignity in a secular country. □□

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Challenges before the Nation affecting Common Citizens and the possible way forward



2018 the challenges will be very complex both in global front and also in domestic front. This will be the most crucial year for the political governance, political leadership, and also for many states administrators before many state elections and also general elections of 2019. With every passing day, we are adding to the list of challenges and there are many serious issues which are hurting common man very badly. Some of them are mentioned below with possible options. Citizens of India seek the attention of people in power with a request, please address some of the following challenges or at least share your plans which are time-bound so that citizens can feel comfortable.

Factual Position

Between 2017 and 2018, there is the addition of about 20 million people and about 20 million animal population. I understand there is also a reduction in some population due to natural reasons, but the requirements of growing population are different than people those are leaving this world.

Looking forward to the following basic challenges are:

1. Food and Nutrition Security: Do we have enough affordable food and feed to ensure minimum nutritional requirement for all? India needs about 20 million of additional food to meet the need of growing population. How much additional food and feed we will produce this year?

One on the side we can claim godowns are full, the fact is 30% of Indians and 50% of children of India, you may also call them future of India, are suffering from hunger and malnutrition. So any claim that we have enough food has no meaning. Unfortunately, we have not seen any agriculture and food security policy of the government at last so many years. Can we expect agriculture policy this year to address this fundamental needs of any society? This will help in addressing the farmer's distress and consumers food inflation? My request to the policy makers, please share your agriculture and food security plans so that private capital also support your efforts in making India food secure.

Farmers Income and agro-based enterprises are all linked to government policies. Growing imports and reducing exports is clear message that people prefer to import than produce locally even for local consumption. We are spending our money on imports in place of providing extension support to local farmers. Food inflation will remain the biggest political challenge. On the other hand, as long as interest rates are linked to food inflation, farmers will never get the price even to recover their cost escalation due to inflation. The average inflation in India was 6 to 8 % during the same time rise in MSP was about 4%. Are we

Food and Nutrition Security, Water Conservation, Expensive Education, Employment, Healthcare, Law & Order, Delayed Justice & Public Transport are the challenges that would affect common citizens in 2018.
Vijay Sardana

removing poverty or adding to poverty becomes a serious debate. Without a clear and visible road-map, no one can contribute to this huge challenge which country is facing. So, please release your Agriculture and Food Security Road-Map in 2018.

2. Water Conservation: To produce more food, we need more water and more land. How much more water we will save this year to meet the need for agriculture, drinking purpose and other requirements?

India is one of the few countries where water harvesting is minimum compared to rainfall we get every year. It is important that we must make water harvesting a national mission and every person must cut down its water use and wasteful requirements without compromising on hygiene. There must be a mission to design water saving technologies which can we use by every individual. We have promoted water wasting technologies in every household like RO. Can we have a better option like normal reliable filters which takes care of water wastage and deliver hygienic and safe water? This needs research priority. Can we expect some major water conservation plan in line with "Toilets Campaign"?

3. Poor quality & Expensive Education: How many schools we will create this year to address the need of the growing population? Do we have any plans to meet the requirements?

Where are the teachers? Education is fundamental to democracy, civic sense and law & order in society. Do we have properly trained teachers to take care of education needs of the growing modern society? India wanted to

produce teachers for the world market, but where are the plans to ensure proper teachers to student ratio within India. Is there any plan to ensure quality teachers in the country to develop responsibly and educate citizens. We can use IT technology and mobile technologies to reach the students, but where are the teachers who can address the queries of the students.

High Cost of Higher Education will kill service quality: The cost of professional education is so high that no student after paying so much cost for education i.e. fee will ever think of service to society because his first and foremost duty is to recover all the cost plus interest to ensure payment of education loans. This is a very bad policy for the country like India. Cost of professional education must be controlled if we want service mindset to develop in society. Please also share your plan for quality teachers training in this country.

4. Governance and Employment: Sensible governance can create better socio-economic order. Vibrant markets will create entrepreneurs and innovation. There are many laws which are killing entrepreneurial spirit in the country in the name of regulation, registration, and inspections. Why so many approvals and inspections are required in this country. Is this ease of doing business? Unfortunately, we trust our inspectors more than our entrepreneurs. This clearly reflects our colonial mindset. Why there is no transparency in inspection and testing systems in the country. Why citizens are not told how many inspections were done and what was the outcome of the work done by so many in-

spectors. Still, people are suffering due to adulterated foods, bad medicines, and poor education quality. Please show us one department where due to inspectors things have improved and that sector is producing world-class products, consumers are happy and there is no allegation of corruption.

Fire in Mumbai Pub is just one example of corruption in all related departments dealing with people and establishments. So, the claim that there is no corruption is far away from reality. The facts are ways and means of corruption has become more sophisticated.

How many laws and procedures will be reviewed this year to minimize the overheads due to paperwork and corruption on enterprises? Can we try to create at least one department free of inspector raj? Ask industry associations to take charge of quality if they need government sponsorship of their programs from taxpayers' money.

Creation of new enterprises will create new jobs. In the present regulatory regime and governance system, it is difficult for the startups to sustain in the prevailing inspector raj. The current system does not encourage innovation and out-of-box thinking because outdated knowledge base of inspectors decides what is right and what is wrong with society ensure meaningful engagement of the youth of India. The current governance structure will only create more demand for MNREGA like schemes?

The fact is it is better to import and trade in India than manufacture in India. The growing import is clear example for policymakers to understand this basic concern.

5. Healthcare: Health is wealth and without proper nutri-

tion and without proper healthcare no country can ever become a developed nation. Per capita GDP is a fictitious number in a real sense when 50 to 60% population suffer from health-related disorders.

Balanced nutritious food availability is the first step in good health. We must ensure this. The way our food supply and food security plans are managed, I don't see any hope that load on health management system will ever be less.

The cost of healthcare is increasing and accessibility is also going down. We must encourage health for all in every institution and establishment so that rest of the society can use public healthcare facilities. Let corporates be allowed to create their own medical and education facilities under CSR to support the needs of their own employees and their families. If they want they should be allowed to extend the same to the other members of society. Education and healthcare policy must address this and with less procedural hurdles and no inspectors. Let the management be accountable for outcome and safety and quality of beneficiaries. When defense forces can manage their hospitals and schools, other institutions and corporates can also do the same under the guidelines of respective guidelines issued by the authorities.

6. Law and Order: How many police personnel will we add to ensure law and order? This is a growing challenge. Can't we think of involving civil society in law and order? Why RWA and local community groups cannot be allowed to mediate and take a decision in ensuring law and order in Civil cases in their area like issues related to parking, street markets, wine shops,

local disputes, etc. The local bodies must place their decisions and reasons behind the decisions in public forum so that citizens can give a final verdict. A website of the city or local police station can be created to ensure that all disputes are addressed by local bodies and police can just guide them in mediation, if required.

An innovative approach is required to address these law & order issues in civil matters so that crime rates can be controlled and pressure police can be reduced and they can only handle criminal cases.

7. Delayed Justice: In criminal and civil cases, there must be

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an attempt to deliver faster judgments. Why government cannot create more courts and fill all the posts of judges so that people can focus on their work and help in creating GDP in place of wasting time in courts and police stations. This also leads to corruption because money and muscle power are used to settle the case outside courts. Investors and small entrepreneurs also lose hope if there is no timely judgment. They reduce investments to avoid inspectors and prefer not to hire more people because who will address their complaint in time bound manner if any.

Reduced investments in a country with growing population

and market is a clear message that investors do not trust the governance and justice system. It is important to address, what should be the per capita budget to ensure justice and time-bound redressal of the complaints. If required, complaints should be graded to decide jurisdiction, to save the resources. Officers and Inspectors filing wrong complaints without evidence should also be made accountable under the same law.

8. Public Transport: It is sensible to run few empty buses than to have traffic jams all the time on the roads in cities. Training of drivers and conductors and timeliness of the public transport is must to develop faith in public transport systems. All cities with more than one million population must have public transport system and every car owner must contribute to parking charges which should subsidize public transport facilities.

There must be premium small capacity public transport facilities which should be one-third of the price of petrol consumed in cars for the same distance. This will motivate car owners and ladies to prefer luxury public transport at a lower cost than cars and also reduce traffic congestion. The pilot should be initiated in few cities.

Unless we make the life of common man better there is no way she or can understand that quality of life has improved. Quality and cost of food, education, healthcare, and social and personal security are the priority to check the governance in any society.

Every other parameter is secondary. I hope 2018, can give a new beginning in the priorities for the governance and this will need out-of-box thinking. □□



coast is known to all as Bharat. Obviously therefore the concept of this land has been clear in our minds since ancient times. According to Sri Gururji, Nation (Rashtra) is not simply an assemblage of men but possess such common characteristics of Dharma, culture(Samskriti) and tradition etc. People living on a particular piece of land at particular time with common aspirations for the future with unity of tradition and culture as an essential attributes. People living since centuries developed bonds of affection and reverence for this land and feel proud to regard themselves as sons of this country. The factor of common history, the common experiences of joy and sorrow shared, common appreciation of friends and enemies resulting there from are the qualities practiced since thousands of centuries.

The Relationship with Nation (Rashtra) is “Bharat is my mother and I am her son” is cultural nationalism i.e. Rashtra Dharma. Swamy Vivekananda described Bharat as Nation with Dharma as soul. Ramayana and Mahabharat two great epics provides testimony to the fact that in Bharat the spirit of nationalism had been a living force from the very dawn of civilization. The message of Ramayana, Oh! *Laxmana*, even the golden Lanka has no fascination for me, the mother and the motherland are greater than heaven itself. Lord Rama, who is from North and Hanumantha is from south joined hands for Dharma. Shiva purana spells that Lord Shiva who is from north sends Lord Veerabhadra, to south to spread Dharma i.e. shivabhakti. According to Vishnupuran *Bharat is the greatest land on earth, and it alone is the Land of Action while the rest are lands of Pleasure. It is only after great acquisition of merit that a person gets the privilege of being born a human being in this country.*

Many centuries ago, our ancestors were able to declare to all mankind that they had actually seen and experienced the Eternal Truth, that Divine being whose knowledge and light enable man to transcend all bonds of death and misery, and

*Rastra Dharma
alone can arouse
within us all the
noble virtues we
have inherited from
our forefathers
without touching
the differences of
caste, region,
language.*
**Mahadevayya
Karadalli**

attain ever lasting bliss, nay, to become Bliss itself. A unique system was therefore evolved to enable every individual to discharge his worldly obligations to his family with ease, and then proceed unhampered in the pursuit of spiritual enlightenment. The sum of total of righteous samskaras (it is a process by which good qualities are generated and bad qualities are removed in an individual) cast on the social ethos by pursuit of this dharma is our samkriti which we all know, is common for the entire Hindu society.

Our history also is one and common, and reminds us over and over again that whenever we allowed wicked self interest to divide us, we landed ourselves in to trouble, and often disaster. But whenever we evinced an awareness that our interests are common and in severable, glory and prosperity have been ours. Right up to this day, the entire country holds festivals and celebrations in the name of Sri Rama.

Cultural Nationalism i.e. Rashtra Dharma has its route in our Shradda (Belief)

Beliving rebirth, Womanhood as motherhood, karma- working without expectation in return, Knowledge in Vedas, puranas, shastra, Vachana etc concentrated on making every man ultimate human being. Every man was destined to be refined into his highest self thorough various samskaras, through four Ashramas, *Mahapursha's*, Seers and saints viz Budda, Mahavir, Kabir, Gurunanak, Shankaracharya, Tulsidas, Basava and Kings like Kharvel, Shivaji, Chatrasal, Ranapratap, Kingdoms like Mourya, Gupta, Vijayanagar,

Rashtrakuta, Chalukya etc have felt they are the sons of Bharath Varsha. Swami Vivekananda is from East (Bengal) and Mahatma Gandhi is from West (Gujarat), Dr Ambedkar is from Center (Maharashtra), famous trio Lal, bal, pal etc by their action and thoughts gave the message that Bharat belongs to all. So they are respected by one and all. Culture through actions are imbibed in the life of each and every country men. The beliefs in certain values, traditions, such as Ganga Snana Tunga paan is the best example for South and North integral unity.

People of all sects and religions chants the same purification mantra 'Gange cha yamunechaiva Godavari Saraswati Narmade Sindhu kaveri Jalesmin Sannidhim kuru hayat' while worshipping their Gods.

People of all sects and religions chants the same purification mantra Gange cha yamunechaiva Godavari Saraswati Narmade Sindhu kaveri Jalesmin Sannidhim kuru hayat while worshipping their Gods. Our prayer, Let all be happy, Let all be free from diseases, Let all see auspicious things and let nobody suffer from grief, are the living examples of cultural nationalism. ***In which home women are respected there Gods are pleased*** is highest mandate of Manu smriti. And is the highest respect for women in the world.

According to Manu the God resides where women are respected. Women has multidimensional role in family such as mother, daughter, sister, wife etc being the centre of the family takes care of all and all will takes care of women. It is the proof that shows since ancient times utmost privileges were extended to women. Kerry brown author of Essential teachings of Hinduism wrote, "In Hinduism a woman is looked after not because she is inferior or incapable but, on the contrary, because she is treasured. Women as mother is the pride and power of the society. It is our belief and faith that mother is the representative of God on earth, and many believe that, mother herself is their God. *Ekam sat viprah bahudah vadanti. Truth is one, but it is perceived differently by different seekers.* The People living in different states have the feeling of belongingness to Bharath. *He is mine, he is not are petty minded. Those who are large hearted regard the world as one family (hitopadesha).* The basic philosophy of Vedas were told *kalanukula* by saints in their own way.

Famous reformer of 12th century Sri Basaveshwara in his vachana expressed as not to tell who is he, who is he, who is he, tell he is ours, he is ours, he is ours Lord Kudala Sangamdeva is son of our home. This was the feeling all over Bharat Varsha. God is one. Shiva, Vishnu, Brahma, Devi, etc., are the different names of same God, who is the Lord of the universe. Shaivas worships God as Shiva, Vaishnavas as Vishnu, Vedantis as Brahma, Jains as Arihant, boudhas as Buddha. One life, One mission, One God is our faith and philosophy practiced from generation to generation. People belong-

ing to different religious sects, faiths call him by different names, whatever name God may be addressed while offering prayers, their destination is the same. i.e. God is one. Beliving or not beliving God was purely either personal or at community level, and at any point of time, was not a hurdle in making of nation, which is one of the basic principle of cultural nationalism i.e. Rashtra Dharma i.e., Securing happiness to human beings is the aim of our Bharatiya philosophy.

Unity in diversity

Though Bharat is ruled by different kings, Bharat-Varsha was one. People have different life style in food habits, wearing of cloths per 50 to 100 kms, in spite diversity in life style their thoughts are one. i.e. unity in diversity. 4 dhama, 12 Jyotirlingas, 52 Shaktipeethas etc of this land are spread over the country to give message that Bharat is one. So, Great emphasis has been laid also on undertaking pilgrimage to sacred spots spread all over the country. The rivers and lakes of this country are the places of holy pilgrimage. The peaks of mountains are the abode of Divinity itself. God and Godliness in every particle of this soil. In this manner we have been conscious of this territory since very ancient times to strengthen the nation's unity. Bharat cared for seers, saints, etc who are the links between region and people, rather than for rulers & administrators. Kumba Mela is one such example of cultural nationalism (Rashtra Dharma). Sadhus', San-yasi, Santas' and Mahants' from nook and corner of the country assemble in Prayag, triveni sangama of Ganga, Yamuna and Saraswati rivers for kumba mela with an interval of 12 years. After discussions, symposium, finally rules were framed for common man. Kumba Mela resolutions will be spread all over the



**Unity of states is
our strength and
not mere union of
states is the
historic living**

Bharatvarsha. This practice is running since centuries. It is noteworthy that there were no conveyance facilities, no calendars, no advertisement, no modern communication facilities. In spite of this people gathered in lakhs and crores. This is another live example of cultural nationalism.

During British rule westernization was called as modernization. In spite of Bharat turned to India by saying goodbye to ancient values and beliefs, the feeling of patriotism and deep sense of love towards mother land still remained unaltered. Britishers' without knowing the strength of Rashtra Dharma, called India, federation of 500+ states. They presumed all our states as nation. Whereas we are specific in defining Rashtra and Rajya. The clear cut thought about Rashtra was working as under current and rulers and ruled have shradda towards Bharat was undisturbed. Since thousands of centuries our states believed they are the part and parcel of the Bharat varsha. *The rise and fall of a nation is not the result of the change in fortunes of rulers or the success or defeat at the battle ground. It is the people who sustain it or who let it down.* (BMS Conf 26-28 Dec 1988 Resol. 3.) British tried to divide Bharat into pieces by saying states are free to join either India or Pakistan. But not only to the astonishment of the British but also to the world all the states

except few immediately merged into Bharat without giving second thought. Unity of states is our strength and not mere union of states is the historic living example for Rashtra Dharma. *Mata bhoomih putroham prithivyah (Prithvisukta. This land is the mother and I am her son. The feeling of Bharat Mata is our mother land. To strengthen & for the welfare of the Bharat we are ready to sacrifice every thing is Cultural Nationalism in true sense Rashtra Dharma. Rashtra will be the center of all activities & Dharma takes care of socio-economic sovereignty of the Rashtra by supervising the day to day political and administrative activities of the state. Rashtra Dharma (Cultural nationalism) which promotes co operation, co ordination among each individual and states was imbibed in the blood of Bharatiyas. The only way to arrest dangers facing the country today is to bring back true cultural nationalism i.e. Rastra Dharma. Rastra Dharma alone can arouse within us all the noble virtues we have inherited from our forefathers without touching the differences of caste, region, language. It can also infuse intense feelings of brotherhood, patriotism, selfishness & Integral Humanism to rebuild Vishal Bharat to make "Bharat a Vishwa Guru" once again.* □□

To

**The Director General,
World Trade Organisation**

Subject: India's Key concerns at WTO's 11th Ministerial conference

Aggregate Measurement of Support (AMS)

Agriculture is a key issue for India and the majority of its population. But developed country subsidies, in particular the **AMS** (Aggregate Measurement of Support) are hurting farmers in India. We support the proposal by India on eliminating the AMS and strongly urge you to push on this, while making it very clear that the development subsidies we get cannot be touched as these represent an important tool to support farmers in developing countries. More than 100 developing countries support us in this endeavour. Billions of small farmers stand united to end unjust and unethical subsidies being given by developed world. Therefore,

Sir, you are requested to set agenda in order to put pressure on developed countries to eliminate AMS as it brings large disparities between developed and developing countries. Rich countries get more subsidy entitlements because of AMS and can also concentrate subsidies on a few products which get large subsidies such as rice, wheat, dairy products etc.

We demand elimination of AMS while defending the development box of subsidies/input subsidies (as suggested by Australia, New Zealand etc). That cannot be brought under subsidy reduction talks as it is S&DT.

Now 100 countries are supporting India's position on AMS (India China proposal).

Permanent Solution of Public Stockholding

We demand **permanent solution on public stockholding**, which has to be allowed without limits. We do not accept very difficult compliance conditions, including those set out under the Peace Clause which makes it almost impossible to use. This decision needs to be taken by December Ministerial as has been agreed. Therefore,

Therefore you are requested to facilitate a permanent solution by Buenos Aires ministerial as the Peace clause is difficult to use. It has to be specifically triggered. US still sued China even with Peace Clause.

The permanent solution has to be better than the peace clause. The demand for exemption of these subsidies (i.e. Put them under Green Box) is correct and we stand by that stand (the G-33 proposal).

In particular cannot have the onerous notification requirements which make it impossible to use. We cannot have more onerous notification requirements than the developed countries have for Green Box.

We denounce the effort by EU, Brazil etc to divide the developing countries and LDCs.

Special Safeguard Mechanism

Every country has the right to adopt special measure in order to curb sudden surge in supply of agricultural produce, to safeguard the interest of the farmers, by increasing tariff. An agreement on these SSMs is pending for many years, which needs to be pushed to protect our farmers against surge in import of agricultural produce. Therefore,

Therefore we demand earliest conclusion for SSMs, which should not be linked with further market access (tariff cuts). The market is already distorted by developed country subsidies and standard barriers.

The developed countries already enjoy the Special Agricultural Safeguard (SSG) which is very simple to use. Then, why not SSM for developing countries?

Fisheries

There is a proposal to push rules on **fisheries subsidies** at the December Ministerial. While we support sustainable fishing and think big industrial fishing needs to be discouraged, we are extremely worried that the current proposals being discussed will actually allow developed countries to continue with their subsidies while banning subsidies that are for small scale informal fishing in developing countries. The special and differential treatment which our fisher folk urgently needs is not at all visible or actionable in the current proposals. Our organisation has had close connections with small scale fishers in India and has been fighting for their cause against mechanised deep sea fishing and therefore, it would be detrimental to the interests of traditional fisherman. If we agree to current proposals, as they can affect their lives and livelihoods. It is better to reject bad outcomes than to try to improve them without doing thorough research on the implications. Such discussions can be taken up later.

Investment Facilitation

Proposals on **investment facilitation** that are being pushed in the negotiations, is a matter of great concern. We know very well from the history of the WTO that what starts off as simple 'facilitation' can end up as crucial commitments on investor protection and market access. India is trying to revise its approach on investment protection as it faces millions of rupee damages in investment lawsuits. To take up an additional commitment in a multilateral forum on investment may pose a major problem at this point in time. We support our government's position of totally rejecting any negotiations on investment, 'facilitation' or otherwise as it has done in Geneva this year.

E-commerce

E-commerce is a complex and unknown area where the entire future of the country is potentially impacted. It can restrict future economic policy making and curb the government's ability to regulate giant e-companies. It is not in best interest of our country to give away a critical raw material like data for free to large corporations in the west to profit from affecting future manufacturing policy space; and allow the WTO to decide on rules shaping key policies on health, agriculture, finance. Losing all tariff revenue on e-commerce as well as the regulatory control it exerts over imports is also unthinkable for a country like India. When we do not know how and what future e-technology will develop and what regulation it will need, the question of freeing up regulation in this area should not even arise at this juncture. Therefore,

Do not allow opening of mandate at WTO.

Do not allow permanent waiver of customs duties on e-trading as e-trading is growing fast, more and more digitised goods, and even physical manufactured goods can come in as China wants duty waiver even on manufactured goods ordered online for Alibaba. In the future even software can come in and threaten domestic manufacturing through 3-D printing.

E-commerce is not just about trading. It has more impact on manufacturing. Data is the new raw material for the 4th industrial revolution. It is the new oil. E-commerce proposals ask for free flow of data.

Entire e-economy is controlled by huge monopolies; a few giant corporations control the data, the technology. They want uninhibited access to data, and no regulation. The argument that it will benefit SMEs is limited. SMEs will benefit for a short while but will be at the mercy of the corporations and will have to accept prices and terms set by these giant corporations who own the platforms.

We want to enjoy access to these services but with regulation and ensure these services continue to remain beneficial for us.

So most important to remember, we do not know how the e-economy and the technology there will evolve so cannot give up regulatory space. E-commerce proposals challenge regulatory space of at least 13 ministries of Government of India, including finance, labour, trade, industry, agriculture, health and so on.

We support Indian representative for taking a right approach in WTO about not allowing e-commerce in the agenda in the Ministerial Council 11 WTO. We know any commitment on e-commerce will be of great impact for our retailers, especially small retailers in India many of whom are already adversely affected by mostly MNCs run e-trading portals. Inclusion of e-commerce in WTO negotiation will severely impact the retailers as well as customs duty revenues and therefore government spending. Concerns have been expressed at various levels with regard to the impact of e-commerce rules on policy areas, not only on commerce but on India's manufacturing policy which will face competition from duty free entry of digitized, digitisable, and even physical manufacturing goods. China is pushing interests of 'Alibaba', which seeks duty free access for its manufactured goods into our markets using the e-commerce route.

Apart from China, which has its own interest, e-commerce rules are being pushed by the American giant e-corporations who are advancing their demands through Japan. These rules seek to free up all regulation on their activities through provisions such as free data flows, no disclosure of source code and so on. Why should India give up its sovereignty and national policy space to these corporations, which seek to maximize their profits? India also needs to retain control over its public data and private data of its citizens and not hand it over to corporations for excessive profit making.

In addition, the full implications of e-commerce rules in trade agreements are as yet not clearly known or understood. The technology in this field is moving very fast which makes it difficult to estimate the full impact of such commitments especially for a developing country like India at this point. It is not the correct time to make such binding commitments in trade agreements. □

Press Release**11th Ministerial Conference of WTO, Buenos Aires December 12, 2017, 9.00AM**

We at Swadeshi Jagran Manch extend full support to the Commerce and Industries Minister Suresh Prabhu's stance at 11th Ministerial Conference of World Trade Organisation, at Buenos Aires, Argentina. In the same breath, we also condemn the statement issued by the US Trade Representative Ambassador Robert Emmet Lighthizer. Commerce Minister Shri Suresh Prabhu's statement is in complete alignment with the SJM's thoughts and extended full confidence and support in him. SJM expect the minister to maintain this stand, on the table of negotiations as well. The Commerce minister articulated the desires and needs of not only those living at the bottom of pyramid back home, but also those in the developing and poor countries.

The delegation of Swadeshi Jagran Manch led by Dr Ashwani Mahajan at Buenos Aires has already shared their thoughts with the minister. It is long standing demand of SJM that WTO must not abandon the commitments made in the Doha Development Agenda.

We strongly believe that the outcome of the expansion of global trade must be development, and back India's push for re-endorsement of the same. SJM also appreciate minister's stand on pushing for a permanent solution on the public stockholding for food security purposes. SJM believes that for developing countries like India, it is a matter of survival for 800 million hungry and under-nourished people across the world. Instead aggregate measure of support extended by the developed countries is creating trade distortion and is harming the farmers in developing countries.

Along with this, SJM welcome the stand that no new agenda –investment facilitation, E-commerce & others— will be brought for discussion before agenda items are complete.

SJM criticize the stance taken by the US trade representative. The world is not a homogenous mix of demography. There has to be a differential application of rules, depending on the well being of the economies. It is quite arrogant of the US administration of believing that countries are seeking pass in the name of 'self-proclaimed development' status, indicating that five of the six richest countries in the world presently 'claim' developing country status. This list includes India. But, the US must realize that the level of development is not the same. In days to come, SJM would ask the US administration to come clean on these charges.

SJM really appreciate the efforts made by the minister to recognize the plight of traditional farmers, and demanded policy space for fisheries. These traditional fishermen survive on fishing, can't be left alone to the global magnets. SJM agrees with the minister's stand that turning to some of the new issues that are sought to be introduced into the negotiating agenda of the WTO, in India's view agreeing to these would be extremely divisive. SJM too continues to stand on the view that the bringing issues, like investments, MSMEs and ecommerce has nothing to do with trade, but it should not be confused with gains from negotiating binding rules in this area.

11th Ministerial Conference of WTO, Buenos Aires (Argentina) December 12, 2017, 2.30PM

We at Swadesh Jagran Manch strongly criticise stand of US establishment in clubbing the permanent solution with new issues. It is not only a backtrack on the commitments made in the Nairobi round. SJM continues to extend full support to the Commerce and Industries Minister Suresh Prabhu's stance at 11th ministerial of World Trade Conference at Buenos Aires, Argentina. India must stand against undue pressure extended by selfish stand of US.

SJM expects India to stick to the commitments. The permanent solution for public stockholding for food security is crucial for not only India, but for all developing & poor countries.

SJM believe that the policy space must be extended to these countries, as these supports are extended to safeguard small & marginal farmers. Adamant US regime must realise that fate of 800 million poor & hungry is hanging fire. If the talks collapse, the onus will be entirely on them.

US is unnecessarily trying to push e-commerce, most of the issues are not even part of WTO's mandate. The arrogance is only leading to deadlock, which will not help anyone.

In last one year, US didn't engage with other stakeholders on the agriculture challenges. SJM believes that US must commit to cut AMS extended for food aid. US must realise that AMS is hurting the farmers across the world, not support extended to farmers in poorer world.

SJM has already condemned the statement of US Trade Representative Ambassador Robert Emmet Lighthizer. SJM expect the minister to maintain this stand, on the table of negotiations as well. □□

Make China comply with WTO norms: SJM

China must comply with World Trade Organisation's (WTO) norms, the Swadeshi Jagaran Manch (SJM), the economic wing of the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS), demanded at a recent meeting with a team designated by Prime Minister Narendra Modi.

India is "suffering due to heavy imports" from China which is enabled by Beijing's non-compliance with WTO norms, an SJM memorandum to the Prime Minister said. The memorandum to the team led by Defence Minister Nirmala Sitharaman was handed over by an SJM delegation, led by Arun Ojha, national convener of SJM. China "has not complied" with WTO norms, argued Dhanpat Ram Agarwal, national co-convener of SJM. (<http://www.thehindu.com>)

SJM warns govt against succumbing in WTO talks

Urging India to continue its pressure in the World Trade Organisation (WTO) to drop subsidies-related Aggregate Measurement of Support (AMS) from negotiations, Swadeshi Jagran Manch (SJM) has said India should push for a permanent solution on development subsidies and public stockpiling of food (for the Public Distribution System) in the forthcoming 11th ministerial conference in Buenos Aires on December 10 and 13.

Participants urged Minister of State SS Ahluwalia, who attended the conference here, to ensure that India counters the efforts by European Union, Brazil to divide the 100-odd developing countries and Least Developed Countries (LDCs) on the issues. Instead of a (temporary) Peace Clause, India should push for a permanent solution and the demand for exemption of these subsidies should be pressed, the participants said, according to SJM National Convener Ashwini Mahajan. Among others who participated in the day-long deliberation were former minister and senior BJP leader Murli Manohar Joshi, trade experts and civil society members. Asserting that every country had the right to adopt special measures to curb sudden surge in supply of agriculture produce by increasing import tariffs, the SJM said India should negotiate for the Special Safeguard Mechanism in this regard.

"The market is already distorted by developed countries' subsidies and standard barriers," the partic-



ipants agreed. On the proposal to bring rules on Fisheries subsidies, the meeting expressed concern about the attempt to allow developed countries to continue with their subsidies while banning subsidies by developing countries for small scale, traditional fishing.

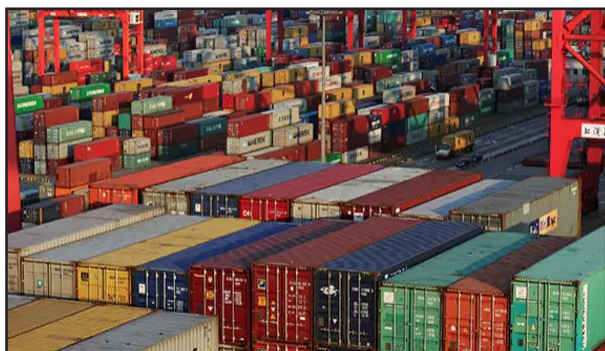
The SJM also opposed the proposal for investment facilitation which it said might end up in 'commitments (from India) on investor protection and market access'. It said that India should tread carefully on the issue of freeing e-commerce from regulation as it was a "complex and unknown area" which might restrict the government's ability to regulate giant, multi-national e-commerce companies. "India should not allow the WTO to decide on regulatory rules shaping key policies on health, labour, trade, industry, agriculture and finance. Losing all tariff revenue on e-commerce, as well as regulatory control over imports is unthinkable for a country like India."

The SJM also warned the government against succumbing to pressure on e-Commerce being pushed in trade negotiations in the Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership (RCEP) and said that it will impact retailers and custom duty revenues.

Giving the example of China, it said the neighbouring country was pushing the interests of a wholesale manufacturer and supplier of Chinese goods which seeks duty-free access using the e-commerce route. (<http://www.uniindia.com/>)

Commerce Ministry to study impact of Chinese imports

A staggering trade deficit of \$51 billion with China has prompted the government to conduct a study on the impact of Chinese imports and the extent to which they have displaced domestic production. The commerce ministry will also seek to identify Chinese products that can be substituted competitively by domestic products through this in-depth study for



the period between 2007-08 and 2016-17. There will be specific emphasis in the study on sectors like steel, urea and other chemicals including pharmaceuticals, electronics, telecom and consumer products of mass consumption.

"The study will estimate the impact of Chinese imports on employment generation," an official aware of the development said, adding that the government will hire an external consultant to do the analysis.

Last week, the European Union ruled to check excessively cheap imports, as it flagged China for special attention, reasoning its economy is distorted by the state. It could mean more anti-dumping action against Chinese imports into the European Union. This would encourage other countries as well to take action against very cheap Chinese goods that have flooded their markets. Among developing countries, India's trade with China has witnessed a steep rise with bilateral trade increasing to \$71.4 billion in 2016-17 from \$70.7 billion in 2015-16 and China replacing the US as the biggest trade partner of India. (<https://economictimes.indiatimes.com>)

Terrorism almost daily routine, must be fought unitedly: PM

Prime Minister Narendra Modi recalled the sacrifices of brave citizens in the 26/11 Mumbai terror attack nine years ago, and said terrorism posed a global threat "almost as a daily routine", and stressed on the need to fight it unitedly. Speaking in his monthly radio programme 'Mann ki Baat', Mr Modi said even a few years ago, when India talked about the threats of terrorism, not many in the world were ready to take it seriously.

"Now that terrorism is knocking at their doors, every government in the world, those who believe in humanity, governments with faith in democracy, are seeing this as one of the biggest challenges," he said, adding that terrorism was a threat to humanity.

"Terrorism has taken an ugly shape and has become a global threat almost as a daily routine. Terrorism has challenged humanity. It is bent upon destroying humanitarian forces. So not only India but all humanitarian forces will have to keep fighting unitedly to defeat the menace of terrorism," he said.

(<https://www.deccanchronicle.com/>)

SJM accuses Niti Aayog of misleading govt

Swadeshi Jagran Manch (SJM) attacked Niti Aayog for pushing packed dietary supplements for malnourished children instead of supplying fresh, home-cooked meals by seeking Prime Minister Narendra Modi's intervention in tackling the problem. SJM has long been opposing ready-to-use therapeutic foods (RUTF) provided by several states to malnourished children. Talking to DNA, SJM national co-convenor Ashwani Mahajan said Niti Aayog is trying to mislead the government by pushing for RUTF which would benefit certain private entities.

"We, however, will continue to oppose the move tooth and nail as RUTF is not a sustainable solution to malnutrition. There are no studies to indicate its long-term health risks," Mahajan said.

In a letter to the PM, Mahajan said, "We are concerned about the decision taken, especially with inputs from Niti Aayog – who had recently constituted a working group on nutrition riddled with conflicts of interests. This is in spite of the fact that National Nutrition Strategy – launched by the Deputy Chairperson of Niti Aayog in September – recommends avoiding conflicts of interest in its guiding principles."

"These food supplements will only serve the corporate interests rather than treating the malnourished children," Mahajan wrote in the letter.

He also stated that evidence is not in favour of use of RUTF adding that Union Health Minister JP Nadda had said RUTF may not benefit a common household in developing appropriate food habits for children against home-cooked food. RUTF food packets or supplements are a mixture of protein, carbohydrate, lipid and vitamins and minerals.

In August, the Women and Child development ministry issued a circular to state governments telling them that the use of RUTF food to tackle Severe Acute Malnutrition is not 'accepted policy' of the Centre.

In his letter, he also stated that in a response to

parliament question in 2010, then Minister of External Affairs SM Krishna stated that UNICEF distributed RUTF in contravention to Government of India guidelines and was asked to ship it out.

As a proof of that, the ministry referenced a February 2009 circular issued by the health ministry. The circular came a few days after the RSS-linked Swadeshi Jagran Manch objected the use of packet foods as RUTF because they felt that the move will only benefit corporate bodies and in states where it has been launched, RUTF have proved to be an expensive affair. However, WHO deputy director and former ICMR chief Soumya Swaminathan had told DNA that there is no health issue with the usage of RUTF food.

“In several cases that we have observed, RUTF food has helped severely-malnourished children regain back their health without side-effects. I would recommend it,” said Swaminathan. (<http://www.dnaindia.com>)

Organic farming for financial independence

Swadeshi Jagran Manch's national convenor Sh. Arun Ojha said that the SJM will make organic farming a tool for the economic independence of the country. Talking to reporters Ojha said that the chemical fertilizers are hazardous for human health and environment. He said that the SJM has decided to launch a nationwide movement against farming based on chemical fertilizers and encourage farmers to go for organic farming as it is the only way for economic independence of the country. Mahatma Gandhi had made khadi as his weapon to make the country independent while SJM has decided to use 'Khad' (organic fertilizer) as its tool for this movement, he said. SJM has given a slogan "Tab Khadi ab Khad" for this movement that will be launched across the country.

Ojha and the National Organizer of SJM Sh. Kashmiri Lal discussed plans for improvement in the organizational structure and its work. Lal called upon the SJM members to hold events based on employment, environment and family in all the districts of state.

Earlier, they addressed the convention of workers of east UP region. They said that western model of development has failed in generating employment opportunities. So there is a need of focusing on indigenous model. Several office bearers of the organisation were present at the convention.

European privacy regulators to discuss Uber's data breach

European Union privacy regulators will discuss ride-hailing app Uber's massive data breach cover-up next week and could create a task-force to coordinate investigations. Uber faces regulatory scrutiny after CEO Dara Khosrowshahi said the company covered up a data breach last year that exposed personal data from around 57 million accounts.

The chair of the group of European data protection authorities – known as the Article 29 Working Party – said on Thursday the data breach would be discussed at its meeting on Nov. 28 and 29. While EU data protection authorities cannot impose joint sanctions, they can set up task-forces to coordinate national investigations. When a new EU data protection law comes into force next May, regulators will have the power to impose much higher fines – up to 4 percent of global turnover – and coordinate more closely. Uber paid hackers \$100,000 to keep secret the massive breach. The stolen information included names, email addresses and mobile phone numbers of Uber users around the world, and the names and license numbers of 600,000 U.S. drivers, Khosrowshahi said. Uber declined to say what other countries may be affected.

“We cannot but voice our strong concern for the breach suffered by Uber, which was reported belatedly by the U.S. company. We initiated our inquiries and are gathering all the information that can help us assess the scope of the data breach and take the appropriate steps to protect any Italian citizens involved,” said Antonello Soro, President of the Italian Data Protection Authority. (<http://fortune.com>)

12% & 18% GST slabs may be merged, 28% for demerit goods: Arvind Subramanian

The government may combine the 12 per cent and 18 per cent slabs for goods and services tax (GST) into one in the near future and reserve the 28 per cent rate only for demerit goods, said chief economic adviser Arvind Subramanian.

While India will never move to a single GST rate, over time there would be a “poor man's” rate (0 per cent and 5 per cent), a “core” rate (the 12 per cent-18 per cent combination), and the demerit rate

(28 per cent), Subramanian said during the course of a 90-minute interaction. (<https://economictimes.indiatimes.com/>)

Hafiz Saeed a designated terrorist, LeT responsible for hundreds of deaths: US

Mumbai attacks mastermind and banned Jamaat-ud-Dawah (JuD) chief Hafiz Saeed is a terrorist leader designated by both the United Nations and the United States, the Trump administration has said after a Pakistani court ordered his release from detention. Saeed, who carries a bounty of \$10 million announced by the US for his role in terrorist activities, has been under detention since January this year.

“The US is aware of media reports that Pakistan (court) ordered release of Lashkar-e-Taiba leader Hafiz Saeed from house arrest,” a US state department spokesperson told PTI.

In May 2008, the United States Department of the Treasury designated Saeed as a specially designated global terrorist, the spokesperson said. “Saeed was also individually designated by the United Nations under UNSCR 1267 (UN Security Council Resolution) in December 2008 following the November 2008 Mumbai attack,” the official added. Members say the Jamaat-ud-Dawa is a charity but the United States says it is a front for the Pakistan-based Lashkar-e-Taiba militant group. Saeed was put under house arrest in January after years of living freely in Pakistan. He is accused of directing the Mumbai attacks that killed 166 people and injured another 200 people. India accused Pakistan of sponsoring the attacks through the LeT, which Saeed founded in the 1990s.

“The US reiterates its stance that LeT is a designated Foreign Terrorist Organisation responsible for the death of hundreds of innocent civilians in terrorist attacks, including a number of American citizens,” the spokesperson said. The Pakistani court rejected the government’s plea to extend for three more months



Saeed’s house arrest. US President Donald Trump in August accused Pakistan of harbouring “agents of chaos”, and Secretary of State Rex Tillerson said last month that the Washington has made “very specific” requests of Pakistan over militancy. (<http://www.bhaskar.com/>)

India asks UN to declare 2018 as International year of millets



India has asked the United Nations to declare 2018 as the ‘International Year of Millets’ and promote it as nutrition-rich smart food across the world. A letter in this regard has been written to UN Secretary General Antonio Guterres by Union Agriculture Minister Radha Mohan Singh. In the letter, Singh said there is a need to promote millets as the “awareness is low” among consumers, policy makers, industry and R&D sector. Sorghum, Bajra and Ragi are some popular millets in India.

“Promotion of production and consumption of millets through conscious efforts at global level is likely to contribute substantially in the fight against the targeted hunger and mitigate the effects of climate change in the long run,” he said. The yield of millets can be increased three times and they have multiple untapped uses such as food, feed, biofuels and brewing. Therefore, millets are smart food and good for consumers, farmers and the planet, he added.

“Considering the importance of millets ...the Government of India along with other country governments urges the UN to declare 2018 as the ‘International Year of Millets’,” Singh said. This will go a long way in popularising millets which would benefit future generation of farmers as well as consumers, he added. Singh said millets are nutritionally superior to wheat and rice owing to their higher level of protein with more balanced amino acid profile, crude fibre and minerals. They are traditionally grown in resource poor agro-climatic region. (<https://economictimes.indiatimes.com/>) □□