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Pathway Innovation

The article "Pathway to Innovation" by Sri Bharat Jhunjhunwala is timely and made an interesting reading. In the post-world-war-II era it was due to the generous federal support that the US produced epoch-making inventions like IBM-360, ARPANET etc. Similarly the Bay-Dole Act enacted by that country in 1980 paved the way for researchers in public universities to commercialize and patent their innovations - which is how we find a Stanford University in California (in addition to MIT, Harvard at Boston) giving birth to the Silicon Valley, the world's preeminent entrepreneurial hotspot that is home to iconic companies like Google, Facebook, Apple, eBay. Mr. Vijay Chandru (a member of the expert committee on innovation and entrepreneurship at Niti Aayog) laments that although the original aim of our universities & PSUs was to innovate for the material benefit of the society, later it got reduced to publishing in top journals and recruiting post-graduates in Centers of Excellence - with there being little social accountability, only not helped by a lack of 3rd party reviews. However to their credit we did see certain universities uniquely innovate like for instance the wireless in local loop (WLL) technology developed by professor Ashok Jhunjhunwala of IIT Madras for improving telecom access in developing countries and plastic roads by Prof. Vasudevan of Madhurai's Tyagarajar College of Engg., who mixed molten plastic wastes to liquid tar to lay durable roads)

Industrial innovation in India has been veering towards inclusive innovation (MLM i.e. More from Less for More - "high-quality yet easily affordable" products made using fewer resources) which gave rise to low-cost-cum-high-quality innovations like portable ECG machine (GE-India's Mac 400), Rs.3500 portable refrigerator (Godrej's Chotukool), Rs.1 lakh car (Tata Nano), Shantha Biotech's \$1 dollar hepatitis-B vaccine which captured 40% of UNICEF market, process innovations (based on Assembly Line technique of surgery - increases surgeon's productivity & not the number of surgeons) like affordable cataract eye surgeries from Aravind Eye Hospital, Devi Shetty's (of Narayana Hrudayalaya) low-cost open-heart surgeries, and of course the Dabbawallas whose success became a case study in Harvard Business School! And not to speak of the Jaipur foot and wet-grinders!! One holistic Indian system of medicine - Siddha, has inspired the Indian-origin US scientist Shiva Ayyadurai to create a computational tool called CytoSolve that simulates diseases on computer which enables in silico (computer-based) drug discovery, thereby making an alternative to animal testing! Today there is an urgent need to promote innovation in generating sustainable solutions for ushering in a circular economy and phasing out the linear one. Efforts are already afoot in search of that Holy Grail - renewable energy sources for the new century. Apart from this, how to increase the life of the battery used in electric cars, mobile phones or producing fully biodegradable paper, inks, dyes, paints, bio-plastics from soybean, hemp (non-GMO+ sustainably grown) & discovering plastic-eating bacteria etc. must be addressed. A. Jagadeesh, the director of Nayudamma Center for Development Alternatives at Nellore advocates the use of wastelands to produce biogas/biofuels from desert plants like Agave & Opuntia that act as carbon sinks plus having little maintenance, which will also generate employment for the youth! In the prevailing "extractive" economic era, how to give back to the earth what we take from her constitutes the foremost innovation (however "low-tech" or humble it may be)!

– Chintamani Venkata Krishnija Manojr, Hyderabad (Telangana),

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Surge Pricing

The unfair model of fleecing customers

"Whenever people with money have power over people with less money, you have the potential for exploitation."

— (Jennifer Weiner)

Surge pricing has dominated topics of discussion over past several weeks, especially in Delhi and Bengaluru. People instantaneously reacted to this occurrence of exploiting emergency situations by profit hungry Corporates in such a huge way that forced traditional media to take note of it which in turn compelled both Ola and Uber - the service provider companies to react and use social media, trying in vain to explain how surge and dynamic pricing is in the favour of victim customers. People who use this service are not however, convinced as those who use Ola or Uber at the standard rate regularly on being suddenly told that the trip booked will be several times more expensive get jolted. Customers feel cheated and blackmailed. "Surge pricing" to begin with occurs when a company vigorously raises the price of its offering if there is an increase in demand or supply decreases. Apologists are trying to explain this unethical greed for profits in terms of demand and supply model of price determination. In microeconomics, supply and demand model concludes that in a competitive market, the unit price for a particular good, or other traded item or service such as labour or liquid financial assets, will vary until it settles at a point where the quantity demanded (at the current price) will equal the quantity supplied (at the current price), resulting in an economic equilibrium for price and quantity transacted. It therefore justifies the fluctuation while struggling to convince people by saying that when demand starts to recede, prices do fall automatically. The issue however is that the very basis of this model is exploitative. It not only treats the entire user community as a homogenous unit but also refuses to recognise and address the causes of imbalances in the supply demand chain. Justice, fairness, compassion, impartiality, objectivity and independence does not fit in this model. Worst still is the inability of a grievance-redressal-mechanism that can match the level, spread and speed of violations by the service providers does not exist. This model is inherently incapable of preventing artificially constrained supply schedule. Nor can it thwart the compulsive demand increase. This is visible in airfares at regular intervals and governments have not been able to check the brazen defiance of rule book. Worst sufferers in this model are the deprived and vulnerable sections of the society. Students appearing for exams; unemployed youth rushing for interviews for much needed jobs, patients waiting to be taken to Hospitals, kids ferrying to and fro from the schools and so on are some of the vulnerable sections who will use the service under compulsion. And the politician made situations like odd-even formula that forces commuters to use services which otherwise were not affordable for them also can be included along with women working in late night shifts. In all these and similar other situations it is the service provider who multiplies the profits. The common people suffer immensely.

Explaining the economics of surge pricing and why it polarises opinions is the difference between civilisational experiences and understanding of ultimate objective of human endeavour among the people who dominate global governance structure. At the root of this thinking is the western world view and the developmental model they have forced on the rest of the world. They are focussed on making Money at any cost. Pricing strategy of products and or services is designed around that goal only. Making money means generating enough revenue from selling the products so that one can not only cover costs, but take a profit and expand business. Ethics, human rights, respect for law based trade take a back seat and survival of fittest and winning at all costs dictates decisions. India does not need this system. We can't disconnect from our civilisational ethos. Exploiting others is not and must not be permitted. The manner in which MNC plead for a predictable tax regime, consumers have a right for predictable pricing of services and products. Surge pricing must hence forth be stopped instantly.

Water Disputes



The over-use of water by the farmers, the low support prices of grains, and low incomes of the urban poor are all interlinked. The solution also has to be interconnected, says **Dr Bharat Jhunjunwala**

The Supreme Court has recently directed the State of Punjab to maintain status quo on the Satluj Yamuna Link Canal. This comes in midst of an old dispute. The Central Government had allotted certain amount of waters of the Satluj River to Haryana. A canal had to be made in Punjab to carry the water to Haryana. But Punjab did not accept the award. Instead it enacted a new law nullifying the award. The validity of this Punjab enactment was challenged in the Supreme Court. Punjab is arguing that it does not have enough water even to fulfill the needs of its own farmers. It cannot spare water for Haryana. Recently Punjab had started refilling the half-made link canal and also started to give back the land acquired for the canal to the farmers. The Supreme Court has ruled that Punjab must not refill the half-made canal or return the land to the farmers. This order freezes the situation, but does not solve it. Similar conflict has been simmering between Tamil Nadu and Karnataka on the sharing of waters of the Cauvery River for many decades. Bihar is unhappy that it has got no rights to use waters of the Ganga River which flows through the State. As of now we do not know how to resolve these delicate issues.

The problem is rooted in our inability to distribute water on the basis of economic principles. Areas of Punjab are today facing problems of water logging and increase in salinity. Farmers are irrigating their fields many times over. Canal water is available aplenty. Farmers are required to pay for canal water according to the area irrigated irrespective of the numbers of irrigations done. It is profitable for them to make more numbers of irrigation even if the increase in yield is small because they do not have to pay for the additional irrigations. This is leading to increase in ground water level. The salt that was lying dormant in the bowels of the earth is coming to the surface and destroying farmlands. Of course,

this extreme event is happening in selected areas of Punjab only. But “over-irrigation” is rampant across the state in command areas of the canals. Farmers are using water worth Rs 100 to produce crops worth Rs 50. Basic law of economics is that value of the output should be more than value of the input. A factory owner uses raw materials of Rs 100 to produce goods of Rs 200. He does not use raw materials of Rs 100 to produce goods of Rs 50. But farmers of Punjab are doing the opposite. They are using water worth Rs 100 to produce a crop of Rs 50 because they do not have to pay Rs 100 for the water. Result is that farmers of Punjab are irrigating the crops ten times with small increases in the yields; while farmers in Haryana are not able to irrigate their crops even two times and are losing huge yields.

This problem can be solved in a win-win manner by using economic principles. The increase in yield that farmers of Punjab obtain by an additional irrigation can be calculated. Say, increase in yield from providing an additional irrigation is 100 kilograms of wheat. The increase in yield from providing an additional irrigation in Haryana would be much more, say, 500 kilograms. This difference in the benefits from irrigation arises because the increase in yield from an additional irrigation declines as the number of irrigations increase. The first irrigation will lead to an increase in yield of say 700 kg, the second will lead to an increase in yield of 500 kilograms. Similarly, the third, fourth and fifth irrigations will lead to an increase in yield of 300, 200 and 100 kilograms. The loss to Punjab from giving up the

fifth irrigation will be 100 kilograms while the gain to Haryana from providing the second irrigation will be 500 kilograms.

The farmer of Haryana would be happy to give away 200 kilograms of wheat to Punjab if he can get water for an additional second irrigation. His increase in yield will be 500 kilograms. He can give away 200 kilograms to Punjab and still make an additional crop of 300 kilograms. The farmer of Punjab will also be happy to give up the one additional irrigation if he gets 200 kilograms of wheat from Haryana. He will be losing 100 kilograms by not providing the fifth irrigation but he will

Farmers are using water worth Rs 100 to produce crops worth Rs 50.

get 200 kilograms of wheat from Haryana. The country will obtain a net benefit of 400 kilograms of wheat while farmers of Punjab and Haryana will both be happy.

The difficulty in implementing this win-win arrangement is that water is not priced properly. The farmer of Punjab is charged on per hectare basis irrespective of the numbers of irrigations. Reduction of an irrigation would cause him to lose 100 kilograms of yield. Thus he wants that additional irrigation even though the same water could lead to the production of 500 kilograms in Haryana.

This irrational distribution of water can be put to an end by put-

ting a correct price on water. Let us say the Government charges Rs 2500 per hectare per irrigation. The Punjab farmer would not make the fourth and fifth irrigations because he would have to pay Rs 5,000 for these two irrigations while the additional yield of 200 and 100 kilograms of wheat from these two irrigations will beget him only Rs 4,500. On the other hand, the Haryana farmer would be happy to pay Rs 2,500 for the additional irrigation because he would get additional yield of 500 kilograms worth Rs 7,500. Scientific distribution of water requires that water be priced by volume and supplied to the farmer who can derive the maximum benefit from the same.

Our farmers are opposed to volumetric pricing because that will lead to increased financial burden upon them. The solution is to make a parallel and adequate increase in the support prices of the crops so that the farmer is fully compensated for the money paid towards volumetric purchase of water. Unfortunately, it is the policy of the Government to keep agricultural prices low so that the poor urban consumer is protected. The over-use of water by the farmers, the low support prices of grains, and low incomes of the urban poor are all interlinked. The solution will come by securing an increase in the incomes of the urban poor; followed by an increase in the price of food grains; followed by volumetric pricing of water. That alone will make it profitable for Haryana to pay for water received from Punjab and make it a win-win solution for both the states as well as the country. □□

Author was formerly Professor of Economics at IIM Bengaluru.

Water governance in India & food security

India faces a set of water challenges – water scarcity and water pollution – brought about by rapid urbanisation, industrialisation and uneven resource endowments even when its policy makers have failed to address India's scarce per capita availability of water – merely 1,056 cubic meters per the 2011 Census.

Excessive use of ground water post green revolution brought most of the north Indian states such as Punjab, Haryana, and Uttar Pradesh under red zone. In India, half of the country's population lacks access to safe drinking water. Such water stress is only intensifying as the population increases.

In India the states are given more responsibility vis-à-vis water issues. Water uses are still heavily subsidised in India. Available water use for irrigation purpose is 83%, too high in comparison to the rest of the world (and hence) optimal use efficiency in irrigation projects in India is still missing. This write up will systematically compare various aspects of water governance in India, including but not limited to, irrigation water management, water pricing, water laws/water rights, Public Private Partnerships (PPP) in water sector, approaches to transboundary water resources.

Optimal management of water allocation and use

Most challenging under the climate threat will be water shortage under the present societal structure. About 70% of total water resources have been used mainly for irrigation purpose for agriculture. In arid and semi-arid regions and in developing nation, this amount is already insufficient to meet with irrigation demand and is decreasing with intensifying competition with adding more valued uses. In addition, climate change impacts and uncertainty over monsoon, especially in Indian conditions, call for increased stress on proper management of resources. The alarm over irrigated agriculture under progressive water scarcity seeks urgent need for more efficient and sustainable water resource planning. This

Experience shows that farmers all over the world are potential managers who, when properly organized, are able to manage their own affairs even under difficult circumstances. Participatory irrigation management is increasingly viewed as a means to improve the performance of investment in irrigation, finds
Satyendra Tripathi



can be achieved only by both increasing water productivity and the economic efficiency of water used for irrigation need generally lower than that obtained by its competing uses. Moreover, to rationalise water use, economically viable cropping patterns for a given area and available resources should be selected.

However, irrigation institutions have to manage the allocation of water between different parts of the system and different users in a particular part of the system. This involves (a) laying down criteria for deciding the timing, frequency and duration of water supplies to different sections, and (b) evolving mechanisms and procedures to regulate actual distribution in accordance with these criteria and to resolve conflicts that may arise in the process.

Therefore, a better understanding of water requirements of crops and better management of irrigation water will result in large benefits. When irrigation water is insufficient and land resources are also limited, an appropriate scheduling can increase crop yields. Increase in economic efficiency and optimal cropping pattern can be achieved through optimizing the land and water allocation. Two distinct decisions to be made are: how much water and land should be allocated to each crop at a seasonal level and to each season at an inter-seasonal level. This process needs the strategy of allocation of land and area at each level to maximize net income.

Community Based Participatory Management

Increased farmer community participation in irrigation is part of a world-wide trend of devo-

lution in natural resource management. Experience shows that farmers all over the world are potential managers who, when properly organized, are able to manage their own affairs even under difficult circumstances. Participatory irrigation management is increasingly viewed as a means to im-



prove the performance of investment in irrigation. Beginning in the 1980s, there have been large-scale programmes to turn over irrigation management from government agencies to organized water user groups in a number of countries, including Philippines, Indonesia, Senegal, Madagascar, Colombia and Mexico.

The idea that farmers should participate in irrigation management has grown in India since the mid-1980s. It has been driven by the need for a higher return from the massive funds invested in irrigation, which plays a major role in increasing agricultural production. The concepts of farmer participation and farmer organization are not well understood and are not used in the same way by all. They must be discussed, tested in the field and standardised.

Farmer participation in the

Irrigation water is insufficient and land resources are also limited.

prevailing system of irrigation management in Rajasthan takes place at two distinct water distribution levels. One is above the outlets, i.e. the canal distribution network, which is managed by the irrigation department or the command area development in co-ordination with the district level committee consisting of district collectors, executive engineers for irrigation, public representatives and representatives of water users, etc.

Main objective of Community based Irrigation Policies are:

- To promote and secure equitable distribution of water among its users, adequate maintenance of irrigation system, efficient and economical utilization of water to optimize agricultural production
- To protect the environment and to ensure ecological balance inculcating sense of ownership of

the irrigation system in accordance with the water budget and the operational plan

- To bridge the gap between potential created and potential utilized
- For prompt attention to problems and resolutions of disputes
- For collective involvement in better application and management of agricultural extension services

Participatory irrigation management is not a new concept. There are instances of locally managed irrigation systems which are centuries-old in Northern India, in the Atlas mountain range of North

Table: Per capita water availability in India		
Year	Population (Million)	Per capita water availability (m ³ /year)
1951	361	5177
1955	395	4732
1991	846	2209
2001	1027	1820
2025	1394	1341
2050	1640	1140

Source: Government of India, 2009.

be at the level of a distributary (15 000-25 000 Ha) or of a minor (up to 500 Ha), or it can be done in stages. There are no predetermined norms for the association of farmers, which are to be governed by their own by-laws.

lion, the per capita water availability reduced drastically to 1,820 m³ per year. By 2025, the per capita water availability will further drop down to 1,341 m³ and to 1,140 m³ in 2050 as per water availability projections.



Water available within the country varies widely as a result of inequitable rainfall.

Africa and in the semiarid regions of Pakistan. However, in the present context, these systems exist in isolation. Once there is government willingness, such systems do have the capability to encompass a wide area and catch the fancy of the participants.

In the irrigation sector, the global trend is clearly towards reducing the role of government in operation and maintenance. Portions of the systems are being turned over to associations of farmers to manage, in some countries on a pilot basis, in others, on a large scale. In India, the appropriate division of management responsibility between the users and the agency varies. The transfer can

Irrigation & food security

Water for consumption is most crucial in present scenario, it is equally important to ensure water for irrigation to increase the food production under limited land availability and livestock husbandry, to ensure food security for the increasing population. Growing population, as everyone is aware, is a serious concern as it will create further burden on the per capita water availability in the future.

As can be seen in the table below, the per capita water availability in 1951 was 5,177 m³ per year when the total population was only 361 million. In 2001, as the population increased to 1,027 mil-

Based on the average requirement of water for various purposes, the situation is considered as 'water stress condition' when the per capita water availability ranges from 1,000 to 1,700 m³ per year and it is considered 'water scarcity' when the availability reduces to 1,000 m³ per year. As the water available within the country varies widely as a result of inequitable rainfall, ground water reserve and proximity to river basins, most of the Indian states will have reached 'water stress' condition by 2020 and 'water scarcity' condition by 2025. This would further hamper the food security, as the scarcity of water will directly suppress agricultural production.

Presently, in spite of good rainfall distribution, the country is unable to make good use of rain water, because of lack of awareness and poor infrastructure to construct dams and reservoirs. As a result, only about 35-40 % of the cropping area receives irrigation to take 1-2 crops in a year. Out of the total cultivable area of 182 million hectares (m Ha), only 140

m Ha are under net cultivation and of this, 62 m Ha are under irrigation. There is further potential to increase the area under irrigation to 140 m Ha, 76 m Ha through surface water and 64 m Ha by using ground water. So far, the irrigation potential has already been created to cover 107 m Ha, although it is not utilised effectively.

It is estimated that effective area under irrigation by 2025 will be 76 million Ha, although the central government is estimating to cover 104 million Ha. Ground water is a major source of irrigation and this trend will continue, rather increase in absence of canal irrigation. By 2025, 60 million Ha will be irrigated by using ground water and by 2050, the area irrigated by underground water will increase to 70 million Ha. In 2000, the area under canal irrigation was 17 million Ha, which will increase to 27 million Ha by 2050. There is further scope to increase the potential by 35 million Ha, by inter-linking the rivers and harnessing 36 billion m³ through artificial recharging of ground water.

Under climate vulnerability, it is important to ensure water availability to increase crop production to meet the rising demand. It seems almost impossible to increase the irrigable land as rapid urbanisation takes place to meet the demand of population. Therefore, optimal land water allocation can be a viable solution to conserve water and enhance productivity as well. There is a need to enhance water use efficiency and increase awareness for using the Water User Association (WUA) model, so that better irrigation management is ensured.

The way forward

Technological innovative irrigation practices can enhance water use efficiency, gaining an economic advantage for farmers while also reducing environmental stress. Advanced water-efficient methods and better irrigation scheduling could also integrate water and nutrient management, thus minimising agrochemical runoff and leaching problems. To help fulfil this potential, experts have developed various models of water efficiency and environmental benefits. Yet these models are little used for irrigation scheduling; at most, they help retrospectively to evaluate seasonal approaches.

Development in soft computing application in water resources management and optimisation techniques, should also be introduced to understand the challenges and reduce human error. Irrigation planning using nature-inspired algorithms simplify the process to allocate water in particular cropping pattern and its combinations.

An adequate knowledge-exchange system would depend on greater institutional responsibility for water-related policies and strategies, for example, through an extension service or a functional equivalent such as a Water User Association. This, in turn, would provide an enabling condition and incentive for all relevant stakeholders (especially WUOs) to share greater responsibility for agricultural water management across the entire water-supply chain, including farm-level practices as well as drainage and reach-out management.

On this basis, more water-efficient practices could combine wider environmental benefits with economic advantage for farmers. □□

Quote-Unquote



India will lead the 21st century because the energy required for the 21st century, which is knowledge, is with India.

Narendra Modi
Prime Minister



Science is education of creation & Brahmgyan is the education of the creator.

Saint Bhanu Raj Vasdev Singh



It is not possible to achieve 100 per cent self-reliance in defence production as certain components required in limited numbers have to be purchased off-the-shelf to save money.

Manohar Parrikar
Defence Minister



I will always stand with Israel's right and ability to defend itself. Israel must know it has no greater friend than the US.

Hillary Clinton
US presidential hopeful

Water crisis and the possible solutions

India is water stressed country, is a well known fact. This reality haunts people more during the summer months when images of people from drought hit areas dominate media headlines. In rest of the year it more or less ceases to be a priority issue for most of the populace. Experts, however, warn on regular basis about the alarming situation that is staring us in the face. With every passing year indications of deadlier water challenges ahead is becoming explicitly clear.

When it comes to drought, India is not alone. The world's underground water reserves are depleting at an alarming rate. According to Water scientist Jay Famiglietti countries sitting on top of the world's most stressed aquifers have had political unrest driven in part by food shortages caused by lack of water. The California-based hydrologist in an interview with Namita Devidayal on the big water challenge says that Most of the world's mid-latitude regions — those that are already arid to semi-arid — are getting drier. Since groundwater fuels agricultural productivity, its disappearance means that producing food for our growing population will become increasing challenging, sooner rather than later.

A scarce natural resource, water is fundamental to life, livelihood, food security and sustainable development. India has more than 18 % of the world's population, but has only 4% of world's renewable water resources and 2.4% of world's land area. There are further limits on utilizable quantities of water owing to uneven distribution over time and space. With a growing population and rising needs of a fast developing nation as well as the given indications of the impact of climate change, availability of utilizable water will be under further strain in future with the possibility of deepening water conflicts among different user groups.

Rapid growth in demand for water due to population growth, urbanization and changing lifestyle pose serious challenges to water security. Mismanagement of water resources has led to a critical situation in many parts of the country.

We have seen how one side common man is struggling to get water for even cooking food on the other side rich and affluent are wasting water on grossly inappropriate things like IPL matches, preparing temporary helipads for one or the other VVIP.



COVER STORY

It is not that there are no positive efforts being put in. We have several examples to follow in preservation of water that has been used effectively and successfully in several challenging circumstances.

For example in parched Bundelkhand in Madhya Pradesh, villagers in Dargai Khurd and Gour have devised clever ways to recycle water. This village of 700 in Tikamgarh — the worst drought-affected district in the region — has managed to steer clear of troubled waters by reforming its farming practices. So three

years ago, Gayajeetpura acted on the advice of a non-profit and replaced a part of their crop share with organic horticulture. The farmers here have created small slopes on their fields and planted vegetables in close rows on these slopes so that water trickles down and covers a wider area. Nandram, another farmer, grows papaya, tomato, onion, chilli, lady finger and cucumber and earns between Rs 500 and Rs 1,000 a week at the weekly market.

Similarly in Laporiya, a village 80 km from Jaipur, a collective effort to harvest water by 350 families has been defying drought for the past 30 years. While ground water has gone down to 500 feet in nearby areas, it is found at 15-40 feet in this village. Not only does lush Laporiya have enough water for its population of nearly 2,000, it even supplies water to some 10-15 surrounding villages.

This journey from scarcity to self-sufficiency started in 1977 when an 18-year-old Laxman Singh returned to his village only to find that it gripped by poverty, caste conflicts and malnourishment. The school dropout realized that the only way to stop this vicious cycle of misfortune was to make the area agriculturally prosperous. But water was a big problem — it was available at a depth of 100 feet. He then devised the chowka system based on a traditional method of water harvesting in Rajasthan and founded the non-profit organization Gram Vikas Navyuvak Mandal Laporiya (GVNML).

Under the chowka system, small, interconnected, sloping rectangular pits, nine inches deep, are made



in pasture land. The pits are bordered with bunds (mud embankment). As water assembles in one chowka it flows into an adjacent chowka and then spreads evenly because of the bunds. After crossing several such chowkas, water finally moves into a pond. This method of preserving rainwater makes the top layer of soil moist, recharges ground water, and also enables growth of native grasses and shrubs.

There's been some smart crop planning too. Villagers stay away from water-intensive crops. During summer, cultiva-

tion of only green fodder and vegetables is allowed and that too in fields that are close to the well.

The discipline reaped some additional benefits. As the pasture land got green, animals started getting enough fodder. An indigenous breed of cow (Gir) was brought from Gujarat and dairy farming was promoted. Gir produces 8-10 litres of milk in a day and each house now has at least two of them. This changed the fortunes of the villagers.

It is therefore time that the government steps in and puts in place a water usage policy. This is important because water usage is leading to socio-economic conflicts. The deepening of wells, constructing of more and more dams, linking of rivers and supply of water through tankers is not the solution to Indian water problem. The need is to stop high water consuming agriculture, industries and construction activity. The cropping system need to be according to the geography, its soil pattern and natural water resource availability. Commercialisation of agriculture and inducing small and marginal farmers to take crops not suitable to their soil and water sources have already played havoc and brought water tables down everywhere. Further depletion of land and water sources will bring disaster to future socio-economic life. Government should not take the ownership of water resources and disturb the natural flows of water courses or allow water exploitation at discretion. Nature has its own system and that need to be respected and acted upon if necessary within is natural options. □□

Survival Politics of Congress and Communists



The idea of India will not be strengthened by petty politicians who support dynastic rule in democratic India or from the pseudo intellectuals who make issues out of non-issues and debate to confuse Indian minds nor from organised anti national elements within but from organised righteous thinking that believe in India and its great capabilities, pleads **Anil Javalekar**

Indian Politicians and Indian political parties particularly Indian National Congress and Indian Communist parties like CPI and CPM have not yet digested the electoral win of BJP in the last parliamentary elections and more so its actual forming of government at centre. More important, these parties are still not able to understand the changing attitude of Indian electorate that is condemning cast-class politics and politics of poverty and accepting BJP's nationalist attitude and agenda of 'Sabka Sath Sabka Vikas'. Recent incidents of JNU Delhi, Hyderabad University and Ishrat Jahan encounter are evidence to their restlessness and of their survival politics. Indian Communists and their intolerance to the existence of BJP and RSS are not new and Indians are familiar with their outcry on every opportune time. The surprising however, is the Congress attitude; their active support for antinational activities and open use of cast politics for survival. More tragic, these parties have also not understood the rise of BJP which is the result not of people's attraction to its philosophy or its organisational capabilities but mainly of Congress party's failure to build the nation with a just system of governance and implement right socio-economic policies that meant development of all in real sense. It is their governance that failed Indian people and it is their socio-economic philosophy and resultant policies that frustrated Indian youth. BJP only encashed this failure and solidly posed itself as the best alternative that can make the difference to the governance and implement socio-economic policies meant for commons.



Rise of BJP is reactionary

Many give credit to Advaniji's Rath Yatra and Ram Mandir issue for BJP's rise. This is half-truth. The rise of BJP is due to the failure of congress's global economic model of capital-technology dominance and communist's policy preference to unionism and labour dominant model of industrial development. First served the interest of Indian corporate and world's giant companies and ignored national commitment towards self-reliance and development of commons or unorganised Indian small sectors. Second created a labour class that fought for their own interest and monopolised good living standard for themselves apart from creating a huge corrupt governance system giving India an inefficient & costly economy. Indian National Congress, through their policies and governance, basically allowed corporate and MNCs to control Indian profiteering sectors and left unviable economic sectors like small land holding agriculture and small uneconomic entrepreneurial sectors to Indian commons that finally revolted against congress. Additionally, both played politics of religion and marginalised Indian majority community in the name of secularism and saw that Indian so-

ciety remained divided in religions, casts and sub casts and keep fighting each other for socio-economic benefits. Their electoral politics of appeasing minorities and alluring poor through cash benefit schemes have indeed helped them to win elections for long time. However, Indian youth from all sections of society including minorities realised the dangers of divisive politics and strategies that helped parties to win elections and politicians to monopolise family prosperity. Finally, this youth refused to play in the hands of these parties and gave BJP a chance in last parliamentary elections in the hope that BJP will rise above petty politics of poverty and appeasement and do something more for Indian commons.

Indian National congress lost in family

Indian National congress has the glorious background of freedom struggle that helped party to enjoy political power for almost 60 or more years. The party howev-

er, slowly lost its grand personality over the years and became a family party. The party has decided to sink or swim with Gandhi family in the hope that the family can help win elections and retain power. This however, is not happening. The family is not able to win elections nor able to give a compatible national leadership. True, once, it had towering leaders. Among them, Jawaharlal Nehru and Mrs Indira Gandhi were important and both played a major role in dreaming high and framing of socio-economic policies for better India. Most of ground work for today's Indian Industrial development was done by Nehru and Mrs Indiraji can be credited for poverty alleviation programmes and raising of national spirit in foreign affairs. However, India saw the brutal emergency and a draconian rule during Mrs Indiraji's tenure that negated Indian democracy and people's rights. The emergency changed democratic setup of Congress party and Indiraji's assassination formally established Gandhi family rule. Late Rajiv Gandhi became prime minister only because he was the son of Mrs Indira Gandhi. Naturally after him the claim to rule the party and country remained with his heirs. Some congressman tried to challenge the proxy governance of Gandhi family. Prime Minister Dr Man Mohan Sing, however, was an appointee of Gandhi family and obediently followed their orders. This fall and ambition of Gandhi family to retain power anyhow is now leading Congress and forcing it to do anything that will help to win elections and this include using antinational issues and playing of worst religio-cast politics.

***Emergency
changed
democratic setup
of Congress party.***



The survival politics is imminent for congress

The survival politics is imminent for congress. **First**, the party has shattered its dream of power mainly because it has changed its national commitments from serving nation to serving Gandhi family. **Second**, the party has equated the survival of Gandhi family to its own survival and thus allowed Gandhi family to control the party. **Third**, as the elections are becoming more and more difficult to win because of emerging youth power, the party is frustrated and therefore, preferring the strategies that will finish the rising rivals from other parties instead of facing competition. The efforts to finish Narendra Modi politically during last congress rule is the evidence. **Fourth**, for last 60 or more year's governance, congress could give only power mongers and corrupt systems and a nation engulfed with various scams and scandals that made party dependent on money and muscle elements. **Fifth**, important, frustrated congress is restless and has limited options. The survival politics seems the need of party and using issues even like Isharat Jahan encounter for minority votes and suicide by Dalit student for the purpose seems certain.

Communist lost in bookish philosophy

Indians are tolerant and evidence is the existence of Communists in India. Communists by their birth philosophy are intolerant, dictatorial and believers in violence. Indian masses, on the other hand are tolerant and secular by their birth philosophy and are basically religious in their outlook and attitude. And therefore, Indian masses never followed communists nor



voted them to power; their presence and success remained limited to some pockets and to certain pseudo intelligentsia. The communists are however successful in capturing most Indian media and all type of Indian socio-educational institutions with their small but vocal intelligentsia and continued influencing Indian politico-economic debates. The tragedy of Indian communists is that they relied on their bookish ideas of Marxism and opposed everything that is originated from America and western countries. Indian communists clung to these ideas when world's top communist countries gave up Marxism and adopted vigorously capitalist's economic policies.

Communists fight for survival

Indian communists survived in India mainly by two things; one by distorting all democratic debates in Indian media and two, opposing RSS/BJP by all it means. Most of Indian media debates are futile in its base approach and were mainly to confuse Indian mind, be their religious faith, their beliefs, their neighbourly attitude or their outlook of future or their national commitments. Indian communists and their pseudo intelligentsia always focused on non-issues that

Communists by their birth philosophy are intolerant.

has only debate value. For instance, Secularism. Indians are by nature secularists. But communists confused Indian minds and posed Indian communities against each other. The issue of Uniform Civil code is another that deprived a large section of India from justice. Their outcry against majoritarian Hindu is well-known and was only to divide Indian communities on the basis of religion and to destabilise Indian polity and democracy. The communists are now lost their relevance and fighting for their survival. TMC's win in west Bengal may fully stamp them out and may limit their existence to JNU, Delhi. Hence communists are restless and eager to ally not only with Congress but all others including antinational.

BJP Need to learn

The fate of Indian National Congress and Indian communists is the lesson for BJP and if not learnt properly BJP may face the same fate. **First**, it should avoid

politics of money and muscle apart from cast and religion. The congress is mainly lost because it allowed these forces to control Indian elections. BJP need to go for electoral reforms that will control these elements and limit their role so to improve Indian polity. **Second**, BJP and its cadre need to be away from vocal futile debates and reactions to non-issues. These lead nowhere but confuse Indian mind particularly of Indian youth. **Third**, adopt long term effective socio-economic policies so to reduce socio-economic inequality and create opportunities for rural youth. For this it is necessary that BJP stop corporatizing and globalising Indian economy and promote rural entrepreneurship led small and localised industrial sector. Small is still beautiful and historically Indian culture and knowledge prospered on local Self-suf-

ficiency model of development. Corporatisation only destroyed this model with no viable replacement. **Fourth**, BJP need to work for religious reforms within. Adopting uniform civil code is one. There is a need to promote uniform non-discriminatory approach for temple administration and public worship practices apart from non-tolerant approach towards 'Andh Shraddha' promoters. **Fifth**, India is a country more of a united culture than geographical boundaries and therefore need nationalist attitude with reference to the world affairs and world happenings. The need is to develop faith among all Indians in Indian system of governance and Indian polity that has deteriorated over the years. Leaving everything to justice system and to pseudo media is dangerous. Righteous leadership with organised ground level volunteers can be

the only hope and BJP need to nurse the same.

Survival politics by Indian polity is dangerous

BJP needs to survive this extreme politics of Congress and Communists or other cast or religion based parties and prove that it is different and can make the difference to life and conditions of Indians particularly Indian youth. The idea of India will not be strengthened by petty politicians who support dynastic rule in democratic India or from the pseudo intellectuals who make issues out of non-issues and debate to confuse Indian minds nor from organised anti national elements within but from organised righteous thinking that believe in India and its great capabilities. BJP has given a hope to Indian youth and need to stand to their expectations. □□

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RBI must embrace rate cuts

On April, 2016, the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) announced its first Monetary Policy Review for the financial year 2016-17. While continuing the trend of reducing interest rates, the repo rate (interest rate at which banks borrow from the RBI) has been reduced from 6.75% to 6.50% and cash reserve ratio (CRR) has been kept intact at 4.0%.

Although by using some other measures – like reduction in marginal standing facility (MSF) rate by 75 basis points to 7% – the RBI has tried to improve liquidity in the economy, the market which had expected a much bigger reduction in interest rates, showed its displeasure by a sharp decline in the share prices. The market experts believed that the repo rate would be brought down by at least half percent.

It may be noted that after 2010, the RBI started increasing interest rates due to high rate of inflation. The repo rate, which was only 5% in 2010, increased to 8.5% by 2012. Later, the RBI started reducing the policy rate and it now stands at 6.5%. Nevertheless, the RBI has been moving cautiously and has actually followed the ‘wait and watch’ principle. It seems that the body is still not confident about the stability of prices and a high growth trajectory in the near future.

It appears that the RBI is apprehending a fresh spurt of inflation due to implementation of 7th Pay Commission and One Rank One Pension (OROP), apart from monsoon uncertainties. Rating agencies like Moody’s are also airing similar concerns apart from fearing depreciation of rupee. However, their apprehensions seem to be unfounded for more than one reason.

Firstly, after a long time, weather forecasters are seemingly in consensus that this year the monsoon would be normal and India is likely to witness a bumper



Once policy interest rates are reduced, demand for credit to build roads, bridges, airports and other infrastructure will go up, suggests

Dr. Ashwani Mahajan



crop. Secondly, the rupee has been growing consistently in the last more than one month, primarily due to consistently improving condition in balance of payment deficit on current account (CAD) and also a persistent surplus in balance of payment on capital account. There does not seem to be any reason for commodity prices to move upward in the near future.

According to the Chief Economic Advisor Arvind Subramanian, India's economy has been passing through deep deflationary situation. Though growth is picking up, wholesale prices of commodities, including metals and crude, have been coming down. An important indicator of inflation, called the GDP deflator, is clearly indicating at deflationary situation, due to which GDP growth in monetary terms is slower than real GDP growth. This situation, though rare, causes not only short-fall in revenue but incentive to increase production also gets adversely affected.

The situation is no different in other parts of the globe. To deal with the problem of economic slowdown, the US, the European nations, Japan and many other countries have reduced their interest rates to near zero level. The US has been following a most unconventional monetary policy in the name and style of 'quantitative easing.'

Courageous monetary policy

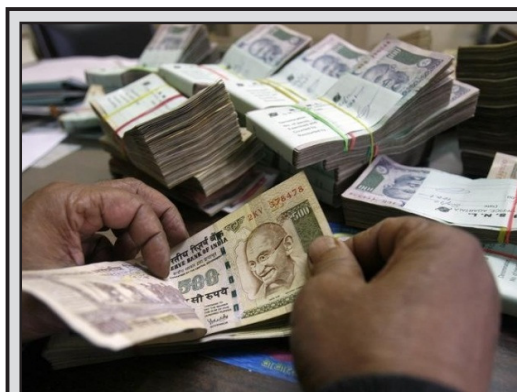
Today, when retail inflation is less than 5% and wholesale inflation has been in negative zone for nearly 15 months, there is an almost certainty about normal monsoon with GDP growth expected to be nearly 8%. With hardly any danger to the stability of rupee, the RBI

could have easily gone for improving the liquidity position in the country, satisfying the thirst of the market and bringing improvement.

RBI Governor Raghuram Rajan has been time and again pleading for transmission of lower interest rates to the borrowers. No doubt, this move by the banks would improve the demand for credit and increase much needed liquidity in the system. However, by suggesting this, the RBI cannot absolve itself of its duty to reduce interest rates significantly, which is an urgent need to tackle the problem of deflation in the economy. There is no doubt that once policy

2004-05. The country witnessed a fast expansion of road network and other infrastructure under Public Private Partnership (PPP) projects. The housing sector saw a big boost due to huge demand.

Perhaps, a major factor which helped development was low interest rates. For instance, at a rate of interest of 8%, an equated monthly instalment (EMI) on 20 years of housing loan of 10 lakh was hardly Rs 8,360, whereas for a housing loan of the same maturity at 10% rate of interest, one needs to shell out Rs 9,650 as EMI. Expectedly, lower rate of interest led to expansion of demand for



RBI has tried to improve liquidity in the economy

interest rates are reduced, demand for credit to build roads, bridges, airports and other infrastructure would go up; and consumer demand will also shoot up.

It is notable that in the past, whenever interest rates were lower, growth was boosted. For the first time, when the economy could surpass the hurdle of low growth rates (what used to be called 'Hindu Rate of Growth'), it was basically due to low interest rate regime. During NDA-I, under then prime minister A B Vajpayee, lower interest rates gave a fillip to development.

Rate of growth of industrial development, which was hardly 4.1% in 1998-99, reached 8.4% by

cars and other automobiles, consumer durables, housing etc, apart from encouraging entrepreneurs to expand their businesses.

During UPA-II, high rate of inflation and resulting high interest rates, led to downfall in economic activity. Rate of capital formation, which had reached 37% at one point of time, nosedived to 31%. Therefore, dispelling unfounded fears, the RBI should reduce interest rates, especially the repo rate to at least 6% and usher in an era of lower interest rates to boost growth, more so when the economic situation is ripe for the same. □□

(The writer is Associate Professor, PGDAV College, University of Delhi)

Modi's rural vision may turn hinterlands into economic hubs



Prime Minister Narendra Modi's three announcements may broaden the aspects of economy. The National Agriculture Market (NAM), Gramodaya se Bharat Uday and Sagarmala – plan to double port capacity – are likely to ensure a major shift from an urban-industry-based system to a farmer, rural, coast-based economy.

The parameters of the economy are to widen and engulf far more people than a globalised Manmohanomics had done. The only caution Modi has to ensure is that there is no lag in implementation. In the past many initiatives lost their steam after their formal launch. Hopefully there is a

change in style of governance and it may ensure that India having taken the stride would be able to sustain the momentum.

Another quite event was the direction of the road transport ministry to states for removal of speed breakers on all national highways to save lives and ensure smooth road travel. The speed bumps led to loss of 4726 lives, enormous man-hours, misery for many families and delayed journeys. The move would speed up road movement, minimize losses and add to faster economic activities.

The electronic NAM and Bharat Uday are major policy initiatives. It would ensure marketability of farm produce sans borders – a vision for empowerment of all by strengthening of the villages.

The government has accepted the farmers' pleas and cries of villagers who together number 80 crore. This segment was ignored as the industry wanted focus to remain on it during the socialist euphoria and the globalization.

The NAM online system ensures connectivity to 21 wholesale mandis in eight states at the initial stages. It would increase to 585 mandis by 2018.

Farmers would be its direct beneficiaries but others like the consumers or traders too would gain enormously. Traders would not be out in the system. They would emerge as bigger facilitators. The consumers it is hoped would benefit as it is expected to bring down the overall prices as many bottlenecks would be removed.

The NAM promises more options for sale. It increases access to markets through warehouse-based sales and thus obviates the need to transport farmers' produce to the mandi.

For local traders, NAM offers the opportunity to access larger national market for secondary trading. The bulk buyers and exporters are likely to benefit



The parameters of the economy are to widen and engulf far more people than a globalised Manmohanomics had done. The need is to ensure that there is no lag in implementation as in past many initiatives lost their steam after their formal launch; cautions
Shivaji Sarkar

from being able to participate directly in trading at the local mandis through the NAM e-platform. It is expected to reduce their intermediation costs.

This would happen as NAM is fully functional. Farmers will initially be able to sell produce through the mandis within the state. It will gradually be extended to cover the country by 2017. Once this happens the farmers would have access to wholesale markets all over the country.

The eventual goal of “one nation one market” for agriculture and horticulture produce may become a reality in the next few years. Some hurdles like dismantling of the Agriculture Produce Marketing Committee Act (APMC) still remains. This regulates the farm market in the states. Though some states have agreed to amend or do away with APMC Act, still a lot needs to be done in this sphere.

So despite the central government providing the software free of cost to states and grant of Rs 30 lakh per mandi as a one-time measure, the actual momentum may take a bit of time. Only two states – Bihar and Kerala – presently do not have such law.

Each state has different kind of mandis and the e-market would link these. Gujarat has castor seed, chana and wheat mandies, Telangana has paddy, turmeric, maize and onion; Haryana has mustard and wheat; Jharkhand flowers; Himachal shelling peas. A trader located in any corner of the country can access any of these markets. Similarly a farmer can see the prices of his produce in different markets and sell at the best price.

The Gram Uday (GU) would be a major step to enliven the ru-



***“one nation
one market”
may become a
reality in the
next few
years.***

ral economy. It would not only supplement the farm activities but also would ensure that overall economic activities are geared up to meet the expectations of increased economic activities. The RSS has already started village clusters for integrated development in many states. The government is likely to follow the model to make villages self-sustaining economic and production units. It aims at creating “samarasta” –harmony - in socially divided villages and orient them to work together for overall development of the society.

The GU programme is a realization that “50 cities and 50 individuals doing good business” cannot turn the fortunes of India. Modi wants to combine Mahatma Gandhi’s ‘gram swaraj’ and BR Ambedkar’s social harmony. The Stand Up India, Skill India and similar other programmes are aimed at creating entrepreneurs in 1.25 lakh bank clusters in the rural India.

The GU aims at ensuring substantial development to strengthen the foundation of villages.

The Rs 1 lakh crore Sagarmala is likely to double the port capacity by 2025. It would link the ports and inland waterways. Thus it creates the highways for development of hinterlands. It can provide faster movements for farm and rural cluster produced goods, integrate

SEZs, smart cities, industrial and logistics parks. Apart from creating jobs, it can ensure a sustainable model of development. The project was conceived by former prime minister Atal Behari Vajpayee. Modi has revived it.

The Sagarmala can save up to Rs 35,000 crore through optimal use of multi-modal transport as port capacity increases to 3000 million tonnes by 2025 from 1555 million tonnes now. It is expected to boost exports to \$ 10 billion.

People have seen many such programs being launched and also being dumped. Sometimes it has happened by the same political dispensation at other by different political set-ups. Many programmes launched NDA-I were dumped by UPA-I. This government has to ensure that these programmes do not become victim of fancies of anyone. Tailoring a programme is not difficult but continuing it is a herculean task.

Modi has made a good beginning and raised aspirations. Now he has to ensure a system that makes his political system widely acceptable. The success of an economic vision depends on successful political sustainability. Modi has to ensure it so that the change he proposes continues and the country’s hinterlands become the hub of economy. □□

Mansarovar Yatra & India-China Relations

The dynamics of India China relations has been an interesting area of observation for the scholars of China studies in India. The kind of 'preventive engagement' between both sides and still surviving 'trust deficit' has much role to play towards this dynamism. Moreover, the strong 'anti-China constituency' in India often finds rationale with its arguments due to incidents of Chinese 'border incursions' and reports of 'aggressive border patrolling'. However, despite these shortcomings bilateral relations have seen an upswing considering some recent developments. Interestingly, the bilateral relations can not be seen only within the framework of 'zero sum game' since both the states are sincerely striving to uphold their 'national interests' which might not often find 'strategic convergence' between the objectives of their conduct of diplomacy.

In the given scenario the successful completion of second successive year of Kailash Mansarovar Yatra 2016, being organized by Ministry of External Affairs, Government of India, and the process of which is underway holds positive significance for bilateral relations. Earlier the yatra used to be conducted via Lipulekh, Uttarakhand pass but the opening of new route via Nathula pass, Sikkim (June, 2015) has been hailed as 'good gesture' from Chinese and in due recognition to the fact of 'building cultural ties' across the Himalayan range. Kailash is located in Tibet, the autonomous Region of China and is ruled by China.

For Indians, Mansarovar yatra holds key religious and spiritual significance. According to Hindu classical texts and beliefs, a 'holy dip' in the Mansarovar and completion of the parikrama of Mount Kailash makes a devotee absolved of its sins and are liberation from the cycle of birth and death. This experience makes an individual realize 'state of oneness' causing all 'sensory activities' being ceased to exist. It makes the 'holy unification' with sacred brahmin (Atman) the ultimate



In its second year of celebration Mansarovar yatra via Nathu La pass offers new source of cultural synergy between India and China – **Abhishek Pratap Singh**



soul represented by Mount Kailash as lord Shiva.

Both the states had signed a 'bilateral agreement' on the alternative route via Nathula pass during Chinese President Xi Jinping's visit to India in September, 2014. While the opening of new route through the Himalayan pass of Nathu La in Sikkim, 4,000 metres above sea level, was officially announced during Prime Minister Modi's visit to China. The border trade via Nathu La pass was opened in 2006 under Vajpayee government.

The new route offers a different experience in comparison to Lipulekh pass which mostly comprises of tough terrain, inhospitable condition and high trekking. The new route reduced the 'pilgrimage time' from more than 20 days to about 8 and also enabled pilgrims to travel the 1,500 km-long route from Nathu La to Kailash by buses. These modalities particularly count for the elderly yatri. Noting the importance of new route, External Affairs Minister Smt. Sushma Swaraj said, "The route via Nathula pass is completely motorable so infirm people can just take a vehicle to reach there". The Nathu La route offers a much comfort and easy travel for the travelers. The first batch of yatri. Moreover, "It is not only a big event for the yatri, but also a milestone in China-India relations", said Le Yuchung, then China's Ambassador to India.

On behalf of the ministry of foreign affairs of China and the Chinese embassy in India, he was personally present there to greet and welcome the first batch of yatri in June, 2015. In addition, Chinese side also offered every yatri from India a 'pilgrimage gift



The new route offers a different experience.

bag' which included dawn coats, hats and blankets in order to facilitate the comfort of yatri. It also witness efforts from Chinese side in the form of building four stay points, necessary makeshift facilities and other related amenities in order to provide the yatri from India a peaceful, clean, comfortable and life learning experience. It is well to acknowledge that these 'people centric initiatives' provide strong bonds for interaction between both the states. Interestingly, it also proves to be a new gesture towards consolidation of the cultural foundations and inject 'positive synergy' in China-India relations. With the process of Mansarovar yatra, 2016 doing around one can expect its positive contribution to cement bilateral cultural ties.

The opening of new route for Maansarovar Yatra marks one of the positive step and good sign between India-China relations. Similarly, the various 'high level' political engagements in last one year and intended desire to 'solve bilateral border dispute' from both the leadership also attaches sincerity to mutual relations. It was only in December, 2015 that Northern Area Commander Lt Gen DS Hooda travelled to Beijing despite earlier Chinese reluctance that the command covers disputed Jammu and Kashmir region.

Considering some of the necessary developments in bilateral relations which includes signing off 22 billion US \$ business-to-business pacts, sister city agreements, joint task force formation to address widening trade deficit, grant of E-visas to Chinese tourists, prospects for increased Chinese investment for infrastructure projects in India, role in high-speed railway between Delhi and Chennai and conduct of hand in hand joint military exercise (2015) the role of yatra is no less of significance. More recently, the new trade route via 'Stilwell road' has been opened to offer better trade off between two states.

To sum up, in the realist global world order there are some 'relevant areas of concerns' between India and China, but as these positive steps set the process towards greater cooperation and synergy of bilateral ties between both Mansarovar yatra also holds key component of the process. In addition, as yatra looks forward towards its second year of celebration, one might expect for a chance where holy pilgrimage leads to 'holy conduct' of bilateral relations between both towards greater stability and convergence of interest in the region. □□

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Will Saudi Arabia Destabilize Global Financial Markets?

At the heart of the matter is 28 pages of the original Congressional report which probed the 9/11 attack on twin towers. These 28 pages were never released since it is supposed to link some members of Kingdom of Saudi Arabia as abettors of that crime. Now the US Congress is considering a bill that would allow the Saudi government to be held responsible in American courts for any role in the Sept. 11, 2001, attacks. As of now the bill is unexpected in a Congress divided by bitter partisanship, especially during an election year. It is sponsored by Senator John Cornyn, Republican of Texas, and Senator Chuck Schumer, Democrat of New York. It has the support of an unlikely coalition of liberal and conservative senators, including Al Franken, Democrat of Minnesota, and Ted Cruz, Republican of Texas—who is in the race for GOP nomination. It passed through the Judiciary Committee in January without dissent.

Saudi officials have long denied that the kingdom had any role in the Sept. 11 plot, and the 9/11 Commission found “no evidence that the Saudi government as an institution or senior Saudi officials individually funded the organization.” But critics have noted that the commission’s narrow wording left open the possibility that less senior officials or parts of the Saudi government could have played a role. Suspicions have lingered, partly because of the conclusions of a 2002 congressional inquiry into the attacks that cited some evidence that Saudi officials living in the United States at the time had a hand in the plot. Those conclusions, contained in 28 pages of the report, still have not been released publicly.

Now Saudi Arabia threatens to off-load its holdings of nearly USD 750 billions of US treasury bills etc if US congress proceeds further which might end up large number of claims from KSA by affected citizens. According to a report in New York Times the foreign minister of KSA has given this threat and it could



Obama administration is less concerned about the market impact of a Saudi liquidation, and far more worried what a real inquiry into the Saudi role of Sept.11 would, believes
Prof. R Vaidyanathan



impact markets severely.

There is lots of concern among the Obama administration regarding the fall of the proposed bill. It is argued that it will affect the US actions abroad since foreigners will be able to legally question actions of US citizens in their jurisdiction. But the proponents argue that the bill can be narrowly drawn to cover only terror related activities like 9/11 on US soil.

Obama administration seems to be more worried about fallout of exposing the possible role of some Saudi elites in the terror attacks than about the de-stabilization of markets due to unloading of huge Saudi holdings.

The nature of relationships which Bush and Cheney had with KSA leaders might also be brought into question. The US involvement in KSA is very substantial –military/diplomatic/economic- and there is a concern that this bill might unravel the whole lot of that.

That is one of the major reasons that the 28 pages of the Congressional report was classified as “super confidential” and never got released. The 60 minute segment of CBS news talked about the 28 pages recently. It says

Is it sensitive Steve, might it involve opening a bit of can of worms, or some snakes crawling out of there, yes. That’s how the latest “60 Minutes” segment ended. [CBS News—10th April 2016]

The comment was in reference to the final chapter of a Congressional investigative report into 9/11 that has been left out of the report due to it being classified. The congressional investigative report is a report that was completed and handed over to the 9/11 commission, who ultimately pro-



Hijackers were “substantially” supported by Saudi government, as well as charities and wealthy people in that country.

duced the final “official” report.

The 28 pages that were classified have only been seen by a select few, and allegedly have to do with details around the existence of a possible Saudi support system for the hijackers while they were in the US among other implications of official Saudi involvement.

The push to declassify the documents is being led by then Chairman of the Senate Select Committee on Intelligence, former Senator Bob Graham (D-FL), who has been a strong advocate of the documents being declassified since the Bush administration classified them due to matters of national security back in 2003.

Point blank, the Democratic senator said **the hijackers were “substantially” supported by Saudi government, as well as charities and wealthy people in that country.**

Congressional member Graham [D-FL] was more explicit.

“I think it is implausible to believe that 19 people, most of whom didn’t speak English, most of whom never been in the United States before, many of whom didn’t have a high school education, could’ve carried out such a complicated task without some support from within the United States,” Graham said.

For now only a handful of

people know for sure: those who have seen the contents of the 28 classified pages. And here are some notable quotes by those that have actually read these 28 pages:

I think it is implausible to believe that nineteen people, most of whom didn’t speak English, most of whom had never been in the United States before, many of whom didn’t have a high school education, could have carried out such a complicated task without some support from within the United States.

Interviewer: *You believe that support came from Saudi Arabia.*

Graham: *Substantially*

Interviewer: *When you say the Saudis you mean the government, rich people in the country, charities*

Graham: *All of the above*

You can’t provide the money for terrorists and then say I don’t have anything to do with what they were doing.

In general, the 9/11 commission did not get every single detail of the conspiracy. We didn’t have the time, we didn’t have the resources. And we certainly didn’t pursue the entire line of inquiry in regards to Saudi Arabia.

The papers are currently locked in a guarded vault beneath the Capitol called a Sensitive Compartmented Information Facility (SCIF). Very few people have access to these sites, and According to other reports.

Actually, the kingdom’s in-

volvement was deliberately covered up at the highest levels of our government. And the cover-up goes beyond locking up 28 pages of the Saudi report in a vault in the US Capitol basement. Investigations were throttled. Co-conspirators were let off the hook.

Case agents I've interviewed at the Joint Terrorism Task Forces in Washington and San Diego, the forward operating base for some of the Saudi hijackers, as well as detectives at the Fairfax County (Va.) Police Department who also investigated several 9/11 leads, say virtually every road led back to the Saudi Embassy in Washington, as well as the Saudi Consulate in Los Angeles.

Yet time and time again, they were called off from pursuing leads. A common excuse was "diplomatic immunity." There are also reports that Saudi citizens were flown out of US immediately after 9/11 went there was actually a blanket ban on any flights.

After he—Bander—then Ambassador of KSA to USA—met on Sept. 13, 2001, with President Bush in the White House, where the two old family friends shared cigars on the Truman Balcony, the FBI evacuated dozens of Saudi officials from multiple cities, including at least one Osama bin Laden family member on the terror watch list. Instead of interrogating the Saudis, FBI agents acted as security escorts for them, even though it was known at the time that 15 of the 19 hijackers were Saudi citizens. But interestingly how much KSA holds in US assets is not clear since.

"Their actual composition remains as a secret, because while the US discloses the explicit Treasury

holdings of all other nations, **Saudi Arabia's holdings, for some unknown reason, are not officially disclosed.**

"It's a secret of the vast U.S. Treasury market, a hold-over from an age of oil shortages and mighty petrodollars," Bloomberg wrote of Saudi Arabia's US Treasury holdings.

"As a matter of policy, the Treasury has never disclosed the holdings of Saudi Arabia, long a key ally in the volatile Middle East, and instead groups it with 14 other mostly OPEC nations including Kuwait, the United Arab Emirates and Nigeria," Bloomberg goes on to note, adding that the rules are different for

Global markets are reeling under possible recession forecast for USA.

almost everyone else. Although Saudi Arabia's "secret" is protected by **"an unusual blackout by the U.S. Treasury Department,"** for more than a hundred other countries, from China to the Vatican, the Treasury provides a detailed breakdown of how much U.S. debt each holds."

The Obama administration, meanwhile, is far less concerned about the market impact of a Saudi liquidation, and far more worried what a real inquiry into the Saudi role of Sept.11 would reveal (and who it would implicate) and as a result is building straw man arguments that the legislation would put Americans at legal risk overseas. In fact, as the NYT reports, **"Obama**

has been lobbying so intently against the bill that some lawmakers and families of Sept. 11 victims are infuriated. In their view, **the Obama administration has consistently sided with the kingdom and has thwarted their efforts to learn what they believe to be the truth about the role some Saudi officials played in the terrorist plot."**

"It's stunning to think that our government would back the Saudis over its own citizens," said Mindy Kleinberg, whose husband died in the World Trade Center on Sept. 11 and who is part of a group of victims' family members pushing for the legislation. Stunning indeed, and yet that's precisely who the "U.S." president sides with when attempting to get to the bottom of the 2001 terrorist attacks".

[<http://www.zerohedge.com/news/2016-04-16/saudi-arabia-threatens-us-it-will-liquidate-its-treasury-holdings-if-congress-passes>]

Increasingly it is becoming clear that those 28 pages contain explosive information on the role of Saudis in 9/11 attack. It will clearly will come out—more of when than if—and if Saudis as threatened off load its billions of asset holding and the global markets will not be what they are.

Already Global markets are reeling under possible recession forecast for USA and bond markets in particular are in turmoil. Many of the bigger banks are in doldrums and a looming threat of Brexit—Britain leaving EU—is making the situation grim.

USA has to choose between punishing the perpetrators of terror—whosoever they are—and turmoil in part of the global markets due to KSA sale of its assets. □□

Achchhe Din for the Pharma Research Industry



Drug development industry is unique in many ways. Less than 12 percent of invented new drugs finally reach the market and only 20 percent of these entities match or exceed the developmental cost, estimated to be over 2 billion US dollars in some cases. Still new drugs appear in the market and patient death rates continue to decline in diseases like cancer, hepatitis-C and HIV/AIDS. Before entry into the market, three phases of clinical trials on every drug are conducted. The Phase – I trial is required for toxicity testing on healthy volunteers while Phase – II and III are conducted on patients for effectiveness against the disease.

This pre-marketing activity when carried out in the Western countries accounts for almost 90 percent of the total development cost which can be considerably reduced using the vast resources of developing countries.

India is ideally suited place for such clinical trials because it has a large population with a wide biodiversity. The majority of Indian patients are being served by poorly equipped and over-burdened government hospitals in District towns and primary health centres in muffsil areas. The spectrum of diseases vastly varies from traditional water-born and poor hygiene related ailments like diarrhea, typhoid, malaria, TB, HIV and cancer to the present day life-style related diseases like diabetes and cardiovascular disorders. Apart from the State-run hospitals, there are numerous private hospitals in almost all our major cities that have the modern equipment and the best qualified medical professionals second to none in the world. In addition, there are a large number of medicos practicing in their private clinics. Notwithstanding the aforesaid favourable conditions, less than 1.4 percent of global clinical research is being done in the country

Although India is an economically developing country it can be a leader in drug development through clinical trials. Hence India attracted the attention of foreign drug industry for clinical evaluation of their new drugs and technologies. A number of private owned Contract Research Organizations (CROs) had cropped-up in the country who started contracting-out clinical trials on behalf of the industry to private parties after obtaining clearance from their own ethics committees that were constituted and functioning roughly in accordance with the ICMR Guidelines 2006.

Unfortunately, the Indian drug regulatory agency, the Drug Controller General of India (DCGI) under the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare which was to work as the watch-dog for clinical research in the country, had been inadequately staffed and badly managed. This resulted in numerous unethical clinical trials being conducted in the country without adhering to the ICMR Guidelines. As a consequence of this laxity in regulatory machinery, the clinical trial industry in



With patient care and welfare objectives, the Government has become proactive and has taken steps to monitor constitution of the ethics committees and ensure the members are knowledgeable in Good Clinical Practices and the regulatory requirements, anticipates
Dr. B.B.Singh

India increased sixteen fold between 2007 and 2009 some of which were disturbingly unethical. The media exposure of ill-famed Indore Clinical trials in mid 2011 created a serious public outcry. An Indore base NGO the Swasthya Adhikar Manch, filed a Writ Petition at the Supreme Court of India in 2012 seeking direction against such activities in the country and impleaded almost all the States as the Respondents. While the Petition was pending, the Government took several stringent steps to urgently rectify the situation and went over-board. Amendments in the Drugs and Cosmetics Rules 1945 were notified that laid stricter conditions for clinical trials in the country. These dealt with the composition and compulsory registration of institutional ethical committees; audio-video recording of obtaining patient's informed consent, strict monitoring of results and compensation for patients in case of serious adverse events. A formula was also evolved for the amount of compensation to be paid to the patients by the industry sponsoring the trial or by the institution if the project be investigator initiated. While this greatly deterred the industry for fear of paying heavy compensation, the video-recording proved impractical and expensive in most cases. An expert Committee under Prof. Ranjit Roy Chaudhury was formed to prepare Guidelines for clinical trials to be strictly followed as per the Schedule Y of the Rules. A new Drugs and Cosmetics Bill (2013) was also introduced in the Parliament on 29th August 2013. Most of the international Pharma industries cried "wolf". Several clinical trials including those sponsored by the US

based National Institutes of Health (NIH) were suspended resulting in a fall of about 25 percent in 2013 compared to the period 2010-2012. The prospects of new clinical trials in India also turned bleak.

In these circumstances India was going to lose a multi-billion dollar business. In addition, Indian patients would be denied access to newer drugs and modern technologies because Phase-III trials on Indian patients are mandatory before any new drug is marketed in the country. Hence India softened some of the Rules but without compromising patient care and welfare. The expensive time-consuming audio-visual recording of informed consent of the patient is

The media exposure of Indore Clinical trials created a serious public outcry.

now applicable only for patients from vulnerable populations like children or mentally challenged individuals. As a result of such efforts things have improved and there are now a total of 1050 institutional ethics committees registered with the regulatory authorities existing in various States, Maharashtra being the leader with 255 followed by Gujarat and Karnataka having 123 and 107 committees respectively.

With patient care and welfare objectives, the Government has become also proactive and has taken steps to monitor that ethics committees are properly constituted and the members are knowledgeable in Good Clinical Practices and the regulatory requirements.

They are required to regularly update their knowledge for which purpose the Clinical Development Services Agency (CDSA), an autonomous body is formed under the Department of Bio-technology that can be rightly described as the academy of clinical research training. It has trained about 3150 professionals during the last 2 years who are qualified to be members of the institutional ethics and trial monitoring committees.

To generate further manpower for clinical research in the country the Indian Medical Association has drawn plans to encourage clinical research by the private medical practitioners who are based in small towns and are not affiliated with any institution. It proposes to constitute ethics committees with 20 members instead of 10-12 members as recommended in ICMR Guidelines.

To further facilitate clinical research particularly for approved drugs, the DCGI has still further relaxed the Rules through a notification dated on 15th March 2016 stating that non-commercial clinical trials for academic research need not be registered nor shall require permission or prior approval of the DCGI but will still need scrutiny and clearance by the institutional ethics committees. This would give a great boost to researches on drugs for new indications, new route of administration, new doses and new dose forms, and the activities that were as restricted as entry of new drugs. With such efforts in place Achchhe Din for clinical research industry in the country are not too far away. □□

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Defence Expo 2016:

Time for military exhibitionism to emphasise on 'Make in India'

The ninth edition of Def Expo 2016 – a biennial international event that displays land, naval and homeland security products primarily for Indian clients – is going to be held in Goa from March 28 till 31. Forty plus countries, 50 plus state level delegations, 300 plus foreign companies, 200 plus Indian companies, 50 plus memoranda of understanding (MoUs) and 100 plus business to business (B-2-B) meetings are envisaged during this grand event. Figures may fluctuate but are indicative of Def Expo's growing importance. Gigantic events such as this require infrastructure and related arrangements. Involvement of Defence Exhibitions Organisation (DEO), MoD and many private sector industry bodies like CII, FICCI, ASSOCHAM and others make this event run at a grand scale.

India hosts a large number of such events in both military and civilian domains every year. However, on the military front, the Def Expo (land, naval and internal security) and Aero India (aerospace) stand out. Normally Def Expo and Aero India are held in Delhi and Bengaluru respectively. However, this time, the Def Expo is being held in Goa, which seems to suggest that such events need to be moved into different cities. There was also a rumor that Aero India could similarly be shifted elsewhere, for instance at Hyderabad. In addition to such events, several domain specific events occur in many places (for example, homeland security solutions, cyber security, R&D, etc.).

What are the general and specific objectives of events like Def Expo? A set of four objectives can be denoted. First, Def Expo serves as a market place for suppliers to showcase their products and recipients to expand their buying op-



Military exhibitionism should attract recipients with innovative and exciting items and encourage multi-dimensional collaborative projects along with meaningful knowledge sharing,
opines **Deba R Mohanty**



Report

tions. Second, a little beyond mere product display, it serves as a meeting of minds between several types of groups – government agencies, both Indian and foreign officials (primarily from respective defence departments and armed forces), government-owned and private companies, industry bodies. Third, beyond product displays, it also showcases futuristic systems under development or new technologies for meeting both conventional and non-conventional threats. And last but not the least, rather the most important, it conducts many seminars and conferences, prior to and during the event, which deliberate on security issues. Such intellectually stimulating exercises bring together best of minds across disciplines and what is important is that such events bring on the table ground level and operational / real time experiences, unlike a purely academic or policy driven intellectual exercises.

Looking back to stride forward

A broad analysis of results from previous Def Expo events (from 1999 till 2014) denotes four distinct pointers. First, Def Expo has expanded rapidly, but could have done better in achieving its core objectives. I say this in a personal capacity and based on my own experience by attending most of them since 2001 onward. For example, despite many seminars and conferences and deliberations at highest levels, such an event has not been able to do justice to issues such as defence offsets, transfer of technology or intellectual property issues. Def Expo thus needs to identify key areas for deliberations with the industry. Second, successive events like Def Expo or Aero India for the last 15



odd years have witnessed signing of memoranda between government agencies, private or government owned companies and foreign OEMs. On an average, about two dozen or more MoUs between companies are signed during events for the past decade. However, very few of them actually fructify thereafter. The event organizers and the Indian MoD should take note of this trend. There is also a need for further facilitation of such MoUs through effective interactions. It is here that the MoD can play an important role.

Third, larger systems for obvious reasons dominate the show as these are displayed by big companies. However, there are interesting smaller yet advanced products made by smaller and medium sized companies, which attract attention at times. My personal view is that such smaller companies need to be identified by the organizers and given suitable help for their displays and interactive knowledge sharing platforms, possibly at affordable cost. Big companies would in any case compete for larger contracts, but it is the smaller and medium sized companies who provide critical back up.

Last but not the least, events like Def Expo must create and

***Intellectually
stimulating
exercises bring
together best of
minds.***

nurture a knowledge sharing platform for all stakeholders as a core objective. Game changing potential spin off and spin on effects of military and civilian technologies are often times not realized by states, decision makers and stakeholders. Such potential must be harnessed by executing well crafted plans for maximization S&T prowess. Events like Def Expo are a perfect platform for execution of such policies.

This time, the Def Expo could be the beginning of a new era in Indian defence sector. An attempt will be made to emphasize 'Make in India' as well as indigenization of defence products through indigenous or collaborative methods. If these themes draw the imagination of stakeholders, one of the core objectives of military exhibitionism will find a definitive expression. □□

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SWADESH PATRIKA
MAY 2016

Distorting of Ambedkar by Leftists and Islamists

“India lost her Independence due to the infidelity and treachery of some of her own people,” Dr B R Ambedkar said, “If the parties place creed above country, our independence will be put in jeopardy a second time. And probably be lost forever.”

On social justice, in the same speech on November 25, 1949 in the Constituent Assembly, Ambedkar said, “In politics, we will be recognising the principle of ‘One man One vote’ and ‘One vote One value’. In our social and economic life, we shall, by reason of our social and economic structure, continue to deny the principle of one man one value. If we continue to deny it for long, we will do so only by putting our political democracy in peril.”

Dr Ambedkar faced the attack from the Communists as his Constitution ‘was not based on the dictatorship of the proletariat’ but ‘Parliamentary democracy’. “In the Parliamentary government, you have a duty and a right; the duty to obey the law and the right to criticize it. In dictatorship, you have only duty to obey but no right to criticize it,” Ambedkar said in his brilliant defense of Parliamentary democracy.

Dr Ambedkar pointed out that historic roots of democracy in India go back to pre-Buddhist India. A study of the Buddhist Bhikshu Sanghas discloses that not only there were Parliaments – for the Sanghas were nothing but Parliaments – but the Sanghas knew and observed all the rules of Parliamentary procedure known to modern times. Although these rules of Parliamentary procedure were applied by the Buddha to the meetings of the Sanghas, he must have borrowed them from the rules of the political assemblies functioning in the country in his time.

Sitaram Yechury of the CPM, during the recent Constitution Day debate in the Parliament, quoted Dr Ambedkar’s speech on the issue of placing creed above



Dr Ambedkar had passionately disliked Marxism and had explicitly held that Islam was inimical to Indian nationalism, the irony is that the Marxist-Islamist combine is today projecting him as their poster boy only to sabotage the very nationalism that was so dear to him, explains

Ajay Kumar



country and inequality in social and economic life. As if the NDA government is responsible and promoting both, he did not ask his party's new comrades who ruled the country for 60 years and along with whom they have emerged as new votaries of freedom of speech even at cost of destruction of nation.

Contrast it with their conduct when they were in power or stronger than those who do not subscribe to their ideology. Thus between 1977 and 2009, the total number of political murder was 55,408 in West Bengal CPM rule. It means yearly average of 1,787; a monthly average of 149 and a daily average of five. So far the brutality of many of them are concerned, they can exchange notes with ISIS. (D Bandyopadhyay: Mainstream, Vol. XLVIII, No 34, August 14 2010). The frequent beastly attack on perceived opponents in Kerala often resulting in death or decapitation of victim is a continuation of same trend while preaching freedom of speech and dissent.

So far the love for nation is concerned it is too well documented. During China war, comrades cracked down on VS Achutanandan for saying let's give blood to jawans. They found this approach as anti-Communist, and he was demoted from the central committee to the branch level. This one of the innumerable examples.

Radical Leftists claim to have a pantheon of original thinkers on their side. Be it Swami Vivekananda, or Dr Ambedkar, the Leftists have at one point or the other, attempted to appropriate all of them. And, Dr Ambedkar seems to have suffered the most at the hands of the Leftists and their fond

bedfellows—the Islamic fundamentalists. While in reality **Dr Ambedkar had passionately disliked Marxism and had explicitly held that Islam was inimical to Indian nationalism, the irony is that the Marxist-Islamist combine is today projecting him as their poster boy only to sabotage the very nationalism that was so dear to him.**

This is clearly evident wherein the 'beef festivals' in our universities are organised jointly by self-proclaimed Ambedkarites and fundamentalist Islamists. President JNSU claim of natural alliance between Red (Left), Blue (Ambedkarite) and Green (Islamists) explains it.

Today, most of the self-proclaimed Ambedkarites—who are nothing but committed Leftists in another avatar— have joined hands with Islamists to achieve their stated goal of building an egalitarian society. They say that unlike Hinduism, which according to them has an inherent system of class-hierarchy, Islam is a religion of equality and fraternity. And so, let us see what Dr Ambedkar had to say about this supposed brotherhood and equality of Islam in his seminal work 'Thoughts on Pakistan':

"The brotherhood of Islam is not the universal brotherhood of man. It is the brotherhood of the Muslims for Muslims only. There is fraternity but its benefit is confined to those within that corporation. For those who are outside the corporation, there is nothing but contempt and enmity."

The other accusation that the Leftists-Ambedkarites hurl at Hindus is that they are a stagnant group who do not make way for any progress. But if you ask them about Islam, as usual, they remain tight-

lipped. However, Dr Ambedkar was very vocal on this too: "The existence of these evils among the Muslims is distressing enough. But far more distressing is the fact that there is no organized movement of social reform among the Muslims of India on a scale sufficient to bring about their eradication. The Hindus have their social evils. But there is relieving feature about them – namely, that some of them are conscious of their existence and a few of them are actively agitating for their removal ..."

An interesting aspect about the Indian Left is their ability to jettison their favoured icons as they make more 'ideological progress.' Thus, even if Nehru was until yesterday their favorite icon, he has been abandoned when they come across his willingness to celebrate our Indic heritage. Someone whose works can be presented as more venomous will have to be found. A recent article on "The Missing Conservative Intellectuals" is a good instance of such an attitude. The article makes the usual rabid anti-Indian statements – that "despite constitutional secularism' India being 'a Hindu majoritarian state in practice' has 'documented anti-minority biases in the bureaucracy, the judiciary, the police, the media and other institutions' etc."

The article also charges the 'Left-liberals' as being insufficiently critical of caste-ism 'despite overwhelming evidence of pervasive caste-ism'. And what is caste-ism but Brahmanism and what is Brahmanism but Hinduism? The writer states that the India's nationhood was intimately associated with 'Hindu imaginary' that, in this context, is 'nothing but another name for Brahminism'.

None other than Nehru is singled out as an example of a 'Left liberal' view being socially conservative. A passage from Nehru's 'Discovery of India,' which seems to glorify 'Brahminism' when taken out of context is highlighted. The passage: "That mixture of religion and philosophy, history and tradition, custom and social structure, which in its wide fold included almost every aspect of the life of India, and which might be called Brahminism or (to use a later word) Hinduism, became the symbol of nationalism. It was indeed a national religion."

This part is then contrasted with a statement taken from Dr Ambedkar's writings:

"No matter what the Hindus say, Hinduism is a menace to liberty, equality, and fraternity. On that account, it is incompatible with democracy." But he always considered the pre-Buddhist, Upanishadic Indian culture the most assured source for those values.

Essentially Nehru was speaking about the rooted nature of Hinduism. In fact, he held common ground with the later day 'cultural nationalists' – a term almost always identified with Hindu 'right-wing' when he stated that India ... "is ... a cultural unity amidst diversity ... held together by strong but invisible threads." This cultural unity of India was axiomatic for both Hindu nationalists and the Left. Dr Ambedkar was even more emphatic on this aspect when he declared that India "has over and above all a deeper and a much more fundamental unity — the indubitable cultural unity that covers the land from end to end."

The pseudo-progressives of Arundhati Roy vintage who redis-

covered Dr Ambedkar's 'Annihilation of Caste' only as a convenient stick to beat Gandhi and Hinduism, forgot the important point. Dr Ambedkar had emphasized that Hindus need not 'borrow from foreign sources' concepts to build a society on the principles of equality, fraternity and liberty. They "could draw for such principles on the Upanishads." Even in 'Riddles in Hinduism', his harshest tract on Hinduism, he points out that Hinduism has the potential to become the spiritual basis of social democracy, than the idea of fraternity.

Dr Ambedkar had used the word 'Brahminism' contemptuously to designate a kind of counter-revolution to Buddhism.

Dr Ambedkar had emphasized that Hindus need not 'borrow from foreign sources'.

But he had also used a much holistic, more accurate and more secular term to represent the social ills of Indian society: social stagnation. In their desire to use Dr Ambedkar as a catalyst to aggravate Hindu-phobia, the far-left radicals have forgotten that Dr Ambedkar's very project of annihilation of caste was from the perspective of 'Hindu Sangathan'. He wanted Hindus to homogenize, to become a strong nation and who saw caste as the single greatest stumbling block in that direction (Hindu Unity).

Gnani Sankaran, a leading rabid Left intellectual and activist, alleged that the RSS-Hindutva agenda "is to make every Muslim

a cultural nationalist like Dr APJ Abdul Kalam" whom he derisively labeled as "three-quarters Hindu and one-quarter Muslim."

It is interesting to note the typical radical far-Left's attempt to categorize every Left-intellectual in India who has no visceral hatred for Hinduism as 'merely Hindu, upper caste, and invisible.' This is exactly how the Wahhabi mind set functions. It excludes, violently, every sub-sect of Islam that differs from its own version. Thus, the Sufis, the Shias are excluded and, of course, Ahmadiyas are also excluded. If power comes, they all can also be eliminated as the ISIS is demonstrating. CPM's 31-year-rule of Bengal is a glaring example.

Contrast this with the Hindu mindset or, rather, the Hindutva mindset that goes on an inclusive spree. This Indic inclusiveness is something unique to Hindutva and is the hallmark of Hindu politics even when it does not acknowledge itself as explicitly 'Hindu'. Thus, to Hindus, Jains are Hindus, Buddhists are Hindus, Saivaites are Hindus, Arya Samajis are Hindus – without them having to do any theological correction. Everyone who has read the legal definition of 'Hindu' that Dr Ambedkar had put forth would know which side of the fence the genius of people like Dr Ambedkar stands.

Dr Ambedkar besides being a scholar par excellence was an uncompromising nationalist which is his true legacy. However, over the years, the Communists not only hijacked the backward castes movement in the country but also fraudulently appropriated Dr Ambedkar's legacy. □□

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Urbanisation may be 60% in 3 decades

India's urbanisation may double to over 60 per cent in 30 years assuming that economic growth remains at 7-9 per cent level, NITI Aayog Vice-Chairman Arvind Panagariya has said. "Generally, the level of urbanisation is over 60 per cent in developed economies. It will take time for India to achieve that level. Within two to three decades India's urbanisation should be 60 per cent. But that would require 7-9 per cent economic growth," Panagariya said at the inauguration a 2-day Urban Management Programme. The process of urbanisation in the country may accelerate as it has touched the threshold of 30-35 per cent urban population, he added.

He said "The chances of acceleration in urbanisation are greater when urban population crosses the threshold of 30-35 per cent. The empirical evidence suggests that once the threshold of 30-35 per cent (urbanisation) is crossed then the process of urbanisation accelerates." About India's slow growth of urbanisation, which was 31.16 per cent as per the 2011 Census, he said.

Anti-dumping duty on Huawei, ZTE

India has imposed anti-dumping duty on import of telecom gear from Chinese firms Huawei, ZTE Corp and Alcatel Lucent to protect domestic industry from cheap shipments. The restrictive duty imposed on import of 'Synchronous Digital Hierarchy Transmission Equipment (SDHTE)' from China ranges be-

tween 9.42 per cent and 86.59 per cent of the landed (cost, insurance and freight or CIF) value. India had first come out with anti-dumping duty of up to 266 per cent on import of telecom gear from China and Israel in December 2010 for five years.

The Department of Revenue issued a notification further extending the anti-dumping duty for five years, up to April 25, 2021. An anti-dumping duty of 48.42 per cent has been slapped on import of SDHTE from ZTE Corp while the same on Shanghai-based Alcatel-Lucent will be 54.09 per cent. Imports from Huawei Technologies Co faced an anti-dumping levy of 37.73 per cent. However, anti-dumping duty on import from Israel's ECI Telecom has been withdrawn. The government had in December 2010 imposed anti-dumping duty on ECI, along with the Chinese firms. In the previous notification, the anti-dumping duty ranged from 3 per cent to 266 per cent.

A 9.42 per cent anti-dumping duty was imposed on import of telecom equipment from any other manufacturer from Israel. Hit hard by the anti-dumping duty, Shenzhen-based Huawei Technologies' now plans to set up a new telecom equipment manufacturing unit in the Sripurumbudur special economic zone (SEZ).

"Italian firm allotted Rs 50 cr to 'manage' media"

Issue of reported misuse of media by the Italian company which had earmarked Rs 50 crore for the purpose to clinch the VVIP chopper deal was raised in Lok Sabha. Raising the issue during zero hour, Meenakshi Lekhi suggested that the middleman Christian Michel had been given the amount to 'manage' the media. Amid strong protests from Congress for allowing raising the issue, Lekhi said it was unfortunate that media which is an organ of healthy democracy has been "misused".

Amid the protests, the Speaker adjourned the House for the lunch recess. Reports had it Christian Michel, a British businessman and an alleged middleman in the deal, was paid millions of dollars by AgustaWestland. A large portion of the money paid by AgustaWestland to Michel is "completely disproportionate" to the work he did for the company, the Milan Court of Appeals has held. Interpol issued a red corner notice against Michel on India's request in December 2015.

The Milan court had noted that Michel was paid over 44 million euros by AgustaWestland for various contracts, which included a deal to supply spare parts for Indian naval helicopters and a post-contract service deal for the VVIP chopper contract.

Indian-origin becomes youngest cricketer

A 16-year-old batsman of Indian origin, Jason Sangha, became the youngest player to ever be contracted by the country's most decorated team, New South Wales. The teenager has come up the ranks of NSW cricket rapidly, having scored heavily in the Under-19 National Championships and then scoring a hundred on debut for the Australian U-19 team against Pakistan in January this year. Also in the NSW list of fully

contracted players for the 2016-17 season is an 18-year-old spinner by the name of Arjun Nair. Interestingly, Nair honed his brand of spin by watching clips of India off spinner Ravichandran Ashwin and West Indian Sunil Narine on YouTube. News of Sangha's breakthrough rookie contract comes just a couple of days ago after it was announced that another Indian-origin sportsman, wrestler Vinod Kumar Dahiya, will represent Australia at the 2016 Rio Olympics after he won silver at the African/Oceania Olympic qualifiers in Antigua.

PM terms PSLV-C33 launch as example of 'Make in India'

ISRO's PSLV-C33, carrying India's seventh navigation satellite IRNSS-1G, that blasted off from the Satish Dhawan Space Centre in Sriharikota was successfully placed in sub-Geosynchronous Transfer Orbit. The countdown for the launch of the 1,425-kg satellite began at 9.20 a.m. on Tuesday. The integration of the rocket on the launch pad and the propellant filling operations were taken up at different stages during the 51.30-hour countdown. A regional navigation satellite system with just seven spacecraft and in civil domain is unique to India. The three global versions of other countries offer worldwide commercial coverage and are operated by their militaries.

IRNSS (Indian Regional Navigation Satellite System) will be to the subcontinent what the GPS is to its users worldwide, but with far greater precision and in Indian control, according to the Indian Space Research Organisation. It is expected to provide position accuracy of better than 20 m over Indian region and also an area extending up to 1,500 sq. km around India. Prime Minister Narendra Modi hailed the successful launch, saying it will help not only India but also fellow SAARC nations. Underlining that through space science lives of people can be transformed, he said the benefits from this new technology will benefit people of the country, particularly the fisherfolk.

ITBP NE hqr from Shillong to Itanagar

Amidst concerns over Chinese military activities along the forward areas of Arunachal Pradesh, India has started the process of shifting the North East headquarters of border guarding force ITBP, 500-km from Shillong to state capital Itanagar. The huge logistical exercise entails shifting of over 2,000 troops and support staff, setting up of communications and border signals, residential logistics and transportation of heavy vehicles, weapons and artillery from Meghalaya to Arunachal Pradesh, both states on the eastern border flank of the country.

Officials said the central government had in 2014 approved a Rs 175 crore infrastructure package for Arunachal which includes deployment of eight fresh ITBP battalions with about 8,000 troops in it, opening of 35 new border roads, 54 border outposts and 72 staging camps along the Line of Actual Control (LAC). Indo-Tibetan Border Police (ITBP) force Director General Krishna Chaudhary confirmed the move to PTI stating the exercise of shifting the North East frontier headquar-

ters from Meghalaya's capital Shillong to Arunachal's capital Itanagar is expected to be accomplished by next month. "The process is on. The ITBP North East frontier will soon be operating from Itanagar," the DG said. Officials said a huge infrastructure creation exercise is currently on in Itanagar where the force's sector headquarters has been operating since 2004.

A senior official in the security establishment said keeping in mind the military capabilities being created in Arunachal, it was essential to base the ITBP command in Itanagar rather than in far-off Shillong where there are no such huge developments taking place to bolster the strength and number of Indian troops and other logistical activities.

'Corruption took place' Agusta Westland deal

The 225-page judgement by the Milan Court of Appeals (an Italian court) says that there was "reasonable belief that corruption took place" in the 2010 VVIP helicopter deal and the former Indian Air Force chief SP Tyagi was involved. The judgement by the Italian court has a separate 17-page chapter on SP Tyagi explaining the grounds on which it came to the conclusion on the corruption of the former IAF chief, according to media reports.

Moreover, the court said it was "validly proven" that a part of \$10-15 million in illicit funds made their way to Indian officials. SP Tyagi was IAF chief from 2005-07 when VVIP chopper deal was processed. However, he has denied involvement in any wrongdoings. □□

ISI controlled laden's compound

The Abbottabad hideout of Osama bin Laden was under ISI control and a Pakistan Army doctor treated the most dreaded terrorist in the world before he was killed in a daring raid by US commandos in 2011, according to a new book. In fact, the doctor Amir Aziz, of the rank of major, who lived in a compound near bin Laden's hideout in Abbottabad, was rewarded by the CIA with a share of the USD 25 million bounty the US had put up because a DNA sample had conclusively proved the al-Qaeda leader's identity.

In his latest book, 'The Killing of Osama bin Laden', investigative journalist Seymour Hersh claims that ISI got hold of bin Laden in 2006 after paying bribes to some of the tribal leaders. At the time he was said to be very ill. And all this while the Pakistani leadership in particular the army chief and ISI boss repeatedly told the US that they did not know the whereabouts of bin Laden. Hersh claims that the CIA came to know about bin Laden's hideout from a senior Pakistani intelligence official who betrayed the secret in return for much of the USD 25 million reward offered by the US. The said official is now living near Washington along with his family.

PAK may use F-16 against India

Top US lawmakers have expressed concerns over the Obama Administration's decision to sell eight F-16 fighter jets to Pakistan, saying the aircrafts could be used against India and not in combat-

ing terrorism. They have also urged the Obama Administration to review its decision in this regard. "Many members of Congress, including me, seriously question the judgement and timing of such a sale. Additionally, Indo-Pak tensions remain elevated and some question whether the F-16s could ultimately be used against India or other regional powers, rather than the terrorists as Pakistan as asserted," Congressman Matt Salmon said during a Congressional hearing yesterday.

Salmon was joined by several other lawmakers during the Congressional hearing on Afghanistan and Pakistan convened by the Subcommittee on Asia and Pacific of the House Foreign Affairs Committee wherein the Obama Administration was represented by the Special US Representative for Afghanistan and Pakistan Richard Olson. The US Senate has currently put a hold on the decision of the Obama Administration to give eight F-16 fighter jets to Pakistan at an estimated cost of USD700 million. Salmon asked Olson to clarify the underlying purpose and timing of the intended sale and how is it in the best interest of the United States. The subcommittee chairperson, Ileana Ros-Lehtinen too expressed concerns over sale of F-16 to Pakistan.

US acts moral policeman on IP issue

The Obama administration kept China, Russia and India on its annual list of countries with the worst records of preventing the theft of intellectual property and cited Switzerland for failing to curb online copyright infringements. The annual list, released by the US trade representative's office, carries no threat of sanctions, but aims to shame governments into cracking down on piracy and counterfeiting and updating their copyright laws. It is a typical US behaviour where it knows countries like India are not wrong on law they resort to arm-twisting.

"Intellectual property is a critical source of economic growth and high-quality jobs for the United States, and it is more important than ever to prevent foreign governments and competitors from ripping off United States innovators who are trying to support high-paying jobs by exporting their goods and services to consumers around the world," US trade representative Michael Froman said in a statement.

The trade agency said that the value added of US-held intellectual property was approximately \$5 trillion in 2010, contributing 34 per cent to US gross domestic product that year and supporting 40 million jobs in IP-intensive industries.

India for 'tension and rivalry' free sea lanes

Amid concerns over China's maritime assertiveness, India has called for freedom of navigation saying sea lanes of communications should be devoid of tension and rivalry. "India does not see itself as in competition with any country in this regard," said President Pranab Mukherjee who is on a maiden two-day state visit to Papua New Guinea (PNG), the largest island in the Pacific region. He also said that India was not in competition with anyone in tying up on security cooperation with PNG.

All sea lanes of communications should be free of tension and

rivalry, Mukherjee said in an interview to the 'Post Courier' newspaper here. He was replying to a question about the future of security cooperation between PNG and India against the backdrop of strong Chinese military presence in the region.

The waters and Exclusive Economic Zones (EEZs) of Pacific Island countries have seen a surge of illegal activities such as smuggling, illegal fishing, human trafficking, drug trafficking which impact on the economy and political security of the Pacific Island Countries, the President said.

UN court orders return of Italian marine

Italian marine Salvatore Girone, one of the two marines facing murder charges for killing two Indian fishermen, will be able to return to Italy while his case is subject to an arbitration procedure, Italian Foreign Ministry has said, citing an order of the UN's Permanent Court of Arbitration (PCA) in The Hague.

The Government has been working to submit the whole matter to international arbitration and, in this framework, bringing home the two Riflemen Marina. The announced order paves the way for this result.

Italy in March had asked the PCA judges to order India to release its detained marine Girone, saying otherwise he risks four more years in India without any charges being made which would amount to "grave violation of his human rights".

The PCA is hearing oral arguments by the two sides. The arbitration "could last at least three or four years" which means that Girone risks "being held in (New) Delhi, without any charges being made, for a total of seven-eight years", Italy's representative had told the court.

Girone is one of two Italian marines - on board ship 'Enrica Lexie' - accused by India of killing two of its fishermen during an anti-piracy mission in 2012 off the Kerala coast after mistaking them for pirates. He has not been able to leave India, aside from a few brief permits, since the incident.

The other marine, Massimiliano Latorre, is back in Italy after a stroke in 2014. The Italian government has taken the marines case to international arbitration after repeated delays in the trial in India.

ISIS developing driverless cars for attacks

Islamic State (ISIS) technicians are working to develop a Google-style driverless car that could navigate itself into a crowded area before detonating an explosive device, a The North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO) security expert has warned.

ISIS' research and development department in the terror group's de facto Syrian capital, Raqqa, is believed to be producing the vehicles at the same time as US Internet giant Google attempts to perfect the same technology.

If successful, the invention could prove to be a major headache for security services in Britain and throughout Europe and North America, where self-driving cars are expected to become commonplace, Daily

Express reported.

Thousands of driverless cars are expected to be on Britain's roads within the next few years and there is a very real prospect jihadis could prey on the new technology to launch attacks in the United Kingdom.

Jamie Shea, NATO's deputy assistant secretary general for emerging security threats, said the Islamic extremists were using their bomb making factory in Raqqa to develop the technology.

He said ISIS was using its "technical expertise" to "play around" with driverless cars in a "worrying" development.

Rainwater may help trigger earthquakes

Rainwater may play an important role in the process that triggers earthquakes, according to new research. Researchers identified the sources and fluxes of the geothermal fluids and mineral veins from the Southern Alps of New Zealand where the Pacific and Australian Plates collide along the Alpine Fault.

From careful chemical analyses, they discovered that fluids originating from the mantle, the layer below Earth's crust, and fluids derived from rainwater, are channelled up the Alpine Fault.

By calculating how much fluid is flowing through the fault zone at depth, the researchers showed for the first time that enough rainwater is present to promote earthquake rupture on this major plate boundary fault.

The Alpine Fault is a major strike-slip fault that fails in very large (more than magnitude 8) earthquakes around every 300 years. □□

India to file 16 cases against US

Government of India intends to file 16 cases against USA for allegedly violating WTO treaties. Minister of State for power, coal, new and renewable energy Piyush Goyal has said. The Minister, who was speaking at the Pune International Centre on 'India's efforts in shaping the Global Solar Alliance', also said that the government would soon announce a new policy to further help the domestic solar manufacturing industry.

"It amazes me that a country (the US) which speaks of encouraging green energy goes to the WTO against us and asks as to why we put up 400 MW of domestic production facility and says that we should have allowed it to compete in those 400 MW facilities too," he said.

"India does not bow to this kind of pressure and it will fight it out and appeal. I will continue to protect every domestic manufacturer and take every solar equipment that is produced here," the minister said.

"We did try to reach a settlement and almost reached one with the United States Trade Representative on how to deal with this, and then they threw a bombshell," he said. The US wanted to demonstrate to the world a trade victory, he pointed out.

"I will soon come out with a policy to further encourage manufacturing in India. In fact, I am going to file 16 cases of their violations of WTO policies," he added. The minister further said that while the US goes to WTO and wins a case against India for protecting its domestic manufacturing industry, it continues to protect its own domestic industry. Other than appealing against the recent WTO ruling, Goyal said that the government would continue to support domestic manufacturers.

Trade growth to remain subdued

Growth in the volume of world trade is expected to remain sluggish in 2016 at 2.8%, unchanged from increase registered in 2015. Imports of developed countries should moderate this year while demand for imported goods in developing Asian economies should pick up. Global trade growth should rise to 3.6% in 2017, WTO economists reported.

Risks to this forecast are mostly on the downside, including a sharper than expected slowing of the Chinese economy, worsening financial market vol-

atility, and exposure of countries with large foreign debts to sharp exchange rate movements. On the other hand, there is some upside potential if monetary support from the European Central Bank succeeds in generating faster growth in the euro area.

Alternative indicators of economic and trade activity in the opening months of 2016 are mixed, with some pointing to a firming of trade and output growth while others suggest some slowing. On the positive side, container throughput at major ports has recovered much of the ground lost to the trade slowdown last year, while automobile sales – one of the best early signals of trade downturns – have continued to grow at a healthy pace in developed countries. On the other hand, composite leading indicators from the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development point to an easing of growth in OECD countries, and financial market volatility has continued in 2016. Therefore trade growth may remain volatile in 2016.

US Special 301 inconsistent with WTO rules, says India

India has said that the US Special 301 report, which tries to put pressure on countries to enhance their intellectual property rights (IPRs) legislation, violated WTO rules. "Under the WTO regime, any dispute between two countries needs to be referred to the Dispute Settlement Body and unilateral actions are not tenable.

Special 301, which is an extra territorial application of the domestic law of a country, is inconsistent with the established norms of the WTO," Commerce & Industry Minister Nirmala Sitharaman said in a written reply in the Lok Sabha. The Minister said that India continued to be placed on the 'priority watch list' of the Special 301 report.

Listed as a 'priority watch' country means that the US government believes that a country's IP laws are not adequate to protect the interests of its investors. A country can next be classified as a 'priority foreign country', following which the US could impose economic sanctions against it.

"The government is committed to fully utilising all the flexibilities provided under the TRIPS agreement to protect the domestic pharmaceutical sector from pressure exerted by foreign countries," Sitharaman said. □□