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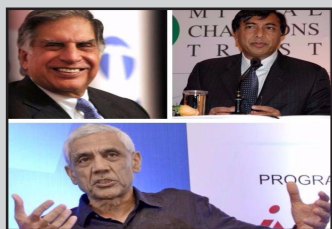
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LETTERS 3

NEWS 34



CONTENTS

COVER ARTICLE 6

Growth for Whom?

Dr. Ashwani Mahajan



- 1 Cover Page
- 2 Cover Inside Page

08 OPINION

Aadhaar, Data Security and Breach of Privacy
..... **Sandhya Jain**

10 GM FOOD

Health Hazards of Genetically Engineered Food
..... **Bharat Dogra**

13 Enough! Don't allow GMO mustard

..... **Dr. Vandana Shiva**

15 FOCUS

Industry Consortiums to Invigorate Domestic Manufacturing
..... **Prof. Bhagwati Prakash Sharma**

18 VIEW POINT

De-mon — a multidimensional project
..... **S. Gurumurthy**

21 ANALYSIS

Give direct subsidy to farmers
..... **Dr. Bharat Jhunjhunwala**

23 SCRUTINY

Why India Must Go Beyond Loan Waivers to Free Farmers ...
..... **Kavitha Kuruganti**

26 PERSPECTIVE

Create integral economy; Focus India's largest private sector; ...
..... **Shivaji Sarkar**

28 AGRICULTURE

India@ 100: Of The Agrarian Distress
..... **Dr. Devinder Sharma**

30 PRESS RELEASE

Press Conference of Swadeshi Jagran Manch addressed by Sh. Kashmiri Lal & Dr. Ashwani Mahajan on Sept. 7, 2017

31 SWADESHI ACTIVITIES

Press Coverage: Anti-China Campaign

- 39 Back Inside Cover
- 40 Back Cover



Boycott strategy for rediscovering and helping our own economy

Respected Sir,

China is testing the limits of India's patience. The imperialist dragon, for too long, has not only been gobbling up our border territories and militarily encircling us, but also making grave inroads into our economy. At this rate it will push even moderates into believing that the stand taken by swadeshi activists to boycott Chinese goods, is after all justified.

Ironically, it was China, which had originally inspired India in boycotting foreign goods! K.R. Narayanan, our former President, while delivering a speech at Peking University in 2000, said: "In 1905 there was a boycott of American goods by China provoked by the U.S. attitude to the renewal of the Sino-American Immigration Treaty. Almost at the same time, there were mass demonstrations in India against the British decision to partition the province of Bengal. Newspapers and political leaders of India were telling the people 'American goods were boycotted by China, so should India in the case of England.' When the news of these developments reached Mahatma Gandhi in South Africa, he wrote exhorting Indians to show the same sort of unity as the Chinese did in the boycott of foreign goods and that 'we must admit that our people learned these tactics from the Chinese'. Thus the boycott of British goods by India and the dramatic bonfire of foreign clothes that Gandhi made later in Bombay and the swadeshi movement he launched owed their inspiration to China"!!

Hence in adopting the boycott strategy we would not only be rediscovering and helping our own economy but also be giving China a taste of it's own medicine!

— C.V. Krishna Manoj, Hyderabad, Telangana

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Quote-Unquote



West Pakistan refugees, Kashmiri Pandits still denied rights.

Respected Mohan Bhagwat ji

Sar Sanghchalak, Rashtriya Swayamsewak Sangh



New India requires an energy framework that works on the principle of equity, efficiency and sustainability.

Narendra Modi

Prime Minister



Negotiations with North Korea a waste of time, U.S. will 'do what has to be done'.

Donald Trump

USA President



The Reserve Bank of India has to bring down interest rates radically to deal with the high level of NPAs.

Arun Jaitley

Finance Minister

Need for effective ban on Bitcoin

Today, there are many virtual currencies are in circulation, which are not issued by any authority of the Government(s); however, transactions are being made using these currencies. Though, at limited places, official payments are also accepted using these currencies. These currencies are created by computer systems, and are also termed as crypto currencies. Out of all crypto currencies, highest circulated currency is Bitcoin. Recently, Chinese government has banned crypto currency exchanges. In India and many other countries, they are already banned. It is notable that China is a big hub of Bitcoin transactions, accounting for nearly 25 percent transactions in the world. Russia has also indicated that it intends to ban Bitcoin transactions. Earlier local media in Russia had indicated that Russian government may legalise transactions in Bitcoin. But with declared intention of Russian government to ban Bitcoin and China had already banned on this currency, there is now a fear amongst the hoarders of Bitcoin; and value of Bitcoin has declined by 20 percent in the first week of September, 2017, coming down from \$5000 per Bitcoin to \$4000 per Bitcoin. In the last few days, it has again improved slightly, to \$4300 per Bitcoin.

Recently, due to severe cyber attacks by cyber criminals, nearly two lakh computers were affected in nearly 150 countries. Whole world was stunned, as ransom was demanded for restoring the data in 'Bitcoins'. Generally we transact online, using debit cards, credit cards, online banking etc. All these transactions are legal and are recorded properly. Information about the parties engaged in these transactions is available or is traceable. However, distinction of Bitcoin transactions is that 'Block Chain' method is used and is browsed on 'Dark Web', which makes it impossible to trace the particulars about the transactions. Further these transactions are irreversible and cannot be undone. Due to these features of 'Bitcoin', it's becoming very popular among criminals, as they would not be caught by security agencies. Increasing use of 'Bitcoin' in crimes is making it intricate for security agencies and financial authorities to trace the trails. Bitcoin has become safest bet for money laundering and anybody can transfer any amount to tax heavens by sending money to 'Bitcoin wallet'. Systems all over the world are finding it impossible to catch transaction by criminals.

Reserve Bank of India (RBI) has declared 'Bitcoin' to be illegal. Despite being warned by the government and RBI, number of people investing in Bitcoin is rising. Despite warning from the government that money put in 'Bitcoin' would be treated as 'money laundering', so far more than 5 lakh people have downloaded Bitcoin network in India. Bitcoin does not have approval of any central bank in the world and is not a legal tender anywhere in the world, as it is not issued by any bank/central bank. Therefore, no tax is applicable on Bitcoins. Perhaps this is the reason for its rising popularity, especially among criminals. Another reason of craze for 'Bitcoins' is its fast increasing value. Since value of Bitcoin is determined on the basis of its demand and supply, there are big upheavals in its market value, which makes it attractive for speculators. Most of the money invested in 'Bitcoin' is black money, and Bitcoin has emerged safe haven for black money hoarders. Due to rising popularity of Bitcoin, its value has also been rising in dollar terms. In 2010, 1000 Bitcoin were just equal to price of a pizza, by September 1, 2017, its value went up to 5000 US dollars per Bitcoin, that is Rs. 3,20,000 per Bitcoin. Notably its price was only 1000 US dollars in the beginning of 2017. Because of these reasons, craze for Bitcoin never ends. Switzerland became the first country where a local body announced that it could accept payment of local taxes in 'Bitcoin'. It is well known that Switzerland has been the safe haven for black money from throughout the world.

Till now we know only about Initial Public Offer (IPO), which is made by a company to attract equity or other investments under given rules and regulations. In some countries, companies have started raising capital through crypto currencies, and the method for the same is called Initial Currency Offer (ICO). In this method, a company making ICO would issue a limited amount of virtual currency; which investors can exchange later.

Bitcoin and other crypto currencies are becoming a cause of financial indiscipline and giving encouragement to money laundering and crimes. Their increasing usage is an alarm bell for the world. Economies are not benefitted by their use; rather it spoils the legal channels. Need of the hour is that effective steps are taken to free the world from these illegitimate currencies like Bitcoin.

Growth for Whom?



Decline in GDP growth in the first quarter of 2017-18 to 5.4 percent, compared to 7.6 percent during same quarter in 2016-17; mainly because of slowing manufacturing sector, after euphoria of turnaround in the economy is causing sleepless nights to the present regime under PM Narendra Modi. A sudden slow down spree after a significant recovery in the past 2-3 years, has raised alarm bells for the policy makers. Prime Minister has started meeting key persons from his cabinet and outside, to catch the thread of the problem. A new economic advisory committee has also been constituted.

With first Vice Chairman of NITI Aayog back to Columbia, new Vice Chairman is also burning midnight oil to somehow take the economy back on track and see people happy, to take Modi on the 2019 ship. In the meanwhile many friends of the government and also a veteran of Bhartiya Janata Party, and ex-finance minister have also raised concerned about the mismanagement and shattered economy.

If newspapers and media are to be believed, another spell of bail out and booster doses are being planned to take the economy out of slowdown. Official circles are indicating that all this would be tried, without really slipping on fiscal discipline front. Classically, what one generally understands from these measures is that companies would be incentivised to make more investment; tax concessions to boost consumption, obviously to the well of section of the society; reduce indirect taxes to attract spending; bail out of banks to deal with menace of Non Performing Assets (NPAs) enabling them to lend more etc.



It is important that the benefit of economic growth gets distributed equally, says
Dr. Ashwani Mahajan

Readymade solutions don't work

While finding solutions to stem slowdown, it's important to understand, why growth has actually slowed down. So far the practice has been to offer readymade solutions for slowdown, irrespective of the reasons. Not going too far, when US was passing through meltdown, US government, started showering bailout packages to banks and financial sector, distributed money to commoners to somehow raise demand and overcome recession. In the process, though demand was created, US government's debt increased by nearly 100 percent. European countries also followed the suit. Copying the same, Indian policy makers also started giving bailout packages. In the process our fiscal deficit started increasing (due to increased government expenditure without corresponding in-

crease in revenue). We find that fiscal deficit which had reached 2.5 percent of GDP in 2007-08, actually jumped to 6.5 percent by 2009-10. Obvious outcome was spiralling inflation, which ultimately led to downturn in GDP growth. Therefore giving more concessions to corporates actually does not provide solution to stem the slowdown.

Growth for whom?

Recently in a report entitled 'Indian Income Inequality, 1922-2014: From British Raj to Billionaire Raj' famous economist Thomas Piketti has said that in 34 years from 1980 to 2014 top 10 percent of Indian population has cornered 66 percent of benefits of growth. Even more serious is the fact that top one percent has cornered 29 percent of the benefits of GDP growth in these years. One can very well understand that when 34 percent of the benefit of GDP growth have reached bottom 90 percent of the population, their economic well being would not have improved significantly. It is not only a question of social justice, in fact the inequalities caused by lop sided growth would come in way of increasing demand of consumer goods, which is the basic requirement for sustained growth.

According to the report of the 66th round of National Sample Survey Organisation (NSSO), 250 lakh people are out of self-employment and in their place 220 lakh people have become casual labour, between 2004 and 2009. It means that farmers, small shopkeepers and people who used to run small-scale businesses have either become casual labourers or are unemployed. It may be interesting to note that the income of casual

labour is around rupees 200 to 300 daily, with hardly any continuity of employment.

Data shows that in the beginning of the decade of 1990, the share of wages and salaries, including all perks, in total value added in industries was 78 per cent which came down to 41 per cent in 2014-15. In urban areas in 1993-94, the consumption of top 10 per cent of the population was 10.5 times more than that of the bottom 10 per cent of population, now this it has reached nearly 15 times. In villages, this difference has increased from 7 times to 10 times during the same period. Further we

Giving more concessions to corporates actually does not provide solution to stem the slowdown

note that share of agriculture and allied activities, which provide employment to nearly 60 percent of the population is hardly 15 to 16 percent of the total GDP. This fact is corroborated by Social and Economic Census Report also.

Today all indicators of economic health of the country indicate at a comfortable position, which Finance Minister generally calls 'Bright Spot' of Indian economy. For instance we find inflation generally is under control, Consumer inflation coming down to nearly 2.36 percent in July 2017 (Though in August suddenly it has jumped to nearly 5 percent), external balance (Balance of Trade and Balance of Payment) broadly within comfortable limits, bumper

FDI and FII, record agricultural production both foodgrains as well as non foodgrains crops and so on. There is no reason why economy should face any problem in the near future. However, despite all these favourable conditions we find a slowdown in the last quarter. This slowdown is seemingly due to disruption caused by introduction of GST, which is a big change indirect tax structure in the economy. This slowdown is considered to be a temporary phase. However the big question is that are we realising full potential of growth?

Inequalities Hindering Economic Growth

The increasing inequalities in the country not only mean that there has been no improvement in the standard of living of the poor and that they are still living in poverty, in spite of economic growth but it is also causing a hindrance in the future economic growth. The top 5 per cent people in India like capitalists, government officials, highly-educated salaried people and a few corrupt politicians have undoubtedly been benefitted by economic growth but the majority of the population has remained deprived of these benefits. But they do not have money to recharge these phones.

Since there has been no increase in the income of 'mango people', the demand for industrial goods has not picked up. This is coming in way of industrial recovery. The middle class is under duress due to the EMIs of their loans. It is important that the benefit of economic growth gets distributed equally. The income of the poor should increase. There should be a control on the profits of capitalists and increase in the wages of the labourers. □□

Aadhaar, Data Security and Breach of Privacy

An RTI application filed by Bengaluru-based Col. Matthew Thomas, a petitioner in the Right to Privacy case before the Supreme Court, reveals that the Unique Identification Authority of India (UIDAI), custodian of Aadhaar data, signed contracts with foreign firms giving them “full access” to classified data and personal details of citizens, which they were allowed to store for seven years. The Centre must direct the UIDAI to make a full disclosure of the project since its inception, including contracts signed, and who selected the firms recruited for the task. Then Chairman Nandan Nilekani must explain why the technology (hardware and software) for collecting and storing the data was not created domestically, when India is supposed to be the hub for information technology services.

The RTI reply punctures the UIDAI’s assertion that no private entity had access to unencrypted Aadhaar data. The contract with US-based biometric service provider, L-1 Identity Solutions Operating Co. Pvt. Ltd. (now owned by French transnational Safran Group), clearly says the firm was given Aadhaar data access “as part of its job”. Other firms given identical contracts from 2010 to 2012 include Morpho and Accenture Services Pvt. Ltd.

In 2014, Prime Minister Narendra Modi was persuaded that Aadhaar could expand the reach of his social welfare programmes exponentially. But recently, when data breaches became glaring, Nilekani dismissed the problem saying data security is challenging in a digital age and ran back to his parent company. The unanimous verdict of the nine-judge bench of the Supreme Court, upholding Right to Privacy as a fundamental right, reportedly reflects this belated understanding at the top echelons of government.

The contract’s Clause 15.1, ‘Data and Hardware’, says the firm “may have access to personal data of the purchaser (UID), and/or a third party or any resident of India...” Clause 3, which deals with privacy, says the biometric service provider



No country in the world has allowed Bankers and Corporations such totalitarian access to intimate data about its citizens,
says
Sandhya Jain



(BSP) could “collect, use, transfer, store and process the data”. Also, the BSP shall process all personal data in accordance with applicable law and regulation and should not disclose such information. The contract does not define ‘personal data’.

However, according to UIDAI, personal data includes biometric (fingerprints, iris) and demographic data (name, date of birth, address, mobile number), and could include bank details, licence number, PAN number, passport number and other information furnished as part of Know Your Customer (KYC). A clause in the contract says the firm should maintain the biometric template created by it and on termination or expiry of contract, “transfer all the proprietary templates to UIDAI”.

The UIDAI claimed it had purchased the software and hardware for the Aadhaar programme, but the contracts show that the BSPs provided hardware for the first one crore enrolments. It is not known if the hardware was checked to ascertain if data could be stolen via a back door. UIDAI’s assertion that no data ever left its servers and premises cannot be trusted as the language of the contracts clearly shows that foreign firms had access to raw data.

But is this surprising? In a Forward to a Credit Suisse study (Ideas Engine Series, 29 June 2016), Nandan Nilekani wrote, “Once in a while a major disruption or discontinuity happens which has huge consequences. In 2007, the internet and the mobile phone came together in a whole new product called the smartphone... [which] could support OTT (Over The Top) applications. The messaging solution for the smartphone...

came from WhatsApp, a start-up”.

Nilekani argued that Indian Banking is experiencing a ‘WhatsApp’ moment, as smartphones could reach 700 million by 2020 and over one billion Indian residents have the online biometric identity, Aadhaar. Hence it is possible to “visualise a future where every adult Indian has an Aadhaar number, a smartphone and a bank account”.

More insidiously, Aadhaar provides on-line authentication using fingerprint or iris, which can be done from *anywhere*, making transactions ‘presence-less’. Aadhaar’s eKYC feature enables a bank account to be opened instantly by using one’s Aadhaar number and biometric; something prone to misuse. In Jammu & Kashmir, illegal immigrants (Rohingyas) have acquired Aadhaar and ration cards.

Extolling many facets of the new technology (the India Stack), Nilekani states, “as data becomes the new currency, financial institutions will be willing to forego transaction fees to *get rich digital information on their customers* (italics added)”. This would accelerate the move to a cashless economy as merchant payments will also become digital.

Commending Credit Suisse’s “insightful report”, Nilekani agrees that there is a US\$ 600 billion market capitalisation opportunity possible in the next ten years, which will be shared between existing public and private banks, new banks and new age non-bank financial companies (NBFCs). “It may even go to non-banking platform players, which use the power of data to fine-tune credit risk and pricing, and make money from customer ownership and risk arbitrage”. He expects a serious challenge to Public Sector banks which currently enjoy

a 70 per cent market share.

The Payment Bank (Paytm), launched in 2016 (Alibaba holds 40 per cent stake), and Unified Payment Interface (UPI)-powered payment interfaces, hope to encash the shift towards digital transactions, and get their share of the coveted US\$ 600 billion pie. Credit Suisse anticipates that private banks, NBFCs’ and fin-tech players will be its prime beneficiaries.

Credit Suisse explains that financial providers will become data rich in just two or three years as they receive data via transactions made through their apps, digital footprints left by individuals, smartphone data and online tax information, as 3 to 5 billion invoices go digital with GST. Forecasting consumer debt to rise to 25 per cent of GDP from the current 17 per cent on the back of new data availability, the SME lending market could grow from US\$ 620 billion to US\$ 3,020 billion over the next decade. Aadhaar seems tailored to benefit private bankers.

This writer was invited to enroll for the National Population Register vide acknowledgement slip 130, form number 02046115, household block no. 0021, household number 128, by Enumerator O.P. Singh, dated 26 May 2010. Aadhaar was supposedly for BPL beneficiaries. It turned out they were one and the same.

Now, it is not clear who controls the data; certainly it is prone to misuse. The Sonia Gandhi-led regime unleashed this menace through lies and deception. The Modi-led government must fix this treachery. No country in the world has allowed Bankers and Corporations such totalitarian access to intimate data about its citizens. □□

Health Hazards of Genetically Engineered Food



All over the world the controversy over genetically engineered (GE) food and genetically modified (GM) crops, also called genetically modified organisms (GMOs) is heating up as more and more evidence becomes available on their extremely serious hazards and threats. What needs to be emphasised is that these warnings have the support of some of the world's most eminent and well-qualified independent scientists and experts in the field.

Some time back seventeen distinguished scientists from Europe, USA, Canada and New Zealand wrote in a letter to the former

Prime Minister of India Dr. Manmohan Singh, "GM transformation can produce novel biochemical processes that are unpredictable and for which there is no natural history to assume are safe.

"The GM transformation process is highly mutagenic leading to disruptions to host plant genetic structure and function, which in turn leads to disturbances in the biochemistry of the plant. This can lead to novel toxin and allergen production as well as reduced/altered nutritional quality.

"It is not a question of if there are disturbances to gene function and biochemistry but to what degree they will be present within any given GM plant. For example, the levels of more than 40 proteins are altered significantly in the commercialised GM MON810 corn compared to equivalent non-GM corn, which included production of a new allergenic protein.

"Numerous animal feeding studies demonstrate negative health impacts of GM feed on kidney, liver, gut, blood cells, blood biochemistry & the immune system.

"Of greatest concern is that studies show negative health effects with GM crops that have already been approved and which have been grown commercially for 10-13 years. This highlights the inadequacy of the original criteria and set of data on the basis of which marketing approval was and is still being granted."

In 2003 the Independent Science Panel, which consists of eminent scientists from many countries covering a wide range of relevant disciplines reviewed the evidence on the hazards of GMOs. This review concluded that many GM crops contain gene products known to be harmful. For example, the Bt proteins that kill pests include potent immunogens and allergens. Food crops are increasingly being engineered to produce pharmaceuticals, drugs and vaccines in the open



Would the corporate bodies propagating GMO, then, be liable for compensating the victims of such pandemics and mass-scale malignancies caused by deliberately engineered poisoned foods?
asks Bharat Dogra

environment, exposing people to the danger of inappropriate medication and their harmful side effects. Herbicides tolerant crops - accounting for a majority of all GM crops worldwide - are tied to the broad-spectrum herbicide glyphosate and glufosinate ammonium. These have been linked to spontaneous abortions, birth defects and other serious health problems for human beings, animals and soil-organisms. GM varieties are unstable, with the potential to create new viruses and bacteria that cause diseases, and to disrupt gene function in animal and human cells.

This report also said that there have been very few credible studies on GM food safety. Nevertheless, the available findings already give cause for concern. In the still only systematic investigation on GM food ever carried out in the world, 'growth factor-like' effects were found in the stomach and small intestine of young rats that were not fully accounted for by the transgene product, and were hence attributable to the transgenic process or the transgenic construct, and may hence be general to all GM food. There have been at least two other, more limited, studies that also raised serious safety concerns.

"There is already experimental evidence that transgenic DNA from plants has been taken up by bacteria in the soil and in the gut of human volunteers. Antibiotic resistance marker genes can spread from transgenic food to pathogenic bacteria, making infections very difficult to treat.

Transgenic DNA is known to survive digestion in the gut and to jump into the genome of mammalian cells, raising the possibility for triggering cancer. The possibility

cannot be excluded that feeding GM products such as maize to animals also carries risks, not just for the animals but also for human beings consuming the animal products.

Evidence suggests that transgenic constructs with the CaMV 35S promoter might be especially unstable and prone to horizontal gene transfer and recombination, with all the attendant hazards: gene mutations due to random insertion, cancer, reactivation of dormant viruses and generation of new viruses. This promoter is present in most GM crops being grown commercially today."

A four-part series of experiments conducted over 3 years by

cerned with the risk of greatly increased resistance of antibiotics linked to GMOs.

Several scientists involved in studying the implication and impacts of genetic engineering got together at the International Conference on 'Redefining of Life Sciences' organised at Penang, Malaysia, by the Third World Network. They issued the Penang Statement (PS) which stated:

"Some GEOs (Genetically Engineered Organisms) have been made with virus or transposon vectors that have been artificially enhanced to become less species-specific. Since viruses and transposons can cause or induce mutations,

Persons with allergies may have legitimate concerns that with genetic engineering, once-familiar foods may be made allergenic

the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds and the Centre for Ecology and Hydrology, Lancaster (United Kingdom)' (see The Independent dated March 22, 2005 reporting the findings of this study) concluded that GM crops could be more harmful to many groups of wild life than their conventional equivalents. According to these studies, Bt proteins, incorporated into a significant part of all GM crops, have been found to be harmful to many non-target insects, worms and amphibians. The serious threat to amphibians was also confirmed in research at Pitt's Pyramating Laboratory of Ecology.

Many scientists have been con-

cerned with the risk of greatly increased resistance of antibiotics linked to GMOs.

"Persons with allergies may have legitimate concerns that with genetic engineering, once-familiar foods may be made allergenic. Furthermore, they will not be able to protect themselves if the foods are not labelled to state that they have been produced from genetically engineered organisms. Allergic effects could be carried with the transgene or be stimulated by imbalances in the chemistry of the host plant or organism.

"Another problem is that field workers or neighbours may devel-

op allergies to insecticidal transgenic crops. For example, a spider venom expressed in sugarcane might block a metabolic pathway only in insects and not in humans, but humans can nevertheless develop serious allergies to some venoms.

“With genetic engineering, familiar foods could become metabolically dangerous or even toxic. Even if the transgene itself is not dangerous or toxic, it could upset complex biochemical network and create new bioactive compounds or change the concentrations of those normally present. In addition, the properties in proteins may change in a new chemical environment because they may fold in new ways.”

Sometime back Greenpeace, Germany highlighted the results of a study from the Research Centre for Milk and Foodstuffs in Bavaria which is reported to have been

“kept under lock and key for three years.” This study is important as it confirms the possibility of contamination of milk due to GMOs which exists in all countries where cattle-feed GM crops are being grown (including India).

In addition to all this there is the ethical dilemma faced by vegetarians who may find it difficult to select food when animal genes are introduced into plant genes. The choice becomes even more difficult (and not just for vegetarians) when even human genes are introduced into food crops (even rice). This dilemma is most difficult to resolve when GM foods are not specifically labelled, and in fact GM food companies try their best to avoid any legal requirement of specific labelling of GM food.

Environmentalism Sailendra Nath Ghosh has raised the very valid question whether GMO

companies will compensate people for the damage caused to their health. He writes, “The UK-based science journal Science in Society has reported that globally, cauliflower mosaic virus (CaMv) was the first plant virus found suitable to drive the expression of foreign genes in transgenic plants so much so that it is present in all genetically modified (GM) crops commercially grown today. It has also reported that this virus is hazardous for its relationship to hepatitis-B virus and the even more dreaded HIV. If this CaMv finds its way to the human cell, it multiplies and activates a number of common viruses that cause diseases including cancer. Would the corporate bodies propagating GMO, then, be liable for compensating the victims of such pandemics and mass-scale malignancies caused by deliberately engineered poisoned foods?” □ □

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Enough! Don't allow GMO mustard



For two decades, the Poison Cartel (now reduced to three — Bayer Monsanto, Dow Dupont, Syngenta Chem China) has been corrupting our governments, our regulatory agencies and some of our scientists to push their hazardous GMOs that do not work and claim patents and royalties based on scientific fraud.

Monsanto's corruption of regulatory agencies and attack on science and scientists is getting exposed. In the recently released "Monsanto Papers" made public through discovery in a court case filed by 100 cancer victims against Monsanto, it has become evident that not only are Monsanto's products

(Roundup and Roundup Ready crops) carcinogenic, but Monsanto has attacked the United Nations' World Health Organisation and scientists like Dr Eric Seralini whose research established Monsanto's links to cancer.

On March 10, 1995, Mahyco (Maharashtra Hybrid Seeds Company), a collaborator with Monsanto, imported 100 grams of the Bt Cotton seed without approval from the GEAC, which under Rules for the Manufacture, Use, Import, Export and Storage of hazardous Microorganisms Genetically Engineered Organisms or Cells, 1989 — framed under the Environment (Protection) Act, 1986 — is the only body that can grant permission for importing genetically engineered substances (seeds in the present case).

"No person shall import, export, transport, manufacture, process, use or sell any hazardous micro-organisms or genetically-engineered organisms/substances or cells except with the approval of the GEAC."

In 1998, Monsanto entered into an exclusive agreement with Mahyco and formed a joint venture, to introduce genetically modified Bt cotton in India.

In 1998, Monsanto-Mahyco illegally started open field trials of Bt cotton in 40 locations, and I had to start a case against them in the Supreme Court to uphold our biosafety laws.

In March 2002, the ministry of environment, forests and climate change admitted that Bt cotton poses major risks.

The GEAC stated:

- i. The crop, which is standing, may pass to the soil that modified genes which it contains. The effect on soil micro-organisms cannot be estimated and may cause an irreversible change in the environment structure of the soil. It is a standard practice to uproot crops which pose such a threat. The destruction by burning is to ensure safety to environment and human health and to obviate



Two decades of corporate corruption and scientific fraud is enough. GMO mustard must not be approved, emphasises Vandana Shiva

- any possibility of cross-pollination.
- ii. The destruction of the cotton produce as well as seeds harvested from this plant is also equally necessary. The cotton which has been produced is genetically-modified cotton, the effect of which i.e. allergenicity and other factors on mammals are not tested. The precautionary principles would require that no product, the effect of which is unknown be put into the market stream. This cotton which in appearance is no different from any other cotton will intermingle with ordinary cotton and it will become impossible to contain its adverse affect. The only remedy is to destroy the cotton as well as the seeds produced and harvested in this manner.
 - iii. Since farmers are being put to a loss, the further process to determine the compensation payable to farmers, who have unwittingly used this product, has to be determined and undertaken.

“I would respectfully submit that every day of delay in this matter poses a threat to the environment”.

Yet, a few days later Bt cotton that had been declared hazardous in the case of Navbharat was declared safe for Monsanto, and approval was given to Monsanto to introduce Bollard I.

Even at the trial stage, it was clear that new pests are being created and Bt cotton does not work as a pest control technology.

The primary justification for the genetic engineering of Bt into crops is that this will reduce the use of insecticides. One of the Monsanto brochures had a picture of a few worms and stated: “You will

see these in your cotton and that’s okay. Don’t spray”. However, new pests have emerged and the pink bollworm has evolved resistance.

Monsanto has used the failure of its technology as an excuse to sell Bollard II with higher prices and higher illegal royalties.

Monsanto cannot legally collect royalties on seeds because our patent laws do not recognise seeds, plants and animals as “inventions”. Article 3(j), therefore, clearly excludes seeds and plants from patentability. When the government passed a seed price control order, Monsanto took the government to

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court and the case was dismissed only after our intervention.

Monsanto is now challenging Article 3(j) of our patent Act in a case in the high court in Delhi in which I have had to intervene.

Monsanto controls 95 per cent in the cotton seed sector, and when the Competition Commission started an investigation on the monopoly, it took the Competition Commission to court.

This is the rule of Monsanto, not the rule of law. Corporations are introducing unnecessary, hazardous GMOs by corrupting biosafety regulations.

The government failure to

regulate GMOs and the courts failure to have regulations implemented honestly and scientifically has cost hundreds of thousands of farmers to commit suicides.

Sixty per cent of the beneficial soil organism has disappeared and there are no pollinators to be found. These were avoidable costs if the evidence had not been ignored. The fraud and corruption we have witnessed in Bt cotton at high costs to farmers and the environment are now being repeated with GMO mustard. A herbicide-resist crop is being fraudulently pushed as a hybrid. The bar-bar-nase-barstar technology patented by Bayer-Monsanto is being falsely passed off as Pental’s. Mustard, a crop that cross-pollinates vigorously, is being presented as a crop that has no risks of contamination through pollination.

Mustard, our food, our culture of which we eat leaves, seeds and oil is being unscientifically equated with canola. Even though the evidence shows that the leaves have toxic genes, it is unscientifically assumed there will be no impact on health. No feeding trials have been done. Biosafety regulations have been put in place internationally and nationally to do independent safety assessments and obey the regulations. Non-tests are not proof of safety. Ignoring the recommendations of the Technical Expert Committee of the Supreme Court is, in effect, contempt of court. Ignoring the states that are saying they will not allow GMO mustard is a violation of the Constitution and the biosafety framework.

Two decades of corporate corruption and scientific fraud is enough. GMO mustard must not be approved. □□

Industry Consortiums to Invigorate Domestic Manufacturing

[Continued Previous issue...]

Cooperative Research & Development Agreements (CRADAs) - Another Alternative

Such agreements can be worked out between two or more companies, research laboratories, universities, technology institutes or any combination of these.

A CRADA is an agreement inter se one or more companies, institutes, laboratories and or any of the one or more parties under which they can share technocrats, other personnel, services, facilities, equipment, or other resources toward the conduct of specified research or development efforts. Such research must be consistent with the mission of the one or more parties. The CRADA partners contribute any one variable or all of the above and funding to the project to share the benefits in predefined ratios.

CRADAs involve collaborative research which may result in the sustained growth and development of inventions. Mostly a CRADA is signed with either a government or a governmental agency.

Examples: Some examples out of several hundred consortia actively engaged in research in industrialized countries are being briefly described hereunder:

1. The Airbus example : Airbus Industries was formed in 1970 as a consortium of aerospace component manufacturers to manufacture the Airbus range of aircraft, with the retention of production and engineering assets by the partner companies and initially making the Airbus Industries consortium as a sales and marketing outfit. This arrangement solved some initial inefficiencies and inherent con-



There is a need to promote 'made by India' by industry consortium on lines of other countries including US, says
Prof. Bhagwati Prakash Sharma



licts of interest to among the four partner companies as; they were both shareholders of, and subcontractors to, the consortium to make aircrafts jointly. The companies collaborated on development of the Airbus range of aircrafts, but also had intent to guard the financial details of their own production activities to maximize the transfer prices of their sub-assemblies. But all these initial problems were overcome with shared vision and ambitions of participating companies and governments. After successfully running this consortium, it was consolidated as European Aerospace and Defence Space company. As consortium the Airbus Industries launched its first 300 seater A300 in 1972. It was converted into a joint stock company in 2001. It has facilities at 16 places across four countries viz France, Germany, Spain and UK. It now has 63,000 employees across these 4 countries and a turnover of \$ 70 billion (Rs. 5 lac crores).

2. The European Photonics Industry Consortium (EPIC): The EPIC is a good example of not-for-profit association with headquarters in Paris, France. EPIC serves the photonics industry community through a regular

The European Photonics Industry Consortium has the mission to build solidarity and sustainable growth for photonics companies increasing recognition of photonics as a strategic technology, building business revenues, and creating employment opportunities for scientists & engineers

series of workshops, market studies and partnering. EPIC focuses its actions on LEDs and OLEDs for lighting, optical fiber telecommunications, laser manufacturing, sensors, photovoltaics and photonics for life sciences. EPIC coordinates its activities internationally through its membership in the International Optoelectronics Association.

EPIC was originally founded in 2003 by five companies: Aixtron, CDT, Osram, Philips, and Sagem. Today, more than 180 companies, research organizations, universities, and other industry stakeholders are members of the consortium. The membership works together to execute the mission by proposing and implementing influential initiatives of significant impact on the industrial landscape. The strength of EPIC comes from its capacity to represent the European photonics industry with a clear

and articulate voice. Industry associations such as EPIC have a key role to play in identifying market opportunities and in helping their members to work together to capture the opportunity. The European photonics industry is made up of a broad community of highly innovative small companies. When economic pressures create turbulent markets and make planning difficult, an association can help companies to create partnerships and find a better way through the crisis by finding new revenue streams.

Mission

The European Photonics Industry Consortium has the mission to build solidarity and sustainable growth for photonics companies increasing recognition of photonics as a strategic technology, building business revenues, and creating employment opportunities for scientists and engineers.

Key initiatives: The EPIC has following breakthroughs to its credit.

- i. **Photonics21 i.e. European technology platform:** In 2004 EPIC proposed the creation of a European Technology Platform in photonics to the European Commission. EPIC's members worked in partnership with other European organizations to develop a vision of photonics as a well defined



science leading to disruptive breakthroughs in telecommunications, life sciences, manufacturing, lighting and displays, sensors and education. The European Commission accepted this vision and established the Photonics-21 Platform at the end of 2005.

- ii. **Merging Optics and Nanotechnologies (The MONA Roadmap):** During 2005-2007 EPIC and its members developed and participated in the MONA project to create a study to identify synergies between photonics and nanotechnologies, and to identify opportunities for industry in these areas. The goal of this project is a roadmap leading from the R&D environment to mastering nano-electronics and nanophotonics technologies at an industrial scale. This roadmap has been completed and is available to the public.

- iii. **Advanced Components Co-operative for Optoelectronics Research and Development (ACCORD):** Beginning in 2007, EPIC and its members initiated the ACCORD project which purchases prototype photonics components and systems from SMEs and awards them to university R&D groups based on competitive proposals. ACCORD is inspired by PTAP, (Photonics Technology Access Program), a similar exchange initiative developed by the OIDA, also a member of the IOA.

- iv. **Leadership in Fiber Laser Technologies (LIFT):** EPIC organised and led a consortium of 20 companies, SMEs, and research labs in a proposal to



Thus, research and development consortia can provide member companies with many benefits and take the country to ever newer heights

the European Commission for a •17 million project to develop new technologies for higher brilliance fiber lasers. The project has been accepted and started in 2009. EPIC also initiated and manages the Linked-In site for Fiber Lasers.

- v. **Workshops on key photonics opportunities:** EPIC organises workshops and symposia on key topics and opportunities identified by its membership. Proceedings and synthesis of these meetings are available to the public. Some examples are presented for workshops developed in collaboration with the SPIE.

CAR Industrial Consortium: The CAR Industrial Consortium has been in operation since 1999, and has since then succeeded to see the participation of 25

automotive original equipment manufacturers (OEMs) and suppliers. Over the years, it has grown with an initial membership of 10-12 companies.

The following members in the CAR Industrial Consortium are global giants from across the globe. Some of them are— • Bosch, • GM, • Renault, • Chrysler, • Honda, • Tenneco, • Cummins, • Lubrizol, • Transportation Research Center, • Ford

Thus, research and development consortia can provide member companies with many benefits and take the country to ever newer heights. They are formed to share expenses and resources and to pool talent and expertise. Consortia that are formed in the United States to compete globally are eligible for government funding. The most common type of consortia is horizontal, consisting of competing firms within an industry to do precompetitive research and develop state of the art technology to grow in global competition. Vertical consortia include firms ranging from materials suppliers to finished product manufacturers. India can develop the manufacturing ecosystem by initiating the vertical industry consortia in all the major sectors. □□

De-mon — a multidimensional project

That 99 per cent of the de-legalised Rs 500/1,000 denomination notes was returned back to the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) has been cited by opposition parties, experts and the media alike as the sole test of failure of demonetisation (which, for brevity, I shall henceforth refer to as de-mon). But it is a less than fair assessment of what was essentially a multipurpose project. The one-line conclusion certifying it as a failure judges a multidimensional corrective venture on the basis of one single parameter: the quantum of notes returned. This conclusion has become popular due to the tempestuous and irrational political debate we witnessed at the end of 2016. The media epilogue that Narendra Modi's de-mon is a rout, based on superficial logic, is a bluff. But to call the bluff, we need a surgical analysis of de-mon, which was missing in the debate then and is missing even now.

The background to de-mon

A flashback to November 2016 when demonetisation was announced. The background to de-mon was the unprecedented rise in the circulation of high-value notes (500/1000) from Rs 1.5 lakh crore in 2004 to almost Rs 15.5 lakh crore when de-mon was announced — with their share in the total currency in circulation going up from 34 per cent to over 88 per cent. The Reserve Bank of India had told the government that a third of the high-value notes which moved out of the banking system, some Rs 6 lakh crore, never returned. They circulate outside the system — the inference being that this huge unmonitored cash was financing and building a massive black economy.

This was manifest in the steep rise in gold, stock and land prices by almost ten times in the six years from 2004 to 2010 as compared the previous five years, 1999-2004. That asset price rise was not stoked by any matching real growth. It was the other way round. The spurious rise in asset values generated the mirage of high growth in India like it happened in the USA prior to 2008. This was evident from



By all counts the black money agenda of de-mon is a success, not a failure by any standard, tells S. Gurumurthy



the fact that despite the high growth of 8.6 per cent recorded in the six years [2004-2010], jobs rose by just 2.7 million as compared to the job growth of 60 million in the earlier five-year period (1999-2004) on the strength of a medium growth rate of 5.4 per cent.

And moreover, while the latter high-growth period witnessed an annual inflation rate of 6.5 per cent, the earlier five-year average growth period recorded an inflation rate of just 4.6 per cent. And further, the external sector did well in the medium-growth period with the closing years posting a current account surplus of \$20 billion after 25 years of relentless current account deficit. But the latter six-year high-growth period accounted for a current account deficit of hundreds of billions of dollars.

It did not need a seer to say that the hyper GDP growth in the latter six years was just wealth-led growth — a mirage that yielded neither jobs nor gave external or internal comfort to the economy. The reason for this spurious growth clearly was the high asset prices, which were fuelled only by an unprecedented rise in high-denomination notes. No economist or commentator has disputed either the figures or the conclusions based on them. And yet none of these critical facts was noticed in the politically and ideologically surcharged debate on de-mon which was reduced to a single-point issue to the exclusion of its other critical dimensions.

Politics reduced de-mon to a single test

The debate on de-mon became utterly political, casting economics aside. Economists and cameraholding journos looked at peo-

ple queuing up at banks to exchange or deposit the old notes and turned populist in opposing de-mon like politicians and media. De-mon was such an India-specific issue that it had no parallel elsewhere in the world. Foreign experts, who had no knowledge of Indiaspecific issues, lambasted de-mon as a disaster. Local experts led by Dr Manmohan Singh said Narendra Modi has destroyed the economy. With the powerful national and global guild of economists, media and the opposition launching a war on him, Modi singlehandedly led the de-mon politics from the front, with-

De-mon was such an India-specific issue that it had no parallel elsewhere in the world. Foreign experts, who had no knowledge of Indiaspecific issues, lambasted de-mon as a disaster

stood the assault and went through the ordeal by fire.

He directly communicated with the people and requested them to bear with the trouble he was giving them. And they willingly endorsed him, as his huge electoral victories since he unveiled de-mon demonstrated. But in the process, Modi had to use the singularly popular logic, which they would easily understand — namely to detect and eliminate black money — to defend de-mon. And by inference, only the notes that did not return to the banks came to be regarded as black money detected and eliminated. The result was that a multi-dimensional

correction to the economic drift came to be reduced by anti-Modi politics to the only proposition, that is: whether de-mon was a failure or success would depend on the sole test of how much black cash would or would not return to the banks. This reductionist logic has obscured a more wholesome view of the de-mon effect and has now demonised the project itself.

Multidimensional correction aimed and achieved

Apart from the fact that de-mon was aimed at puncturing the unprecedented high-denomination cash stock buildup that stoking an asset price rise and threatening the economy with an unmanageable future crisis, it was intended as a multidimensional correction to the economy. The multiple objectives inherent in the de-mon project were:

1. to catch black money;
2. to prevent its growth;
3. to expand the taxpayer base;
4. to arrest and deflate cashstoked asset prices;
5. to bring down the burgeoning cash stock, particularly the high-denomination notes that had become the villain;
6. to suck up the excess cash with the public that was building a parallel economy to the banking system;
7. to enable the banks to multiply the additional deposits by fractional reserve model as lendable resources;
8. to bring down the interest rates;
9. to increase the share of financial savings in household savings;
10. to crash the unaffordable land prices to make housing affordable;
11. to organise the unorganised sector and provide organised support to it;



De-mon is bound to yield multiples of the amount of tax extracted through voluntary disclosures in the past

12. to shift from a jobless high growth to growth with jobs — namely growth of a real economy; and

13. eliminate fake currency and starve Kashmir terrorists and naxalites of funds.

The list is not exhaustive still. Against the background of a monumental cash-driven asset price-led deceptive growth, none of these goals could be attained except by sucking away the huge cash build-up through a high-value note ban. The ban would destroy the appetite for high-value notes, and transform the cash-led economy into a less-cash economy. So tested, Modi's de-mon project has been a huge success in achieving its multiple objectives. But, unfortunately, the experts and the media who have taken a position against de-mon from the word go ceased to be objective to look at its multi-dimensional impact. Instead, they were actually waiting to pronounce it as a failure and once the RBI announced that 99 per cent of the de-legalised notes were returned, they clutched at it as the sole index of its failure. Equating the success of the anti-black money agenda of the de-mon project with only the quantum of de-legalised notes not returned is irrational and wrong. If black money holders daringly deposit the de-legalised notes in the banks, it be-

comes the subject of a tax probe. This aspect is completely ignored by the anti de-mon — read as anti-Modi — rhetoric which came to be regarded as a de-mon discourse.

Black money agenda a success, not failure

Before examining how far the de-mon project achieved its multi-dimensional objectives or the course correction it set as its goal, take the popular objective of unearthing black cash. The de-legalised notes not deposited in the banks, of course, give open-and-shut proof of black cash exposed by demon. But it does not mean that black cash deposited in the banks will go undetected. If the people who had black de-legalised notes took a risk and deposited them in banks, it only means that the income tax authority will have to scrutinise the deposits and collect taxes on such deposits — which of course takes time. And that is happening.

Some Rs 2.9 lakh crore deposits of cash is being investigated for tax. Black money detection under de-mon falls into three categories: (1) undisclosed income in de-legalised notes admitted Rs 29,000 cr; (2) old notes not deposited Rs 16,000 crore; and (3) most importantly, deposits of Rs 2.90 lakh crore under tax probe. The last component, which is huge, is being

completely disregarded to conclude, totally unfairly, that the black money agenda of de-mon has bombed. The actual discovery of Rs 45,000 crore of black money and the potential discovery of Rs 2.9 lakh crore under probe — uncovering a total of Rs 3.35 lakh crore as actual and potential black money — has been achieved only because of de-mon. Even if half the potential black cash deposit is eventually taxed, that would mean detection of some Rs 1.5 lakh crore of black money, most of which would be recovered as tax and penalty.

None of the voluntary disclosure schemes attempted earlier was a success. The two such schemes which yielded a fair amount of tax were the one in 1997 which yielded Rs 9,500 crore and the latest in 2016 which yielded Rs 29,400 crore. De-mon is bound to yield multiples of the amount of tax extracted through voluntary disclosures in the past. Besides the uncovering of actual and potential black money of Rs 3.35 lakh crore, de-mon has expanded the individual income tax base. For 2016-17, as compared to the earlier year, some 57 lakh more assessee have filed returns, advance tax collections are up by 42 per cent and self assessment tax by 34 per cent. Ignoring such vital facts to conclude the de-mon project as a failure in uncovering black money is definitely superficial. It is also recklessly premature as, at any rate, one will have to wait till the tax probe is over to know how much the tax is recovered on the `2.9 lakh crore deposits under probe. By all counts the black money agenda of de-mon is a success, not a failure by any standard. □□

The author is a well-known commentator on political and economic affairs.

Give direct subsidy to farmers

The Prime Minister has assured the farmers of the country that their incomes will be doubled in the next five years. While an increase in the incomes is possible, that will require a change in the policies. The policy of the Modi Government in the last 3 years has been to enhance the incomes of the farmers by securing an increase in production. The Prime Minister wants to expand irrigation. He has started a scheme to provide free “Soil Health Cards” to the farmers. The Government will examine the soil of the fields and inform the farmers of the exact fertilizers that he should apply. The application of correct quality and quantity of fertilizers will enhance his production and, supposedly, his incomes.

Alas! That is not to be. Reason is that increase in production and reduction in incomes often go hand in hand. Last year our farmers had a bumper crop of potatoes. The price of potato in the market fell to Rs 3 per kilo and the farmer could not even recover the cost of harvesting and transporting the crop to the market. Many farmers dumped the potatoes on the roads. Increased production became a curse for them. Mr. Modi is pushing them into a similar distress by getting them to increase production without ensuring that there is no decline in the prices.

Preventing a decline in prices is, however, difficult because we have integrated our domestic agricultural markets with the world markets. The price of agricultural goods in the country is determined largely by global supply and demand. The global prices of agricultural produce show a long term decline. The production has increased hugely due to the adoption of new technologies, bringing new areas into cultivation and expansion of irrigation. However, the demand for the agricultural crops has increased only minimally because there has only been a small increase in the global population. The large increase in global supply coupled with a minimal increase in global demand has led to oversupply and a de-



*Give universal
basic income to
farmers,
suggests*

**Dr. Bharat
Jhunjhunwala**



cline in the global prices. Therefore, it is not possible to arrest a decline in the prices.

In fact, the Government has added to the woes of the farmers by implementing an import-export policy that is harmful for them. The Government restricts exports of crops when the price in the global markets are high so that domestic prices do not increase in tandem with the global prices. On the other hand, the Government imports food items when domestic production is less and domestic prices are likely to increase. The farmers are paying a heavy price in the form of these restrictions on exports and imports. Professor Ashok Gulati of Indian Council for Research on International Economic Relations says that restrictions on exports suppress farm prices are implicit taxes on India's farmers. The farmers obtain lower prices for their produce when exports are banned; and they are deprived of higher prices of their produce when imports are made by the Government. These policies of the Government deprive farmers of income and lead to lower incomes. Mr. Modi should take note.

A possible way out is to impose GST on cash crops like bananas, ginger, menthe, mulberry, pepper, red chilies, and sugarcane. These crops also consume large amounts of water and contribute to environment degradation. Another way of collecting tax on cash crops is to impose a tax on the use of water in irrigation. A large part of irrigation in the country is undertaken for the cultivation of these cash crops. Raising price of water will therefore translate into higher cost of production of cash crops. Such tax will not impact our

food security because the cultivation of staple crops like wheat and bajra requires less irrigation and will also remain outside the GST.

The revenue garnered from high price of irrigation and GST on cash crops can be used to provide all farmers with a basic income. The total burden on the farmers will also be less. Say, Rs 1000 crores is collected from high price of water and from GST on crops. Against this Rs 2,000 crores can be paid as basic income to the farmers. This basic income will ensure that all the farmers can keep their body and soul together even when the crops fail. That will help

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reduce the number of suicides. It can be provided that this basic income cannot be attached under recovery proceedings by the banks. In the end the farmer will be happy. He may not get double the income as proposed by the Prime Minister but he will certainly get a minimum assured income which too he is not getting today. This policy will affect the cultivators of cash crops and staple crops differently. The farmers growing cash crops will be adversely affected. The cost of cultivation of cash crops will increase, their price in the market will increase, the demand will decrease, and the incomes of the farmers growing

these crops will also reduce. However, the farmers growing staple crops will be benefitted. They will only be marginally affected by the increase in the cost of irrigation because the staple crops consume less water. On the other hand, they will get an assured income from the payment of the basic incomes.

Another proposed policy requires reconsideration in the above backdrop. Collection of income tax on agricultural income is actively under the consideration of the Government. Agricultural income is taxed at par with non-agricultural incomes in most developed countries of Europe and America. The basic principle of fairness requires that farm incomes be taxed at par with non-farm incomes in India as well. Also, the rampant misuse of this window to evade taxes also augurs in favour of taxing these incomes. Large numbers of rich show their incomes as accruing from agriculture and avoid paying income tax. Many large corporations undertake agricultural activities but do not pay taxes using this window. However, imposition of agricultural income tax will create a huge problem of book keeping for the farmers and give encouragement to tax terrorism by the tax officials.

An alternative is collect agricultural income tax only from entities who have income from any other source. The exemption for agricultural income tax is misused by persons who have incomes from other sources such as industries and shops. This window will be closed if exemption is given only when the tax payer does not have income from any other source.

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Why India Must Go Beyond Loan Waivers to Free Farmers From Debt

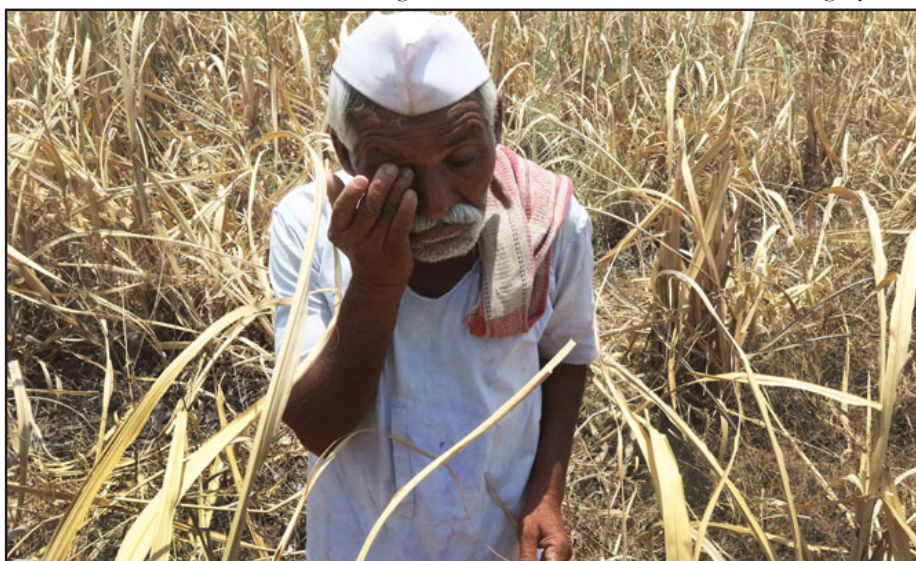
Recent trips to Anantapur district in Andhra Pradesh have shown me that the agricultural credit system in India is an unholy mess. There are brokers outside banks who extend cash to farmers at exorbitant interest rates for just a few days so that the perfunctory “loan renewal” can take place. This is a bank transaction, in the books mainly, wherein a farmer pays the interest amount of a crop loan so that the bank can show one loan to be closed and a fresh loan issued.

If the farmer is lucky, with a revised scale of finance applicable for the crop selected, the bank will pay the difference of Rs 3000-5000 per acre to the farmer against the fresh loan shown to be issued. This additional amount that the farmer takes might very well end up servicing the borrowing from the broker outside the bank. For the rest of the agricultural season, the farmer is obviously depending on other sources of credit since what has happened in the name of ‘loan renewal’ is a book transaction.

I have also discovered something more distressing – farmers taking each other to police stations and lodging complaints in the context of bank loans. When banks insist on a zamanat or guarantee from another farmer, farmer X might approach farmer Y for such a surety. It is obvious that farmer Y who agrees would have done so because there is a cordial, trust-based relationship between X and Y. But when farmer X does not repay the bank loan – including because of successive drought years, like in the case of Anantapur, which last year experience its sixth consecutive drought – and farmer Y is barred from taking his due share of credit from the bank because of X’s default, Y ends up lodging police complaints against X. What was a peaceful relationship has been turned into one of strife in small farming communities thanks to our banking system



Institutional loan waivers and debt swapping can be effective only if they are supported by other measures that prevent farmers from falling back into debt, says
Kavitha Kuruganti



failing to follow a simple RBI guideline of not asking for any other collateral for crop loans upto Rs 100,000 since the crop value itself is supposed to be the collateral. However, banks don't follow this and are insisting on guarantors, if not land titles, to extend farm loans.

Indebtedness of farm households

Between 2003 and 2013 (59th and 70th NSSO rounds), the proportion of indebted households amongst agricultural households increased to 52% (4.7 crore agri households) from 48.6%. The average outstanding amount per household increased from Rs 12,585 in 2003 to 47,000 in 2013. However, there was only a minuscule improvement in institutional agricultural credit in this period.

Importantly, 82% of all indebted agricultural households are those which possess less than two hectares of land (3.84 crore such households, whereas in the other land categories, it is just 84 lakh households). While the average outstanding loan per household amongst small and marginal farmers is Rs 36,300 the average for all other households stood at Rs 189,300.

NSSO data also tells us that 47.4% of marginal and small farmer indebted households are indebted to non-institutional sources, whereas only 30.4% of other indebted farm households are indebted to non-institutional sources giving a clear picture of exclusion from institutional credit of the most marginalised.

While debt itself may not be construed as a problem, it is clear that debt burden (debt to asset ratio) is intensifying on farmers over the decades.



Agriculture credit being usurped by non-farmers

While this is the picture from the farmers' side, it is also clear from RBI data that more than half of what is extended as agri credit is actually being disbursed to non-farmer corporate borrowers (this can be deduced from the number of large sized loans occupying agriculture credit space). It might actually be the case that some such corporate borrowers within the priority sector lending portfolio from the banking system become usurious moneylender on lending further to farmers, including as input dealers.

Freedom from debt to be ensured

What we need is a deep-seated solution to the problem of farmers' indebtedness. As an immediate relief at a time of acute crisis, loan waivers are indeed necessary.

Since loan waiver typically covers only institutional loans, using the NSSO estimates, it can be seen that the small and marginal farmers, who constitute 82% of all farmers, would get at the most Rs 67,469 crore in benefit, whereas the larger farmers, who constitute 18%, would get up to Rs 1,19,115 crore. It is clear that loan waivers need the

Between 2003 & 2013 (59th & 70th NSSO rounds), the proportion of indebted households amongst agricultural households increased to 52% (4.7 crore agri households) from 48.6 percent

Centre to support such a measure at least by a 50% contribution.

Debt swapping as an important option

Debt swapping is the other option that needs to be considered seriously by all governments. The idea of debt swapping is to be discussed in a context when institutional loan waivers are not likely to benefit marginal and small farmers as much as they benefit other farmers. If we consider the outstanding informal loan amount, the small/marginal farmers have a total of Rs 71,923 crore outstanding (higher than their loans from institutional credit sources) whereas the larger farmers have Rs 36,897 crore.

Several studies have already thrown up the fact that it is this



category of farmers who are mostly committing suicides in India. There is also a responsibility on the state to begin discussing the modalities of lessening the debt burden on farmers from the non-institutional sources, since it has been the failure of the establishment as a whole (government, RBI as well as all the banking institutions put together) that these farmers have not been able to access institutional credit for their various needs.

There is a precedence and prior experience of the Kerala state government implementing a farmers' debt relief commission. The Kerala government adopted a Farmers' Debt Relief Commission Act in 2006, subsequently amended in 2008 and 2012 to extend its functioning. This provides a model for an institutional mechanism to address farmers' indebtedness, rather than one-time loan waivers as ad hoc measures. Each year, the debt relief commission operates in districts that are identified as distress districts. The commission deals with both institutional and non-institutional loans.

The Act empowers the commission to "fix, in the case of creditors other than institutional creditors, a fair rate of interest and an appropriate level of debt, to be

Farmers need credit products that they are at least partially exempt from repaying whenever there are disasters and losses

payable as the commission may consider just and reasonable by a farmer declared as distress affected or related to an area or crop declared as distress affected area or distress affected crop...". Once the level of outstanding debt is determined, the commission undertakes conciliation between the two parties and a binding award is passed.

Loan waiver, interest rate relief, loan rescheduling or loan moratorium are all instruments that can be used by the commission. Further, the commission recommends to the government the extent of debt relief to be provided, including taking over the partial or entire debt and exonerating the farmers from the effect of the debt. Such debt swapping, both for individual farmers as well as through joint liability groups and self help groups' modality, with terms of repayment being reasonable and

realistic is very much required.

Effective and continuous debt relief measures

It is also clear that institutional loan waivers and debt swapping would be effective only if various other measures that prevent farmers from falling back into an unbearable situation of indebtedness can be put into place.

It is noted that there is no equivalent of 'non-recourse' loans in agriculture credit even though it is one of the most risky professions, that too in this age of climate change. While in the formal sector, there is always limited liability on the entrepreneur, in agriculture, farmers face unlimited liability. Farmers need credit products that they are at least partially exempt from repaying whenever there are disasters and losses.

Similarly, to reduce the need for borrowing, farmers should be incentivised to shift towards low-cost, low-external input ecological agriculture. Another important requirement is to ensure that we have effective crop insurance and disaster compensation mechanisms because the very next season after a loan waiver, farmers might find themselves incurring total losses due to a natural calamity.

It is time that permanent farmer debt relief commissions are set up to look at immediate relief through loan waivers and debt swapping but also to address medium and long-term measures to be adopted to ensure that farmers' debt burden does not push them into a deep distress from where suicides are seen as the only option left. □□

The author acknowledges inputs from Kiran Vissa, co-convenor of Alliance for Sustainable & Holistic Agriculture. Kavitha Kurruganti is a co-convenor of Alliance for Sustainable and Holistic Agriculture.

Create integral economy; Focus India's largest private sector; farms be job-giver, growth driver

India needs some quick solutions. It needs more jobs, a free and low-cost banking, a growing industry and a thriving farm sector. It is not right to say that India cannot do it. This is the world's highest growing economy, even if we take the slide to 5.7 percent growth. It hides, however, some of the disturbing trends. Many are now blaming demonetization for the slowdown. But we find that the pace had slowed down over the years or at best it had been lopsided. Since 1970s GDP has been growing exponentially but so has been the distress – fewer jobs and increasing rural displacement. It can be attributed to decelerating agricultural growth since 1980s.

The policy makers in their enthusiasm to entice people away from agriculture started laying less attention to the sector, if not ignore. While the rest of the economy was growing, agriculture was winding down with the green revolution losing the push it required. The then planning commission and high-ups in the government had viewed that investment in the farm sector was a waste as in their opinion people needed to be weaned away from it and jobs in industry and other sectors had to be created.

The policy increased penury in the farm sector. Farmers themselves were reduced to marginal labourers and productivity started falling. The annual rate of farm growth at constant prices in the 1980s was 4.24 percent. It reduced to 3.17 percent in the 1990s and to 2.37 percent in the first decade of 21st century.

The Economic Survey 2016-17 volume 2 states that agriculture is characterised by instability on incomes owing to various types of risks related to production, markets and prices.



The nation through an intense discussion must create an integral economy that would be a precursor to integral humanism and all-round job growth, suggests Shivaji Sarkar



It says growth rates of agriculture have been fluctuating at 1.5 percent in 2012-13, 5.6 percent in 2013-14, (-) 0.2 percent in 2014-15, 0.7 percent in 2015-16 and 4.9 percent in 2016-17. The major fact stated is the dependence on rain-fall and the survey attributes this for fall in 2014 to 2016. This speaks volumes. The occasional growth is due to the efforts of the farmers, when they can. The society had done little to add to it.

This becomes more pronounced if we look at the 54 percent GDP growth between 2005 and 2012. The period created only 3 percent – or net 1.5 crore jobs while every year over one crore job-seekers were added to the list. The maximum distress was in the rural and farm sectors, with severe under-employment, the survey notes.

The country will add over 8 crore net new job seekers by 2025. Even if the growth increases to 7 to 8 percent not more than 3 crore jobs would be created. Mere growth does not create jobs. It requires investment and capacity to pay by the industry or the manufacturers, where most jobs are to be created. This lopsided stress again leaves the largest private sector, agriculture, into a perennial situation of neglect. Agriculture, official data say, employs 54 percent of the population, or approximately 70 crore people at 14 percent contribution to GDP. It means the largest number of people subsist on the minimum GDP. It has to change in an area when we rightly or wrongly are in a spree to promote private investment.

Let the nation accept that agriculture will remain the largest employer and reorient the policies. It raises brouhaha over approxi-

mately Rs 75,000 crore farm loan waivers in UP, Maharashtra and Punjab though does not mind about almost Rs 12 lakh crore bank NPAs to about less than 100 large corporate. Loan waiver is bad economy but the banks do not lose, it is paid by the government. The NPA is simple loot of the money put in by poor depositors. Both stress the economy and add to banking and administrative costs.

This exactly happened post demonetization. The banks have excess liquidity of Rs 2500 billion (Rs 2.5 lakh crore) as on June 2017, according to the Survey 2. Other estimates put it at Rs 4 to 5 lakh crore. Managing and paying interest on it is

The IMF-World Bank model would not work nor a modified version of the Mamohanomics

draining the banks. It is said to cost the banking system and RBI about Rs 16,000 to Rs 24,000 crore a year.

It does not estimate that a large part in the farm sector, kept in households or small businesses that transacted in cash, that was away from the banks but legally transacted is stressing the formal banking.

It also affected farm and rural and informal sector. Lack of cash has hit its operations. So if the people associated with farming and informal sector do not thrive, the hope that the rest of the economy would boom is wild expectation. With almost 70 crore people having sub-standard living, the

nation cannot expect to achieve the proverbial *moksha*.

The nation has to plan for adding 8 crore jobs by 2025. No investment in any formal, government, large corporate projects can create that many jobs. The stress of the government is fine through a number of schemes from start up to make in India, but it has to include the farm, informal and the large small sector. The government has to give up the idea that it could manage everything everywhere.

It has to be the facilitator for an economy that would be different from what the world pursues. The IMF-World Bank model would not do it nor a modified version of the Mamohanomics.

India needs an out of the box model. It has to reverse the economic process. Instead of revolving around large industries, large projects, highways, fast trains, fast cars, it has to make a fresh start with the village of Mahatma Gandhi and Deen Dayal Upadhyaya to the fore. So far the planning has been urban centric and it has neither helped the cities nor the villages nor the industry.

The Survey 2 says NITI Ayog has set up a task force to address deficiencies in the existing data on unemployment and create a road map. It is a good admission. The solution has to be different and the Ayog must change the tack. In this 70th year of Independence, the nation has to look for a new economic paradigm. It has to begin from the informal sector, farms and the villages. The focus on shifting villagers must change. The nation through an intense discussion must create an integral economy that would be a precursor to integral humanism and all-round job growth. □□

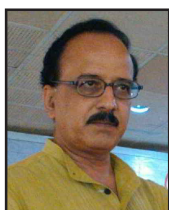
India@ 100: Of The Agrarian Distress

It has been a saga of unprecedented growth, followed by a terrible agrarian distress. No country in the world probably has ever seen the pendulum of agricultural growth swinging from one extreme to another. In the past 70 years, Indian agriculture has not only demonstrated what it takes to attain the pinnacle, but also how easy it is to fritter away the gains.

A right mix of policies, technology and above all, the backing of a determined political will to achieve food self-sufficiency is now part of history. First with milk, followed closely by foodgrain, the actual trigger for the two major revolutions in India's history was set off within a span of two years: 1965-66. It is not that the first Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru didn't make any efforts. A number of community development programmes were initiated during his tenure. Speaking from the ramparts of the Red Fort in 1955, he had said: "It is very humiliating for any country to import food. So everything else can wait, but not agriculture."

Eventually, the country's first Agricultural University at Pantnagar in Uttar Pradesh was inaugurated by him on Nov 17, 1960. Punjab Agricultural University, Ludhiana came up in 1962. Bhakra dam was dedicated to the nation in 1963. So in more than one way, it was Nehru who laid out the infrastructure for what was later called the Green Revolution.

White Revolution: It was in 1965 that the then Prime Minister Lal Bahadur Shastri laid the foundation of milk cooperatives, which enabled farmers to get a higher price for milk and at the same time enabled urban consumers to get the benefit of easy availability of milk at an affordable price. Hailed as one of the world's most successful rural development programmes, the dairy cooperatives



The institutional shift from planned to a market-driven economy has decelerated the rural economy, casting a severe blow to agriculture.

Devinder Sharma



have turned India into the world's largest producer of milk, with production crossing 156 million tonnes. Benefitting more than 150 million dairy farmers, a majority of the beneficiaries being women, the enhanced per capita availability of milk has turned out to be one of the strong pillars of nutritional security.

Green Revolution: A year later, in 1966, by allowing the import of the miracle high-yielding dwarf varieties of wheat from Mexico, Prime Minister Indira Gandhi ushered in what is popularly termed the Green Revolution. Aided and abetted by appropriate price and public procurement policies, public sector investments and food distribution to deficit regions, India became self-sufficient in food, achieving food security at the national level. Subsequently, India stopped food imports under PL-480 coming in from North America.

The success achieved in wheat was followed quickly in rice, cotton, sugarcane, vegetables and fruits. Food self-sufficiency became the foundation for national sovereignty, a fact which is often not acknowledged. It was in 1965 that the then US President Lyndon Johnson got upset over a statement the Indian Prime Minister had made. In an interview to a US newspaper Lal Bahadur Shastri had termed the American war in Vietnam as "an act of aggression". But this was unacceptable. How could a hungry nation dare to call the US an aggressor? The US stopped food supplies, sending the Indian government into a tizzy. The then food minister, C. Subramaniam, later told me that there was a time when the country was left with food stocks for only seven days. There was panic all around. Shastri had urged the na-

tion to fast on Monday, the basic idea being to share the available food with the needy.

The Green Revolution certainly ended the era of chronic food deficiencies; enabling India to meet the challenges of hunger and deprivation. For 70 years, farmers have toiled hard to produce bumper harvests. Year after year, the records have tumbled. Public investments in agriculture declined over the years. The focus gradually began to shift away from food self-sufficiency.

Agrarian Distress: Since the Economic Reforms were initiated

cities. With farm gate prices remaining subdued if not static, a majority of the 600 million farmers have come under increasing levels of debt. In Punjab alone, 80 per cent of the farm families are living in debt. This is happening at a time when the focus is shifting to encouraging contract farming thereby allowing corporates to engage in agriculture. But will this work? Even while some industry projections see India emerging as an export hub for agriculture, most analysts point to India becoming a major food importer.

While food self-sufficiency is

According to Down to Earth magazine, the food import bill for 2015-16 stood at Rs 1,402,680,000,000, three times more than the annual budget for agriculture

in 1991, the institutional shift from the planned to the market-driven economy has decelerated the rural economy, casting a severe blow to agriculture. With the World Bank in 1996 directing India to move 400 million people from the rural to the urban areas in the next 20 years, successive governments began to dismantle the planks of what is popularly called the 'famine-avoidance' strategy, so assiduously built over the decades.

Consequently, with each passing year, the plight of a farming family has only worsened. Successive governments have deliberately created conditions turning farming non-viable, thereby forcing an increasing number of farmers to abandon agriculture and migrate to

being sacrificed at the altar of international trade, food imports have soared. Already, a number of agreements are being signed to outsource food supplies, including from BRICS countries. According to Down to Earth magazine, the food import bill for 2015-16 stood at Rs 1,402,680,000,000, three times more than the annual budget for agriculture. What is not being realised is that importing food is like importing unemployment. At a time when jobless growth is the norm, destroying farm livelihoods does not make any economic sense. The dominant economic thinking is to open up the markets to allow agriculture to be globally competitive. □□

The author is a writer, researcher, columnist & commentator.

Press Conference of Swadeshi Jagran Manch addressed by Sh. Kashmiri Lal & Dr. Ashwani Mahajan on September 7, 2017



Swadeshi Jagran Manch (SJM) will organise a mega rally on 29th October, to conclude its campaign for boycott of Chinese goods. Swadeshi Jagran Manch had launched Rashtriya Swadeshi Suraksha Abhiyan earlier this year to make people aware of China's nefarious designs.

Over one crore people had given their undertaking in writing to boycott Chinese goods and a memorandum addressed to the prime minister was also submitted to district magistrates in 500

districts of the country, told Shri Kashmiri Lal, All India Organiser of SJM in a Press Conference on September 7, 2017.

Stating that the campaign has the support of people from different walks of life including yoga guru Ramdev, governors, MPs, and industrialists, Lal claimed that it is their efforts which resulted in imposing anti-dumping duty on a number of Chinese goods.

SJM has dubbed panchshool, as the lopsided trade policy between the two countries that is crippling economic, environment, employment and humanity fabric of the country.

Demanding a review of the 'imbalanced trade' policy that allows unbridled flow of Chinese goods into Indian markets, SJM has reached all the nooks and corners of the country since January supporting their demand for a boycott of these wares. It blames heavy reliance on Chinese imports of for jobless growth.

Even as the government engages with China, partnering for trade and business, the RSS wants a cautious approach. Following skirmishes along the border and China's support to the One Belt, One Road initiative, which involves investment in Pakistan-occupied Kashmir, the SJM has demanded revisiting ties.

A campaigner for indigenous manufacture, the SJM has raised the issue of import of Chinese goods adversely impacting the domestic production with the government recurrently. SJM functionaries complained that the easy access to Chinese goods cancel outs the government's intent to create more jobs and allow businesses through flagship programmes such as Make in India and Start-Up India.

"Unhindered import of Chinese goods is causing huge damage to Indian economy in more ways than one. Small scale units are getting closed. Job opportunities are shrinking. China's contribution to India's annual trade loss is US\$ 52 billion out of US\$ 118 billion on account of 190 countries," Kashmiri Lal said. He underlined that while China's share in world's manufacturing market has gone up to 22%, India's is only 2.1%. SJM says a ban on imports will serve the twin purposes of resuscitating domestic production and generating jobs.

"Nearly 50% of our manufacturing output is imported from China; about 24% is on paper but the rest finds its way through illegal routes. If this is stopped, we can revive our own industry and also ensure that China does not poke us. It earns at least Rs 72,000 crore net profit from India and yet does not back India on all global platforms—from blocking India's entry into NSG to supporting Pakistan," said SJM co-convenor Dr. Ashwani Mahajan.

Expressing concern over unhindered import of Chinese goods, which are causing huge damage to Indian economy, SJM's co-convenor Ashwani Mahajan said small scale units are shutting down and job opportunities are shrinking due to cheaper imports from China. □□



SJM CALLS FOR BOYCOTT OF CHINESE GOODS

Friday, 15 September 2017 | PNS | BOKARO | in Ranchi

The Bokaro-Dhanbad district unit of Swadeshi Jagran Manch has called for the boycott of Chinese consumer goods and launched a Jan Jagran Abhiyan at Bokaro Steel City on Thursday.

Giving a clarion call to boycott the Chinese goods, Vivekanand Jha the organiser of the Jan Jagran Abhiyan said, "Employment, economy, environment and security are being affected due to increased use of goods manufactured in China. He also said that common citizens should realise this to ultimately make it true and successful. We have a war-like situation at multiple places in areas where we share border with China. "So it is one of the reasons that we should stop buying Chinese goods", he added.

China is earning money as Indians are buying their products. Since we are buying Chinese goods, China has become a strong nation," said Sujit Kumar COC of the Manch. "China is supporting Pakistan in our fight against terrorism. It is, therefore, necessary to boycott Chinese products", he added.

China is trying to disrupt India's economic growth by dumping cheap Chinese products in our markets, which should be countered by using indigenous products, he said.

Besides several others Suresh Kumar Sinha, Bharat Singh, Sourav Kumar, Gourav Kumar, Mantu Singh were present during the Jan Jagran Abhiyan.

Business Standard

Press Trust of India | New Delhi, September 7, 2017

SJM to organise rally for boycott of Chinese goods

The RSS' economic wing Swadeshi Jagran Manch (SJM) will organise a mega rally next month to conclude its campaign for boycott of Chinese goods.

"China is responding to India's principle of Panchsheel by adopting a policy to cripple our economic, environment, employment and humanity fabric," SJM's all-India organiser Kashmiri Lal said here.

The Sangh affiliate said it had launched Rashtriya Swadeshi Suraksha Abhiyan earlier this year to

make people aware of China's "nefarious designs".

Over one crore people had given their undertaking in writing to boycott Chinese goods and a memorandum addressed to the prime minister was also submitted to district magistrates in 500 districts of the country, he said.

Stating that the campaign has the support of people from different walks of life including yoga guru Ramdev, governors, MPs, and industrialists, Lal claimed that it is their efforts which resulted in imposing anti-dumping duty on a number of Chinese goods.

The Abhiyan would conclude on October 29 at Ram Lila Ground here with a huge rally. A large number of important people from different walks of life will attend the rally, he said.

Expressing concern over unhindered import of Chinese goods, which are causing huge damage to Indian economy, SJM's co-convenor Ashwani Mahajan said small scale units are shutting down and job opportunities are shrinking due to cheaper imports from China.

Despite earning at least Rs 72,000 crore from trade with India, China had been creating problems for India on global platforms -- from blocking India's entry into the NSG to Doklam crisis and other border issues, Mahajan claimed.

ThePrint

23 September, 2017

Swadeshi Jagran Manch film at Ramlilas to show India becoming a Chinese 'colony'

RSS-affiliate SJM ties up with 50 Ramlila committees in Delhi to show the film, which criticises the Narendra Modi government's economic policies.

The Swadeshi Jagran Manch (SJM) has decided to attack China through a provocative short film to be aired at Ramlilas. The film warns viewers that India is becoming a Chinese 'colony'.

The RSS-affiliated economic body intends to tie up with 50 Ramlila committees across Delhi to screen the three-minute film through the festive period. It has already received the assent of 26 committees to screen the film.

The film is critical of the Narendra Modi government when it comes to dealing with what it says is a Chinese economic onslaught. It says given the way things are going, India is well on its way to becoming a colony yet again.

The opening lines of the film state: "Main Hin-

dustan hoon, aaj main phir ek baar ghulami ki ore badh raha hoon. Aaj mere saamne Cheen ek badi chunauti ban khada hua ha, aur dukh iss baat ka hai ki use mere saamne khade hone ki taakat aap hi de rahe hain (I am India and I am on my way to becoming a colony again. China is a challenge before me, and it is painful that you are giving it the power to stand before me).”.....

FINANCIAL EXPRESS

July 4, 2017

Boycott Chinese products campaign gains fresh momentum: Here's how and why RSS plans to do so amid Sikkim standoff

Amidst the ongoing standoff between Indian and Chinese soldiers in the Doklam area of Sikkim sector, the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS) has planned to step up the 'Boycott Chinese Products' campaign from August 1. According to RSS mouthpiece, Organiser, the RSS would launch a nation-wide mass awareness drive against Chinese goods between August 1 to 15. Apart from this, a country-wide campaign by RSS-affiliated Swadeshi Jagaran Manch (SJM) is already on. SJM claims that the campaign has received the support from people in "good number" and it would conclude on October 29 at Delhi's Ramlila Ground with a massive rally.

In an interview to the Organiser, SJM national vice-president Satish Kumar said around 87 lakh people across the country have pledged to boycott Chinese goods and the campaign is gaining momentum.

Revealing how the SJM is taking up the campaign, Kumar said people supporting the campaign have demonstrated outside the Chinese Embassy, mass protests in many parts of the country have been held and some market associations have also vowed not to import and sell Chinese goods.



September 7, 2017

चीनी उत्पादों के खिलाफ वैश्विक सहमति बना रहा स्वदेशी जागरण मंच

डोकलाम विवाद के पटाक्षेप के बाद भी स्वदेशी जागरण मंच चीनी उत्पादों के खिलाफ अभियान चलाते हुए इसपर वैश्विक सहमति बना रहा है। इसके लिए चीन से पीड़ित उसके

पड़ोसी देशों के अलावा चीनी उत्पादों के प्रभाव से अपना लघु व मध्यम उद्योग गंवा चुके देशों को भी साथ लाया जा रहा है।

असल में चीनी उत्पादों के खिलाफ स्वदेशी जागरण मंच ने अब तक का सबसे बड़ा आंदोलन छेड़ा हुआ है।

इसका समापन 29 अक्टूबर को रामलीला मैदान में विशाल रैली के माध्यम से होगा। मंच की कोशिश है कि इस विरोध रैली में दूसरे देश के नागरिक भी शामिल हों। इसके लिए दिल्ली में मौजूद विभिन्न देशों के राजनयिकों से मुलाकात के साथ दूसरे देशों के उद्यमी, मजदूर व पर्यावरण संगठनों के पदाधिकारियों से संपर्क साधा जा रहा है। इसमें पाकिस्तान से नाराज बलूचिस्तान के नागरिक, बांग्लादेश, श्रीलंका, नेपाल और अफ्रीकी देश हैं, जिनके सूक्ष्म व लघु उद्योग चीन के सस्ते उत्पादों से दम तोड़ रहे हैं और वहां भी चीन के उत्पादों के खिलाफ इस तरह की आवाजें उठने लगी हैं। इसी तरह वियतनाम, दक्षिण कोरिया व जापान जैसे चीन के पड़ोसी देश हैं, जो चीन की महत्वकांक्षा से सांसत में हैं।



September 17, 2017

स्वदेशी जागरण मंच ने चीनी वस्तु के बहिष्कार में बनाई मानव शृंखला बनाई

रायगढ़: राष्ट्रीय स्वयंसेवक संघ के आह्वान पर शनिवार की सुबह 10 बजे रायगढ़ में चीनी वस्तु के बहिष्कार के लिए स्वदेशी जागरण मंच के बैनर स्टेशन चौक से लेकर घड़ी चौक तक एक मानव शृंखला बनाया। राष्ट्रीय स्वयंसेवक संघ के प्रचार प्रमुख सुमित मिश्रा ने बताया कि इस मानव शृंखला में शहर के गणमान्य नागरिक सहित छात्र-छात्राएं बड़ी संख्या में शामिल हुए।



September 29, 2017

स्वदेशी जागरण मंच ने चीनी सामान की जलाई होली

स्वदेशी जागरण मंच की ओर से चीनी सामान के विरोध में सिनेमा चौराहे पर गुरुवार शाम को होली जलाई गई। इस मौके पर तेजप्रकाश महावर ने संबोधित किया। लोगों को स्वदेशी स्वीकार, विदेशी बहिष्कार, देश होगा समृद्ध, बढ़ेगा रोजगार, राष्ट्रीय स्वदेशी सुरक्षा पखवाड़े के पंपलेट बांटे गए। ...□□

Anti-dumping duty on import of bus, truck tyres from China



India has imposed anti-dumping duty on import of certain type of radial tyres used in buses and trucks to protect domestic manufacturers from below cost shipments from China for five years. The anti-dumping duty has been imposed in the range of \$245.35 - 452.33 per tonne, said a notification issued by the Central Board Excise and Customs (CBEC).

The duty has been slapped on “new/unused pneumatic radial tyres with or without tubes and/or flap of rubber (including tubeless tyres) having nominal rim dia code above 16 (inch)” used in buses and lorries/trucks. The levy follows recommendation for the same by Directorate General of Anti-dumping and Allied Duties (DGAD).

Earlier, Automotive Tyre Manufacturers’ Association (ATMA) had filed an application on behalf of the domestic producers — Apollo Tyres, J K Tyre Industries and Ceat, had approached DGAD for investigations in dumping of tyres. In its recommendation, the DGAD had said the domestic industry has suffered material injury on account of the imports from China. It found that the tyres have been exported to India from the subject country “below normal value”.

Countries impose anti-dumping duties to guard domestic industry from surge in below-cost imports. India has also imposed similar duties on import of several other products including steel, fabrics and chemicals from different countries including China. Anti-dumping steps are taken to ensure fair trade and provide a level-playing field to the domestic industry. They are not a measure to restrict import or cause an unjustified increase in cost of products. <http://economictimes.indiatimes.com>

Imported GM food floods Indian market unchecked

Imported genetically modified (GM) food appears to be circulating uncontrolled in the country without any consumer advisories on possible harm, according to admission of a top government official before a parliamentary panel which, for now, has red-flagged introduction of GM crops in the country without evaluation of biosafety and socio-economic desirability.

“There are certain GM food which we are told is coming in as a mixed form in some of the imports that is happening,” an official of the department of health research told the parliamentary panel, chaired by Congress leader Renuka Chowdhury, which recently submitted a report on “Genetically modified crops and its impact on environment”.

The official pointed to absence of Food Safety and Standards Authority of India (FSSAI)-mandated labelling system that could inform consumers that a particular food does have GM element so the harm should be well known.

The department-related parliamentary standing committee on science and technology and environment and forest has now “strongly” recommended to the FSSAI that labelling on imported GM food must be done with “immediate effect”.

The committee took note of the official’s submission that FSSAI’s scientific panel for the genetically modified organism in food has recommended mandatory labelling for designated food products that have GM ingredient of 5 per cent or more.

Hinting at the existence of an unregulated system under which Indians may already be unknowingly consuming imported GM food, the official of the department of health research said, “Once the labelling comes into force, some of the imported items – where we are still not very clear what the elements of GM



food are – is something they are still working on.”

By the official's own admission before the committee no GM food product has “really been approved so far” yet there are such food coming into the country as a mixed form in some of the imports.

The official also hinted that there was virtually no system in sight, in the near future, on how or who will set standards for GM food consumption. The committee in its 301st report presented to the Rajya Sabha chairman last month, also expressed surprise over absence of an in-house scientific study by the department of health research on impact of GM food on human health.

Ms Chowdhury noted with pain that the secretary of department of health research that no study till date has been carried out on impact of GM crops on human health. The official told the committee, “In terms of food, it would be very difficult to design a study where you tell one group of people that you have to take only this GM food and, then, tell another group to not take that GM food. Then, you have to follow them for many years. So, this type of study has not been done anywhere in the world. It has not been done in India also.”

Meanwhile, the Committee has put the breaks on introduction of GM crops and said, “The committee strongly believes that unless the biosafety and socio-economic desirability, taking into consideration long run effects, is evaluated by a participatory, independent and transparent process and a retrieval and accountability regime is put in place, no GM crop should be introduced in the country.” <http://www.asianage.com/>

Jharkhand Villagers Converted an Entire Wasteland Into a Forest

All this while, the villagers have kept government and NGO intervention at bay. They are happy with what they have achieved and are doing well on their own, they say.

“We started our work six years ago on Holi. We dug the earth, ploughed it and planted vegetables the first year. With profits from vegetables, we started working on the bigger project that of growing trees. We were already cultivating lac on kusum and ber trees on 200 acres. We added the numbers on the community forest of 365 acres,” Jagnu Oraon, a village resident, told Village Square.

The village of about 800 people put their skills



to best use and built the forest on the wasteland and now earns an annual income of Rs 40 lakh to Rs 50 lakh through its agro-forestry initiative. Residents of the village, which comes under the Ormanjhi administrative block, around 27 km from Ranchi, applied their knowledge and carefully planted each tree – eight feet from each other, with each tree having 1.5 feet radius trench around it.

The villagers have even started an open school of training where they charge a daily fee of Rs 100 for people who want to learn how they work. Following the monsoons last year – which they say was a boon for them – the villagers even earn through dairy after earning Rs 4 lakh by selling grass and purchasing around 70 cows.

“Now, the villagers are earning Rs 5,000 per day by selling milk. And last year's income through forestry was around Rs 40 lakh,” said villager Devendra Nath Thakur.

After Hesatu, the villagers have now started developing small nurseries in barren patches around the area. Thanks to their efforts, they say that even seasonal migration has come to a stop. After they started earning profits through forestry in 2014, they convinced family members of those who migrated to work on their own land instead. “In the years 2015 and 2016, the rate of migration was lower. And in 2017 we can safely claim that our village is migration-free,” said Sunita Devi, a villager. <https://www.thebetterindia.com/>

3 Indians in Forbes 100 greatest living business minds list

Three Indian corporate czars - Lakshmi Mittal, Ratan Tata and Vinod Khosla- have been named in Forbes' special list of the world's '100 Greatest Living Business Minds'.

Lakshmi Mittal is the chairman and CEO of Arcelormittal, Ratan Tata is Tata group's Chairman



Emeritus and Vinod Khosla is the co-founder of Sun Microsystems. The special list also includes Donald Trump. Forbes referred him as the “Salesman and Ringmaster Extraordinaire: Owner, Trump Organisation; 45th President Of The United States”.

Others in the list include Amazon Founder Jeff Bezos, Virgin Group founder Richard Branson; Berkshire Hathaway CEO Warren Buffett; Microsoft co-founder Bill Gates and News Corp Executive Chairman Rupert Murdoch. <http://www.thehindubusinessline.com/>

Rough guide to the new Silk Road

Beijing’s so-called Belt and Road vision already has fund firms rushing to create vehicles to lure investment. The latest is an exchange-traded fund launched earlier this month by Krane Funds Advisors, now majority-owned by Chinese investment bank CICC, which tracks the MSCI Global China Infrastructure Exposure Index. But broad indexes miss that many of the projects in the plan to connect some 70 countries make little commercial sense.

Even Chinese officials estimate that projects may

Belt and Road: the equities shortlist

Breakingviews has constructed an index of equities exposed to the Belt and Road Initiative, President Xi Jinping’s push for infrastructure investment across Asia, Africa and Europe. These include China Communications Construction, Guangxi LiuGong Machinery, China Railway Construction, CRR, Sany Heavy Industry, Sinotruk, Siemens, GE and ABB.



Note: For firms listed in both mainland and Hong Kong bourses, the index includes the more accessible Hong Kong shares. Equities in the index are equally weighted and priced in US dollars. Source: Thomson Reuters Datastream, data to 9/18/2017. C. Beddor & V. Flasseur | @Breakingviews

face 80 percent losses in Pakistan, 50 percent in Myanmar and 30 percent across Central Asia, according to news reports. That’s why state-owned banks in the People’s Republic – which answer to political masters – are stumping up much of the estimated \$1 trillion in planned investment.

Skeptical punters should give the stocks of these banks a wide berth. They should also avoid many transport plays. As part of its grand plan, the Chinese government is effectively subsidizing rail transit across Central and Southeast Asia. That makes the inclusion of airlines in ETFs designed to benefit from Belt and Road baffling. If anything, cheaper rail transit might harm them. Then again, even oodles of cheap Chinese capital are unlikely to move the needle much against economic fundamentals. Goods shipped from China to Europe skew toward the lower end of the value chain, meaning cargo shipping is likely to remain the most cost-effective way of transporting them. <https://www.breakingviews.com/>

Banks of Ganga, Highways in Bihar All Set to Get Organic Farm Corridors



From October onwards, officials of Bihar’s agriculture department have been told to start working on creating an organic corridor along the banks of Ganga and the national highways passing through the state. The state’s Chief Minister, Nitish Kumar, agreed to the proposal at a review meeting and identified organic farming as a core area that needs to be promoted. According to Hindustan Times (HT), organic farm clusters will be created along the river’s banks and the highways, and the corridor will give easy access to markets for organic farming purposes.

The idea is also to trigger a large-scale shift from the use of chemicals to organic fertilisers and pesti-

cides and hence enhance land productivity. For irrigation, the chief minister directed that a coordinated plan be made, in order to use treated sewage water. He also instructed officials to modernise seed processing equipment, as there is a shortfall of 10 lakh quintals of locally produced seeds.

This will help improve the availability as well as the quality of seeds.

“Around 15 lakh quintals of seeds of all varieties of crops grown in the state are required. At present, the state has a capacity of about 5 lakh quintals. It is imperative to step up production of quality seeds so that farmers are inclined to source their requirements from BSSC,” he said.

The chief minister also discussed a scheme for encouraging farm tool manufacturers with the officials and directed them to work on infrastructure facilities in marketing yards among other things, reported the publication. <https://www.thebetterindia.com/>

Linking Mobile Number with Aadhaar: Misinterpreting A Supreme Court Order

It appears many telecom service providers have been alerting their customers to link their mobile numbers with their Aadhaar numbers, in terms of a circular issued on March 23, 2017, by the Department of Telecom (DoT). This circular calls upon all the telecom operators to conduct an Aadhaar-based re-verification exercise of all existing pre-paid and post-paid mobile connections. The deadline fixed for this is February 6, 2018.

The DoT circular cites an observation of the Supreme Court in *Lokniti Foundation v Union of India*, in the order issued by the then Chief Justice of India, J.S. Khehar, on February 6 this year. This order

was issued, on the basis of submissions by the then Attorney General, Mukul Rohatgi, who supported the plea of the petitioner, for 100% per cent verification of mobile phone subscribers, in view of the increasing number of instances of mobile phone being used for crime. The Supreme Court bench of the Chief Justice J.S. Khehar and Justice N.V. Ramana, found the plea a “commendable cause”. The bench agreed with the petitioner, that mobile phones are used not only for domestic criminal activity, but also, for known terrorist activity (sometimes with foreign involvement).

The bench took note of the affidavit of the Union of India, wherein it was stated that the DoT has launched Aadhaar-based Know Your Customer for issuing mobile connections, on 16.8.16, to authenticate the customer. The bench also noted that the number of Aadhaar cards already issued constituted 87.09 per cent of population, as on January 31, 2017.

The Centre told the bench that the petitioner’s concerns would be addressed, as far as the new mobile phone connections from August 16, 2016. As more than 90 per cent of the subscribers are using pre-paid connections, the Centre proposed that it would put in place a mechanism, similar to the one adopted for new subscribers, so that when pre-paid connections come up for renewals, the verification could be insisted upon. The bench expressed its satisfaction that this verification process would be completed within one year, and disposed the petition with the hope and expectation that the undertaking given to the court would be taken seriously, and would be given effect to, as soon as possible.

Can the DoT construe this order as a direction to link Aadhaar number with the mobile numbers of the existing subscribers?

First and foremost, Rohatgi did not inform the bench on February 6, that another three-Judge bench of the Supreme Court had made enrolment of Aadhaar optional, and directed the Government not to make it mandatory. As the Chief Justice Khehar and Justice Ramana were neither part of the three-Judge bench, which issued the order on August 11, 2015, and the five Judge Constitution Bench on October 15, 2015, which reiterated that order, they were perhaps unaware of its relevance in the case of mobile phone verification. It was the duty of the AG to inform the bench about its relevance, but he chose not to, as he shared the concerns of the petitioner. <http://www.livelaw.in/>



Unchecked agri waste burning to cause severe air pollution this Diwali

Three states abutting the national capital had last year promised to stop burning agricultural waste in the wake of public uproar and a severe rap from the green court. That promise appears set to go up in smoke and Delhi's citizens are once again likely to choke on severe air pollution this Diwali.

Haryana, Punjab and Uttar Pradesh are claiming to have taken several measures to discourage straw and stubble burning, but farmers say they have not received any assistance from their respective governments on an alternate method to clear the fields after the harvest. The farmers said that the government's suggestions for the removal of straw stubble that remains after harvesting of crops – mainly wheat and rice – involve convoluted and costly processes and they have been left with no option but to set it on fire.

"It is almost impossible to remove straw manually. The government officials are asking us to stop burning it and use machines. However, we have not received any kind of financial help. Also, we cannot buy costly machines," said Pavitra Singh, a farmer from Mansa district of Punjab.

Given the very small window that exists between the rice harvesting season and the wheat sowing season, farmers are expected to burn the crop residue from early October. This burning contributes significantly to increasing the concentration of particulate matter (PM) in the air in Delhi as the winds blow the smoke south. Adding to this, emissions from motor vehicles and smoke from the bursting of fire-crackers on Diwali (October 19) worsens the situation and leaves the capital choked and blanketed by smog.

Harpal Singh, President of the Bharatiya Kisan Union (BKU), said the farmers were already in financial distress due to poor returns for their agriculture produce and were hence in no position to do anything but burn the stubble.

"Removing the straw is a very tiresome process. Farmers do not have money to hire labourers, leave alone buying machines. How does the government expect farmers to spend additional money for removing the straw when they do not have funds for the basic preparations for farming? The government should come up with a viable alternative for disposal of crop residue," Harpal Singh said.

The Haryana government said it had collected Rs 19.38 lakh last winter as fines from farmers caught burning straw in their fields. However, this did not have any impact as the burning of stubble continued after the wheat crop was harvested this summer. While the three states claimed they were making efforts to prevent the burning of stubble, the pace of work appears to be sluggish.

Haryana Agriculture Minister O.P. Dhankar said holding the state responsible for pollution in Delhi was "not logical" and yet the government had started creating awareness among farmers and working on a plan of biomass-fired power plants for effective disposal of agricultural waste.

"It is not logical to say that we are responsible for the air pollution in Delhi. It is a creation of its own. However, we are holding agriculture fairs across the state to dissuade farmers from burning straw," Dhankar said.

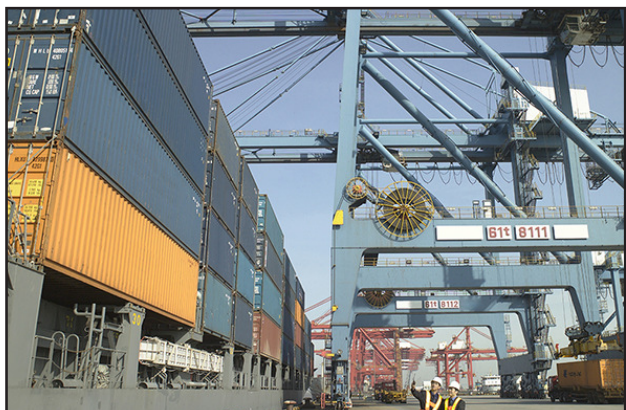
"We are in talks with Indian Oil Company for the production of ethanol using agriculture waste. We are also preparing a policy to set up biomass plants that run on agriculture waste that will be bought from the farmers. If farmers get money, then they will stop burning the stubble," he said. All these efforts will take four to five years to transform into reality, Dhankar added. Unlike the stubble that remains after harvesting the wheat crop, rice straw cannot be used as fodder since it contains a huge amount of silica.

In November 2015, the National Green Tribunal (NGT) had banned the burning of crop residue in five states — Punjab, Haryana, Rajasthan, Uttar Pradesh and Delhi. Punjab, where paddy is grown on over three million hectares, sees a significant amount of straw being burnt in October, causing people in Delhi to bear the brunt.

Punjab Agriculture Secretary M.P. Singh said the government had taken "a large number" of measures but did not spell these out. Meanwhile, the Central Pollution Control Board (CPCB) appeared to be clueless about the progress of work undertaken by the state governments.

"We have sent an advisory to the states. We have heard that they are taking necessary action. Pollution during this Diwali is expected to go down," said Prashant Gargava, head of air quality management at the CPCB. Gargava, however, refused to reveal the status of the action being taken by the states to control the burning of stubble. <http://www.business-standard.com/>

WTO members review Korea-Colombia, Korea-India trade agreements



For the **Korea-Colombia Free Trade Agreement**, parties to the agreement remarked on its positive impact since it entered into force on 15 July 2016. Korea said two-way trade in the first year of the agreement amounted to \$1.29 billion and that exports were complementary, with Korea exporting industrial goods while Colombia exported natural resources and agricultural products. Colombia said this was its first trade agreement with a country in Asia and that it hoped it would become a doorway to other countries in that region.

Korea and Colombia will remove tariffs on almost all goods traded between the two countries by 2034 and have made new commitments in services and investment. A number of members commended Korea and Colombia on the ambitious trade opening undertaken in the agreement, although one member noted that the transition period for implementing the agreement exceeded ten years.

For the **Korea-India Comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreement**, the factual presentation prepared by the WTO Secretariat covered only aspects of the RTA notified by the parties under the General Agreement on Trade in Services (GATS). India said the agreement has allowed job opportunities for Indian services professionals and noted that services play a “very important role” in its economy. Korea said that services trade flows had grown 30% since the agreement’s entry into force and it was confident that trade and investment flows between the two countries will continue on the back of close cooperation. A WTO member said at the meeting that it looked forward to the review of the goods aspects of the agreement.

Both parties to the agreement, which entered into force on 1 January 2010, said they are currently in negotiations to “upgrade” their commitments for goods, services and investment.

The consideration of the **Mexico-Panama Free Trade Agreement**, previously on the agenda of the meeting, was postponed to the next CRTA meeting due to the late receipt of the parties’ responses to members’ questions. As a rule, each notified RTA is considered in a single meeting under the Transparency Mechanism for RTAs which is currently provisionally applied.

Seventy-four RTAs had not been notified to the WTO as of 12 September 2017. Moreover, there are currently 31 RTAs involving WTO members only plus an additional 38 RTAs involving non-members for which a factual presentation had to be prepared, counting goods and services separately. Furthermore, there are three RTAs for which the factual consideration is delayed due to a lack of comments on the draft factual presentations.

The Secretariat urged members to submit data and comments in a timely fashion to enable the committee to adhere to its work programme. Committee chair Ambassador Walid Doudech (Tunisia) said consultations had continued with parties to RTAs for which factual considerations were delayed.

The chair went on to announce his intention to hold consultations with members to follow up on paragraph 28 of the Nairobi Ministerial Declaration from 2015. Ministers had instructed the committee to discuss the systemic implication of RTAs for the multilateral trading system and their relationship to WTO rules. The ministerial declaration also called on members to work towards the transformation of the provisional Transparency Mechanism, which is used to review RTAs, into a permanent one without prejudice to questions related to notification requirements.

One delegation expressed concern over the intention to hold consultations, noting that members had yet to reach consensus on how to proceed. The chair responded that he was not prejudging the outcome of the discussions. □□ <https://www.wto.org/>