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OROP confusion & shaken confidence

There is a lot of unease even among the ardent supporters of Prime Minister Narendra Modi over the issue of OROP. It is really painful to see that the impression gaining ground is that he has betrayed the support of ex-Servicemen, and also shaken the confidence of all serving and retired Armed Forces personnel. It is sad that despite repeated assurances from Prime Minister Narendra Modi (including from the ramparts of Red Fort in 2014) and his Cabinet colleagues that the Government is committed to implementing the one-rank-one-pension principle, no final time-line is yet in sight. The excessive delay is causing great damage to the Prime Minister's image as a firm, prompt and decisive leader. If 'technical' problems are delaying the decision, the Prime Minister should urgently call the leaders of the agitating ex-Servicemen to discuss the issue, take them into confidence and fix a deadline. Non-transparent, vague reasons will only worsen the situation. The OROP concerns large sections of Indians who make the supreme sacrifice to guard our borders and, during conflicts, secure the nation's integrity. The scheme is the least we can do for them in return.

The one-rank-one-pension debacle is the result of the Pay Commission's decadal recommendations, which created anomalies. Ex-servicemen are blaming civil bureaucracy for playing foul games and misleading the government. Now that serious parley have begun one can only hope that an appropriate decision is taken at an earliest.

– Ratan Saini, *New Delhi*

Allahabad HC's welcome order

The Allahabad High Court's directive to Uttar Pradesh Chief Secretary to ensure that the Government servants, elected representatives and all those who benefit from the public exchequer should send their children to Government-run schools is a welcome move. But its efficacy will depend how strongly the directive is enforced by the State Government. The standard of education in Government-run schools in other States is not better either. It is not just the students, who cannot solve a two-digit multiplication question, some of the teachers' intelligence quotient is also no better than such students. Definitely, the standard of education will improve with the enforcement of this directive and private schools will not hold the parents of the wards to ransom by demanding different kinds of donations, which they resort to. After all, the Indian Institute of Managements and the Indian Institutes of Technology fare better than their private counterparts and are of world-class level.

– Sagar Pandit, *Jammu*

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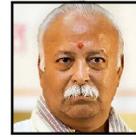
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Quote-Unquote



India has maintained unity in diversity from an ancient era despite having witnessed many ups and down.

Dr. Mohan Bhagwat

Sarsanghchalak, RSS



I firmly believe that clean and hygienic environ is the stepping stone to a healthy nation.

Narendra Modi

Prime Minister of India



A cursory analysis of the 1965 war highlights the fact that a nation's entire military establishment must constantly refine its capabilities in order to ensure territorial integrity.

Manohar Parrikar

Defence Minister of India



Europe's technocrats are like medieval doctors who insisted on bleeding their patients. And when patients became sicker, demanded even more bleeding.

Paul Krugman

Noble Laureate economist

Farmer's welfare

Urgent action required

Welfare of the farmers was one of the major thrust areas in the Independence day speech of Prime Minister from the ramparts of red fort this year. "Agricultural growth is as important as the welfare of farmers. Only talking about agricultural development is incomplete for rural life style and for agriculture based livelihood. That will become complete, when the welfare of the farmer is also linked", he said. The solution offered by Hon'bl Prime Minister to achieve the aforesaid objective, in the same speech was changing the name of the "Ministry of Agriculture", to "Ministry of farmer Welfare". PM added that "in the days to come schemes for the welfare of farmers will also be formulated alike the schemes for agriculture are prepared and the Government would make efforts to provide help to the farmers by means of setting permanent system for the problems that my farmers has to face in his personal life, the hurdles that he has to go through". Change in the nomenclature has been announced as a decision. But the scheme formulation has been delayed and is supposed to be taken up in future. Agriculture is in bad shape in this country. So are the farmers and the population dependent on it for their livelihood. Hence any move to alter the appalling condition of this important section of population is welcome. The question however is, will mere alteration in the name of ministry revolutionize anything on ground? The past experience in this regard is not encouraging. It is not for the first time that the name of the ministry was changed. This has happened several times in the past ever since it was first set up by the British in June 1871 as the Department of Revenue and Agriculture and commerce. Even after Independence name changing practice continued as per the convenience of the ruling dispensation. Since 1947, the name of the ministry has been changed in 1951, 1966, 1971, 1974, 1980, January 1985 and September 1985. In July 1991, the department of fertilisers was transferred from the ministry of agriculture and rural development to the newly-established ministry of chemicals and fertilisers, and the department of rural development was segregated to form another ministry. So, the parent ministry was again named as the ministry of agriculture having three departments: the department of agriculture & co-operation, the department of agricultural research and education and the department of animal husbandry and dairying. Even after 1991, while the name of the ministry has remained unchanged, its composition was tweaked around to insert or part with certain departments. But on ground the reality remained by and large un affected. Even a cursory look at the 70th round of the National Sample Survey Office (NSSO) report, released in December 2014, reveals that situation is worsening, to write it mildly. The NSSO report highlighting the Key Indicators of Situation of Agricultural Households in India, has defined an agricultural household as having "at least one member self-employed in agriculture either in principal status or subsidiary status and having total value of produce during last 365 days more than Rs. 3000." the survey reveals that an estimated 57.8% (more than 9 crore) rural households are agricultural households in the country. About 45 percent out of the total agricultural households belonged to Other Backward Classes (OBC); 16 percent were from Scheduled Castes (SC) and 13 percent were from Scheduled Tribes (ST). 35% of these households own less than 1 acre of land and another 35% hold between 1 and 2.5 acres. 70% of the agricultural households in the country hold less than 2.5 acres. About 30% hold more than 2.5 acres of which about 4% hold more than 10 acres. SECC data released by the government on July 4, 2015 reveal that the rural India accounts for 73 per cent of households and 74 per cent of these survive on a monthly income of less than Rs 5,000 (Rs. 166 per day) of its highest earner. Moreover, according to these data, 51 per cent of the households are engaged in casual, manual labour subjecting them to forces of uncertainty for their survival and subsistence. Now only 30 per cent are engaged in cultivation, revealing that now agriculture is also not in a position to support more than a third of rural households. According to the SECC data, even, after 24 years of economic reforms, 31.26 per cent of the total rural households are in the category of "Poorest of the poor" where the main earner of the family has an "insecure and uncertain" source of income and these households live in a "one room house with kutchha walls and kutchha roof". Among the SCs and STs only 17.70 per cent of SC and 10.50 per cent of ST households have their own houses. The miseries of rural India do not end here, as 44.5% of rural households live in kuccha houses. Immediate affirmative action is required to end the miseries of rural India and farmers.

SECC, Economic Reforms & Poverty in India

The preliminary results of the Socio Economic Caste Census (SECC) of the country, exposing the utter futility of less than a quarter century of economic reforms in alleviating the deep-rooted poverty and bringing the much needed socio-economic turnaround, raise serious doubts about the neoliberal economic policies being pursued for import liberalization and foreign investment promotion. The data released by the government on July 4, 2015 reveal that the rural India accounts for 73% of households and 74% of these survive on a monthly income of less than Rs 5,000 (Rs. 166 per day) of its highest earner. The largest number of such households is in Chhattisgarh — over 90%, which is reflective of almost a nightmarish life of such a vast number of households even after six and half decades of independence.

Moreover, according to these data, 51% of the households are engaged in casual, manual labour subjecting them to dark and random forces of uncertainty for their survival and subsistence. Now only 30% live on cultivation, revealing that now agriculture is also not in a position to support more than a third of rural households. According to the SECC data, still, after 24 years of economic reforms, 31.26% of the total rural households as are in the category of “Poorest of the poor” where the main earner of the family has an “insecure and uncertain” source of income and these households too live in a “one room house with kutchha walls and kutchha roof”. Among the SCs and STs only 17.70% of SC and 10.50% of ST households have their own houses. The miseries of rural India do not end here, as 44.5% of rural households live in kuccha houses.

The neo-liberal economic policies aiming largely at liberalising foreign direct investments (FDI) in trade, commerce and Industry; leading to erosion of tax-GDP ratio especially via reducing indirect tax to GDP; trimming the welfare and social security net, rendering the masses over dependent over Public-Private-Part-



The preliminary data of the Socio Economic Caste Census of the country released by the government has raised serious doubts about the neoliberal economic policies being pursued for import liberalization and foreign investment promotion,

Prof. Bhagwati Prakash Sharma



nership (PPP) for delivery of publicly funded services appear to be counterproductive to our developmental goals.

On coming to literacy it is most painful to find out that, over 35% of rural population is illiterate numbering over 315 million of the 884 million Indians residing in rural areas. Among the literates also the story is very panicky as less than 10% are higher secondary pass or more, and only another 9.6% have cleared their class X exams. Rajasthan leads among all states with 47.6% illiterates in the state, followed by MP (44.19%) and Bihar (43.85%). Even NCT Delhi has 13.6% illiterate people. This is the demographic dividend being talked to fuel our aspirations to lead the world with our talent pool and state of affairs after 24 years of much hyped reforms. Needless to say if three in four rural households have been earning less than Rs. 5,000 per month and almost 90% of households having incomes less than Rs.10,000 per month what would be their nutrition level and means of livelihood. These numbers are not isolated but very close to the estimates of poor and vulnerable derived from various other estimates including those based on the consumption surveys of the National Sample Survey Organization (NSSO) as well. If Rs. 5000 per month per household is divided in the family members where an average household size is of five members, then it would mean an income of Rs. 33 per person per day in the rural areas not enough for a full single nutritive meal.

The findings of this census also reveal that 56% households are landless and 70% of SC households fall in this category. In rural house-

holds, 38.27% are "landless households deriving major part of their income from manual casual labour" which is also not available on all the days. The highest number of such households dependent on uncertain and manual casual labour are in Tamil Nadu (55.80%) followed by Bihar (54.33%). The largest proportion of households with "destitute/living on alms" is in Orissa. On a very fair assessment of poverty all the 39.4% automatically excluded households can be termed as poor or below poverty line.

The automatically excluded households devoid of any tangible variable of inclusiveness are found to constitute 39.4% of the

on the basis of this automatic exclusion. How long should these families wait to get at least one of these tangible variables of inclusiveness is not certain. Whether that will be in the same generation or in their next generation?

The process of the finalization of these 2011 data too has got so much delayed that they are yet to be fully tabulated, analysed and studied. How long would it take to use them, to alleviate the plight of these households, accursed to live under such nightmarish deprivations? Moreover, these data are also partial pertaining to only 299 of the 630 districts whose data have been completed. Thus the



Over 35% of rural population is illiterate numbering over 315 million.

total rural population and constitute households with none of the following: motorised vehicles, mechanised agricultural equipment, kisan credit card with credit limit of Rs 50,000 and above, households with any member as a government employee, households with non-agricultural enterprises registered with the government, any family member earning more than Rs 10,000 a month, those paying income/professional tax, living in houses with three or more rooms with all having pucca walls and roof, owning a refrigerator, landline phone, possessing irrigated land etc. Thus almost 40% of the rural population falls below the poverty line

present data do leave out a large majority of poorer states and districts. The total coverage in the rural area of the final list is then less than 40%- even three years after this survey was concluded. For urban areas it is worse, especially since the questionnaire was designed without any rigorous pilot. The quality of data for most big cities is also suspect. These results of the entire Socio Economic and Caste Census (SECC) exercise that started in 2011 are thus, yet partly out. Of the 640 districts, the draft lists for only 628 are in place and the final list of just 277 districts is available. By the time all the data would be out they would get outdated.

The big surprise is that, even after the preliminary results are out, there does not appear any tangible progress in rural as well as urban India even after a quarter century of the reforms process started in 1991, to take economy on a new growth trajectory with its focus on farmers, agriculture industry and commerce, the SECC shows that over 51% of rural India survives on manual casual labour, while only 30% lives on cultivation. Thus, now agriculture is no more able to sustain the rural households as well, after a level, it was believed to be doing so till yet. Of the rest, 1.61% are non-agricultural enterprise owners, while less than 1% are either beggars or ragpickers. But their number is also above one crore in number almost 157 countries in the world have a population of less than 1 crore. Besides on a rational analysis one finds that the poorer working class is regressing back.

Between 1990 and 2010 India's per capita income is reported to have gone up 2.5 times with an average annual growth in per capita income by more than 5%. But, the annual wage growth for the industrial workers had been only 1% during the same period, as revealed from the annual survey of industries. To the contrary, the corporate profits in the net value added have grown from 28% to 55%. The share of wages in the net value added of the corporate sector has gone down from 32% to 12% between 1983-2013 the number of dollar billionaires from India in the Forbes' list went from 1 to 49 by 2010 and 90 in 2014 almost third largest number in the world. The fast growing income divide between India's rich and poor can be largely attributed to the dismal



rate at which real wages of industrial workers have grown over the past three decades. It is clearly evident from the data from Annual Survey of Industries, published by Mint, whereby the real wages have grown by just 1% per annum between 1983 and 2013! In fact, the real wages appears to have grown far less than the growth in per capita income or productivity leading to worst miseries for the wage earners. This completely overrules the trickle-down theory based on western economic assumption that the two (growth rate and wages) move in tandem. Moreover the rise in corporate profitability, particularly 1991 onwards is phenomenal and the wage rise has kept on lagging far behind. Share of net corporate profits as percentage of net value added in corporate sector has more than doubled. To the contrary the share of wages has gone down to less than half in the net value added in corporate sector.

The ensuing labour reforms are further likely to considerably erode the bargaining power of workers and their unions for having better terms of employment including better wages. In such a case the divide would be much wide leading to stagnation in the

purchasing power of the workers and demand necessary for sustainable growth.

For the policy makers and economic planners as well as investors it is important to bear in mind that the ensuing 8-10% GDP growth will be meaningful only if people have disposable income to spend which would happen if the income divide can be bridged to some extent and real wages grow in tandem with growth and per capita income. Without substantial rise in per capita real wages, India's growth story will hardly take off to generate turnovers and growth. The proposed labour reforms likely to take out wind from the sails of bargaining power of labour would further strangulate growth in wages eluding the economy of requisite rise in income, demand, output, investment and employment to facilitate sustained growth.

Chinese success story of reforms has a different modus operandi. At the macro-economic level they have matched the foreign direct investment (FDI) with a much higher outbound direct investment (ODI), strengthened the domestic sector to outshine the FDI based production at home and sustained trade and current account

surplus. At development and welfare levels they focused more upon rapid expansion of civic infrastructure, fast disposable income growth and wiping out poverty by rapidly generating employment and enhancing wage income through enhanced domestic investments outpacing the FDI to have greater share in the domestic manufacturing vis-a-vis FDI based one. They made huge investments in education, research & development, health & hygiene and civic infrastructure including water supply, sanitation electricity quality roads. This all happened by quality of governance supported by economic patriotism and techno-nationalism aimed at techno-globalism.

The first indicator of success of Chinese growth - its poverty level has been reduced to 1 per cent. From the point of view of civic infrastructure, most villages have 24 hours of power and water supply. All villagers have five types of social insurance and the infrastructure is modern. Many of Chinese cities are even comparable to New York and Toronto but they are fruits of participation of indigenous builders, and not of the foreign realtors. China has become a world power on the basis of its high GDP growth with sustained rise in wages and disposable incomes and its rapid globalization through outbound direct investment (ODI) and not FDI alone. Efficient implementation of policies and good governance are also an important variable. In India on the other hand, the latest NSSO data reveal that for the period 2011-12 (July-June), the bottom 5% of the population had to survive on Rs 521.44 a month in rural areas or Rs 17 a day. In urban areas,

people have had to survive on Rs 27 a day. More than half of that meager amount was spent on food in rural areas and 42% was spent on food in urban areas. How can they managed or think to manage to educate their children or how much could be left over for health-care after square meals?

Thus the liberalisation's express objective of lifting the underprivileged out of poverty and deprivation has not been achieved at all. To the contrary it has led to an increase in inequality of incomes to the extent that half the population striped of any meaningful purchasing power. A series of corruption scandals that have surfaced specially in the last five years of the UPA government showing how people in power misused their office and made unimaginable gains to fill the coffers of black money magnet banks and tax heavens. This disparity has just perpetuated malnutrition and other evils.

If we talk of malnutrition, which has been termed a 'national shame' by the Prime Minister is still hovering around 42% and it would be hard to go unless real wages and incomes grow. Healthcare for the poor is still not universal and Indians have one of the highest 'Out of pocket expenditure' for their health care in the world, and the exorbitant prices charged by private health care centres/hospitals which mushrooming across the country appear to be beyond the means of 80% of households as per the SECC data.

According to the World Bank estimates also, 33% of the world's poor live in India. Yet, the Planning Commission had tried in vain to push earlier that absolute poverty in India has gone down by

12.5% between 2004-2005 and 2009-2011. Official poverty level after SECC release is now at 31% of the population. It is a huge number corporate focused external sector liberalisation has ruined the scene in India and indigenously focused reforms have reformed China has focused on strengthening domestic industry in both public and private sector. India has oriented its focus on foreign investments (direct and portfolio). Indigenous enterprises of micro level scale as well as the small, medium and even large scale one's have either turned sick or are taken over by the foreign MNCs. India had only a singular outcome of reforms and that was growing foreign ownership and control of trade commerce and industry leading to deprivation and poverty. Further there is a vast difference in the quality of governance in the two countries i.e. in China & India.

In China all schemes are properly implemented and all the leaders have had actual rural administrative experience unlike our leaders. They know the problems of rural China, whereas our rural economy not only remains neglected where and cities are the hub of action. But, the real story is also behind a veil - Ministers, bureaucrats and scientists travel abroad all the time to "learn more" - especially from developed countries which they are never able to execute. The urban-rural divide has led to massive migration to cities that have not been able to cope with this influx except to create ever new slums. More than half of Mumbai for example lives in slums because the housing is just not affordable for low-income families.

[Continued on page no. 12]

Maran Fraud: Political Vendetta? Just Misuse?



Freewheeling observations of a judge without the other side filing its affidavit have no value in law. And yet the entire media prints it as if it were an acquittal of Maran. That is why wise judges resist the temptation to make casual observations, notes
S Gurumurthy

SC smells “political vendetta” against Maran, stays arrest, scream media headlines on the Dayanidhi Maran bail case. According to media reports, the court asked, when the FIR was registered in 2013 and the investigation was hanging for two years, “Why did you not arrest him for all this time.” Media also reported the court telling the CBI, “Your assessment of the loss is `1.2 crore. Maran is ready to pay that money to BSNL. We are not saying that there is no misuse of power. But it is not that kind of corruption which requires arrest.”

Saying so, the court stayed Maran’s arrest till September 14 and asked the CBI to file an affidavit detailing the investigation so far. The media did not say much about what the Attorney General argued. The full facts of the case have been in the public domain for four years — but not where the Supreme Court is. The critical facts that ought to be told to the court are not too many.

Maran, who was Telecom Minister from 2004 to 2007, smuggled out a telephone exchange with 341 high speed telephone lines from BSNL to his Chennai home in Gopalapuram. This was kept out of the system and held as secret. The rent for each of these lines for a normal client of BSNL is `10 lakh per year, which alone would work out to `136 crore for four years from 2004-05 to 2007-08 [the lines ran till June 2007]. Maran added another 323 high speed lines in his newly built mansion in the posh Boat Club area in January 2007 and they functioned till June 2007.

For the years 2006-07 and 2007-08 the rent for the 323 lines would be an additional `65 cr. In sum, rent alone tops over `200 crore for 764 lines. The `1.2 crore Maran generously agreed to pay and which seemed to have impressed the court is just the cash-cost incurred by BSNL for laying cables to Maran’s home. Will the CBI tell the court that the loss is minimum `200 crore, not counting the immeasurable user charges. Will the CBI also tell the court that a bribe of `265 — yes just `265 in 1974 — entailed imprisonment of one-and-a-half years and fine of `50,000 in 2014 when the accused was 76 years old and the case 30 years old. [See Criminal Appeal No 404 of 2014 decided by the Supreme Court in February 2014] It is judgments like this that will deter one from corruption.

Not accepting generous offers to pay the bribes back. It is not known whether

the Attorney General, who argued the case, told the court with what intent and purpose the two 764-line capacity high speed fraudulent telephone exchanges were installed. Was the court informed that Marans had surreptitiously connected the illicit high speed lines from their homes to the Sun TV network miles away and to homes of its staff all around Chennai through optic fibre cables for its business?

The AG should ask why the telephone exchanges were installed in the official name of the Chief General Manager, Chennai Telephones in Maran's homes. It does not need a seer to say that Marans did it only lend the colour of genuine official use to mask the fraudulent misuse. Should the AG not ask whether it was to conceal the real, fraudulent intent? If he has not, the AG should ask the court when the case comes up on Sept 14: "Is this just misuse of power, my lord? Or is it a deeper and highly meditated conspiracy and fraud?" He ought to tell the court that the actual user fee of the 764 lines is not measurable because they

***In just one month
over 48 lakh units of
calls have emanated***



were intentionally kept out of the monitoring system by deceptively designating the use as official.

The CBI letter to the Ministry of Telecom [Sept 2007] says that in just one line and in just one month over 48 lakh units of calls have emanated, showing massive multi-media use. This was when the UPA I government was in power.

On this basis, the charge for 764 lines for over 40 months could be several hundred crores. Should the AG not tell the court the very fact that 764 lines have been kept out of the system betrays the conspiracy to conceal the actual use and amount chargeable? Hope the CBI affidavit will contain all basic facts and the AG will ask the right questions.

On the shocking "vendetta" word, the CBI needs to tell court that the prosecution against Maran started by the CBI was stifled by the previous government. The facts are: Maran was telecom minister from June 2004 to June 2007 and got the 764 high speed lines surreptitiously installed - 341 lines in his old home in June 2004 and 323 lines in his new home in January 2007; he resigned as telecom minister when the Maran brothers quarreled with their grand uncle Dr Kalaignar Karunanidhi in

June 2007; the CBI made initial inquiries and in September 2007 asked the telecom ministry for permission to investigate; after Marans bought peace with the grand uncle in 2008 the matter was put in cold storage till 2011; in June 2011 the media - the New Indian Express - exposed the fraud; till the Supreme Court was moved in 2013 the previous government did not even register an FIR though the CBI had requested for it in 2007; only under court pressure the CBI registered the FIR; the CBI began probing the matter only after the new CBI director took office; other accused were arrested but the lower courts in Chennai where Marans exert huge power did not allow custodial interrogation; the CBI wants custodial interrogation of Maran because he alone would know how the 764 high speed lines that stood installed in his homes and connected to Sun TV were made use of in Sun TV premises. Was Maran running his ministry's office from Sun TV premises, which was then situated in DMK's headquarters? Or was Sun TV uplinking its programmes free of cost? Or were the thousands of DMK cadre and leaders making use of the free high speed lines? The AG should ask why should Maran lay optic fibre cables from his home to Sun TV/DMK offices and then drive and work from there as minister? Why could he not do it from his home? For that, he will need just one high speed line. If he were greedy, may be two. But why 764 high speed lines? Unless Marans were kleptomaniacs, who steal without intent of personal use or gain, why smuggle away 764 high speed lines for no purpose? The

AG should also ask: if the present government investigates the case that was buried by the previous government, is that vendetta?

The AG must also tell the court that the smuggled telephone lines breach national security. How illegal telephones were a security threat was discussed at a meeting on April 26, 2003 chaired by the Telecom Secretary himself and attended by intelligence agencies and cellular operators. This was before Maran became Telecom Minister and smuggled away from BSNL his 764-line exchanges. In its order of May 24, 2010, the Telecom Appellate Tribunal [TDSAT] ruled: "Operation of clandestine/illegal telecommunications facilities has serious implications from national security point of view. This is a matter of serious concern and all possible steps need to be taken by all concerned to curb such activities."

The AG should ask the court: Is it a simple case of misuse of telephone lines to be closed by Maran's generous offer of '1.2 crore? The AG must also say that there is a real security angle to the case [see 'Mr Attorney, You Got Your Facts, Law Right on Marans?' NIE dated July 13, 2015] The AG should ask the court whether this did not call for a probe from the national security perspective. Unfortunately the AG cannot put these vital questions to the court because he has given an opinion in another case favouring Maran, unless he says that he was not briefed on these aspects. Will he? God alone knows. If he does not, the court will be unaware of this vital aspect of the case.

Freewheeling observations of a judge without the other side filing its affidavit have no value in law. And

yet the entire media prints it as if it were an acquittal of Maran. That is why wise judges resist the temptation to make casual observations. The real issue in corruption cases is who is the wrong doer. Higher the official stricter should be the rule.

But the judicial trend seems to be the other way round, like in imprisonment and fine in the '265 corruption case of petty official mentioned above and being considerate to the strong. Even '1.2 crore may not be a big amount for Maran, but for the nation it is. If a minister is the wrong doer, the punishment must be stricter. In other cases, it is just offence. Not in a minister's case. As a minister, Maran had taken the oath that he would act in "accordance with the Constitution and the law". His setting up of a fraudulent telephone

exchange in his home as the telecom minister is a fraud on his constitutional oath. Similarly, when assuming office, a judge of the SC solemnly affirms he will bear true faith and allegiance to the Constitution, perform the duties of his office without fear or favour, affection or ill-will and uphold the Constitution and the laws. A judge's duty is to punish the offender - doubly punish those who have a constitutional duty.

A caveat: Srimad Bhagawatam says: in Kali Yuga [Dark Age] justice will be done only on the basis of one's power. Fortunately, Kali Yuga, whose age is 4,32,000 years, is now only 5,116 years old. It is a long way before Dark Age descends fully and people like Maran are let off just because they are powerful. □□

[Continued from page no. 9]

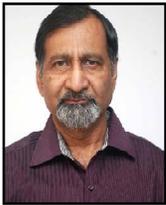
SECC, Economic Reforms

Inclusive growth has been the slogan for quite a few years but the poor have remained alienated/arginalised because of poor delivery of the social schemes. A large number of poverty alleviation schemes were started with great fanfare but the benefits did not reach most of the poor. The latest gesture of a munificent government has been the Food Security Bill which will actually exclude 33% of the population from accessing PDS as a right and will provide only 5 Kg of grain as against the ICMR norm of 14 Kg for an adult and 7 Kg for a child.

Now when SECC data are telling the truth, India must think of internal reforms focusing upon reviving domestic economy includ-

ing agriculture and small business to usher in an era of reviving employment, wage growth and domestic investment through invoking greater indigenous participation, rather than pursuing the route of import facilitation and foreign investment promotion. Agriculture needs a new impetus with enhanced public investments, supported by renewed spate of R&D in crop sector. On the other side, We have only 2.04% share in world manufacturing vis a vis 23% share of China. So, as already pointed out, instead of external sector liberalisation, India needs greater focus upon revival of domestic investments, production, employment and promotion of informal sector and agriculture. □□

Greek Lessons for India



India needs to capitalise on its integrated self-sufficient village level socio-economic system; the public sector and plan for rural prosperity by way of utilising domestic market potentials, sustainable agriculture and strong manufacturing sector to escape adverse impact of world economic failure, advises Anil Javalekar

International Indebtedness of Greece and refusal of Greek people to bow down and accept forced austerity can be an important lesson to international creditors. There is, however, lot more to be learnt from this Greek episode. The habit of borrowing has gone beyond and not remained limited to business ventures that normally have definite plans for repayments. The financial institutions or creditors are now financing more of consumption needs, false or true, and development infrastructural projects that too without clear resource base for repayments. The result is the expansion of credit beyond the capacities of debtors. Additionally, more and more ideas of development and welfare are implemented through expansion of credit and printing of money that have brought the people and countries and world's financial order to bankruptcy. Almost all countries, their governments and people or institutions are venturing in to business of development with borrowed funds and more so without the obligation of repayment leading ultimately to disorder in the financial systems. The Greek lesson, if learnt properly, will hopefully make world's financiers and thinkers revisit the functioning of national and international financial systems and bring it possibly within the reasonable mode of financial sustainability and viability. No doubt, India needs to care for its own economy and its possible financial collapses.

Greek episode

Greece is a country in south Eastern Europe consisting of 2 mainland peninsulas and of many islands. It is considered as the birthplace of Western civilization and is famous for its philosophers like Socrates, Plato and Aristotle. Athens, its capital, still retains its ancient landmarks. Greece, however, is not in the news for its ancient glory but for its indebtedness. Greece Government's Debt reached to unsustainable level of 177 percent of the country's Gross



Domestic Product in 2014. Many know that the Greek economy, one of the fastest growing in the Eurozone from 2000 to 2007 (annual rate of 4.2%) with the flood of foreign capital, failed to sustain its growth due to its rising trade and budget deficits and fallen in to a debt trap. The creditors were forcing for austerity measures that include reduction of governance expenses and increase of taxes etc. so to help financial recovery and avoid defaults for bailout packages. The Greek crisis is a warning to many countries, including India, for they are indulged in development strategies dependent mainly on foreign capital and spendthrift governance.

Societies gave up sharing and accepted looter's system

The first and important root cause of this crisis can be traced in modern human societies and their lifestyles. Modern societies gave up the idea of sharing resources and living happily by; Societies now believe in the ideas more of looting, controlling and renting resources for profits. Nature and natural resources, other life forms or species and lastly human being themselves are the sources of these rents and profits. The participation of state in

The Greek crisis is a warning to many countries, including India.

this loot and control has turned societies that were primarily living a shared life in to the societies that are shared by looters; state facilitating and supporting it. The inequality in its all forms, depletion of natural resources and damage to environment are evidence to it. This loot initially started with Military adventures and had limited geographical impacts. Modern development of financial systems and its varied modes of mobilisation of resources and deploying it are, however, more cruel in its impact and geographical spread. Its lending mode not only induced societies and people to borrow more but allowed lenders to take away all their assets and claim on future capabilities. The adventures of lending and the ideas of derived assets and its speculations, development and welfare through expansion of credit and printed money, adoption of consumptive lifestyles through borrowings have all led to indebtedness everywhere and reached to present critical stage.



Bretton Wood Institutions played major role

Second, the ideas and policies of Bretton wood institutions that were established after World War II to reconstruct all that was destroyed by war have played a major role. The financial systems and ideas of lending and borrowings are ancient. The idea of organised indebtedness is modern and its origin is in Bretton Woods Institutions. Their added agenda of development and welfare are playing an additional role. The main among the institutions are World Bank and IMF. The International Bank for Reconstruction and Development (IBRD), later renamed as World Bank, helped war-ravaged and impoverished countries for reconstruction and development projects while IMF provided temporary financial assistance to countries encountering difficulties with their balance of payments. Their main programme was to provide loans at cheaper rates and on concessional terms. Later on, these institutions brought almost every country under its wings and uniformly spread the ideas and interests of developed world; supporting, financing and thrusting it on poor countries. Many of their ideas though modified lately due to environment damages and dangers to earthly life systems, their policies of reconstruction and development as also of bailing out countries have played its role and brought financial systems to present non-survival state.

India followed western systems and failed

India, after independence, adopted western model of development and followed not only all their policies but borrowed their

institutional setup including the financial one. Nehruvian strategy ignored Gandhian ideas of small and localised self-reliant model of development and supported everything that is western and high-tech that required heavy investments with borrowed funds. Initially, these borrowings were cheap and concessional but later on became commercial and costly. There were few efforts during late 1960s and 1970s to bring some element of self-reliance but later on, the policies relied again on foreign capital and foreign technology. This made India dependent on other countries for oil, capital and technology finally leading to a collapse in 1990s necessitating submission to the economic reforms and austerity forced by western world and their institutions. True, Indian institutions like Reserve Bank of India took cautious approach and adopted go slow strategy on many of policy issues and structural institutional and financial reforms and saved Indian economy from world financial crisis and collapses. Major cause that saved India from world financial crisis is, however, its diversified localised economy that is still agriculture based and most of its components are small and not dependent on world economies and their performances. Above all, most of Indian population is self-employed and not dependent on corporate world.

Learning from Greek episode

First lesson, if learnt, is the need to **review Indian growth and development strategies**. Indian emphasis on globalised growth strategies mainly insist for real estate sponsored urbanisation, export led growth and capital intensive industrialisation through



national and international corporate. This model has exploited Indian resources and made India a guaranteed market for world's giant companies and created opportunities for foreign capital to speculate and earn more without giving much benefit to Indian real economy. Instead it has increased Indian dependence on other countries. As is known, India is a country of small entrepreneurs, small traders and small agriculturists with small income and small needs and survival of Small land holding agriculture, small entrepreneur led manufacturing and trade with supportive infrastructure by government is important. The grooming of localized free enterprise and self-employment is also the real answer to Indian growth, poverty and unemployment. Therefore, India must take its strategies towards making India locally self-sufficient and local population locally entrepreneurial and stop globalising its small local Indian economies by national and international corporatisation that rely more on borrowed or high cost capital and make country prone to crisis.

Second lesson, if understood properly, is the need to **limit government expenses** to its tax or such revenues. Indian Gov-

Government now has started selling its valuable assets

ernment even increases salaries and perks of their own parliamentarians or employees without reference to the government resources and has developed a spendthrift governance system that relies on high revenue deficits. The revenue deficit that is consistent since 1980s is reaching to Rs 3,94,472 crore in 2015-16. More than that, Government now has started selling its valuable assets (equities) of PSUs in the name of liberalization to meet its own expenses. The major components of government expenses are revenue and defence apart from interest payments and subsidies. Remember that the revenue deficit is one important component of government indebtedness that can cause economic collapse.

Third lesson is the need to **delink welfare schemes from subsidies and grants**. There may be lot more reasons to do more for poverty alleviation and helping deprived classes to survive but doing it through money transfers without definite revenue source is a false idea and not sustainable;

Only revenue surplus through tax collection can be the source. There is a need to review the strategies that of resorting to print money and borrowings or forcing public financial institution to bear the cost. Desirable to raise definite national level funds from all the beneficiaries of modern industrialisation or partners involved in the modern strategies of corporate led development and use it for welfare programmes. This will help reduce government expenses and its borrowings.

Fourth lesson is the need to **stop supporting, promoting and subsidising corporatisation** of Indian economy. The economic reforms since 1991 for globalization of Indian economy were mainly for privatizations, liberalizations and freeing of domestic and foreign trade and all policies adopted were to suit promotion

of corporate -Indian or foreign. The idea of mixed economy with commanding role for Public sector has given up in the hope that private corporate will do everything for country's development. This prioritising the corporate led economy has affected the performance of Indian economy and led to many of the present financial crisis including the high NPAs of public sector banks. Corporate development should be on its own and should not in any case depend on government support, direct or indirect. Impression need to be given that the Government is not for corporate world and will not bail-out them in any form.

Fifth lesson is to **make Indian economy self-reliant**. India's development model, in principle, should be based on Indian indigenous thought, resource capabilities within and Indian needs.

Uniform industrialization and consumerist lifestyle without reference to local resources and local needs is a falls idea and imitating others can make India a market for western corporate world. Self-reliance in every of its meaning should be the base of Indian policies and that alone can save India from world economic crisis created by free flow of capital and technology.

Greek episode teaches us that more the dependence on foreign capital and foreign trade more will be indebtedness in varied forms. India needs to capitalise on its integrated self-sufficient village level socio-economic system and the public sector base already created and plan for rural prosperity by way of utilising domestic market potentials, sustainable agriculture and strong manufacturing sector so to ensure escape from the impact of world economic collapses. □□

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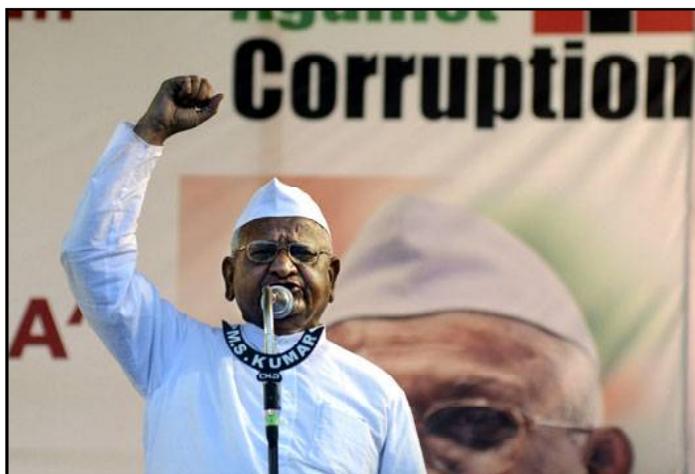
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Sorry! Good bye to MAC 3 (movement against corruption)



The day Arvind Kejriwal openly supported Nitish, Lallu Congress alliance, it was practically official announcement of end (failure) of Bharat's latest movement against corruption.

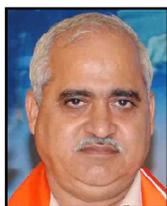
First in 1974-75, Bharat raised ante against corruption when Mrs. Indira Gandhi the then prime minister was dubbed as corrupt. Jaiprakash Narain led the Bharat's first mass movement against corruption (MAC). Indira Gandhi imposed emergency. But Bharat was awakened. Finally Indira Gandhi lost Lok Sabha election. Morar Ji Desai became Prime Minister. But in lust of power, leaders of the Janata Party quarrelled with each other. In less than

two and a half years Only all hopes collapsed and Congress again came to power. It was first sun -set of MAC

Second time, in 1986-87 came Bofors. Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi's image of a clean prime minister was hit badly in Bofors kick back case. At that time V.P. Singh raised the flag of anti corruption movement. 2nd MAC swept the congress and from a thumping majority of 415 it was reduced to 195, only to sit in opposition. But history repeated itself when within 9 months VP Singh, unable to control power hungry leaders of his own party, announced Mandal commission. Ultimately he too could not survive even one year in his office. Again Congress came to power within 2 years. It was 2nd sun set of MAC

Thirddtime It was 2011-12 when Bharat was caught in corruption whirlpool. Congress government led by Dr. Manmohan Singh fetched the image of government of scandals. Anna Hazare led the Bharat's new MAC. In Anna Hazare's movement, Arvind Kejriwal played a key role. But BJP also raised strong voice against corruption. Along with it Narendra Modi played the development card. Congress lost power and its tally in Lok Sabha reached a historic low. (Only 44 MPs could manage to lok sabha on Congress ticket)

But Anna Hazare and Kejriwal became the symbol of movement against corruption. Anna wanted to remain non political. But kejriwal wanted to taste power. He made the political party Aam Aadmi Party (AAP). His very clean image and a man with new type of politics became new hope of a large section of Indian masses. His simple dress, common man's talking style, body language etc all made young Bharat's aspirations. He swept Delhi election with one sided victory. But after only 6 months Bharat was stunned, when it saw this man, in the lust of power in anti Modi syndrome, standing with Nitish kumar. Who has made an alliance with declared & convicted corrupt Lallu n Congress. Again, within 2years sun was forced to set on MAC- 3. □□



Movement against corruption has been sabotaged by the people who led it, believes

Satish Kumar

India needs strategy to counter Sino-US nexus

Global slowdown is official. The devaluation of Chinese yuan by 2.5 per cent only confirms it. Is it currency war? Possibly not. It could have been a war had it hit the US. It is not hitting the US. Instead the US is the biggest gainer, China being its largest trade partner.

The US consumers dependent on Chinese imports would benefit the most paving way for the US Federal Reserve to go coolly on rate increases as inflation in US would plummet. This is detrimental for India.

China has not done a bit to ruffle the US feathers. Rather its action is framed as per prescriptions of the US and International Monetary Fund (IMF). They had long sought this devaluation and had been insisting yuan was overpriced. China had been propping up the yuan. It appreciated 14 percent against a basket of currencies. It was straining China's export sector and pushing up inflation in the US market, despite strengthening of the dollar, dependent on Chinese consumer goods.

The present downward trend seems to be in tandem with the US wishes and is likely to benefit the US most particularly on the eve of revising its monetary policy. China's net gain would be continuation of its exports to the US and possibly can even increase a bit as its goods would be cheaper. A rate increase by Fed Reserve on the contrary has serious implications for India.

If it is a war, it is against Asian neighbours. It is to hit India and other Asian economies significantly. Cheaper Chinese goods would further rock the Indian market. No wonder, it has hit the rupee hard pushing it down to below Rs 65 to a dollar and created virtual upheaval in the market.

If China's devaluation deepens, pressure to weaken currencies could become particularly intense in other Asian nations that export large amounts to China or compete with Beijing in other markets. Asian currencies tumbled on Tuesday, notably the South Korean won, Australian dollar and Thai baht, as investors bet China's move could lead to further monetary easing in those nations. Many Asian nations have cut rates this year and could be forced to take further action in coming months.

India needs to look for strategy to counter the Chinese. India imports heavily from its eastern neighbour. This may swell the trade deficit further, which is



India needs to look for strategy to counter the China's devaluation as it is likely to push the deficit further up with cheap imports initiated by Chinese manufacturers irrespective of dumping safeguards, cautions
Shivaji Sarkar





India has not yet created hedge against direct & subtle onslaught against Chinese moves.

touching \$50 billion.

The imports are worth \$ 60 billion. This devaluation is likely to push the deficit further up as cheap imports will be initiated by Chinese manufacturers irrespective of dumping safeguards, DK Joshi, senior director and chief economist, CRISIL, says. .

Apprehending dumping of steel, as Chinese steel would be much cheaper than India-produced steel; the government on August 13 itself raised customs duties on certain steel products by 2.5 per cent, equal to the cut in yuan value.

India's overall exports have contracted for seven straight months until June. Domestic players such as Tata Steel and JSW Steel have been urging the government to take more measures to check cheaper imports and save the domestic industry. The import-duty hike is only likely to keep the prices of imported steel to the previous level, which is considered high by Indian industry.

The government has problems in meeting the demand. It has to go as per the WTO norms. If it goes beyond, the WTO or competitors can initiate many legal moves to embarrass India. What the industry is terming as dumping, the government has to prove that as per technical and legal norms.

India may find its make in India in a tizzy. With cheaper imports

flowing in directly and through porous borders, Indian manufacturing already hit would now find it more difficult to counter it.

As this move may also boost slowing Chinese economy, investors who had been mulling putting money in India may have a second thought. If Chinese exports to US and the West increases, it is likely to clear Chinese warehouses of stacked goods and may give boost to new manufacturing. It can create new jobs and may make China more attractive.

The problem is not restricted to a mere import-export imbalance. There are several sectors where India competes with China to sell to the world.

In normal course, falling rupee would have aided domestic exports, which have contracted for seven straight months until June 2015. However, a rise in domestic exports would not be easy because of a global slowdown. The fact that China and India compete for several export items such as textiles, gems and jewellery, bicycles, and tyres will also go against domestic exporters.

The economic slowdown in China - which is among the top five countries for Indian exports - is another negative for Indian exporters.

Textile manufacturers and chemical producers might have it

a little tougher now because in the global marketplace their goods might become less attractive than those from China.

The Dalal Street is reflecting these woes. Shares of these companies as well as those of tyre manufacturers are tumbling. Of late, cheap Chinese tyres have hit sales of domestic manufacturers. A further fall in price would force companies to cut corners.

The strengthening dollar and fall of yuan are a double whammy. As it hits the rupee that has become more volatile it might send occasional shockwaves here. It would make all imports, including petroleum dearer. The little relief that Indian consumers had got through fall of official price index may disappear. The impending fortnightly cut in domestic selling price of petrol and diesel may be put off. Inflation may return.

There are chances that RBI would have to hold on to high interest rates. A cut in rate may lead to capital flight to the US as it is bound to raise the rates. Besides, as the country has a high trade deficit, chances are that the current account deficit will also rise. This will further pressurise the rupee. This has many implications just not only terms of imports but also for those companies which dollar-denominated foreign loans. It can have a negative impact on FII flows particularly to the stock market as returns would be less attractive.

India has not yet created hedge against direct and subtle onslaught against Chinese moves. Now it has to develop a strategy for developing an independent path for Indian economy. Mere changes in monetary policy would not help. □□

Subsidize recharge of groundwater, not its extraction

India Meteorological Department had predicted drought-like conditions before the onset of monsoons. The prediction appeared to be correct till the middle of July. Large parts of the country were deficient in rains at that time. However, the monsoons have revived and as of now the situation is normal. However, this is deceptive though technically correct. Many parts of the country continue to suffer even though rain is normal on the average. Orissa has undertaken an urgent programme to install 13,000 borewells to help farmers tide over the deficient rainfall. Prices of onions in Maharashtra have jumped lately because crops are under stress. The Reserve Bank of India has directed the banks to increase their direct lending to the farmers. These contrary indicators mean that the variability of the monsoons has increased even though average may be normal. It is like one child in the family being sick while other winning a medals in the sports event of the school. The average performance of the children would be “normal” but this would hardly be satisfactory.

The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) has warned of such increasing variability much earlier. It has forecast that weather will become more extreme in the coming years. There will be sharp bursts of heavy rainfall followed by long periods of no rain. Shrinking glaciers will reduce the water we receive from the Himalayan rivers during the summers. The groundwater levels will decline. Slow rainfall that continues over many days gives time to the water to percolate into the groundwater aquifers. A sharp burst of rain does not provide time for the water to percolate. Thus groundwater levels will decline. The problem will be compounded by the farmers relying even more on bore wells during long period of no rain. These problems will only become worse according to the predictions made by IPCC.



The water crisis will aggravate along with global warming but still there is no strategy of how we will increase the availability of water, points out
Dr Bharat Jhunjhunwala



The solution is to provide subsidies for undertaking groundwater recharge. Nearly 300 villagers in Kadavanchi near Jalna in Maharashtra have captured rain water and have been able to undertake profitable agriculture even in drought periods. One farmer spent Rs 5.5 lac in making the storage structure but made a profit of Rs 30 lacs by cultivating grapes while fields in the surrounding villages were parched. Farmers in Bagalkot District of Karnataka have leveled their fields and made bunds around them so that the rain water does not escape and seeps into the soil. They harvest good crops without fail even though surrounding areas are blank. The Model Bill does not provide powers to the Farmers' Committee to provide incentives or to compulsorily require farmers to establish water harvesting structures such as these.

We have to redesign the economic policy. Presently we are providing subsidies for extraction of groundwater. Many states provide cheap- or free electricity to the farmers. This encourages them to extract more groundwater. Need is to provide subsidies on recharge structures. Let us say, a farmer is today getting a subsidy of Rs 5000 though cheap electricity. The same money should be given to him for making a water storage tank, check dams and bunds on his fields. Simultaneously, the price of his produce should be raised so that the farmer can pay the real cost of electricity without starving to death. Here problem is the urban middle class that wants cheap food grains. It is necessary that the government takes the middle class into confidence and raises the price of food

products such that the farmer can pay the true cost of electricity. Providing subsidy for water harvesting structures along with charging true cost of electricity from the farmers will ensure that more water is recharged into the aquifers and less is extracted. This will enable us to extract some groundwater even during drought years and produce food.

There is need to change another policy. Government engineers are more interested in building large storage dams like Bhakra and implementing large engineering schemes like those of interlinking the rivers. It is true that storage dams have helped irrigate large tracts of land and established our food security. But the usefulness of these structures will recede with global warming. Dams will store only if rivers are bringing water. Very frequently these dams cannot be filled to their full capacity because of less rains in their catchments. This problem will become more pronounced with increased variability of rainfall as predicted by IPCC. There may not be any water to transfer from one river basin to another through the river interlinking scheme. Moreover, huge loss of water takes place through evaporation from these reservoirs. It is better, therefore, to store rainwater in underground aquifers where evaporation does not take place.

The Central Ground Water Board has made a plan to increase groundwater recharge. However, the plan is limited to holding and recharging local rainfall. Rain that falls in a village will be captured and stored in the aquifers of the village. But there is no plan to recharge groundwater aquifers using

river flows. Our rivers bring large amounts of water during the monsoons. This water can also be used to recharge the aquifers. There exists such a traditional water harvesting system in the pynes of Gaya. Canals are made that take water from the flooded rivers and bring it into the village ponds. Another canal takes flood water from one pond to another pond lying farther away. The canals are blocked once the floods recede thus trapping the river flow in the ponds. Groundwater is recharged from these ponds. Such innovative systems need to be implemented across the country.

The Government has established a National Mission for Sustainable Agriculture (NMSA). This mission seeks to face drought through improved seeds, pest management, nutrient management, credit support, development of markets, and dissemination of information. All these measures do not face the fundamental problem of water availability. Water use efficiency, farm practices and crop diversification are also covered in the NMSA. These steps are welcome and will help. But still there is no strategy of how we will increase the availability of water in the face of global warming.

The water crisis will aggravate along with global warming. The need is to (1) Dismantle all subsidies on water extraction and replace them with subsidies on water recharging; (2) Empower the Local Committees under the Groundwater Management Acts to prohibit the cultivation of selected water-guzzling crops; (3) Develop a method of recharging groundwater by using river runoff as done in pynes of Gaya. □□

Tantra Swadeshi Mantra Vande Mataram

Bankim Chandra Chatterjee serving as Deputy Magistrate and deputy collector in the Government of British India, composed Bande Mataram first and introduced it in his great novel Anand Math which was published serially from 1882 in his periodical *Banga Darshan*. Once, the manager of his Printing Press came to him to get some written matter to fill the space left blank in the *Banga Darshan*. Seeing Bande Mataram written on a piece of paper on Bankim's table he asked Bankim to correct it so that it could fill the space. Bankim stared at his manager and told, "You want me to correct it, if you live for twenty five years more you will see what storm it will create." Bankim also told his eldest daughter about tremendous uproar Bande Mataram would create in future. Bankim lived till 1894 and five editions of Anand Math came out during the period.

After singing Vande Mataram Rabindra Nath Tagore exclaimed, the whole body experienced thrill and sensation while singing it. Sarla Devi Chaudhurani sang Bande Mataram in Congress session in 1890.

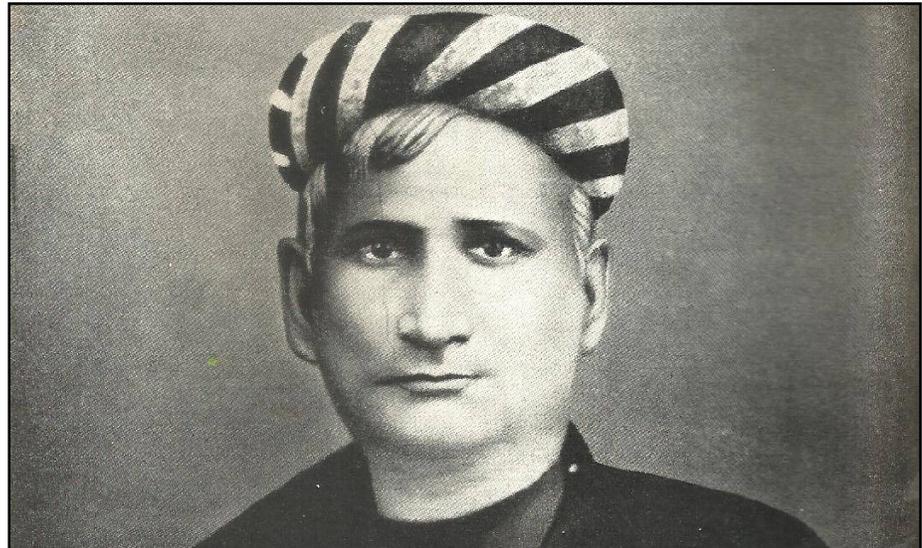
Bande Mataram is a mantra. And any Mantra, to be effective, it needs Tantra and Jantra as per Tantra Vidhya authored by Sir John Woodroffe, ex-chief justice of Kolkata High Court. Thus Surendra Nath Banerjee declared Swadeshi was Bande Mataram in action.



Shri Aurobindo, who was exceedingly pleased to know that Vande Mataram had become so popular in all parts of India, said that the song replete with mighty power, being a sacred mantra, revealed to us by the author of Ananda Math, who might be called an inspired Rishi, recalls Saroj Mitra.

Aurobindo on Bande Mataram

Shri Aurobindo said that he was exceedingly pleased to know that the song had become so popular in all parts of India and that it was being so repeatedly sung. He said that he would make this national anthem the subject of his speech. The song, he said, was not only a national anthem to be looked on as the European nations look upon their own, but one replete with mighty power, being a sacred mantra, revealed to us by the author of Ananda Math, who might be called an inspired Rishi. He described the manner in which the mantra had been



revealed to Bankim Chandra, probably by a Sannyasi under whose teaching he was. He said that the mantra was not an invention, but a revivification of the old mantra which had become extinct, so to speak, by the treachery of one Navakishan. The mantra of Bankim Chandra was not appreciated in his own day, and he predicted that there would come a time when the whole of India would resound with the singing of the song, and the word of the prophet was enigmatically fulfilled.

The meaning of the song was not understood then because there was no patriotism except such as consisted in making India the shadow of England and other countries which dazzled the sight of the sons of this our Motherland with their glory and opulence. The so-called patriots of that time might have been the well-wishers of India but not men who loved her. One who loved his mother never looked to her defects, never disregarded her as an ignorant, superstitious, degraded and decrepit woman. The speaker then unfolded the meaning of the song.

As with the individual, so with the nation, there were three bodies or kosas, the sthula, suksma and karana sariras. In this way the speaker went on clearing up the hidden meaning of the song. The manner in which he treated with love and devotion was exceedingly touching and the audience sat before him like dumb statues, not knowing where they were or whether they were listening to a prophet revealing to them the higher mysteries of life. He then concluded with a most pathetic appeal to true patriotism and exhorted the audience to love the Motherland and sacrifice every-

thing to bring about her salvation. — *Bande Mataram (Journal), January 29, 1908*

The Future of the Movement

When a great people rises from the dust, what mantra is the sanjivani mantra or what power is the resurrecting force of its resurgence? In India there are two great mantras, the mantra of "Bande Mataram" which is the public and universal cry of awakened love of Motherland, and there is another more secret and mystic which is not yet revealed. The mantra of "Bande Mataram" is a mantra once before given to the world by the Sannyasins of the Vindhya hills. It was lost by the treachery of our own countrymen because the nation was not then ripe for resurgence and a premature awakening would have brought about a speedy downfall. But when in the great earthquake of 1897 there was a voice heard by the Sannyasins, and they were conscious of the decree of God that India should rise again, the mantra was again revealed to the world. It was echoed in the hearts of the people, and when the cry had ripened in silence in a few great hearts, the whole nation became conscious of the revelation. — *Bande Mataram, February 19, 1908*

On 7th Aug 1905 *Bande Mataram* became a war cry when people marched in streets in Kolkata shouting *Bande Mataram* against partition of Bengal.

About 7th Aug 1905 Aurobindo wrote

It is the soul within us that decides, that makes our history that determines Fate, and the material nature, material events only shape themselves under the limitations of Space and Time to give an out-

ward body and realisation to the decisions of the soul. The day of a nation's independence is not the day when the administrative changes are made which complete the outward realization of its independence but the day when it realises in its soul that it is free and must be free. For it is the self-sufficing separateness of a nation that is its independence, and when that separateness is realised and recorded as a determined thing in ourselves, the outward realisation is only a question of time. The seventh of August was the birthday of Indian Nationalism, and Indian Nationalism, as we pointed out the other day, means two things, the self-consecration to the gospel of national freedom and the practice of independence. Boycott is the practice of independence. When therefore we declared the Boycott on the seventh of August, it was no mere economical revolt we were instituting, but the practice of national independence; for the attempt to be separate and self-sufficient economically must bring with it the attempt to be free in every other function of a nation's life; for these functions are all mutually interdependent. August 7th is therefore the day when Indian Nationalism was born, when India discovered to her soul her own freedom, when we set our feet irrevocably on the only path to unity, the only path to self-realisation. On that day the foundation-stone of the new Indian nationality was laid. — *Bande Mataram, August 06, 1907*

Vande Mataram announcement of which creates a vibration both in body as well as in atmosphere. Invoking mother India by uttering *Vande Mataram* repeatedly, Mantra Shakti starts working. □□

Tougher laws needed to regulate food industry

Only a few days back, the US government reached an out of court settlement with British Petroleum (BP) for a 2010 oil spill it had caused in the Gulf of Mexico. The oil major will pay \$ 18.7 billion in damages. Spewing 4 million barrels into the sea, the oil spill had caused 11 deaths and led to a massive destruction of the marine ecosystem. Instead of worrying about how the huge penalties will impact future investments, I remember US President Barack Obama saying soon after the oil spill happened: "Will make BP pay."

And it did. This is how the world's only superpower means business.

While it may be perfectly right to feel outraged at the huge BP oil spill penalties when compared with the paltry compensation package of \$ 470 million that Union Carbide was made to pay for the Bhopal gas tragedy, in which some 10,000 people had died, I thought over the past three decades India had learnt the lessons the hard way. The desperation of foreign investments will not be at the cost of human lives, food safety and the environment. After all, there had been heated debates on the questionable role of politicians, judiciary and the industry leaders in ensuring justice to the victims.

But I was wrong. Following the recall of Nestle's maggi noodles, Food Processing Minister Harsimrat Kaur Badal has accused the food regulator – Food Safety and Standards Authority of India (FSSAI) – for inculcating an "environment of fear" in food industry. Her ire was obviously aimed at the food safety organization which had imposed a ban on maggi noodles in June. Addressing recently the regional CII office in Chandigarh, and later in a detailed interview with a newspaper, she criticized the spurt in food safety tests which she believes is hampering more investments to come in. Her main argument was that there is no testing protocol for quality check on processed food. She also blamed the return of 'Inspector Raj' that is haunting the food industry.

Mrs Badal's outburst against FSSAI comes at a time when a US study has found sugary drinks responsible for 184,000 deaths globally every year. Consider-



The task to ensure processed food is undoubtedly safe becomes more onerous and urgent in the light of the report submitted by the US President's panel on cancer that warns against the pervasive use of chemicals in processed food – including pesticides, insecticides and synthetic ingredients in the processed food, highlights

**Dr. Devinder
Sharma**





Only 25% of the 53,406 companies whose samples had failed to conform to quality standards, could be penalized.

ing that the consumption of sugary drinks has multiplied in India over years, and knowing the damning health impacts, including fatalities, it leaves behind, I expected the Food Processing Ministry to launch a massive nationwide campaign to educate people about the dangers of consuming colas, and at the same time directing the manufacturers to ensure that the sugary drinks being sold are completely safe for human health. For instance, the well-known food writer Vir Sanghvi has in a recent tweet asked Pepsico to explain why the beverage company is using Aspartame in sugary drinks in India whereas completely blacking it out in America?

The Diabetes Foundation and the Centre for Nutrition & Metabolic Research has pointed to the continuous rise in consumption of sugary beverages, including energy drinks. With per capita consumption of sugary drinks rising from 2 lit in 1998 to 11 lit in 2014, these sugary drinks are being blamed for an increasing number of deaths and disabilities. Considering that Swami Ramdev has been repeatedly warning people against using these sugary drinks claiming that these sodas as good as toilet cleaners, I had expected the Food Processing ministry to be extra vigilant.

The task to ensure processed

food is undoubtedly safe becomes more onerous and urgent in the light of the report submitted by the US President's panel on cancer. It estimates that 41 per cent of Americans living today will suffer cancer in their lifetime. The report warns against the pervasive use of chemicals in processed food – including pesticides, insecticides and synthetic ingredients in the processed food. Fighting cancer therefore requires tougher laws and strict implementation of food laws. If the US food industry was responsive enough, the country wouldn't have faced a cancer epidemic. But still, the food industry does adhere to the quality standards in US/Europe. Much of the problem in the developed countries is because of lax quality standards in view of the aggressive lobbying by the industry.

Following the maggi noodles ban, the FSSAI has drawn samples from some of the major brands like Hindustan Unilever, Britannia, Nestle India, Heinz India, MTR, Haldiram and others. Quality test of food products for safety certainly warrants urgency considering that food adulteration and contamination has become rampant over the years. With nearly 80,000 food processing companies in operation, including Big Food, and with hardly any quality laboratories to check what goes inside, manufacturers

have had a field day so far.

It took 16 months from the day the first maggi sample was drawn to the final test report. Woe-fully lack of adequate testing laboratories all these years has therefore been an easy escape route for the food companies to manage getting Scott free. A Zee Business report showed how 75 per cent companies, whose samples were drawn, escaped being penalized because of gaps in quality testing. In the past five years, only 25 per cent of the 53,406 companies whose samples had failed to conform to quality standards, could be penalized. The penalties of course are too low which does not provide any deterrent.

It is alright to decry 'Inspector Raj' but unless the inspectors draw samples regularly how will the food processing industry be made to clean up its act? In China, there exists one food quality laboratory for 0.2 million people. In India, one lab is available for 88 million people. The thrust therefore should be to increase the number of quality testing labs at a phenomenal rate. And I am sure the Chinese labs are not only for decorative purposes but for testing food samples. If the food industry is perfectly comfortable with regular food testing in China why it should cry foul in India?

The need for investment therefore should not be compromised in the name of tougher food safety laws as well as environmental norms. India needs responsive business, and all investments must respect the rights of the people. The food industry must be asked to adhere to the safety laws, and if it is unable to do so, be directed to pull down the shutter. □□

Is World Heading Towards Depression?

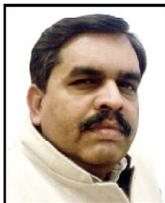
Global markets crashed after China devalued Yuan by 2 percent on August 10, 2015. This has worried the world that this may lead to chain reaction by other countries, in order to nullify the effect of Chinese action. If history is any guide, competitive devaluation would benefit none; but may definitely bring in a wave of recession.

Before this, RBI Governor Raghuram Rajan, while addressing London Business School Conference said "I do worry that we are slowly slipping into the kind of problems that we had in the thirties in attempts to active growth". He further said "The question is are we now moving into the territory in trying to produce growth out of nowhere we are in fact shifting growth from each other, rather than creating growth. Of course, there is past history of this during the Great Depression when we got into competitive devaluation", Media almost got the feeling which was later contradicted by RBI; that Rajan is actually hinting towards the possibility of global recessions.

Today we see that central banks of world's leading economies have been adopting measures to increase liquidity in their respective countries; especially policy of quantitative easing (QEs) adopted in the post recession period by Federal Reserve (central bank of USA). Though RBI, while refuting that Rajan has made any such prediction that world is heading towards recession, RBI governor has definitely said that monetary policies being adopted by the central banks are not in right direction and needs to be mended. Although Raghu Ram Rajan has not directly predicted towards global recession, he has definitely hinted at the emerging trends towards the same.

Other Indicators of Depression

If we leave aside Raghu Rajan's utterances, questions are definitely being raised about the efficiency of the policies adopted by US Administration and Federal



Chinese economy is in severe crisis, its GDP growth is down to below 7.4 percent foreign exchange reserves have started coming down, exports are declining forcing large scale sale of gold before a major devaluation of Yuan that has stunned the whole world; explains

Dr. Ashwani Mahajan



Reserve to deal with post 2007-08 slowdown. Though some economists believe that US economy has been showing sign of revival and site employment and income data to prove their point; there are others who are not convinced with the same. Issue is not just of USA, many of European countries are also facing much more precarious situation.

Greece's economic crisis is known to all. Almost all European countries are fighting to somehow save existence of Euro Zone. Nevertheless, emerging trends in different European countries indicate towards advent of recession. In the last 5 years, Greece's GDP has come down by 25 percent and its youth unemployment has climbed to 60 percent.

As Greek's crisis had deepened, USA's and many of European countries' financial institutions are entering into danger zone. Although, after Germany and other Euro Zone members agreeing to the bailout package, fall of Greek's has been avoided for the time being, but crisis has definitely not ended.

China Too in Trouble

Once growth engine of the world; China, has started slowing down. First time, since 1990, Chinese GDP growth is down to below 7.4 percent. Chinese president while addressing World Economic Forum 2015, conceded that Chinese economy has been passing through severe crisis. Chinese foreign exchange reserves have started coming down, as its exports have started declining. In the last two and a half decades, China's manufacturing sector could reach new heights, thanks to its huge exports. China was able to capture international market riding on its low prices of electronics, mobile



phones and other telecom products, machinery, project goods and other engineering products. China became manufacturing hub of the world as enterprises from all around the world shifted their production base to China.

But, China which was challenging the world is now surrounded by its own economic problems. China which was most sought after destination for foreign capital has been facing the problems of flight of capital. Chinese share market came down by 25 percent in just one month, as foreign investors are taking their money out. Chinese government has been trying hard to save share market from falling further. Before a major devaluation of Yuan, recent large scale sale of gold by Chinese government has stunned the whole world and caused a dip in gold prices.

Production has been falling in almost all sectors. Chinese industry has installed huge production capacity and now they are forced to cut production. China's steel and solar energy is into deep trouble. Its largest solar company 'Suntek' has gone bankrupt and steel industry has cut its production by 25 percent.

Greece and China are some glaring examples, though there are many more countries which are into red and are entering into dan-

Bailout packages cannot stabilize economy and survive in the long-run.

ger zone. IMF has reduced its expectation about world's economic growth from 3.5 percent in April, 2015 to 3.3 percent now. However, IMF is even more pessimistic about Canada and has now predicted only 1.5 percent growth in Canada, against 2.2 percent predicted in April 2015. USA's GDP has shown 0.2 percent fall in February and March 2015; though bad weather has been said to be responsible for this decline.

Imperative to Change Policy

As Raghu Ram Rajan said that the competitive monetary policies have been pushing all countries towards deep recession, need of the hour is that the government of these countries understand that excessive flow of money is not going to improve the situation. Government of these countries need to keep in check their budget deficits by avoiding wasteful (or even welfare) expenditure. Bailout packages can save these economies in short run, however, they cannot be stabilized and survive in the long-run, based on these bailout packages. □□

The Future is Organic, not GMOs



Farmers, first of all, are breeders. They might not have the lab coats that have come to define modern plant breeding, but their wisdom, knowledge and contribution is unquestionable. To be able to continue breeding, using their own seed, is their first right, their first freedom and their first duty.

This right has been recognised in India's Plant Variety Protection and Farmers Rights Act 39 (iv) a farmer shall be deemed to be entitled to save, use, sow, resow, exchange, share or sell his farm produce including seed of a variety protected under this Act in the same manner

as he was entitled before the coming into force of this Act.

All seeds bred by the public sector or by private corporations are based on varieties bred by farmers.

For the last 2 decades, Monsanto has forcefully monopolised the cotton seed sector with its Bt Cotton seeds, through illegal, illegitimate and corrupt means. It controls 95% of the cotton seed supply and collects royalties in the form of technology fees even though it does not have a valid patent - because Monsanto introduced Bt cotton into India illegally, before India changed its patent laws (following a WTO - TRIPS dispute), and when we did amend our patent act we introduced clause 3(j) clearly defining that biological processes are not inventions.

Article 3(J) excludes from patentability "Plants and Animals in whole or in any part thereof other than microorganisms; but including seeds, varieties, and species, and essentially biological processes for production or propagation of plants and animals".

Knowing that Monsanto was collecting illegal royalties, and that there is an epidemic of farmers suicides (300,000 farmer suicides due to a debt trap created by costly seeds and chemicals) the government has failed to act. The government failed to break Monsanto's illegal monopoly, and it failed in its public duty to ensure a supply of safe, reliable, renewable seed for our farmers.

A Right To Information (RTI) request submitted by the Research Foundation for Science, Technology and Ecology (RFSTE) to the Central Institute for Cotton Research in Nagpur revealed that CICR has not released a single variety of cotton for the farmers of Vidarbha since Monsanto entered India's cotton seed market.

Suddenly, after 20 years of slumber, there is a flurry of activity - in the press, in the PMO, in the Agriculture Ministry - to rush the introduction of a straight variety of Bt cotton by the CICR, claiming that it will serve the farmer. "Straight" is a word used to describe renewable varieties which are selections from farmers varieties. These farmers' varieties have been bred in the commons and belong to the commons.

Could this sudden rush be a desperate attempt by the biotech industry and government to use the public sector as a Trojan horse to dilute and dismantle



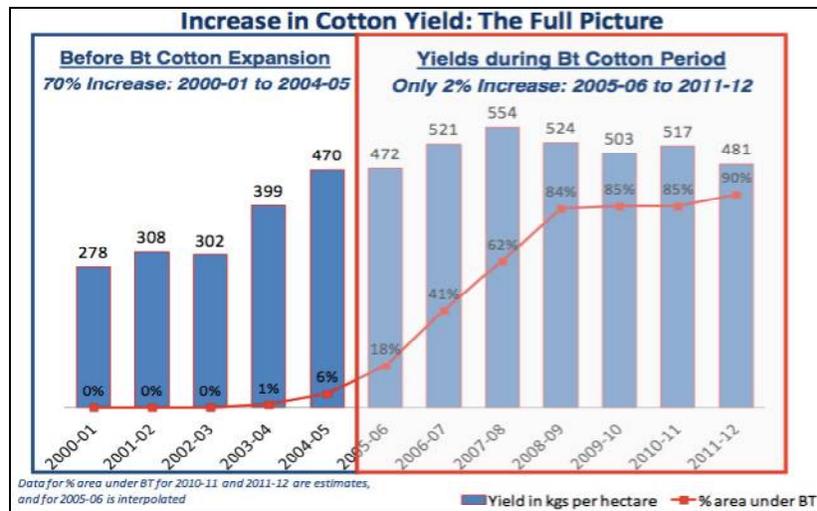
Could sudden rush be a desperate attempt by the biotech industry and government to use the public sector as a Trojan horse to dilute and dismantle India's Biosafety regulations?
asks **Dr. Vamdana Shiva**

India's Biosafety regulations? Could this be an attempt by Big Biotech to bypass the Indian Judiciary by bypassing the pending Supreme Court Case on GMO field trials? The biotech industry is using the public sector as a mask.

There are legal aspects related to GMO seeds. First is the issue of IPR's and royalty collections. The second is the issue of Biosafety. Monsanto has violated both sets of regulation in India and must be held accountable for breaking the country's laws. While Bt in straight varieties of cotton addresses the issues of seed costs for the future, it does not negate Monsanto's prior violations, nor is it any different from Monsanto's Bt when it comes to Biosafety. According to our field studies, at least 84% of the cases of farmers suicides in Vidarbha are related to debt and failure of Bt cotton crop. If the government is committed to protecting farmers' rights and bringing justice to the farmers, it must force Monsanto to compensate farmers for illegal royalties collected on the basis of an imaginary patent, and make reparations for the hundreds of thousands of farmers it has killed by collecting these illegitimate and illegal royalties.

Insurance statisticians have put the life of a "prime aged worker", in the US, where Monsanto is based, at a median value of USD 7 million. 84% of 300,000 suicides, 252,000, are directly attributed to Monsanto's Bt-Cotton. By this calculation, Monsanto, in addition to the illegal royalties collected, owes the families of 'prime aged' working Indian farmers an amount of **USD 1.764 Trillion**.

Unless action is taken on this front, the talk of straight Bt varieties



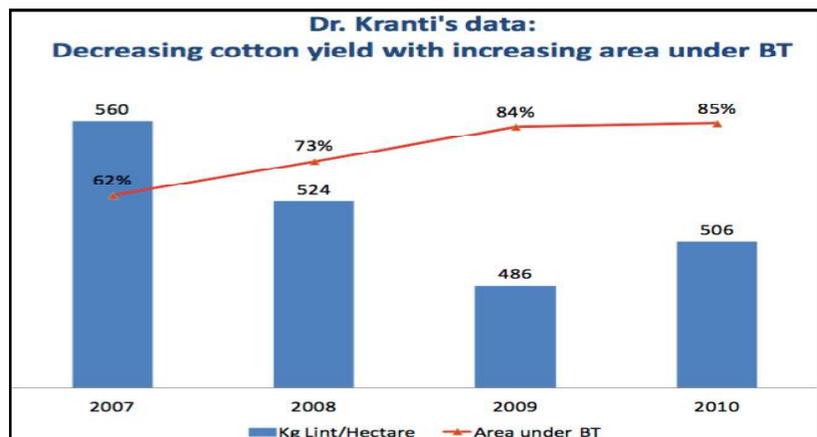
ies is a distraction from Monsanto's criminal actions against the farmers and seed businesses of India, and the country at large. It is also an attempt to use Indian tax payers' money and Public Institutions to open the flood gates for GMOs beyond cotton into our food - dismantling and weakening India's Biosafety - without corporate liability.

Bt - Reduced Yields even with increased acreage

Monsanto has illegally collected US\$ 900 million as royalty from small farmers of India. This money was charged as technology fees for Bt technology - a technology they promised would increase cotton yields, reduce the use of pesticide and increase farmers incomes. All Bt managed to do was make

money for Monsanto and push farmers to suicide. If Monsanto's goal, with Bt, was to wage war on Indian farmers, it's been a roaring success, in all other respects, Bt is a complete failure.

Dr. K.R. Kranthi, Director of the CICR (the same institution that, for 20 years, has failed to provide alternatives to Bt-Cotton to farmers, and now wants to introduce Bt-genes in farmers varieties of cotton), has assessed the failures of Bt and decrease in cotton yields after the introduction of Bt in India. The following tables are based on Dr Kranthi's own data and can be found here. Why is the CICR peddling a technology which has no gain in yields, but has tremendous biosafety risks & costs to the country?



Bt-Toxification and death of our soils

Surely, the CICR is aware of the failures of Bt-technology and the havoc it has wreaked on the Indian cotton sector and the cotton farmers. According to Dr. Kranthi, himself, there has also been depletion of nutrients in the soil due to repeated cultivation of Bt cotton hybrids, which draw more nutrients and water from the soil. The crop is exhibiting nutrient deficiency especially in rain-fed zones where wilt and leaf-reddening problems are also getting more severe over the years. He continues,

"The leaf hoppers showed very high levels of resistance of up to 5,000-fold to imidacloprid and other neonicotinoid insecticides in central India. The neonicotinoids were introduced barely a decade ago. Progressive nutrient (macro and micro) depletion due to the source sink relationship because of Bt-cotton after Bt-cotton hybrid cultivation. Bt-cotton hybrids utilize more nutrients and water for higher yields and profits, therefore the soils are getting progressively depleted & need more nutrient recharging." (Part III-10 Years of Bt-Dr Keshav Kranthi)

CD Mayee, of the GEAC - the agency entrusted with the regulation of biotechnology and GM field trials - and a friend to Monsanto, in his assessment, added:

"If the area under advanced transgenic seeds increases to 10 per cent in a few years from the present level of 4 per cent, the country's fertiliser consumption will increase 107 per cent to 220 kgs per hectare (ha) from the current levels (the latest available figure 2005-06), at 106 kgs per ha."

Located in the heart of the farmer suicide belt, being aware of the causes of these suicides and their rela-

tionship to Bt Cotton failure, why has Dr Kranthi (CICR) not released alternative seed for 20 years? Seeds that could have saved lives and alleviated the misery of Vidarbha's cotton farmers. The CICR did not release a single cotton variety after Monsanto came to India, enabling Monsanto's monopolistic stranglehold on Vidarbha's cotton farmers. Why would Dr Kranthi, aware of the failures of Bt technology, be rushing the CICR to introduce Bt genes into farmers varieties of Cotton seed?

If, on the one hand, India faces pressure to change her IPR regime and on the other we face complete contamination of *desi* cotton by Bt, India will lose all the benefits of her cotton exports and will merely be paying Monsanto royalties to grow any cotton at all. If Monsanto has made the coffin for the Indian cotton farmer, the CICR seems intent to be the one lowering that coffin into an early grave.

Biosafety impacts of Bt GMO plants on soils and pollinators

Whether the introduction of Bt toxin into a plant (where it does not belong) is carried out by the public sector or an MNC, whether it is introduced in a straight variety or hybrid, it does not change the toxic impact Bt has on the environment and health. The Biosafety concerns for India, or any other

country, remain the same.

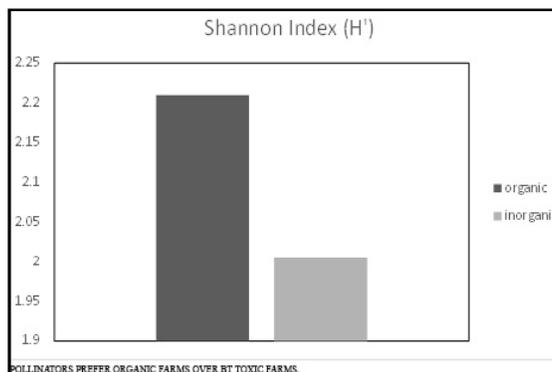
A study of the impacts of Bt on soil ecosystems that we published in *Applied Biological Research* showed that beneficial soil organisms were being killed by the Bt toxin. Soil health has been destroyed by Bt cultivation. Our ongoing research shows continued reduction in the ecological activity of the soils and staggering reductions in microbial populations in Bt-toxic soils. Compared to non-Bt soils, we have found that Bt has destroyed fungi populations by 31.4%, nitrifiers by 29.6% and bacteria by 256.5% in the years since we started gathering data in 2007.

Additionally, our studies on pollinators in the Bt cotton areas show a major decline in pollinator populations in Bt fields compared to Organic fields. Diversity indices of pollinators in organic and inorganic farms show that organic farms had more species of pollinators. The Shannon diversity index (H') of organic farms was higher than that of inorganic systems.

A True Cost study of Bt-Cotton vs Desi Kappas

Shri Radha Mohan Singh, Agriculture Minister of India, wrote the foreword for, and also released our book *Wealth per Acre*. In *Wealth per Acre* we have shown how agroecology based organic agriculture systems are far more efficient and increase the incomes of farmers. The assessments of the economics of growing cotton in India show the *desi* varieties, farmed organically, earn farmers much more than false promises of Bt-Cotton.

Table 3.17.1 is a table from a CICR Annual Report that shows that Dr Kranthi



INPUTS	Bt-Cotton (INR/Acre)	Desi Kappas (INR/Acre)
Seeds	1616	400
Fertiliser	1426	0
Pesticides	1545	0
Irrigation	356	670
Miscellaneous	1608	3695
Total costs	6551	4765
Total yield	(2.17 qt/acre) ^a	(2.88 qt/acre) ^a
Gross Revenue per Acre (2013)	9960	14375
Net Income per Acre(2013)	Rs. 3,409	Rs. 9,610

and the rest of CICR must be aware that cost of seed is not the only expense that increases with the use of Bt technology, whether it's in hybrid or straight. Even compared to hybrid cotton seeds, Bt input costs are higher.

The CICR's excuse that straight Bt seeds will be cheaper for the farmer and increase earnings is a fallacy. The development of straight variety Bt by CICR makes no sense for the farmers or the nation. Farmers earn more with their own seeds, grown organically, than with the failed Bt-technology that the CICR is attempting to force on Indian cotton farmers, instead of helping them earn more by providing organic seeds. Seeds that they can grow organically without the use of imported chemicals, earn more, and help India through exports of organic cotton.

Future impact of Bt in Straight varieties on India's Economy

The Biosafety issues related to Bt crops are serious. Our future ecological security and our food security depends on Biosafety. While Bt hybrids could not contaminate *desi* varieties, the Bt introduced in *desi* varieties will contaminate all *desi* varieties, robbing the farmers of their option to have GMO free, organic cotton seeds.

India is where cotton was domesticated. India is the leading producer of organic cotton, accounting for 74% of the world's organ-

ic cotton supply. The global organic cotton market is estimated to be US\$ 15.7 billion, with increasing demand. Without organic cotton seeds India cannot grow organic cotton. The global lack of non-GMO cotton seed is one of the most pressing issues with organic cotton today. The introduction of Bt in 'straight' varieties poses a grave threat to the availability of organic cotton seeds, and to India's ability to grow and export organic cotton.

The CICR should be focusing on strengthening India's ability to provide organic cotton and increase farmers' earnings by working *with* farmers, doing participatory breeding with farmers' varieties for an organic GMOfree seed supply, instead of attempting to force Bt - a failed technology by CICR's own assessment. CICR should be increasing availability of *desi* seeds so that India can gain from her 74% market share of global organic cotton. Instead, the CICR is attempting to destroy India's *desi kappas* seeds through contamination, blocking India's opportunity

Table 3.17.1: Use of inputs before and after introduction of Bt cotton

S. No.	Particular	Before Bt	After Bt
1.	Seed		
	Quantity (kg/acre)	1.52	0.79
	Cost (Rs/acre)	926.00	1922.00
2.	No of insecticidal sprays	7.4	4.3
3.	Fertilizers		
	Quantity (kg/acre)	106	230
	Cost (Rs/acre)	636	3418
4.	Respondents used weedicides (%)	0.00	21.50
5.	Respondents used growth regulators (%)	0.25	35.08
6.	Yield (qt/acre)	4.15	6.32

in organic cotton. If our government is serious about promoting India's rich cultural heritage, our handicrafts, our handlooms, the prime minister's office should not be attempting to expedite the death of India's fabric - *Khaadi*.

The Government of India must protect the interests of the country and of the farmers.

1. Monsanto must be made to return all the money it has illegally taken from our farmers and hybrid seed companies and repatriated to the United States.
2. A comprehensive Biosafety assessment of CCRI Bt cotton should be carried out in accordance with the law. Biosafety framework should be strengthened keeping in mind the TEC recommendations. On those recommendations we should not introduce any GMO in a crop for which India is the centre of Diversity - like cotton.
3. A plan should be made for organic breeding of organic seed for the organic sector with a focus on participatory breeding with farmers. This will protect India's position as the leading producer of organic cotton and India's interests in the future.

We, at Navdanya have spent the last 30 years protecting the biodiversity of our crops, spreading organic seeds and organic crops, protecting species that provide the ecological services that make agriculture possible and defending the first right of the farmer to *Bija Swaraj*, Seed Sovereignty - to have their own seeds, their own knowledge, to shape their own markets, their future and strengthen India by strengthening India's farmer communities. □□

Chinese Currency Devaluation and Indian Economy



There has always been a critical difference between the practice of 'protectionist economic policy' and a popular dominant economic model of 'market economy'. While the earlier rests on the role and importance of domestic national economic planning the latter is more concerned with free flow of capital, labour and trade. To say, market economy entails globally integrated economic system based on the policies of 'comparative advantage' and 'currency convertibility' thriving towards an economically interdependent world order. This financial interdependence

among states often causes a sense of unease across the world with a shift in policy priorities and structural monetary changes in the economies of major world countries. The current devaluation of Yuan by China is reflection of this trend.

Chinese economy has been on sustained 'ten+' growth rate for past three decades. However, with last two years we have witness the growth rate falling below ten in convergence with market meltdown. This was more attributed to 'Euro-zone crisis' which led to decline in Chinese exports and so the rate of economic growth rate. In between this, Chinese domestic economic policy makers are facing heat in order to transform the nature of economy from relying on investment and exports to a more 'consumption driven' model of growth. China's economy is officially expected to expand around 7 percent this year, the lowest in over two decades, but many observers believe it is growing at a much slower pace.



Chinese domestic economic policy makers are facing heat in order to transform the nature of economy from relying on investment and exports to a more 'consumption driven' model of growth, explains
Abhishek Pratap Singh

In the given situation China's central bank made devaluation of its tightly controlled currency, yuan, by 1.9 per cent followed by an another 1 per cent cut next week. Perhaps in order to protect its export interests China has done this. Also this is not for the first time that China has been adhering to this kind of policy. Chinese authorities said the change would help drive the currency toward more market-driven movements. It appears that a shift toward a weaker currency could help flagging exports at a time when many other efforts to boost the economy haven't proven very effective in China. More importantly, the devaluation was the most significant downward adjustment to the yuan since 1994 in post economic reform era in China.

The engineered fall in the yuan is likely to cause political ripples around the economic globe. It is yet to be seen if the fall is directed towards restoring export pace for China perhaps it also had an imperative as Chinese leadership has been urging the IMF to declare the yuan an official reserve currency on par with the dollar, euro, the Japanese yen and the British pound.

In addition, the devaluation of yuan also cannot be overlooked from Indian

economic point of view. Although there has been mixed response to the situation. As the DIPP note observed the impact of yuan devaluation on Indian industry is expected to be threefold. It said that loss in 'currency competitiveness' against Yuan will hurt already ailing exports from India to China by making them costlier. India's exports contracted for the eighth straight month by 10.3% in July to \$23.13 billion, pushing the trade deficit to \$12.81 billion. Domestic industry will have to compete with cheaper imports from China and are likely to suffer as China's share in India's total imports is around 13.48%

which has almost doubled in span of ten years, the Department of Industrial Policy and Promotion's (DIPP) note said. In the given scenario the 'trade competitiveness' of Indian exports might suffer in the market.

China's devaluation may be best seen as a 'distress signal' from Beijing policymakers and given the case it could possibly offer an opportunity for India. The weaker yuan would help eventually a recovery in economies from where China imports including India. However this could be done with an increased set of export basket from India to China. There are also

chances that if Beijing allows the yuan to decline further in near future it could increase trade tensions, or could even cause a "currency war". However, much on the subject depends on when the depreciation of the renminbi stops and at what level it stabilizes.

To the Indian economic interests if the devaluation of yuan hits another low and against our export interests our policy makers must seal the opportunity to widen the nature and scope of

India-China Strategic Economic Dialogue so as to include 'currency movements' to be discussed under it for better trade off. □□

State Conference of Swadeshi Jagran Manch, Delhi



State conference of Swadeshi Jagran Manch Delhi was successfully held on 23rd August 2015. More than 150 women activists and around 450 Male Karikartas participated in the conference. Issues of national importance including current economic scenario were discussed in detail. Major themes

of discussion in different working session were as follows:- importance of Swadeshi in current situation, FDI, Land Acquisition Act, GM foods, E-commerce, challenges from China, Environment, Self Reliance through Panchgavya, Swadeshi in daily life and economic thought of Pt. Deendayal Up-

adhyay & Rev. Dattopant Thengdi.

Those who spoke on these issue included Rashtriya Sangathak Sh. Kashmiri Lal, Rashtriya Seh-Sanyojak Sh. Saroj Mitra and Dr. Ashwani Mahajan; Rashtriya Vichar Mandal Pramukh Sh. Deepak Sharma 'Pradip', Sangathak North India Sh. Satish ji, Kshetriya Sanyojak Sh. Krishan Kumar Sharma and Sh. Kamaljeet ji Sangathak Delhi & Haryana.

Working session were president over by Dr. Sushma Yadav – VC-IGNOU, Sh. Shiv Prakash – Shiv Naresh ji, Sh. Anil Sharma and Sh. PankajChoudhary from Patanjali Yogpeeth.

Conference was also attended by Sh. Bharat Bushan ji, Sh. Dayanand ji, Sh. Ravindra Sharma and Sh. Bhimsen ji from RSS, Dr. Ex. MLA Jitendra Mahajan, Vijay Khurana, Devendra Sharma, ACP Anand Mishra also attended.

Sh. Susheel Panchal ji conducted the proceedings, Sh. Govindram Aggarwal, Prant Sanyojak welcomed the guests and proposed vote of thanks. □□

Master plans for 50 solar cities

Government has approved a proposed master plan to develop 50 solar cities, for which master plans have been prepared for 46, an official statement said. Three of these cities under the programme are planned to be set up in the National Capital region, the Ministry of New and Renewable Energy said in a status note. "At least one city in each state to a maximum of five cities in a State may be supported by the Ministry," it said. Out of the proposed 60 solar cities, sanctions have been issued for 50 cities that include New Delhi, Agra, Chandigarh, Gurgaon, Faridabad, Amritsar, New Town (Kolkata), Howrah, Madhyamgram, Kochi and Bhopal. The Ministry had empanelled 26 consultants in June 2009 to prepare the master plans. Eight cities are to be developed as "Model Solar Cities", the ministry said, adding Nagpur, Chandigarh, Gandhinagar and Mysuru have so far been selected for this. □

Bandhan joins Indian banking league

Bandhan Bank began operations as a full-fledged bank with 501 branches and 1.43 crore accounts across the country, becoming the newest member of the estimated \$2 trillion Indian banking industry. Bandhan said it is starting operations with 1.43 crore accounts, around Rs 10,500 crore loan book and 19,500 employees. To begin with, it has got 501 branches, 2022 service centres and 50 ATMs across 24 states.

It plans to have 632 branches and 250 ATMs in 27 states by the end of fiscal year 2016, the bank said after Finance Minister Arun Jaitley inaugurated its operations here at the Science City Auditorium in Kolkata, at a function attended by regulators, policy makers and luminaries from financial sector and corporate India. The bank said over 71 per cent of the branches will be in rural India, including at least 35 per cent in unbanked rural pockets.

The Kolkata-headquartered bank has two divisions — micro banking and general banking — and will offer complete retail financial solutions, including a variety of savings and loan products.

Organic food business grows 4-fold

Growing health consciousness and awareness about harmful pesticides has nearly quadrupled the size of organic foods in India in the last three years. Organic foods, which started out by occupying fewer shelves at retail stores, is now a Rs 300 crore business in the domestic market. The export market from India is even bigger at Rs 700 crore, according to industry experts. Consumers are opting for healthier eating habits which are driving entrepreneurship in organic foods, prodding retailers to offer greater shelf space to brands in this category. As per industry estimates, the category is currently growing at 50 per cent per annum.

Industry experts believe with growing talk about the bad effects of chemicals and pesticides used in the food industry, products that are believed to be

free of such substances will grow exponentially. "Three years back, this market was approximately Rs 70 crore. We are growing at a very healthy rate year on year. In the last 5 years, shelf space given to organic foods has tripled. However, retailers are yet to realize the full potential," said N Balasubramanian, CEO, Sresta Natural Bioproducts, who claims its brand 24 Mantra is the largest player in organic foods in India.

Organic packaged food comes at a premium to the regular variety of packaged commodity. If the monthly household expense for a family of four on grocery is in the range of Rs 4,000 to Rs 5,000, a switch to a brand of organic food would cost Rs 1,200-1,500 more per month. "This is almost the same as what a family would spend on a movie outing over a weekend," said Balasubramanian.

Scrap NOC rule to GM: Pawar

Sharad Pawar, NCP leader & former Agriculture Minister has asked Prime Minister Narendra Modi to do away with a rule introduced by Jairam Ramesh, with regard to field trials of GM crops. Ramesh, then environment minister, had made it mandatory for developers of GM varieties to obtain a no-objection certificate (NOC) from the concerned state government before going ahead with open field trials. Pawar has written to Prime Minister saying the NOC requirement was not necessary and was in fact choking the growth of the agricultural biotechnology sector.

While conceding that the NOC requirement was "not a regressive step", Pawar has said that it has become a subject of "socio-political process rather than an objective science-based process of rigorous evaluation at the state level".

Pawar has pointed that the NOC requirement has made "all permissions of GEAC ineffective and redundant". "In the past, respective states were represented on various regulatory committees and contributed to the successful approval of Bt cotton and field trials of many crops. The NOC requirement

■ Cabinet clears auctioning of ONGC, Oil India fields ■

Cabinet has approved auction of 69 small and marginal oil fields of state-owned ONGC and Oil India to private and foreign firms as a precursor to a full-fledged licensing round. The Cabinet Committee on Economic Affairs (CCEA), headed by Prime Minister Narendra Modi, approved auctioning of the fields that state-owned firms are surrendering because they were uneconomical to develop due to government's subsidy sharing mechanism. The fields will be bid out on the basis of revenue share or the share of oil and gas a bidder offers to the government upfront, and work programme, an official said. Companies offering the maximum revenue share or percentage of oil and gas to the government, and committing to do more work, will win the field. The weight for revenue share will be 80 per cent while 20 per cent would be for work programme that may include drilling of exploratory and development wells and seismic studies. □

from states is not a regressive step but a condition that is becoming difficult to be met in the absence of regulatory system at the state level," he has written.

Political parties can't be under RTI Act

The government has opposed in Supreme Court a plea to bring political parties under the ambit of RTI Act, saying this would adversely impact their internal working and political functioning. Submitting an affidavit, the Department of Personnel and Training (DoPT) has said the Central Information Commission (CIC) erroneously ruled in June 2013 that political parties are public authorities under the RTI Act and, hence, are accountable under the transparency law. The DoPT claimed that the CIC had made a "very liberal" interpretation of RTI Act, "leading to an erroneous conclusion" that political parties are public authorities. In its judgment, the CIC had said political parties should be held accountable under the RTI Act since their constitution was akin to setting up a body by the government and they also performed public functions after availing various financial aid and concessions by the Centre. But this judgment remained on paper and the parties did not comply with the mandate of RTI Act.

Complaining non-compliance, applicants Subhash Chandra Aggarwal and Anil Bairwal of the Association of Democratic Reforms (ADR) approached the CIC which, in March, directed the DoPT to take action. ADR and Aggarwal moved a PIL in Supreme Court, seeking a declaration that political parties are public authorities and should disclose details of income and expenditure for public scrutiny.

Vedants raises Rs. 2000 cr from SBI

Mining Conglomerate Vedanta Ltd has raised Rs2,000 crore from country's largest lender State Bank of India through issuance of Non-Convertible Debentures (NCDs). In a BSE filing, the Anil Agarwal-led firm said: "The Company have allotted 20,000, 9.45

per cent secured, rated, non-cumulative, redeemable, NCDs of Rs10 lakh each aggregating to Rs2,000 crore to State Bank of India (SBI) on August 17, 2015."

The NCDs are long term funds and this issuance will reduce our cost of funds, it said. The firm's shares on Monday breached the lower circuit and closed at Rs80.4 apiece on BSE, down by 15.30 per cent, on a day the exchange witnessed a bloodbath with the Sensex plummeting by more than 1,600 points at close — its biggest fall ever.

Earlier this month, Vedanta, formerly Sesa Sterlite, had said that the issuance of NCDs is part of the overall debt refinancing of the firm to substitute short-term liabilities and/or to retire higher cost debt.

DRDO ties up with Ramdev

India's premier defence research organisation DRDO has now roped in yoga guru Ramdev's Patanjali Ayurveda Limited to manufacture and market in the country and abroad some herbal supplements and food products developed by it. DRDO entered into licensing agreements with Ramdev's company for transfer of Seabuckthorn technology based products developed by Defence Institute of High Altitude Research (DIHAR).

The technology has been transferred under the DRDO FICCI ATAC (Accelerated Technology Assessment & Commercialisation) programme that has been established to identify spin-off technologies for commercial markets within India and abroad, with a special focus on social benefit technologies, an official statement said. DIHAR, a frontier laboratory of DRDO which is located in Leh with detachments in the strategic Siachen sector has pioneered cold arid-agro animal technologies for augmenting local availability of fresh food in the region. The laboratory, through its translational laboratory to land approach, develops technologies for fresh food cultivation, poultry, goat and dairy farming and green house cultivation which are disseminated to the local farmers. □□

ISIS destroys temple at Syria

ISIS terrorists have destroyed a temple at Syria's ancient ruins of Palmyra, realising the worst fears archaeologists had for the 2,000-year-old Roman-era city after the extremists seized it and beheaded a local scholar. Palmyra, one of the Middle East's most spectacular archaeological sites and a UNESCO World Heritage site, sits near the modern Syrian city of the same name.

Activists said the militants used explosives to blow up the Baalshamin Temple on its grounds, the blast so powerful it also damaged some of the Roman columns around it. The Britain-based Syrian Observatory for Human Rights said that the temple was blown up a month ago. The Sunni extremists, who have imposed a violent interpretation of Islamic law across their self-declared "caliphate" in territory they control in Syria and Iraq, claim ancient relics promote idolatry and say they are destroying them as part of their purge of paganism. However, they are also believed to sell off looted antiquities, bringing in significant sums of cash. □

Chinese slowdown fears grip world

Fears that Chinese growth is weakening, dragging down the global economy with it, are hammering commodities and world stock markets. A survey showed Chinese manufacturing slowed the most since the global financial crisis in 2009 — adding to other worrying clues about the country's health, including its falling exports. China devalued the yuan earlier in August, by pushing its official guidance rate down 2 per cent. The central bank has said there was no reason for the currency to fall further, but investors are also bracing for further interest rate cuts.

China is also widely expected to relax reserve requirements ratios for its banks again in the coming months, a measure intended to spur lending by reducing the cash they need to hold. It is trying to keep its economy on course to grow 7 per cent in 2015 — its slowest pace in a quarter of a century. The cash reserves ratio has already been cut three times this year. A looming snap election in Greece and a closely watched conference hosted by the Federal Reserve in the United States are also likely to keep investors on their toes next week, in particular as they look for hints on when the US will raise interest rates

Iran asks India to clear oil dues

Iran has asked India to pay within two months \$6.5 billion in past oil dues, partly in rupees and rest in dollars or euros, a top official said. "The payment will be in at least three installments. The modalities of installments and the route are being worked out," he said. The dues to Iran on crude oil that refiners buy have accumulated as Western sanctions blocked payment routes since 2013.

About 45 per cent of the oil import bill is paid in rupees. The official said the payment to Iran can be either through Reserve Bank of India (RBI) - in that

case refiners will hand over the money to the central bank which will then do the onward transmission to Iran, or through a gateway notified by the government. Iran will use the rupee payments to settle bills for goods and commodities it imports from India.

Since February 2013, refiners like Mangalore Refinery and Petrochemicals (MRPL) and Essar Oil have been paying 45 per cent of payment due on purchase of crude oil from Iran in rupees through Uco Bank, Kolkata. The remaining has been accumulating, pending finalization of a payment route and mechanism. They had last year paid nearly \$3 billion in six installments through a limited payment channel following start of nuclear talks between the Western world and Iran. The outstanding has since climbed to over \$6.5 billion.

US blocks military aid to PAK

Peeved over Pakistan's failure to act decisively against the militant Haqqani Network that continues to mount terrorist attacks on Afghanistan from its soil, the United States is understood to have withheld for now a \$300 million disbursement in military aid. The Washington Post reported that Islamabad had recently been informed about the likely withholding of the final tranche of \$300 million for this year in the absence of sufficient action against the Haqqanis.

US Defence Secretary Ashton Carter took the stand that the matter has not come to him yet for consideration. Release of military aid instalments to Pakistan from what is called the Coalition Support Fund can happen only after the US Defence Secretary certifies to Congress that Islamabad is going all-out against the Haqqani Network that continues to carry out lethal attacks against high-profile targets in Afghanistan.

Citing a senior Obama administration official, the Post said the US is concerned that the Haqqanis, earlier driven out from Miran Shah in North Waziristan,

Sindh fast becoming a terrorist safe haven

Pakistan's Sindh province is fast becoming a terrorist safe haven with jihadi outfits running a large number of madrasas and the country's leadership lacking a political will to take actions against them, a report released by a US-based Sindhi organisation claimed.

"There is no likelihood of terrorist militancy being rooted out and containing religious extremism in Sindh. Hafez Saeed and his Jamaat Ud Dawa is one example among several who are operating openly and with total impunity not only in Sindh but exporting terrorism abroad," the report titled 'Rise of Religious Extremism in Sindh' said. Released by the Washington-based Sindhi Foundation, the report says that the Mumbai terrorist attack was being monitored by its perpetrators from a control room set up in Sindh. □

have reconstituted elsewhere in Pakistan from where they are plotting their attacks.

US for transparent economy

The White House has urged China - which is facing one of the worst financial crises in decades - to continue to pursue financial reform and move rapidly toward a more "market-determined" exchange rate system. China should continue to pursue "financial reform to increase exchange rate flexibility" and to move rapidly toward a more "market-determined" exchange rate system, White House Press secretary, Josh Earnest, told reporters.

During its meetings with Chinese officials, the US has consistently reinforced the message that the US would like to see China take additional steps to move more rapidly toward a market-determined exchange rate system. Earnest said one of the cases that the US has made to the Chinese government is that a more "transparent economy" is one that will benefit not just the Chinese economy but the global economy.

UK's Indian hotels face chef shortage

Facing an acute shortage of curry chefs, Indian restaurant owners in the UK have called on Prime Minister David Cameron to introduce short-term work visas to save "hundreds" of restaurants from the possible shut down. The owners are preparing a submission to the Cameron and other cabinet members which warns that 90 per cent of Indian curry restaurants are 'under the threat of a chef skills shortage'.

Enam Ali, who founded the British Curry Awards 10 years ago, is preparing a submission to the Prime Minister and other cabinet members, including the Home Secretary Theresa May and the House of Commons Leader Chris Grayling, The Independent reported. Ali warned that it can take up to three years to train a chef and that "hundreds" of restaurants could soon shut down.

Japanese PM hits out at Russian PM

Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe criticised his Russian counterpart Dmitry Medvedev's weekend visit to disputed islands, aggravating a long-running dispute over the archipelago. The visit "conflicts with Japan's position and hurts the feelings of the Japanese people. It is extremely regrettable," Abe told a parliamentary panel when asked about the trip.

Abe's first comments on the visit come after the Russian Prime Minister arrived in Iturup, one of four in the Kuril island chain that lies off Russia's far eastern coast and just north of Japan. Japanese Foreign Minister Fumio Kishida immediately summoned Russia's ambassador to Japan in protest at the visit to the islands, which Japan calls the Northern Territories. The visit has also led to Kishida postponing a planned trip to Russia in the next few weeks, local reports said, citing Government sources. Kishida had been expected to prepare the ground for Russian President Vladimir Putin to make a long-delayed visit to Japan this year to seek a breakthrough in the 70-year-old territorial dispute. Soviet troops seized the islands just after Japan surrendered in World War II.

Sri Lanka votes for change

Former President Mahinda Rajapaksa conceded defeat in Sri Lanka's tightest-ever presidential race and left his official residence after the majority of voters gave a verdict in favour of completing the partial political change that began with the presidential election of January 8 this year. The election, held peacefully with high voter turnout, determined the makeup of Sri Lanka's 225-member Parliament. As expected, Mr. Rajapaksa easily won a seat in the chamber. But his political coalition fell short of winning a majority, which he had said would have earned him the right to be named prime minister, the second-most powerful job in the government. □□

India might not ratify WTO TFA

India is unlikely to ratify WTO's trade facilitation agreement (TFA). It has decided to seek a permanent solution on the food stockholding issue at the coming 10th ministerial meeting in Nairobi, Kenya, in December.

The government is believed to be again taking a tough stance, as it did last year when it decided to veto the protocol of amendment of the TFA that made it a legal agreement under WTO. It is learnt the government has decided to not ratify the pact, as there has been no progress in negotiations on a permanent solution on food security for stockholding purposes.

Besides, India was also miffed with the fact that there had been no positive discussion on other issues of the Doha round, the most important being a 'substantial reduction' in the overall trade distorting subsidies (OTDS) of developed countries in their farm sector, officials told Business Standard.

At a meeting of the WTO's General Council, director general Roberto Azevêdo said it remains very unlikely that a clearly defined work programme on the remaining Doha issues could be agreed by the mandated deadline of July 31.

"Compliance" panel report issued

WTO issued the "compliance" panel report in the case "European Communities — Definitive anti-dumping measures on certain iron or steel fasteners from China" on On 7 August 2015. In July 2009, China had requested consultations with the European Communities concerning Article 9(5) of Council Regulation which provides that in case of imports from non-market economy countries, the duty shall be specified for the supplying country concerned and not for each supplier and that an individual duty will only be specified for exporters that demonstrate that they fulfil the criteria listed in that provision.

In October 2009, China requested the establishment of a panel which the DSB established on 23 October 2009. Brazil, Canada, Chile, Colombia, India, Japan, Norway, Chinese Taipei, Thailand, Turkey and the United States reserved their third-party rights. On 30 November 2009, the European Communities requested the Director-General to determine the composition of the panel which he did on 9 December 2009.

On 14 July 2014, the Chair of the compliance

panel informed the DSB that it expects to issue its final report to the parties in May 2015, in accordance with the timetable adopted after consultation with the parties. On 7 August 2015, the compliance panel report was circulated to Members.

Niger ratifies TFA

Niger has become the twelfth WTO member and the first LDC (Least developed country) to ratify the new Trade Facilitation Agreement (TFA). Niger's ambassador, Ado Elhadji Abou, presented the instrument of acceptance of the TFA to the Director-General, Roberto Azevêdo on August 6th. The TFA will enter into force once two-thirds of the WTO membership has formally accepted the Agreement. In addition to Niger, the following members have ratified the Agreement: Nicaragua, Trinidad and Tobago, the Republic of Korea, Hong Kong China, Singapore, the United States, Mauritius, Malaysia, Japan, Australia and Botswana.

Concluded at the WTO's 2013 Bali Ministerial Conference, the TFA contains provisions for expediting the movement, release and clearance of goods, including goods in transit. It also sets out measures for effective cooperation between customs and other appropriate authorities on trade facilitation and customs compliance issues. It further contains provisions for technical assistance and capacity building in this area.

Arbitration hearing opened to the public

At the request of the parties in the disputes United States – Certain Country of Origin Labelling (COOL) Requirements: Recourse to Article 22.6 of the DSU by the United States, the Arbitrator has agreed to open its meetings with the parties on 15 and 16 September 2015 with a session open to public viewing at the WTO Headquarters in Geneva. This public session is expected to start at 15h00 until 18h00 on Tuesday, 15 September 2015 and continue from 10h00 to 13h00 and from 15h00 to 18h00 on Wednesday, 16 September 2015.

The limited number of places in the gallery above the meeting room reserved for the public will be allocated on a first-come first-served basis upon receipt of a completed registration form. Members of the public whose registration has been confirmed will need to present a valid official photo identification on-site to access the meeting room. □□