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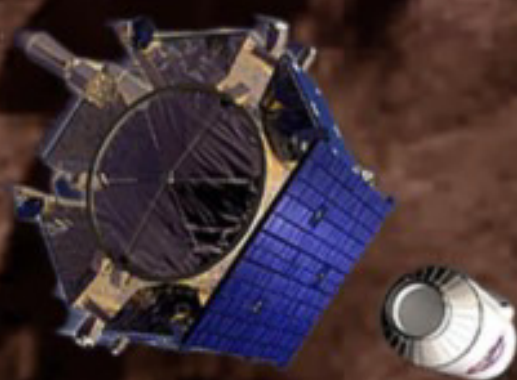
Swadeshi

PATRIKA

November 2009



Bt. Brinjal
The Poisonous Crop



Global Warming
**Voracious assault on Moon
after spoiling earth**



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LETTER 2

BOOK SCAN 26



NEWS

NATIONAL 32

INTERNATIONAL 34

WTO 36



CONTENTS

COVER ARTICLE 4

G. Raina

Politics of Climate Change



07 COVER ARTICLE-2

Environmental pollution, consequent climatic changes & human sustenance

..... **Bhanwar Dan Bithu**

10 OUTLOOK

Why not boycott China Economically

..... **Ashwani Mahajan**

11 OUTLOOK-2

Swadeshi way to fight China

..... **K.V. Biju**

14 BT BRINJAL

Commercial release of Bt-brinjal spawns persuasive dissent

..... **Ajay Bharti**

17 POLICY SCAN

India's first poisonous food crop

..... **Devinder Sharma**

19 OPINION

Inequality is more explosive than poverty

..... **Bharat Jhunjunwala**

21 STUDY

SJM brings to light the plight of Gulf Migrants

..... **Appala Prasad**

23 SJM ACTIVITIES

Jaipur National Seminar

28 NEWS-DISSECT

The Moving Pen

..... **Kashmirilal**

Moving Pen

Column "Moving Pen" was a good reading. I liked it. In one of its paragraphs it is written that "while centenary celebrations of great men and events are organized from time to time it is perhaps for the first time that the centenary year of a book is celebrated". This is not correct. We in India have been celebrating "Geeta Jayanti" for thousands of years. Festivals on Tulsi Ramayan in Chitrakoot" is a well known affair. In Punjab Tricentenary Year of "Shree Gurugranth Sahib" was celebrated with great pomp and show and religious fervour. These are just few examples of celebration of book publication in India. As far as Hind Swaraj is concerned, yes it has been ignored in the independent India. Those who have enjoyed luxuries of power in the name of Gandhi ji are responsible for pushing the book into oblivion. They are the people who have killed everything Gandhi ji stood for. His principles are laughed at. Liquor is freely available throughout the country. Cow slaughter continues unabated. Corruption has replaced morality. May be these functions help us remember true Gandhi.

– Devinder Pal, Batala (Pb.)

Truth behind Chinese Threat

Let us be realistic. Trust deficit still persists between India and China. Can China be trusted? Indian Prime ministers after the 1962 capitulation, it seems, like an Ostrich buried its head in the sand, are in an appeasement mindset. Time has come that Indian leaders should wake up from slumber and eschew the appeasement mindset and treat China as a potential enemy with territorial intentions. As it says, "A man chooses; a slave obeys." Likewise, Pakistan and China dictate; India obliges.

India hasn't learned from the bitter lessons of 1962 and the politicians are still shadow boxing-sparring the arch the enemy, China, with kid gloves. Hindi-Chini bhai-bhai' slogan was bait that was concealed in deception and Nehru was caught with hook, line and sinker. Nehru had paid the ultimate price-his death due to the shock of the Chinese betrayal.

– Anil Kumar, Via email.

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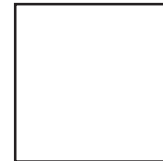
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Quote-Unquote



Politics is not something that can unite society.

Mohan Rao Bhagwat
Sarsanghchalak RSS



A strong nationalist sentiment is the answer to adverse impact of globalization.

Arun Ojha
National Convener SJM



It wouldn't be unfair to say that Indian science is literally in a pit

Dr. Devinder Sharma
Food Policy Analyst



Getting angry makes me mentally tougher.

Gautam Gambhir
Noted cricketer



It's always a charm to age gracefully.

Lata Mangeshkar
Veteran Singer

Chinese Riddle

China once again dominates our national discourse. Sheer mention of the word China or issues related to it evokes strong feelings among the countrymen. State of affairs is no better on the other side of Macmohonline. Scars of immediate past and growing signs of emergent China on expedition to fulfill its global ambitions is compelling a concerned India to take a grim note. Chinese attempts to block the waiver to global civilian nuclear cooperation at the NSG, the objection to Chinese visa to Indians from Arunachal Pradesh, opposition to development projects in Arunachal Pradesh at the ADB, separate visas to Indian citizens from Jammu & Kashmir, objection to elections in Arunachal Pradesh and almost regular border incursions have put additional pressure on the already strained relations. Assistance China provides to Pakistan and other non state actors in both India and its neighbourhood, policy of dividing India into several units preached by its official websites and plans regarding water diversion in the Himalayas are some other major irritants. Under such an environment of legitimate misgivings it will be foolish to expect some one believe that within a generation, China and India will spearhead a regional free trade agreement that will help develop all of Asia. That both these countries will be more influential and bigger economically than the United States or Western Europe is not doubted. India and China are neighbours - each with a billion-plus population, together accounting for 38 per cent of the world's population, with the fastest GDP growth rates for large economies. How these two big neighbours or as some would like to call them 'Chindia', the word coined by our Environment and Forest Minister, bond together in the future is crucial for global order. However, there are several geopolitical, cultural, economic and political differences between China and India that many others argue would make the term "Chindia" inappropriate. It will be apt to recognize the fact that the days of US centered world economic order is coming to an end and the new centers are in progress to come up. Asia after a lapse of almost two centuries is once again becoming the center of world economy. And both China and India are geographically proximate, both are regarded as upwardly moving countries and both are among the fastest growing major economies in the world. They have been named as countries with the highest potential for growth in the next 50 years. The picture that emerges is a mixed pack of different shades. It is not pure black and white.

Such a situation needs careful handling. It is no doubt a difficult riddle that needs enduring, innovative, farsighted and imaginative minds to transform the challenge into opportunity. Accepted that on face of it China has several advantages over India. It is a permanent member of UN Security Council. It has a head start in international marketplaces and is a large investor in Africa. There is also the belief that China has greater geopolitical clout. It has been splurging on military capabilities far beyond her adequate requirements to defend herself. All these point to just one direction, World domination. She has been flexing her muscles and testing the waters-shooting down one of her satellite from the firmament; Chinese Navy's aggressive manoeuvres at sea merely confirm the same. And in its global ambition they must be considering India to be an impediment. What shall we do in such a situation? Be scared and jump the gun or behave as a mature nation with a hoary past. India is not a banana republic. We are a great nation with our own strengths. We have several more advantages over China than is probably discussed. Besides being a democracy with much better, skilled and younger workforce we do have cultural influence over vast regions as well as hearts and minds of world population. The very innate nature of Indians that promotes accommodative existence is the future for humanity. 1962 is history. Chinese are no fools to misunderstand this fact. And if in any case she thinks of any misadventurism the cost for it will be devastating. Hence it is prudent on our part to concentrate on and define our own goal and the path to achieve that ground. After that we must tie the loose ends wherever required. In short we must match Chinese military capacity in every respect, but still be conciliatory in policy, attitude, and words.

Politics of Climate Change

Forest and Environment Minister Jairam Ramesh has suggested a major deviation from the earlier Indian negotiating stand on climate talks. Why is Jairam Ramesh instead of doing his job of protecting interests of India & Indians taking upon himself the responsibility of bridging the gap between India and USA, explains G. Raina

In yet another act of betraying broad national consensus and hitting a hard blow at the existential interests of the poor countrymen, Forest and Environment Minister of UPA-II government Jairam Ramesh has demonstrated his belief in toeing the US-EU line on climate talks and dumping of Kyoto Protocol.

The minister in a confidential letter to the PM written reportedly on 13th Oct. 2009, has suggested that India neglect the Kyoto Protocol, delink itself from G77— the 131-member bloc of developing nations & take on greenhouse gas emission reduction commitments under the new deal without any counter guarantee of finances & technology.

The Minister has in fact suggested a major deviation from the earlier Indian negotiating stand on several counts. But, before coming to the deviations suggested by the minister in the month of October 2009 it will be interesting to recall what Clinton, Hillary not Bill, said in Gurgaon in the month of July 2009. Talking optimistically to reporters she declared that she had productive talks with Indian environmental Minister and USA & India can bridge their difference on reducing greenhouse gases. Hence Jairam Ramesh instead of doing his job of pro-

tecting interests of India & Indians, seems to have taken upon himself the responsibility of bridging the gap between India and USA as instructed by Madan Clinton. No reward for guessing that it will be India that will have to depart from its stated position. That is what is happening. Jairam who in July was of the opinion that “we (Indians) are simply not in a position to take



on legally binding emissions (reductions) targets,” suddenly started pleading, India should “not stick with G77 but be embedded in G20. We should be pragmatic and constructive, not argumentative and polemical.”

This proposal comes just after he wrote to the PM suggesting India permit strict external scrutiny— just as is done under IMF and WTO— of the mitigation measures it takes at its own cost.

Minister’s proposal is close to

the stand taken by the USA that has constantly voiced its opposition to the Kyoto Protocol as it demands quantified targets from rich countries.

The Kyoto Protocol is a protocol to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC or FCCC), aimed at combating global warming. The UNFCCC is an international environmental treaty with the goal of achieving “stabilization of greenhouse gas concentrations in the atmosphere at a level that would prevent dangerous anthropogenic interference with the climate system.

The Protocol, it may be recalled, was initially adopted on 11 December 1997 in Kyoto, Japan and entered into force on 16 February 2005. Under the Protocol, 37 industrialized countries (called “Annex I countries”) commit themselves to a reduction of four greenhouse gases (GHG) (carbon dioxide, methane, nitrous oxide, sulphur hexafluoride) and two groups of gases (hydrofluorocarbons and perfluorocarbons) produced by them, and all member countries give general commitments. Annex I countries agreed to reduce their collective greenhouse gas emissions by 5.2% from the 1990 level. Emission limits do not include emissions by in-

Repay the climate debt

A just and effective outcome for Copenhagen

As the climate negotiations intensify on the road to Copenhagen, a key issue that has occupied much attention is the issue of mitigation and the burden-sharing between developed and developing countries. Third World Network (TWN), an independent non-profit international network of organisations and individuals involved in issues relating to development, Third World and North-South affairs, has circulated the following letter on climate debt to have an influence over the negotiations. Endorsements can be sent to Yvonne Miller at twngeneva@bluewin.ch

We the undersigned groups, including development, environment, gender and youth organisations, faith-based communities, indigenous peoples, and social and economic justice movements in Africa, Asia, Latin America and the Caribbean, Europe and North America call on the rich industrialized world to acknowledge its historic and current responsibility for the causes and adverse effects of climate change, and to fully, effectively and immediately repay its climate debt to poor countries, communities and people.

Climate change threatens the balance of life on Earth. Oceans are rising and acidifying; ice caps and glaciers are melting; forests, coral reefs and other ecosystems are changing or collapsing. The existence of some communities is imperilled, while others face growing barriers to their development. Unless curbed, an impending climate catastrophe risks increasingly violent weather, collapsing food systems, mass migration and unprecedented human conflict.

Poor countries, communities and people have contributed least to the causes of climate change, yet are its first and worst victims. At greatest risk are women, indigenous peoples, poor people, small farmers, fisher-folk and forest communities, people relying on scarce water resources, youth and other groups susceptible to harm and health impacts.

A wealthy minority of the world's countries, corporations and people, by contrast, are the principal cause of climate change. The developed countries representing less than one fifth of the world's population have emitted almost three quarters of all historical emissions. Their excessive historical and current emissions occupy the atmosphere and are the main cause of current and committed future warming.

Developed countries have consumed more than their fair share of the Earth's atmospheric space. On a per person basis, they are responsible for more than ten times the historical emissions of developing countries. Their per person emissions today are more than four times those of developing countries.

For their disproportionate contribution to the causes and consequences of climate change, developed countries owe a two-fold climate debt to the poor majority:

- For their excessive historical and current per person emissions – denying developing countries their fair share of atmospheric space – they have run up an “emissions debt” to developing countries; and
- For their disproportionate contribution to the effects of climate change – requiring developing countries to adapt to rising climate impacts and damage – they have run up an “adaptation debt” to developing countries.

Together the sum of these debts – emissions debt and adaptation debt – constitutes their climate debt, which is part of a larger ecological, social and economic debt owed by the

rich industrialized world to the poor majority.

Honouring these obligations is not only right; it is the basis of a fair and effective solution to climate change. Those who benefited most in the course of causing climate change must compensate those who contributed least but bear its adverse effects. They must compensate developing countries for the two-fold barrier to their development – mitigating and adapting to climate change – which were not present for developed countries during the course of their development but which they have caused.

Developed countries, however, intend to write-off rather than honour their debt. In their submissions to the climate negotiations they seek to pass on substantial adaptation costs to developing countries; evading rather than honouring their adaptation debt. And they seek to continue their high per person emissions; deepening rather than repaying their emissions debt, consuming additional atmospheric space, and crowding the world's poor majority into a small and shrinking remainder.

We are concerned that continued excessive consumption of atmospheric space by the world's wealthy at the expense of the world's poor – who need access to energy and resources to build the schools, houses and infrastructure that the rich world already has and continues to benefit from – puts at risk the prospects of any viable solution to climate change and, with it, the safety of all nations and peoples, and the Earth.

As the basis of a fair and effective climate outcome we therefore call on developed countries to acknowledge and repay the full measure of their climate debt to developing countries commencing in Copenhagen. We demand that they :

- Repay their adaptation debt to developing countries by committing to full financing and compensation for the adverse effects of climate change on all affected countries, groups and people;
- Repay their emissions debt to developing countries through the deepest possible domestic reductions, and by committing to assigned amounts of emissions that reflect the full measure of their historical and continued excessive contributions to climate change; and
- Make available to developing countries the financing and technology required to cover the additional costs of mitigating and adapting to climate change, in accordance with the Climate Convention.

Meeting these demands is a basic prerequisite for success in December 2009. Copenhagen must be a key turning point for climate justice – a major milestone on the journey towards safeguarding the Earth's climate system and ensuring a future in which the rights and aspirations of all people can be realized. □

ternational aviation and shipping.

USA led west is reluctant to act on ground and fulfill its promise. Their unwillingness to behave responsibly is hampering future progress on climate front.

Under scathing attacks from opposition and experts including Indian negotiators, Congress party washed its hands of Jairam Ramesh's controversial pitch for a drastic change in the country's stand on climate change forcing the environment minister to refurbish his adherence to the Kyoto Protocol.

But that does not matter much. Doubts have firmed up. Assumption, as Arun Jaitley, the BJP leader put it, is that Jairam Ramesh was testing waters as a "spokesman or a trial balloon for a larger lobby". That is a really serious issue.

US, as is well known, has refused to put down hard numbers for mitigation under the second phase of Kyoto Protocol at the ongoing climate negotiations. EU too seems to be taking a deal-breaking condition saying, "environmental integrity" was central to the UN treaty and "equity" of different countries' rights was just one element.

The negotiations at various levels seem to be grinding into a logjam with US determined not to sign on to the Kyoto Protocol. The US negotiators fought hard at different forums within the UN talks to block any progress on industrialized countries' commitments to reduce emissions in the mid-term under the second phase of Kyoto Protocol. There in fact is a huge rift between rich and poor nations.

"Warming of the climate system is unequivocal as is now evident from observations of increas-

es in global average air and ocean temperatures, widespread melting of snow and ice and rising global sea level", and that "Most of the observed increase in temperatures since the mid-20th century is very likely due to the observed increase in anthropogenic GHG concentrations," says DR. R. K. PACHAURI Chairman, IPCC.

Climate change is already resulting in an increase in the frequency, intensity and duration of floods, droughts and heat waves. He further adds, 'If we take no action to stabilize the concentration of greenhouse gases in the atmosphere, then average temperature by the end of this century would increase anywhere from 1.1 degrees to 6.4 degrees C, with a best estimate at the lower end of 1.8 degrees and at the upper end of 4 degrees C. The world is increasing its emissions at a rate that may take us to the upper end of the range projected, which implies a total increase in these two centuries of over 7 degrees C, that is, over 12 degrees Fahrenheit. Yet between 1970 and 2004 global GHG emissions increased by 70% and carbon dioxide by 80%. This needs to be not only stopped but actually reversed.

Developing world continues to play politics at the cost of poor and developing countries.

These developed countries are actually responsible for 70% of emissions into the atmosphere. They followed a opulent and environment destroying consumerist lifestyle and are reluctant to give up their comforts. To maintain their extravagant lifestyle they have been exploiting poor and developing nations mostly by mischief and brute force. It is clear now that this

type of lifestyle is unsustainable. A simple look at IPCC's Carbon Budget helps us understand the difference between the consumption levels leading to emissions. According to it, the environmental permissible carbon quota per person for 2009 is 2170 kg. In Sri Lanka each person emits 660 kg annually. In USA and Canada it is 22,000 kg per person, that is more than ten times the permissible quota. The world average is 4700 kg that is twice the permissible level. This means low emitting countries like could not emit more because their space has already been exploited by developed or global polluting countries without consent. And more importantly they exploited future generations' quota as well. If we adopt scientific criteria of IPCC these so called developed countries should cut their emission level by at least 70-90 % by 2020. On the other hand they owe environmental debt to other countries and should compensate them by establishing an adaptation fund. Now these countries adopt delaying tactics by setting out long goals (promising a 50% emission cut by 2050) which are to be honored by their children and blaming developing world for increasing emissions which are now well below the permissible level.

Developing countries have to maintain the economic progress to assuage their vast population living under miserable conditions. It is therefore essential that developed countries should pay off their debt to humankind and the planet; they should provide significant resources to a fund so that developing countries can embark upon a growth model which does not repeat the serious impacts of the capitalist industrialization. □□

Environmental pollution, consequent climatic changes & human sustenance

*Human sustenance is facing the global environmental pollution and consequent climatic changes resulting into reduced rainfall and river flows, decreased food and fiber production and human, cattle, fowl and plant pathological problems. The solution lies within, explains **Bhanwar Dan Bithu**.*

The environmental pollution in reduced global warming, climatic changes, depletion of oxygen in the air, reduced rainfall and river flows and decreased agricultural and livestock production have been causing serious problems to human health and well being. The food and fiber production has been decreasing fast because of the reducing adaptation of the domesticated plant varieties to global climatic changes, low and erratic rainfall and longer and more intense hot periods. New and dormant plant diseases are coming up. The insect and pest nuisance has been increasing. It is therefore, necessary to face the formidable human sustenance problem through increasing oxygen content and rainfall, evolving and discovering new adapted and mutated seed and plant varieties and sustainable use of the available land, water, natural vegetation and scientifically improved indigenous development technology after proper conflict assessment, management and resolution.

Air purification

Environmental pollution caused by indiscriminate industrialization, over use of fossil fuel driven automobiles and unsafe disposal of gaseous, liquid and solid waste loads air by more carbon-di-



oxide and other harmful gases in addition to river and ground water contamination and landscape deterioration. The natural way of cleaning the air is through forestation and plantation of shrubs and trees. It is feared that if the forest and plantation cover reduces below the critical limit of 13 percent, serious healthy living problems

may crop up.

The trees generally take up carbon dioxide and give out oxygen thereby purifying the air. It is therefore, desirable to precede industrialization and large scale use of fossil-fuel automobiles by commensurate areas of forestation and oxygen giving tree plantation. The safe and environment friendly solid and liquid waste disposal should also be ensured well within the assimilative capacity of the earth particularly in the case of urbanization and development of big cities. The area and intensity of forestation and tree and shrub plantation should be decided depending on the degree of air pollution to be purified. Different field model green houses may be constructed

The area & intensity of forestation and tree and shrub plantation should be decided depending on the degree of air pollution to be purified.

with varying size and intensity of forestation and varying degree of air pollution to determine what degree of air pollution requires what size of forestation. The air purifying efficiency in the field may be taken as 50 to 70 percent of what it is found in the green house experiments.

Rainfall stabilization

Pervasive environmental pollution has also reduced and destabilized rainfall and disturbed the summer and winter periods in space and time coordinates. This has resulted in decreased food and fiber production because of the changes in plant root zone soil moisture, soil salt and soil temperature. The low and erratic annual rainfall can be manipulated for satisfactory plant growth through efficient field rain water harvesting and control of evaporation of useful soil moisture under micro catchment rain water harvesting, subterranean dam (soil trap) and preservation of natural perennial vegetation systems. In view of the environmental pollution induced global warming and consequent

decline in annual rainfall, shrinkage of river head glaciers and reduced river water flows greater emphasis should be laid on field rain water harvesting and subterranean dam or soil trap systems. The decline and uncertainty of the rainfall may be controlled by increasing and stabilizing rainfall through temperature controlling forestation and green belt plantation and cloud seeding by Vedic yagya performance particularly in the arid and semi arid regions. Vedic Yagya smoke particles may

provide organic base for cloud seeding and cloud vapor condensation. The Vedic yagya and forestation experiments may be conducted in field model green houses to see how and how soon the yagya smoke particles aided by temperature lowering forestation act as cloud seeding and cloud water vapor condensation to cause rainfall.

Social environmental pollution control

Environmental pollution control requires a multifaceted approach including biological, legislative and self disciplined minimum need based control and remediation measures. Requisite forestation and tree plantation commen-



surable with the degree of pollution should precede the environmentally manageable industrialization. Dispensable industrialization catering to the luxurious and excessive human comfort and convenience giving goods and service should be avoided. Agricultural and pastoral industries and national defense and scientific research industries should get higher priority. It may be kept in mind that dharma, knowledge and selfless service give true happiness. Artha or monetary growth may give human con-

venience and not necessarily happiness.(Bhagwat geeta). The biological pollution control and remediation measures may comprise forestation and tree, shrub and perennial grass plantation and green belt formation. The trees, shrubs and grass plants take carbon dioxide and emit oxygen and thus make up deficit oxygen content and clean the air. Self abnegation and renunciation of the lust for luxurious and excessive human comfort and convenience giving goods and services with their highly publicized promotion ways may also control and minimize avoidable industrialization and environmental pollution. Compatible environmental pollution control and

remediation technology should be decided after proper assessment, management and resolution of the industrialization, urbanization and inorganic farming technology conflicts of human comfort and convenience giving goods and services, employment and wealth generation and growth oriented increased but contaminated agricultural and livestock production versus air and river and ground water pollution, long term disease and human health hazards and social disintegration and poverty of the rural people.

Urbanization

The unregulated and unmanageable urbanization also leads to environmental pollution. The flight of the people from the villages and towns to the big cities in search of the concentrated and centralized educational, medical, employment and other civic facilities swell the cities depopulate villages, cause

social disintegration of the rural population, decrease agricultural and livestock production, increase air and ground water pollution because of the sprawling industries, large number of fossil fuel automobiles and excessive and improper disposal of the sewage and liquid and solid waste in excess to what nature can assimilate and deplete ground water storage on heavy pumping of ground water for factories and city water supply. On the other hand development of self sufficient science education and research promoting villages will control and alleviate environmental pollution and social disintegration and uprooting of the rural poor people. Urbanization also causes increased demand of stones, bricks, cement, steel and wood thereby triggering deforestation and mine pollution. Therefore, control of avoidable urbanization and development of self sufficient environment friendly villages may greatly help control of environmental pollution, deforestation, river or effluent channel water contamination and ground water depletion and contamination. A paradigm shift in construction of the development policy towards development of self sufficient villages and rural poverty alleviation through rural sector organic farming instead of prolific growth of urbanization is essential.

Inorganic farming

The growth oriented excessively fertilized with chemical fertilizers and insecticide sprayed production of food and fiber using heavy tractor driven deep plowing in the prevalent inorganic farming has been causing land degradation, decline in soil fertility and land pro-

ductivity, soil salinity, ground water pollution and transfer of injurious chemical fertilizer and insecticide elements into human and cattle food cycle leading to serious health hazards. The insects and pests generally develop resistance against continued insecticide spray making the insecticide spray less effective. Therefore, the excessively fertilized and drug addicted agricultural and livestock production should be replaced by organic farming and indigenous light cultivation practice under field rain water harvesting (micro catchment rain water harvesting) and subterranean dam or soil trap systems with supplementary light irrigation using predetermined thin irrigation water application where available to alleviate the problems of environmental pollution and human and cattle health hazards. The choice between inorganic and organic farming should be decided after thorough assessment, management and resolution of the conflicts of somewhat increased but contaminated and adulterated food and fiber production with accompanying soil salinity and structural degradation of the soil under inorganic farming and good (but not necessarily low) food and fiber production without soil salinity and structural degradation of the soil under organic farming.

Adapted plant varieties

The environmental pollution and global warming induced change in climate and low and erratic nature of the annual rainfall have been causing decreased food and fiber production. The plant species hitherto grown do not tolerate and stand the longer hot spell, decreased and erratic rainfall and ill timed fog and hailstorm at the

critical growth time of the plants. Therefore, agronomic research should be conducted and new and mutated seed and plant varieties should be discovered and adapted to the changed climate to keep up increased demand of the food and fiber. Field experiments may be conducted in customized green houses where the expected changes in temperature and rainfall pattern can be generated and adapted seed and plant species can be evolved with no decrease in nutritional food value and disease resistance of the plants. However, the crop, shrub and tree growing should necessarily be within the regenerative fertility potential and productive capacity of the soil.

More importantly besides control of environmental pollution, indiscriminate industrialization and excessive use of fossil fuel automobiles, people should abjure and eschew inorganic drug addicted farming and post harvest food adulteration, ground water pumping in excess to the aquifer recharge capacity and unsafe disposal of the sewage, factory effluent and solid waste exceeding the assimilative capacity of the earth. The national spirit and good civic sense of keeping the cities, towns and villages clean and harmonious should prevail and rain water should be efficiently harvested under roof top and field micro catchment rain water harvesting and subterranean dam systems. The lust for luxurious but dispensable excess human comfort and convenience giving goods and services made available by the environment polluting industrialization may be controlled through development of the intrinsic faculty of discrimination and dispassion. □□

Boycott China Economically

*China is once again indulging in provocative activities against India. India, being forced to retaliate, has limited options. Military action and diplomatic efforts are important dimensions of convincing China about any misadventurism. Boycotting Chinese products and debarring Chinese companies is better way of teaching them a lesson, says **Dr. Ashwani Mahajan.***

For quite some time China has been transgressing Indian Territory. Country still has not forgotten 1962 Chinese aggression and illegal occupation of thousands of square kilometers of land by them. Yet again China by leaving traces of their intrusion into Arunachal Pradesh and later objecting to Prime Minister's visit to the state has once again shaken the self-esteem of the nation.

Before this they had given up the visa requirement for the people of Arunachal and now by giving visa to residents of Kashmir on a separate piece of paper, China has continuously been revealing its ulterior motives.

When our then Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru's was propounding Panchsheel principle for peaceful co-existence, China was busy making plans to invade India and grab its land. At present when we are working with China to build closer economic ties, China once again is intruding into Indian Territory and asserting its authority.

Today when our country is fighting against the menace of poverty, hunger and unemployment, our goal can not be to indulge in war with anybody, especially when we believe in the principle of peaceful co-existence. Not that India alone is entangled in this fight against these economic evils; Chi-



na too is suffering from similar problems. Raking up border disputes at this stage can best be termed as China's arrogance to embarrass India. India's endeavor has always been to avoid war. For more than two decades Pakistan has been instigating India by indulging in terrorist activities and giving shelter to terror. A large section in India wanted to teach a lesson to Pakistan for its deeds. But neither the present government nor the previous NDA government were in favour of decisive war. Except for a limited operation like Kargil, Pakistan was never contested, while the whole world knows that India is much ahead of Pakistan's strategic preparedness.

Former Defense Minister Mr.

George Fernandez, had warned the country that China is India's number one enemy. At that time the country had ignored his warnings. Recent operations by China have once again reminded his warning. Meanwhile unfortunately our own military officers are perhaps unwittingly raising issues like strategic superiority of China. Our Naval chief told that Chinese are impregnable power, so now we have Air Force chief, who has repeated almost the same thing. We have won several wars with bravery and self confidence of our forces. Thus this kind of way of words by the forces chiefs needs to be stopped immediately.

We know that today China

[Continued on page no. 13]

Swadeshi way to fight China

Amidst unprecedented internal social unrest threatening the grip of the communist party of China over the Chinese society, that country is preparing to destabilize India on a large scale. We must boycott all Chinese and American products. Export contribution to china's GDP being 40 per cent and exports to America being the highest portion of its total export will help both these countries pay for their misdeeds, opines KV BIJU

Leading Defence expert Bharat Verma, the editor Indian Defence Review, in his article has pointed out that China will attack India in 2012 so as to divert the world attention from its internal problems. Bharat Verma while talking about the current situation in China tells us that loss of export market is creating a lot of tribulations for China. The unprecedented internal social unrest is severely threatening the grip of the communist party of China over the Chinese society.

China is in the doldrums and is considering preparation for a War as an option to deflect the attention of its people from routine troubles. India, hence, should be prepared at least to counter the Chinese aggression. Assumed that India is prepared to fight the beleaguered neighbouring Country's attack, the other difficulty is that how do we face the internal security challenges created by China and Pakistan. Lalgah and Kashmir are not small issues. Maoists are trying to get terrific influence in all most all parts of India. Maoists have veiled strategy to mobilize people and transform the people's anti government perspective as a sentiment against India. Some Muslim organizations are also following the same thing. Jamaat-e-Islami, a Muslim funda-



Swadeshi Jagaran Manch burning the effigy of HU JINBAO -Chinese president

mentalist organization, has formed a new youth organization named Solidarity. They are also involved in the people's agitation and they are also mobilizing and preparing the common people to fight against their own nation.

Chinese leadership arranged a meeting with the Jama-ate-islami leaders in Pakistan with the help of Pakistani Government. China's only demand to Jama-ate-Islami was that they should not do any activity in China. They should work in India against the Indian national interest. China would support the Maoists' action and Jama-ate-islami's action in India and it would be co-ordinated by Pakistan. They are very strategically involved in issues like land acquisition, dam construction,

tribal settlement issues etc. By raking up these 'people's issues', they are creating a lot of problem spots in India.

Last month Chinese International Institute of Strategic studies' director Sham Lu E published an article. In that article he argued that China should try to divide India. If China can tax the efforts some organizations working in Assam, Kashmir and Tamil Nadu, it will be possible to create separate nations. He suggested dividing India into 20 countries with the help of Pakistan, Nepal and Bhutan. Sham Lu E's paper has been published in its official website. Indian government till the date has not commented on this issue. Government may have compulsions to issue a statement on

this. But what is our Opposition Leadership doing?

America is also doing many things against India. They objected when Isreal was ready to give defence technologies. The same technologies they gave to Pakistan. America and China think together to rule the world .America cannot fight against China. They are unable even to think against China. If China withdraws deposit from American treasury, American economy will collapse. Now America is dancing in tune with the Chinese music .Both the Countries are helping Pakistan. China gave weapons to Sri-Lanka to fight against the LTTE. China created influence in all the neighbouring Countries of India. They constructed ports and other military facilities in all the neighbouring Countries. China is preparing facilities in Tibet to assault India. If China attacks India, Pakistan will also assail us. No Country will most probably support us, we alone will have to fight against China.

Even though this is the situation at the international level, our government, political parties and social organizations are not very serious about it.

Government of India continues to allow the import of Chinese products. People of India are using a lot of Chinese products .Most of the Indian private corporates started production centers in China. All these actions are helping China to become more powerful. Now China is becom-

ing our biggest trade partner. In this trade, we are a big loser. Trade deficit with China in 2008-09 alone was to the tune of 25 billion dollars. Last year, for the military modernization programme, China spent 24 billion dollars. Actually we are giving money to China to modernize their military and we are preparing them to fight against India. China is exporting products to America from this trade, China is benefiting a lot.

What China got by making investment in the US treasury? If they withdraw the deposit, Amer-



ica will collapse. When people's Bank of China's governor stated that they would not invest in US treasury bonds, very Next day, America sent Hillary Clinton to meet Chinese premier. What China says America will have to do now? They tell many other things that all are against Indian interest. In the case of trade, what happened to America is happening to India. Trade surplus with India is being used for their military strengthening. We are actually giving money to be used in fight against us .What a tragedy

for India? Global financial crisis has proved two things. One is that the country that fully depends on exports, cannot survive. Those who depend on internal market can easily continue to exist.

What is the way to lead the country in this state of affairs? It is Swadeshi? We must boycott all Chinese and American products. Both these countries are depending on India for the market of their products. If we can finish American companies in our internal markets, we can finish them in all markets. All the MNCs in America are in crisis but the Indian sub-

sidaries are still in profit. Whenever we start a huge movement against Chinese and American products, the American companies's sales would stop on Indian soil. They may again collapse. Their share value in all over the world will collapse. If the outsiders are not investing in American companies, Americans cannot run their companies. If their companies collapse dol-

lar also will collapse (we should do some work to strengthen our rupee).If the US dollar collapses, China will withdraw from treasury bonds. If China withdraws all other countries, will withdraw their reserves .We should ask our government to withdraw our reserve from America. This will accelerate and ensure the collapse of America. If America collapses, it will affect China. As USA is the largest market for Chinese products. Export to America is the highest portion of China's total export. Export contribution to china's GDP is 40

per cent. A problem in America is therefore, a problem for China also.

Aware of such a risk China is using India for their market. They are seriously concentrating in Asian countries. China is promoting illegal exports to India. Chinese companies export to India at half of the market prices. Then, we can only collect small customs duties on those products. Further amount they are receiving through hawala transactions. They get the full amount but we lose the customs duty. Their products are cheap and competent in that way. This they are doing with specific intention to kill our industries. Our pharmaceutical industries are also so powerful. We are exporting affordable medi-

cines to many countries. China has been caught exporting pharmaceutical commodities by printing Indian brand names and made in India labels (see the news about the African Countries complaints).

While China has specific interest to disturb India, India's political organizations are not ready to comment on this issue. Campaign against Chinese products should emerge as a natural reaction on Chinese' activities. No one should take it as the reactionary plan of SJM. SJM should play a constructive role in mobilizing and coordinating activists and groups. When some talk and action against the Chinese products start, then only we should come to the front and

issue statements that we need not any trade relations with China. A country working against Indian interest. We should also plan to campaign against American products by saying America is helping Pakistan. Both these countries are against India. China wants to become number one Country. America wants to retain their number one position. The unfortunate matter is that our political leadership is not thinking on that line. But we should think and act in this way. For that only we need our own market for our own products. If we become number one country, no Country can bark against India. □□

(writer is CO-Convener SJM, South India)

[Continued from page no. 10]

Boycott China Economically

and India are the world's two major emerging forces. These two nations are advancing fast in technology, industry and all sectors of the economy including infrastructure. Unprecedented development India and China and their emergence as economic giants have stunned the world, especially US and countries of Europe. But it is unfortunate that instead of consolidating its gains, China is unnecessarily indulging in non-existing border disputes and military aggression against India, and thus instigating India to retaliate. So India has limited options.

India has to firmly safeguard its borders. Construction of air strips in Arunachal and Kashmir is a step in that direction. But perhaps these measures are not sufficient. The reason is that India still needs to strengthen its defense line

against China, which may take some more time. But the country's security can not wait for that. Diplomatic efforts may also be important to convince China. But the possibilities of success of these efforts are extremely feeble.

Therefore we need a third option. That option is economic boycott. We know that China's emergence as a superpower has primarily been due to its growing industrial production and exports. Chinese products have made inroads into markets world over including India. Ever rising imports of Chinese products have caused havoc on the Indian economy. Our industry has been ruined, whereas businesses and industries in China are flourishing. With this money flowing from growing exports, China is set to enhance their strategic power, and has become a

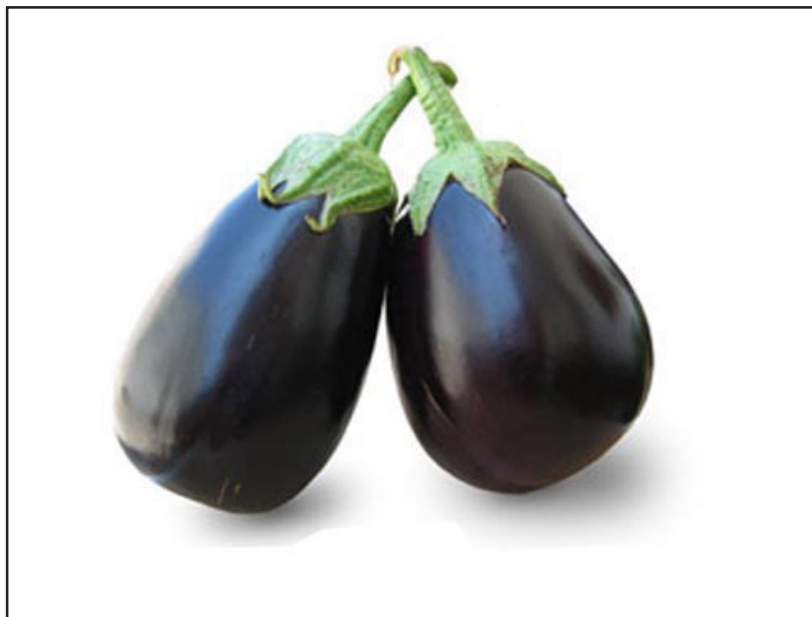
threat to India's security.

At the same time a large number of Chinese firms are being granted infrastructural and other projects in India. China's companies are growing at the cost of India's security and economy.

So to counter evil designs of China who is hurting the country's dignity and self respect, we should boycott Chinese products and bar Chinese companies from contracts for projects in India. Countrymen don't buy goods made in China and government and private establishments don't grant contracts to Chinese companies, then only China would be made to realise the strength of India. Country or countries having enmity with our nation, have to be given most unfavoured nation treatment in national interest and in interest of world peace. Government must show its will power to teach China a suitable lesson. □□

Commercial release of Bt-brinjal spawns persuasive dissent

Apprehensive countrymen from across the nation have raised their voice against the improper & hurried decision of GEAC to allow commercial release of controversial Bt. Brinjal. Ajay Bharti talks about the anxieties of stakeholders and issues at stake.



Recommendations of the Genetic Engineering Approval Committee (GEAC) that were made public on Oct. 14 2009 allowing commercial release of Bt-brinjal has generated a string of protests spreading over length and breadth of the country. The decision of GEAC although expected has scared almost every one.

Bt. - brinjal, a genetically engineered commercial product is spliced with genes toxic to insects and taken from the soil bacterium 'bacillus thuringiensis' (Bt). Scientists, activists and farmers fear that the bacterial genes introduced into the brinjal will put the people's health and life in danger and could also rapidly contaminate the thousands of brinjal varieties, including

wild ones, used very commonly by millions of Indians every day.

Brinjal is native to India and is an important part of food plate of cross section of people.

Owing to its importance both politically as well as commercially, the Ministry of Environment and Forests set up the GEAC to regulate research, testing and commercial release of GM crops, foods and organisms. But the body has been accused of bypassing safety and environmental concerns and instead working to promote the interests of the international biotech industry.

The Committee was also seen to be responsible for allowing seed companies to keep secret the result of GM field trials on the

grounds that they were entitled to protect their intellectual property. However, a Delhi High Court ruling in March 2008 that trial data must be revealed under the country's Right to Information Act has brought to light uncomfortable facts about Bt-brinjal.

Experts tell us that 'There is scientific evidence to prove that GM crops have harmful effects'. As far as a GM crop is concerned, there are nearly 30 tests to be done before giving it clearance. But only six-seven tests, we are told, were done for Bt Brinjal so far, which is improper.

According to Dr Pushpa M Bhargava, a well-known scientist and the founder of the Centre for Cellular and Molecular Biology, Hyderabad, "biosafety cannot be guaranteed in a short span of time. It's a long process. There are a whole lot of protocols to be carried out, which were not done in the case of Bt Brinjal."

'There is scientific evidence to prove that GM crops have harmful effects. The increasing number of GM food and increasing health problems in the US should be seen as a serious issue. In India, after the introduction of Bt Cotton, cases of allergy were reported. In Warangal, several cows had died after eating Bt Cotton plants. After scientists found it causes health hazards, many countries said no to

Are GM Crops good for Indian farmers, consumers and business?

- Yes - 15%
- No - 79%
- Can't Say - 6%

Opinion Poll conducted by
Indian Express.

A worried mother from Orissa writes to Prime minister and UPA Chairperson about Bt. Brinjal after she reads about the adverse effects of the crop

Dear Sir/Madam,

I am Mrs. Jyotirmayee Sarangi from Bhubaneswar, Orissa. I have a child of seven years. We are a family of three members. My parents stay nearby.

Since the past few months I have been reading in the papers about what is being termed as Genetically Engineered (GE) foods. At first I thought it was a good thing. If science can feed the world through innovative techniques there can be nothing better than that. Later when I read that this would be done by taking genes from bacteria, animals and even human beings, I began to have my doubts.

Someone in my group sent me a mail about Bt Brinjal that will be shortly approved it seems. This Bt Brinjal will contain genes of bacteria. This will make the whole plant poisonous. Insects will eat the stem and fruits and die. There will be less spraying of pesticides. This means the fruit will be poisonous from the inside! What will happen if human beings eat this poisonous fruit? The mailed article said that Bt Cotton has been engineered similarly. Thousands of goats, sheep, cows, and buffaloes have eaten its straw and died very painful deaths.

I am extremely worried. Can I serve such food to my family or should I stop buying brinjal altogether? What will happen when we have to eat outside? When I have to visit friends and relatives? Or should I write to everyone not to purchase and cook brinjal? What about my parents, will they agree to have such food?

We are strict vegetarians. Will the introduction

of genes from bacteria and other species into our and vegetables still keep them vegetarian?

I have also heard my friends expressing the same fear and concern. It seems other native brinjal varieties as well as tomato and chilli will be polluted by the poison. Brinjal has many medicinal properties and we use it as a home remedy, particularly for diabetes type B. Will the properties remain intact?

Independent Scientists say animal experiments have proven that such food is extremely dangerous for our health! It is reported that rats and mice fed this food have had underdeveloped organs and bodies, bleeding stomach ulcers, damaged liver and kidneys, intestines, damaged immune system, and also develop tendency to abort dead little ones, litters dying after birth. The rats and mice also developed sterility. All this is unbearable to a mother.

The moot question is why are we being experimented upon like this? Already our bodies are full of toxic pesticides and other poisons that have entered the food chain. Why add an unpredictable toxin on top of all such poisons? I being a strict vegetarian cannot even think of having such food.

I hope now you understand my concerns as a parent and as a family person. I would like to request you and your Cabinet not to allow this crop to be cultivated in India. I would like to get your response within 10 days in spite of your busy schedule. Meantime I will also be interacting with hundreds of mothers in the school of my child.

Respectfully yours

Jyotirmayee Sarangi

GM crops,' Dr. Bhargava adds.

"There's strong evidence that GM crops affect human beings and animals. In Madhya Pradesh, agricultural labourers handling Bt cotton complained of allergic reactions like 'mild to severe itching. In severe cases, the eyes also become red, swollen', with excessive tears, nasal discharge, and sneezing," writes Parful Bidwai.

"If I eat Bt brinjal and I fall ill, is there any way I (or my doctor) can find out whether it was from the alien gene in the brinjal I ate", asks internationally reputed

food policy expert Dr. Devindra Sharma? "Do you have any medical assay anywhere in the world which can even pinpoint an ailment or a disease to an alien gene in the GM foods", he enquires further?

French geneticist Gilles-Eric Seralini, commissioned by the environmental group Greenpeace to check the claims made by MAHYCO at the GEAC has pronounced the data submitted as insufficient and misleading on several counts and the GEAC wanting in diligence.

In July, on a visit to the Indi-

an capital, Seralini, who is chairman of the department of molecular biology at the University of Caen in France, told reporters that he hoped this country would not adopt commercial use of Bt brinjal and allow its people to be turned into "lab rats," since tests have not yet been carried out on how its consumption would affect human health.

Health is not the only concern in this case. The structure of the brinjal flower is conducive to a high rate of cross-pollination. Any student of agriculture and or botany

will understand the need to study the impact of cross pollination of Bt. Brinjal on other varieties of brinjal and other crops in close vicinity of the fields where Bt. Brinjal will be cultivated. That is not done. Another issue of concern is the modus operandi of the giant MNC's who in a bid to increase their profits got to any lengths and manipulate decision making process and subvert institutions. Beneficiaries of these companies and here are a lot of them everywhere, are repeating just one argument saying GM foods are absolutely essential to increase food production. What they do not even care to know or ignore deliberately is that this statement is factually incorrect. There is no GM crop in the world that increases productivity. Dr. Devindra Sharma writes, "I chal-

lenge anyone of them (and they can seek the help of the 11 PR agencies that have been reportedly put on the job to launch a media blitz in support of Bt brinjal) to name even one GM crop that actually increases productivity? Why government is still bent upon introducing commercial use of Bt. Brinjal hence becomes clear.

Concerned countrymen from a cross section of the population have raised its voice against the improperly hurried decision of GEAC. Reaction has been swift. The affected farmers' organisations announced their decision to take 'direct action' if the government did not respond to their queries & concerns. Food & Agriculture experts have warned about the long term adverse effects of such a policy.

Yielding to public reaction environment minister Jairam Ramesh has announced that a "careful, considered decision in the public and national interest" would be made before Bt-brinjal was released. He has promised additional consultations with scientists, farmers' groups, NGOs and other stakeholders in January and February next year.

Though the promised consultations ought to have been made before granting of permission to the Maharashtra Hybrid Seeds Company Limited (MAHYCO), acting under license from the global seed giant Monsanto, to carry out field trials for Bt-brinjal in India, according to experts; it still is welcome and stake holders need to grab this opportunity to set the issue in order. □□

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India's first poisonous food crop

An experiment designed wrongly to yield right results is not the only flaw in the environmental approval to Bt. Brinjal by GEAC. There are number of glaring flaws. Bureaucrats and scientists/officials masquerading as regulators need to be held responsible for premature approval of poisonous GM crops explains, Dr. Devinder Sharma

I am not the least surprised. Knowing that the Genetic Engineering Approval Committee (GEAC) is merely a rubber stamp for the biotech industry, the environmental approval to India's first genetically modified food crop — Bt brinjal — is no surprise. You couldn't have expected anything better from a bunch of stupid bureaucrats and scientists/officials masquerading as regulators. I am sure Michael Moore, if he had followed the ways of GEAC, would have already penned down a sequel to his *The Stupid White Men*.

India's Environment Minister Jairam Ramesh therefore has a monumental task on his hands. He has to appreciate the role of the GEAC (which falls under his ministry) even knowing they have done a shoddy job, and at the same time seek the help of the public at large before taking the final decision pertaining to the commercial release of India's first poisonous food crop. Not a simple task and I know the tight-rope walking Jairam Ramesh will have to do in the days to come.

His task becomes more difficult when one learns that within days of the GEAC giving its nod, the seed company seeking the approval — Mahyco — had already made a presentation to the Prime Minister Office. And let us not forget, Jairam Ramesh's senior colleague and the sugar baron, the

Agriculture Minister Sharad Pawar is already known to have thrown his weight (and we all know how heavy he is) behind GM crops.

In fact, I sympathise with the chairman of the Expert Committee-II (called EC-II), Dr Arjula R Reddy, who is also the vice-chancellor of the Yogi Bema University in Hyderabad, to have worked under such difficult conditions. If I were in his place I would have tendered my resignation rather than stamp a report which is clearly the handiwork of USAID and Mahyco. Knowing the incompetence of the members of the EC-II (and I tried to talk to several of their colleagues before saying this) I doubt if they could ever write such a clean copy. Ask them to write two pages, and you will get to know what I mean.

About USAID, the little said the better. I have always referred to it as: US Artificial Insemination Department. And if you have ever been to Bangkok or Ho Chi Minh city, you will understand what I mean.

Nevertheless, coming back to the report of the EC-II, it is a complete sham. There is no other word to describe it. I wonder how the so-called scientists on the panel could be so stupid. I can understand the vested interest of the Cornell University scientists, but how come our own breed of scientists be so idiotic? Isn't it a re-

flection on the kind of people who dominate the corridors of scientific research in the country? This of course holds true for the advisors in the Department of Biotechnology, but I always thought that at least some scientists working in the ICAR and ICMR system would still be engaged in good science. Perhaps that category of scientists has already been marginalised.

This itself is a dangerous trend, too threatening for the future generations. It wouldn't therefore be unfair to say that Indian science is literally in a pit. Only Bindeshwar Pathak of Sulabh Sauchalaya can pull it out.

Now let us look at some of the conclusions arrived at by the EC-II. On page 2 of the report entitled: Report of the Expert Committee (EC-II) on Bt brinjal EE-1 developed by: M/S Maharashtra Hybrid Seed Company Ltd. (Mahyco), Mumbai; University of Agricultural Sciences (UAS), Dharwad; and Tamil Nadu Agricultural University (TNAU), Coimbatore (this report is available on the website of the Ministry of Environment and Forests), it states the following:

"Based on the recommendations of the EC-1, the GEAC in its 79th meeting held on Aug 8, 2007, permitted the conduct of large scale trials (LST) of Bt brinjal for two seasons under the direct supervision of Director, Indian Institute of Vegetable Research

(IIVR), Varanasi to conduct some additional biosafety related studies by M/S Mahyco. the field trials were subjected to compliance of the following conditions:

1. Maintaining an isolation distance of 300 metres.
2. Submission of validated event specific test protocol at limit of detection (LOD) of at least 0.01 per cent to detect and confirm there has been no contamination.
3. Designated a lead scientist who would be responsible for all aspects of the trials including regulatory requirements.”

This is what is called as clear manipulation of the scientific norms. You first lay out conditions that are suitable for you to arrive at the conclusion you are aiming at, and then you make the recommendation based on the flawed parameters laid out. In the research trials at IIVR, the isolation distance between crop fields is kept at 300 metres (because you don't want the contamination to exceed the LOD of 0.01 per cent). Mahyco therefore got the result it was looking for.

But please tell me where in the country can you conform that Bt brinjal is grown with an isolation distance of 300 metres? Shouldn't the IIVR have known this? If not (and we all know that maintaining an isolation distance of 300 metres at the farm level is practically impossible) than the entire scientific experiment began on a faulty premise. The correct experiment should have been to measure the gene flow on adjoining crop fields of brinjal. That would have given us the correct picture. The experiment therefore was designed wrongly to yield the right results.

This is not the only flaw. I can

point a number of glaring flaws in the way the experiments were conducted. Only stupid scientists could have endorsed these results.

Now move to the annexures. From page 66 onwards, the EC-II has responded to the issues raised by NGOs, National and International Groups on Bt brinjal biosafety studies. This is a very interesting section, and all you can say is how ashamed you are if this is the scholarship of so called distinguished scientists/officials on the panel. Take the response to the studies conducted by Prof G Seralini, University of Cannes, France. The response of the EC-II generally is: The EC-II is of the view that no additional information regarding toxicity and allergenicity needs to be generated.

Again it uses the same stupid argument: Cry1AC protein has a history of safe use for human and animal consumption as GM crops such as Bt maize and Bt potato containing Cry proteins including Cry1AC protein have been consumed by millions of people without any adverse effects. [Each of the responses is simply a cover up. I will take that up subsequently]

I thought the EC-II was a research panel. Instead it has produced the relevant literature to justify its position while ignoring a plethora of scientific research that questions the claims. In any case, the EC-II should have conducted more research to address the issues and concerns raised rather than simply brushing them aside. Let us not forget, history is replete with examples where what was approved as safe by scientists had eventually turned out to be killer. The Orange Gas used by Monsanto in the Vietnam war is a class

example. Even now, thousands of people are dying from the residual impact of the gas, which was once considered to be safe. DDT is another example.

Coming to food, we have numerous such examples. Trans fatty acids were once considered to be safe and of course essential for the processing industry. Today, several US States have banned the use of trans fats. In fact, food has now become the biggest killer in the United States. More than 400,000 people die from food related ailments, including obesity, every year in the US alone.

Further, I want to ask the chairman of the EC-II a simple question. If I eat Bt brinjal, which you consider as absolutely safe, and I fall ill, is there any way I (or my doctor) can find out whether it was from the alien gene in the brinjal I ate? Do you have any medical assay anywhere in the world which can even pinpoint an ailment or a disease to an alien gene in the GM foods? What will happen Dr Reddy if your wife or children get seriously ill from eating Bt brinjal and your hospital treatment is unable to detect the real cause?

The answer is simple. It is because you allowed premature approvals for poisonous GM crops and foods, without asking the companies to first hold human clinical trials. My sympathy for you surely disappears. Scientists like you should be held responsible, and I think the time has come to make provisions for stringent possible punishment for the approval committees (including GEAC) if anything goes wrong. Scientists cannot be allowed to play with human lives, animals and the environment. □□



Inequality is more explosive than poverty

Increasing inequality with poverty alleviation will not provide stability to the society. It will rather become explosive. Therefore; we must coalesce rising inequality with simplicity and charity coupled with incentive to work for a better life among the poor, suggests **Dr Bharat Jhunjunwala**

Welfare can be defined in two ways-poverty alleviation or reduction of inequality. The two definitions are different. Poverty alleviation means that basic means of livelihood such as food, clothing and shelter are made available to every individual. This can be done along with prevalence of high levels of inequality. For example, big companies can make huge profits and give out huge salaries. This will create huge inequality. Simultaneously, taxes collected from them can be used to provide food, clothing and shelter to the poor. In this way poverty allevia-

tion and increase in inequality can go together. But the converse is not true. Less inequality does not mean less poverty. Communist Albania had a relatively equal distribution of income but at dismally low levels. The tribal society is, relatively speaking, equal but has widespread poverty. Distribution of wealth of the rich among the poor may create equality but absence of investment will lead to stagnation in the economy and breed poverty. This is precisely what happened in China during the Cultural Revolution of the 1960s. The rich and the educated

The rich are making huge money while the common man is getting impoverished or, at best, holding on to his low incomes.

were sent to the villages to learn from the peasants. Equality was promoted. But this led to economic stagnation and later led to the adoption of the capitalist model of development in the 1970s. We have to therefore choose between poverty alleviation and equality.

My assessment is that increase in inequality cannot be reversed. The atoms that came out of the Black Hole when this universe was created were 'equal'. Gradually elements were created and inequality increased. Inequality was further created between the living and non-living things and later between more-conscious and less-conscious living beings. It is seen that inequality soon arises between brothers who have inherited similar genes and environment because every individual does not put in same level of effort. One brother may adopt tissue culture and earn much money while another brother may stay put with cultivation of paddy and remain poor.

Another reason for increase in inequality in recent times is the use of labour-saving technologies in industries. One skilled worker can manage 10 automatic looms in a modern textile mill. The wages of this skilled worker are high while unskilled workers lose their

jobs and have to make do with lowly incomes. One more reason for increase in inequality is 'primitive accumulation'. The common man is deprived of even subsistence incomes in the initial period of industrialization and the money is used for investment. The workers of England were impoverished in the 19th century to release money for investment in factories of Manchester. The industrialists became rich while the workers became poor and inequality increased. India and China are passing through such a phase presently. The rich are making huge money while the common man is getting impoverished or, at best, holding on to his low incomes. This is inevitable in our quest for economic prosperity. Increase in inequality appears to be inevitable for these reasons.

Increase in inequality can go together with reduction in poverty. The Zamindar can provide a pair of dhoti, shoes and umbrella to the bonded labour and remove his poverty while inequality reins supreme. Our Government is trying to establish precisely such a system through the Employment Guarantee Scheme. The poor are being provided with minimum employment and incomes while big companies make huge profits and inequality increases by leaps and bounds. The loan waiver for debt-ridden farmers and provision of subsidized food grains to BPL families are all designed with the same objective.

The underlying thinking is that poverty, not inequality, is the main problem. This is not correct in my reckoning. Actually reduction of poverty will create more social instability by enabling peo-

ple to protest against rising inequality. The poorest hungry have no capacity to protest. They have no energy to participate in a mass procession or hartal. Poverty alleviation makes it possible for them to rise in protest. In areas like Bastar, the tribals were previously too poor to protest. The area had widespread poverty but was yet peaceful. Now, fortified with cheap food grains provided to BPL families, they are joining the Naxalites in protesting against inequality.

Inequality is also an impediment to economic growth. It kills demand for goods. If 99 percent of the people are making a living with, say, Rs 100 per day, then

Increase in inequality can go together with reduction in poverty.

there will be little demand for motorcycles, refrigerators and TVs. It is necessary that the market grows for economic growth to sustain. Karl Marx had pointed this out in his major work *Das Kapital*. He said that the businessmen are ever trying to reduce the payment to workers in their effort to reduce their cost of production. These low wages prevent the workers from consuming goods. In the result, there is more production from modern factories along with low demand. This leads to a 'crisis of overproduction'. Goods lie in the market but people do not have the income to buy them. In the result, the income of the rich will implode if it is not distributed just as the Zamindar's haveli becomes a ghastly house if

there are no workers to upkeep it.

Yet another problem with the model of inequality with poverty alleviation is that it kills the incentive to work among the poor. Easy availability of food, clothing and shelter removes the incentive to work for a better life among the poor. This problem is now clearly visible in countries like the United States and Germany. Poor people are content living with the unemployment compensation and social security benefits. They have stopped trying to find work. For these reasons I believe that the model of inequality with poverty alleviation will not provide stability to the society.

We have a difficult choice to make. Inequality is likely to increase because it is inherent in the process of development. This inequality will become explosive despite poverty alleviation for the reasons mentioned above. The solution, perhaps, lies in simplicity of the rich and private charity. Simple lifestyles by the rich will remove the irritation towards richness among the poor. The poor rickshaw puller is less likely to be agitated if the rich businessman sitting behind him is wearing simple clothes. Simultaneously, distribution of wealth by the rich in building village roads, schools and hospitals and running old age homes will transfer incomes to the people and create demand in the market. Making of schools and roads will make it easier for the poor to earn and act as an incentive to work. Therefore, we must combine rising inequality with simplicity and charity. The model of rising inequality with poverty alleviation will not work. □□

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SJM brings to light the plight of Gulf Migrants

Hundreds of gulf sufferers who got cheated either through the hands of travel agents or by the employers in Gulf have committed suicides on their return to motherland. There is a need to identify and address the problems of gulf sufferers, suggests Appala Prasad

The Indian workers in the Gulf constitute about 5 million of the estimated 25 million Indian Diaspora. According to estimates of the ministry of external affairs about 48 per cent of the Indian workers in the Gulf are in Kuwait and Saudi Arabia. The NRI community in the Gulf countries mainly comprises of people from South Indian states, like Kerala and Andhra Pradesh. Many people from Nizamabad and Karimnagar districts of the state have migrated to Gulf countries and have suffered untold miseries. Hundreds of gulf sufferers who got cheated either through the hands of travel agents or by the employers in Gulf have committed suicides on their return to motherland. There is a need to identify and address the problems of gulf sufferers particularly the sexually abused girls, abandoned children, potential victims of trafficking, destitute women, prisoner's children etc.

The SJM, realising the magnitude of the issue, has undertaken a study of the problems of Gulf sufferers. For this purpose 15 teams consisting of 100 Karyakartas have constituted and survey was conducted from 26th May to 14th June, 2009 using elaborate questionnaire. About 450 villages were covered in the survey and information in structured questionnaire has been obtained from 16000 persons

who have returned from Gulf in these districts. Apart from these respondents SJM also consulted the experts who have been working with great concern in this area and are addressing the problems of the Gulf sufferers. The results of survey have been published in the form of a small booklet in Telugu vernacular. The major suggestions that emerged from the survey for addressing the problems of the Gulf sufferers are mentioned hereunder.

- A special fund with a corpus of about Rs.2000 crores has to be established.
- An information centre at convenient place to provide comprehensive and authentic information about procedures and other details of Gulf countries.
- Loan at concessional rates of interest help them rehabilitated.
- All the Gulf sufferers should be issued voter ids and ration cards which were cancelled on the pretext that they have left the country.
- A task force should be established in each district of the state to curb the malpractices of agents and sub-agents.
- Since most of the gulf returnees are unskilled persons, finding employment for them has become difficult. Therefore training should be imparted free of cost to those persons for acquiring skill in some vocation so that they can get gainful employment
- The families of the persons who have committed suicides should be provided with some financial assistance in the form of ex-gratia and gainful employment be-reaved family members.

- The moratorium announced on forceful collection of private debts should be extended for two more years and this moratorium should be implemented effectively.
- Efforts should be made by the External affairs Ministry to get our citizens released from the prisons of the Gulf countries, who have been imprisoned for various reasons. Arrangements should be made to get authentic information of all the Indians arrested abroad as soon as they are arrested and that data should be updated constantly.
- All the Gulf returnees should be covered under the Arogyasree- Health Insurance Scheme of Government of Andhra Pradesh
- To prevent illegal trafficking of women /children and their exploitation abroad special committees have to be constituted
- The data base of Gulf immigrants should be maintained transparently
- To prevent suicides among the Gulf sufferers helplines and Counselling centres have to be established in each mandal in these two districts.
- Arrangements should be made to identify and send expeditiously the dead bodies of the Citizens of this country who die abroad. In this connection the assurances given by both State and Union Governments should be implemented on priority basis.
- Diplomatic arrangements should be made by the Ministry of External affairs to ensure that all the labour laws of respective countries are made applicable to all those particularly

women and children who migrate as domestic help in Gulf countries. Arrangements should be made to prevent abuse of Indian women in Gulf countries.

- The terms of Pravasi Bharatiya Bhima Yojana should be suitably modified to enable all the policy holders who have paid premium to get the benefits under the policy irrespective of their visa status.
- Arrangements should be made to ensure payment of agreed wages to all the immigrants by the foreign employers compliance to their labour laws irrespective of their visa status. For this purpose diplomatic agreements should be entered if necessary.
- To ensure payment of agreed wages to Indian immigrants by foreign employers, payments should be arranged only through bank accounts.
- Arrangements to claim unpaid wages from the foreign employers as per contract of employment. The legal fee payable shall not exceed 10 per cent of the amount received.
- Restrictions on migration to Iraq should be phased out within a stipulated time frame.
- A team for review of all employment advertisements of Gulf should be established to identify illegal advertisements and also dubious advertisements so as to prevent gullible job seekers falling prey to those advertisements. Action should be initiated against the media which carried that illegal dubious advertisements.
- Stern action should be taken against the advertisers of

Azad visas.

- Online facility should be provided to check the correctness of visa details and employment offers made by the foreign employer.

The above list is only illustrative but not exhaustive. I am sure there would be many more suggestions on this issue. Since the Ministry of External affairs have already initiated action to address the problems of Indian Workers in Gulf countries those initiatives should be continued with greater amount of commitment.

SJM did not stop after conduction of the survey. It in fact moved ahead and a public meeting was held at Metpally (Karimnagar dist). About 700 people were attended. Several victims who have themselves had horrific experiences explained their tribulations there. Local MLA SRI vidyasagar rao & President of Prajaraajyam party also participated in this meeting and assured people that they would put pressure on the government.

Similar meetings were organized in Hyderabad, Karimnagar, Nizambad Town, and several other places in which thousands of participants listened terrible stories from victims and widows who expressed their own misfortune.

Elected representatives from every political party attended these meetings.

In New Delhi Swadeshi Jagaran Manch AP Team K. Narsimham Naidu and Appala Prasad met Srimathi Bhuvaneshwari Devi, Minister of HRD, Sri L.K. Advani, Sri Rajnath Singh, Sh. Venkaiah Naidu, Sh. Arun Jaitley, and submitted the memorandum regarding problems of Gulf immigrants of Andhra Pradesh. □□



Jaipur National Seminar

4-6 September, 2009

In the Pink City of Jaipur A National Seminar of SJM was held in the lush green environment of OTS. All the 151 participants besides the eminent resource persons and a large number of local gentry, coming from time to time for attending selected lectures, had a good churning time for the latest economic trends confronting the nation and world as a whole. Two speakers attracted me most, seen from the old timer's point of view. One was the lecture of Anupam Mishra, an eminent Gandhian thinker of repute and seeing and hearing his power point presentation was a physical and metaphysical experience. He was speaking on the topic of traditional water storage systems in Rajasthan and side by side he was comparing with the dilapidated, topsy-turvy condition of the governmental arrangements, irrespective of the

political parties. He explained to the utter astonishment of the participants that in 99.7% village people depend on their local and traditional water storage system, namely the Tanka. The remaining 0.3% village, their survey disclosed were "be-chirag village" that is uninhabited villages or villages which have a name and territory but no human being residing there. So, besides this 'Sarkaar' which is practically ineffectual in this respect, a 'Badi Sarkaar' was working, that is, the public and their time-tested traditions. People with their own traditional systems store the rainy water, take care of its maintenance and upkeep in a splendid way. I had previously gone cursorily through his famous book "Even Now the tanks are useful" but this presentation I found, was more touching and informative.

Second speaker was the Magasaysay Awardee on RTI, Arvind Kejriwal. Previous to it we had invited him twice or thrice in our Seminars but he every time sent his companions for delivering lectures. It was first time that he chose to come to our Seminar. His expose was splendid, informative and up-to-date. He chose not to spoke on the area for which he is known, that is, Right To Information (RTI). He rather selected an ultramodern subject, as he preferred to call it. According to him RTI has become a futile exercise if the masses do not have the right to reprimand, or reject the ineffectual and corrupt Governmental machinery. He has on his tips the classical examples of hoary Vaishali kingdom where king had to bow before the will of his subject. He was lashed with several latest examples, culled from

the world over, where subject of the city were the final authority. According to him the global giant retail group Wal-Mart could not open his outlet in Oregon city of America, because its inhabitants rejected the proposal. This was nowhere visible in India. He publicized much the Visual CD of Phokat Ram Panwar, village Pradhan of Hijre Bazaar. He said that a marvelous record of all round development was witnessed in this "once-a-famine-stricken-village" and residents per capita income shooting from Rs. 540 to Rs. 28,000. The reason was sim-



ple: this young Pradhan stick to the formula of seeking every body's opinion before venturing on any new scheme.

Kejrivaal summarized his agenda in very simple terms: we should seek our right in the management of the country and not merely be satisfied with the lame

right of adult franchise. Similarly one new scholar on the dais was Sh. Manikchand Surana, an ex Minister X-rayed very well the utopia of NREGA. However mention is to be made of Sh. Madandass ji speech wherein he said that SJM should built the capacity of collect-

ing from one to one and half lakh people at one place and also have active units in ten thousand places. This will effect the economic and social agenda of the governments, whatever their colour. The overall atmosphere and learning attitude was encouraging & refreshing. □□

(By the moving pen of Sh. Kashmirilal)

Programmes of Hind Swaraj

Satna, MP, 2nd Oct. To commemorate the centenary year of the publication of Hind Swaraj, a much discussed book written by Mahatma Gandhi a programme was held in Satana (M.P), in the local Saraswati Mandir School in spite of non-stop torrential rains. Prant Sanghchalak of RSS, Sh. Shankarlal Tamarkar in his presidential speech said that though he had heard time and again about this book, but the credit goes to local Swadeshi Jagaran Manch which persuaded him to go through it thoroughly for this programme. He said the book is time-tested and very much relevant even

today. Jagat Narain Singh Zonal Co-Convenor of SJM described



Jainagar Coal Mines area, An All party seminar on Hindswaraj

that there are three aspects of Hind Swaraj namely superiority of Indian Culture in comparison to European culture; the concept of Swadeshi which found a vivid man-

ifestation in Anti-Bengal Division struggle and inadequacy of English Parliamentary system in comparison to our age-old indigenous village oriented and decentralized democratic system. In the last, Kashmirilal, All India Organiser gave the main speech on the topic. He explained that Gandhiji has stressed six points in his development model. These are, decentralisation, village-orientation, energy saving, small-investment, employment generation and eco-friendly lifestyle. The Euro-American model which has proved a fiasco of late is diametrically opposite to sustainable Gandhian model. Local

Mayor Smt. Bimla Pandey presided over the function and forcefully said that she would try to implement the tenets of Mahatma Gandhi in the development of Satna City. Sh. Dharamraj Dwivedi Distt. Co-convenor gave a description of the local activities and Krishana Prasad Pandey thanked the audience.

Earlier in the day a Shobha Yatra was taken out in the main bazaars of the Satna City and in the evening activists meeting was held in Rajeev Gandhi Institute under the guidance of UP Dwivedi, Vibag Convener, where in Shankar Lal Dwivedi, Kamal Sharma, Ramakant, Avnish Soni and other participated and planned the future programmes.

All-Party Meet on Hind Swaraj in Raj Nagar Coal fields Area

The coal-mines area of Raj Nagar witnessed a rare programme on Hind Swaraj wherein leaders of all employee unions, BMS, INTUC, AITUC, Hind Majdoor Sabha and other groups huddled together to celebrate this auspicious occasion under the banner of Swadeshi Jagaran Manch. Even coalmines management was represented by Deputy Manager who lauded the efforts of local SJM. Mahendrapratap Singh, Vibhag Convenor SJM described the activities of local SJM and Jagat Narain Singh, Zonal Co-convenor, who has remained All India Convenor of Coal Mines Association, urged all the participants to rise up to the occasion and implement the principles enshrined in Hind Swaraj. Main speaker Sh. Kashmirilal, all India Organiser delivered his speech followed by the local MLA Sh. Jaiswal.

The packed hall was full of



Distinguished audience at Raj Nagar programme of Hind Swaraj

attentive audience and sympathizers of SJM. Enthusiasm of the occasion was established by passion with which book of Hind Swaraj was purchased. Sh. Vijay Jaiswal, distt. Convenor, SJM thanked the audience.

Vibag Level SJM Workshop in Narsinghpur

Hind Swaraj Seminar also held Narsinghpur MP 4-5 Oct.: A Two-day workshop of Vibag was organized by Indraparashad Tripathi, and Ramadhar Vasishta, Sambhag Organiser at local Saraswati Shishu Mandir wherein about 60 activists participated. Sh. Ramadhar Vashishta gave the introductory remarks, and Jagat Narain Singh discussed about the future programmes. Sh. Sunder Singh Shakarvar, Zonal Convenor presided over the sessions. Dr. Neel Kantha Pandse, HOD Economics Department Jabalpur, Mahendra Goswami, of BKS, Sukhlal of BMS, Sh. Vishwatosh Shrivastava spoke on Retail Sector, whereas an Eminent Surgeon Dr. Sanjeev Chandorkar spoke on Black Money in Swiss Bank and in the last session there was a

seminar on Hind Swaraj wherein the local Mayor presided. In his concluding remarks Sh. Shakarwar delved deep into the working of SJM and urged the participants to implement vigorously whatever they have learnt here. Sh. Indraprashad Tripathi presented the vote of thanks.

Hind Swaraj function in Raipur

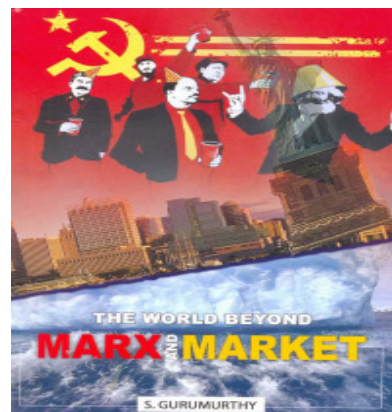
Raipur, Chhatisgarh, 5th Oct.: Sh. Babban Lal Sharma, a noted journalist and editor of a zonal newspaper while delivering his presidential speech on Hind Swaraj laid stress on the several aspects wherein Hind Swaraj can be implemented. He equated the ideas with that of Integral Humanism of Pt. Deendyal ji and Third Way of Dattopant Thangadi. Dr. Rajendra Dubey stressed the importance of the book in the present contest and said that all-round dilapidation in Character and climate reminds us of Gandhian model more than ever. Sh. Amarjeet Singh Chabra presented the bouquets to the dignitaries and Mohan Pawar, State Co-convenor thanked the audience. □□

India ,The living model of relation-based market model

Market and Democracy or the Church and the Pope brought down Communism?

One more aspect would need some clarity. Is it Market and Democracy or the Church and the Pope that brought down Communism? To answer this question a religious and civilisational analysis and understanding of the collapse of Communism would be necessary. Fukuyama was perhaps too hasty and too excited by the collapse of communism to conclude that free market and liberal democracy based on individualism, constitute the ultimate and perfect socio-political and economic destination. The West too was perhaps wrong in proceeding on such assumptions in structuring the global institutional frame work for the new socio-economic and political world order based on globalisation, which actually meant experimenting with the experiences of the West on the Rest of the world. There are two reasons why Francis Fukuyama was wrong from day one. First, his theory regarding the victory of liberal democracy and free market capitalism was itself questionable. There is strong evidence to suggest that the credit for bringing down communism should go to Pope John Paul, who initiated the collapse of the communist state in Poland - not the great idea of liberal democracy or free market based on individualism, which is the last thing that Pope John would legitimise over the beliefs

and norms of his own Church. Second, Fukuyama perhaps too prematurely claimed that liberal democracy and free market capitalism had finally emerged victorious. Indeed the events that followed the demise of communism signalled the emergence of a new phenomenon of Islamic terror emerging as the greatest enemy of the West - Samuel Huntington came out with his famous paper, and followed it with his book, on civilisational clashes along the fault-lines of religion, particularly radical Islam. Fukuyama logic thus became highly questionable. In fact, in his second book "Trust", Fukuyama partially rolled back his view that liberal democracy and free market capitalism had finally won, by suggesting that there was a 20% missing link in economics and that was culture; the Economist magazine derisively commented on this admission as amounting to the end of economics rather than the end of history! In less than couple of years after Fukuyama had proclaimed the victory of liberal democracy and free market, his theory seemed all too utopian. Crisis after crisis - the European exchange rate mechanism crisis, the Mexican crisis, the Russian crisis, the Yugoslavian crisis, the Asian crisis and the Dotcom crisis - derailed global capitalism repeatedly. In fact, while the US was battling the dotcom fallout, everything turned upside down on one single day. That was the 11th of Septem-



ber 2001 when the Islamic terrorists hit, not any other thing, but the World Trade Center, which was the symbol of capitalism. It is perhaps true that the terrorists never knew economics. They would not understand what is capitalism or communism. They only had known Islam and read only the Quran. They were not experts on Socialism of Karl Marx or Market mechanism of Adam Smith. Yet they targeted the very symbol of capitalism - modern capitalism. The collapse of the twin towers was symbolic of the financial meltdown of the US and the world that was to happen six years later.

It is evident that the very notion of free market model, the Anglo-Saxon free market capitalism based on individualism as the core and globalisation as the drive, now seems to be a thing of the past. After the financial meltdown hit the US and then the world, the EU nations began to accuse the US of having exported its crisis to the world. The spearhead of free market economics and the life style

based on borrowing and consumption that supports it, the US, according to France and Germany, is no more the global financial super power. The Continental Europe has distanced itself from the Anglo-Saxon life values and economic models. So the world seems to be moving towards post Anglo-Saxon free market economic model – to an alternative market economic model. What is that alternative? And where from that alternative can emerge? And what is the difference between that alternative market economic model and the Anglo-Saxon or Western economic model?

The model for the post-Marx and post-Market world

Not the contract-based life model and style that is common to free market capitalism and communism, but relation-based market model, which will be the sustainable socio-economic and political model. In fact, India has a living model of relation-based market model for the world.

Not only the world, but India itself seems to have missed out something that it could offer to the world. Indian intellectualism and leadership have missed out on this, as India was only carbon-copying the ideas, even the language and idioms of the West. Our intellectuals looked at India in the way the West was looking at India, so that whatever in India was bad, in the view of the west, was also bad in the eyes of the Indian intellectuals.

The India that had lost confidence by its own discourse

For over 1800 years, India and China were the two global economic super powers. It was in

1850 that the West overtook the Asian nations, when mercantile capitalism was on the rise. The economic decline of India and China coincided with their political decline, and the political and economic rise of the West. In the early part of the last century, Max Weber wrote that the modern capitalism was a product of Protestant Christian Ethic and therefore, according to him, Hinduism and Buddhism, which believe in karma and rebirth, would not help develop modern capitalism. If Max Weber had influenced the West about India this way, that would not have mattered a lot.

Max Weber seems to have greatly influenced Indian socio-economic and political thinkers, with the result, the Indian thinkers were convinced that the belief in karma and rebirth and the caste system of India, have finished India and unless India disowns all these – that is, unless India disowns itself – there was no way that India could develop. So went the discourse. The problem of India is not economics; the problem of India, is the society of India; the problem of India, is the culture of India; the problem of India are the traditions of India.

QED: The problem of India is India itself. This was how the official discourse depicted India to Indians; this was how the school texts taught about India to the impressionable young minds of India; this was how the Indian intellectuals presented India to the rest of the world. So, for 50 years, this nation's confidence was systematically destroyed by its own leadership, the intellectuals, and economists. Yet, India survived, and surprised Indians and the world alike.

The India that is rising

But today India, that had been ignored all along, is being accepted in the world. It is seen rising not only as an economic power but also as a political and economic power, and more importantly a soft cultural power. And, volumes are being written about India's rise. If one were to trace this rise, the search will stop at a single event that completely transformed the confidence levels of India. That is the Pokhran atomic blast. If one traces the rise of India, the zero date will be May 11, 1998, when the sound of the Indian bombs was heard from Pokhran. On that date India defied the world. At the behest of the West, almost all nations of the world imposed sanctions on India. Having done all that it could to undermine India, the West was watching how India would face up to this. The Indian economy then was not even a tenth as strong as it became ten years later. But the courage with which India responded made the world sit up and take note.

That one action of India had invoked the spirit of India and enthused the Indians, both here and abroad, as never before. The spirit of Non-Resident Indians, a highly wealthy expatriate group, rose on hearing the sound of the Indian bomb in Pokhran. Before that, the NRIs had no great reverence for India even though most of them would have the first "mundan" of their children only in their distant village in India. But they turned the Pokhran blast into a Deepavali. Here is a graphic description of how the NRIs who used to trivialise and deride India turned into ardent supporters of India overnight after the sound of the

Pokhran. An Indian advertisement expert wrote an article in Economic Times couple of years after the Pokhran blast. Being a professional, she used to travel throughout the world and stay in the houses of her friends or relatives abroad. She wrote that she used to feel very hurt hearing the way her friends and relatives would run down India as a poor country, dirty country, corrupt country and what not. She said in that article that all this changed on one day, and that was the day India exploded its atomic weapon in Pokhran. Most of them instantly stopped undermining India and, on the contrary, many of them began to show reverence to India. So the Indian government, which was facing financial sanctions of powerful governments, issued an appeal to the Non-Resident Indians asking them to subscribe to India Development Bonds for \$5 billion. This was to augment India's forex reserves. At that time India's foreign exchange reserve was not very comfortable. And, yet when the Indian government wanted \$ 5 billion, the Non-Resident Indians invested a billion dollar more, at a time when no one would think of risking in India even one dollar.

The West, which had encouraged the entire world to impose sanctions on India, was watching India. When it saw that the expatriate Indians have risked billions of dollars in a high risk Indian economy, it understood that, overriding economic considerations, Indian spirit has finally manifested and India has arrived as a major actor in the world. Thereafter, it was just a matter of time that the West, and the Rest, withdrew their sanctions. Further, at the behest of

US, the global nuclear establishments, the International Atomic Energy Association [IAEA] and the Nuclear Suppliers Group [NSG] have even signed deals with India to offer civil nuclear co-operation, not withstanding the fact that India possesses nuclear weapons! So, from the days of sanctions, India has now slowly become a part of the global power system.

India is rising on its own relation-based family and community model, not on the individualistic Anglo-Saxon foundations

The Indian economy is now rising, but that is not because of the norms, methods or models of the Anglo-Saxon West or the other West. It is rising largely on its own norms and principles. India is thus renewing itself in the sense that it is changing with continuity with its past – that is, to use a more familiar term, it is modernising without westernising. It is evolving its own economic model, a model which is more in tune with most nations in the east which are not driven by individualism, an economic model which is based on family as the basic non-formal socio-economic unit. Therefore free market of the type which operates in the West, particularly the Anglo-Saxon West, is alien to the Indian economic system. India is indeed democratic, but, its democracy is not inconsistent with its social ethos and not based on atomised individualism of the liberal democracy in the West. Indian democracy, even though its principles were drawn from Westminster model, could not erode, but rather had to learn to work with, the traditional and non-formal social institutions of India – whether it is the family, biradri [extended fami-

ly], caste, community, linguistic or other social units including religious denominations. It has not reduced the Indian people into a collection of individuals without non-formal intermediary institutions. In short, it has not been able to atomise the Indian families, communities, castes and other segments of the organic Indian society. Even caste and community based politics, often blamed by our elites as distorting the democratic polity, is an adjustment process by which the adult franchise based electoral democracy comes to terms with the organic social realities of India. Not just politics, but even the industrial development model of the West has been digested by the social ethos of the different segments of the organic Indian society. The post-industrialisation debate in the West about 'organic societies', meaning the neighbourhood societies, transforming into 'mechanical societies', meaning the urbanised environment, and the consequent atomization of the society, was largely inapplicable to the India; the organic Indian social segments – chiefly caste, community and linguistic and regional linkages – transcended the limitations of geographic neighbourhood communities of the West and did not get disturbed as their links could overcome geographic limitations. Thus India has largely continued to be an organic society with different segments of the Indian society maintaining their organic models without being disturbed by the intervention of modern commerce and industry. This aspect has not been fully appreciated while making an appraisal of the socio-political and economic model of India.

15-year-old's idea clicks with Stanford University

Usually when a youngster musters courage to describe a crazy idea, everybody seems ready to make fun of him. But sometimes such ideas can change the whole life also. I am not talking about the advertisement of Idea cell phone wherein the idea of teaching poor children through cell phone comes to the exclamation 'What an idea Sir ji'. Actually it happened that a IX class student's innovative idea gets a recognition from a world famous university.

In one of Delhi schools a teacher persuaded her students to tell any fantastic idea about a new innovation. One IX standard student Sarojani Mahajan raised her hand and said that the human pulse can be used to charge a cell phone as we have heard of watches run on human pulse. Her teacher sent her idea as an entry to IGNITE 2009 contest – a nationwide contest of innovative ideas. Though she got a consolation prize in the contest, Stanford University will now work on her idea. Prof. Anil Gupta, vice chairperson, NIF, which conducts IGNITE every year, in collaboration with Stanford University explains that University has already given a token amount of \$1,000 to develop a prototype if feasible. The beaming principal of the school is



EUREKA! Sarojini, who thought of using human pulse to charge mobiles

proud to tell that her student Sarojani Mahajan will be awarded by President Patil on 18th November along with other students having similar achievements.

Lesson: We should also encourage our kids to think about such constructive ideas instead of snubbing them outright. 'Don't be Sheikh Chilli by wasting time on such foolish day dreaming. Do your home work first.' Instead it try saying "What an Idea! My Dear".



The Moving Pen

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Vidarbha Farmers' Suicides: Interview of A Helping hand of Mr. Somani

It is difficult to say whether suicides of farmers became an election issue in that area or not, but for a man like Mr. A.P. Sovani, it is an issue of prime importance day and night. A retired bank employee was moved by the reports of farmers committing suicides and so he started collecting data regarding these heart-moving incidents appearing in media from time to time. Not only this, he has collected the names of the family members who are surviving after this calamity and others details regarding the family members. The number of such devastated families has risen to the alarming figure of 1749...and this data is only for the last 4 years.

When I went to his house along with Ajay Patki and Rajeev ji, he started his talk without any preliminaries and within minutes his table was spread with files, press clippings, and revenue records and his own notes about the poor farmers' plight. "Though I have collected this



Mr. Sohani sitting by him is Sh. Rajeev Kshirsagar, State Organiser Vidarbha of SJM & Shakha karyavah

much data but he actual number is more than 4030, he is saying with his eyes softened. His wife, very much co-operative in this crusade, is also standing on one side to bring more files, when Mr. Somani wants.

In another file he has meticulously collected the relevant articles and details of persons, from Kishor Tiwari

to Medha Patekar, who have said anything regarding this catastrophe. The suggestions and causes enumerated in these articles are on his finger tips. When I asked him which particular story of farmers' plights haunts him the most, he shows the picture of an old farmer whose bullocks being taken away by money-lenders, brings his young relatives to be used in place of cattle for ploughing the fields. Seeing her wife, he adds, the more moving is other story of an old farmer telling his younger daughter how money lenders were victimizing him for the money he had borrowed for the marriage of her elder sisters. In the meantime they hear the sound of something dropping, just from the next room. And oh, the elder daughter had committed suicide after hearing the woes of her father. She had explained it in a suicide note also! In a philosophical mood he went on narrating several haunting stories of farmers born in debt, living in debt and dying in debt. I think the recent TV serial Beri Piya is a dra-

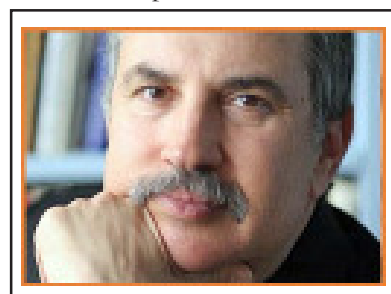
matic presentation of these stories, and this exposure is creating problems for the residents. He has elaborate details about the seeds and pesticides produced by multinational companies which are totally unsuitable for soil. 'It is perhaps the same pesticide that kills the farmer both on land and in life' he quips with a cold sigh.

Do you know why he keeps all the details of the kith and kin of those farmers? He does this because he sends some amounts to these families from his pension money. And he has done more. Constantly talking to his friends and relatives about the dire plight of farmers he now has a group of 21 who have sent some amount to these families. His oft repeated advice and I remember it very well is: *Ask not what others have done; do what you can!*

Three ticking bombs of Friedman

Thomas L Friedman in a recent article explains that when young he grew up in the shadow of nuclear bomb of Soviet Union. But his babies are growing up under the shadow of three bombs –nuclear, climate and debt bombs. Now nuclear threat emerges not only from one Soviet, but from all the jihadi groups and other terrorists groups and states including suicidal jihadis for whom mutual assured destruction is a delight, not a deterrent.

The second bomb of climate is more dangerous. 'As we continue to build up carbon in the atmo-



sphere to unprecedented levels, we never know when the next emitted carbon molecule will tip over some ecosystem and trigger a nonlinear climate even – like melting the Siberian tundra and releasing all of its methane or drying up the Amazon or melting all the sea ice in the North Pole in summer. And when one ecosystem collapses, it can trigger unpredictable changes in others that could alter our whole world.'

The Debt Bomb: Regarding the third bomb he says 'To recover from the Great Recession, we have had to go even deeper into debt. One need only look at today's record-setting price of gold, in a period of deflation, to know that a lot of people are worried that our next dollar– unbalanced by spending cuts or new tax revenues– will trigger a nonlinear move out of the dollar & torpedo the US currency.

So he declares pessimistically: As such, we are in effect putting our kids' future in the hands of the two most merciless forces on the planet: the Market and Mother Nature. He quotes Watson: "Mother Nature always bats last, and she always bats a thousand." He also talks about the frivolous comments of skeptics who mockingly call all climate fears a hoax and others who trivialize the threat of financial debts. While summing up he quotes John Holdren, the president's science adviser about the threat of climate and he is sure that it applies to debt also: "We're driving in a car with bad brakes in a fog and heading for a cliff. We know for sure that cliff is out there. We just don't know exactly where it is. Prudence would suggest that we should start putting on the brakes."

But what we actually hear about Euro-American countries is: They preach poor countries to use

brakes, but they themselves are pressing on accelerators!

13 yr Indian Girl addressed UNO

Have you heard about Yugratana, a 13 year old girl from Lucknow who delivered a speech in UNO on climate change? Certainly it was a mega event for all the children of India, or say Asia, when



Yugratana Srivastava of Lucknow who spoke at UNO climate change meet

she was addressing more than 100 heads of nations. She was not only representing 3 billion children and youth of the globe but also a rich eco-friendly, say eco-worshipping heritage of India. Listen to her words: 'Himalayas are melting, polar bears are dying, 2 of every 5 people don't have access to clean drinking water, earth's temperature is increasing, we are losing the untapped information of potential of plants species, Pacific water level has risen. She was asking: Is this what we are going to hand over to the future generations. PLEASE NO. She quoted Mahatma Gandhi: The earth has enough to satisfy everyone's need but not one's greed. When she was exclaiming at the end: 'We have one Mother Earth: care it and share it' she was elaborating the Indian attitude towards nature by calling her Mother Earth. She is also planning to start a programme of **Plant for the Planet** and has kept a target of planting one million trees in India.

My heartiest congratulations to her and her teachers and guides

but I think she must have given a mere hint of the rich eco-friendly tradition of India. Though the time at her disposal was very short, she should have eulogized the sacrifice of Amritadevi of Raj., who sacrificed her life and also of her children, along with a team of about 300 people, for the sake of saving the trees. Perhaps this was not told to her by the school authorities of St. Fidelis College wherein she is studying in 9th class. Certainly our leaders will remember this inspiring incident while speaking at Copenhagen.

Buy Fresh - Buy Local Campaign

To encourage the sale of local eatables, a now movement is going the world over. Such people have an attractive name for them - the stylish locavore. It's a new word in the dictionary which means 'a man who only eats foods locally grown'. According to them this concept is eco-friendly and also promotes the local economy. The imported vegetables accomplish a long journey before reaching our dining table. In this long and arduous journey the price increases manyfold. Not only the price increases, certain other invisible things also happen en route – pollution and set back for the endangered traditional family farming. The campaign in Black Hawk country IA specifically explains in its ad that nearly \$350 million is spent on food and eatables every year. The tragedy is most of these food dollars leave the country and state because most of the food is imported from other



Ad. of indinous group to buy local products

countries. The ad says GOOD FOOD – NEIGHBORHOOD. The catchy slogan explains 'With rising transportation costs and rising childhood obesity levels, it is vital to purchase local fruits. The new USDA Farm Bill has given almost a ruling to the school authorities to purchase local and unprocessed foods only.

But here in India if you go to any Reliance fresh store or super vegetable markets, you will be bewildered to see the large sized grapes of California, Kiwi of New Zealand and apples of America. Eyes get glued to the price tags with exorbitant prices displayed on them. The elite and middle class have still a colonial hangover of purchasing foreign fruits and vegetables. Sh. S Gurumurthy is very right when he wrote in our sjthinkers@googlegroups.com that 'The easiest way is to brand the Swadeshi Products as social ecological products, namely neighbourhoo'd products. This is modern in idiom. So India needs a fashionable branding of Buy Local, the freshest!

Born to Fall and Live

Have you heard about a kid who took birth in the railway toilet and slipped through the filthy discharge chute onto the tracks but still survived. Not only this, her mother just flung herself from the speeding train in complete darkness to rescue her baby. His husband, totally unaware of the incident only knew about it when some passengers pulled the chain and cried to raise an alarm. When a hundred and so passengers started search on the track, in the dark and at about 10 pm, they found Rinky Devi Roy sitting beside the tracks clutching her newborn with some minor injuries. Really a miracle! You want to know the name of her husband— his name



Rinky jumped off a moving train to save her kid

was Bhola (34), and he was really a Bhola i.e. innocent. What is the fun of knowing that it happened in S2 compartment of Up Tata Chhapra Ex from Tatanagar, and her wife's name is Rinky, her two-year-old daughter accompanying them bears the name Muskan, i.e. smile. They belong to Odisha's Sundergarh. The poor man was taking her 9-month pregnant wife to a hospital by this train and all this happened in between.. Now the twosome are in a Deba Mahato hospital in Purulia undergoing treatment, little aware that the baby was entitled to a life-long railway pass.

Moreover this is the second time in one and a half years that such a miracle has taken place. On Feb. 28, 2008, a new born girl survived a fall from the train toilet in Gujarat. But these are not solitary examples of lack of hospital facilities. In a world where half a million die in pregnancies & child birth & 3.7 million new-born die within the first 28 days, such survivals are miracles. Moreover the plight of India is the most gruesome. Human Rights Watch has complete data regarding 2005 & it quotes that nearly 1,17,000 deaths occurred of pregnancy related causes & this number is the highest in the World. Moreover 70% of deaths are preventable. Arimdam Choudhary rightly said that in order to solve all the pregnancy related problems only 12 million dollars are required, whereas the European human spend 13 million dollars on one single item of cosmetics! □□

Orissa on sale

Universities world over would be put to shame once they know that govt of Orissa is acquiring agricultural land by driving out thousands of villagers from their hearths and homes in Orissa near sea coast of Puri to hand over about 8,000 acres of lands to one M/s Anil Agarwal, a registered company which will establish one university.

Instructed by Chief Minister of Orissa state govt moved in haste to mend, bend all rules and regulations to satisfy one company which changed its name from Sterlite to Vedanta and Anil Agarwal Foundation. With sole purpose and motive to garb thousands of acres of prime land in the side of sea coast of Puri known as marine drive. The company changed its status from private to public company. The proposed university will not pay any tax for next 20 years and will enjoy full autonomy in its administration, admission, teaching etc. This institute will not follow the declared reservation policy. About 1,000 acres of agricultural land belonging to lord Jagannath of Puri are being transferred to M/s Anil Agarwal. People of these villages have already started agitating against this shoddy deal. Recently, unauthorized mining in Orissa, going on for decades came to light.

It seems "Orissa on sale" is the grand project adopted by the ruling party in Orissa which must be apposed and exposed. □

Asia's food security hinges on rice grower India

Rising rice prices and possible shortages in the world's poorest countries will hinge on what major growers India, China and Thailand do to make up for millions of tonnes of the staple lost to floods and droughts.

All eyes are on India, traditionally one of the world's top rice exporters, which may import 1.1 million tonnes to 3.8 million tonnes next year to replace production losses after a drought ravaged the country's rice bowl.

"Just the fact that India has significantly reduced production alone is a significant development given the tightness of supplies that we see in the world today," said Jim Guinn, vice president of USA Rice Federation. "But the fact that they may actually be an importer is of even more importance," he said.

Huge spurt in business visas issued to Chinese

Number of Chinese businessmen coming to India as guests of their Indian counterparts has shown a fourfold increase in the last four years. A glance at the statistics shows that the number of business visas issued to Chinese nationals by the Indian government has increased from just 15,979 in 2004 to 58,658 in 2008. This year, 26,104 visas have already been issued until June.

According to experts, the visa stats show a growing level of cooperation between Chinese and Indian businessmen, as a business visa is issued to a foreign national only when he has an Indian company or businessman to vouch for him and sponsor his trip to India. Moreover, such visas are issued with the sole purpose of letting the visitor explore trade opportunities in India.

To obtain a visa, Chinese businessmen submit a letter from a sponsoring business organisation in India to the Indian missions abroad. The letter indicates the nature of their business, probable duration of stay in India & the places they will be visiting. The Indian sponsor also guarantees that he will meet any maintenance expenses the Chinese businessman may incur during his stay in India.

The business visas are not work permits, and fears have been expressed in certain quarters that they are being misused by Chinese workers to seek employment in India. The business visas allow Chinese businessmen to attend conferences, engage in trade negotiations and undertake fact-finding missions with regard to potential buyers and suppliers. They usually get a period of six months to do so although a few business visas with a validity of 10 years are also issued to those foreign businessmen who have set up or intend to set up joint ventures in India.

Business Visas Issued To Chinese:

2004 (15,979),	2005 (22,427),	2006 (33,960),
2007 (48,146),	2008 (58,658),	2009 (Up to June- 26,014).

RBI gets new Deputy Governor

Global rating agency Standard and Poor's (S&P) Asia-Pacific Chief Economist Subir Gokarn will be the new Deputy Governor of the Reserve Bank of India (RBI), Finance Minister Pranab Mukherjee has said.

The post of Deputy Governor (for economist) in the RBI has been lying vacant since mid-June after Rakesh Mohan quit months ahead of his retirement. The apex bank traditionally has four deputy governors. At present, the other 3 deputy governors include Usha Thorat, K. C. Chakrabarty & Shyamala Gopinath. Before joining S&P in August 2007, Mr. Gokarn was Chief Economist with S&P's Indian arm Crisil. He had also worked as an economist with the think-tank National Council of Applied Economic Research.

Core sector growth slips to 4% in Sept

After showing a healthy expansion of 7.1% in August, the growth in core infrastructure sector dropped to 4% in September, making analysts wonder whether robust industrial recovery can be sustained. The coal and cement which had led the chart in August by showing an impressive growth of 12.9% and 17.6% respectively, slipped to 6.5% each in September, according to the official data. On year-on-year basis, the September growth this fiscal of the six sectors – cement, coal, steel, electricity, crude, oil and petroleum refinery products – remained unchanged at 4%.

The index of the core industries, which account for a quarter of the nation's industrial production, had helped the factory output reach a robust 10.4% growth in August. With infrastructure growth slipping again, it is a matter of debate if the August performance of the total industrial production can be repeated in Sept.

Farmers' resounding no to Bt brinjal

Farmers' organisations from all parts of the country representing 200 million farmers in the major brinjal-growing states are saying that they did not want to grow the genetically modified (GM) version of one of the country's most popular vegetable, the brinjal. The leaders say they would resort to "direct action" if their voice was not heard.

Leaders of the Bharatiya Kisan Union (BKU), the Shetkari Sanghatana of Maharashtra, the Karnataka Rajya Raitha Sangha and the Tamizhaga Vyavasayigal Sangham of Tamil Nadu met in Delhi recently in the wake of the regulatory body's approval to the Bt brinjal that has been developed by Mahyco. Last week, the Genetic Engineering Approvals Committee (GEAC) gave its stamp of approval to the country's first GM food crop, the Bt brinjal, after its expert committee said that Mahyco's controversial data was in order. This paves the way for its commercialisation once the government gives its nod.

Reaction has been swift. The farmers' organisations meeting under aegis of the Coordination Committee of Indian Farmers' Movements, led by Yudhvir Singh— the Delhi president of Mahendra Singh Tikait's BKU— decided they would take 'direct action' if the government did not respond to their queries and concerns.

The questions are basic. Why does the country need a GM brinjal when there is surplus production leading to a glut at times? Why is GM brinjal being thrust upon them when they did not ask for it & are dead set against it? Why is the government not promoting more appropriate & proven methods of cultivation that has the backing of even the World Bank? □□

Bebe di Rasoi, a traditional food festival

The Punjab Chief Minister Parkash Singh Badal has called upon the younger generation to develop a habit of taking traditional food which had far more nutritional value than the modern food & asked them to shun the fast food culture of Pizza, Noodles, Burgers & Pastas.

Addressing a gathering after inaugurating "Bebe di Rasoi – 2009, a traditional food festival jointly organized by Chandigarh Press Club in collaboration with Kheti Virasat Mission (KVM) & Millets Network of India (MINI), he said that the concept of Bebe di Rasoi would offer an opportunity to the younger generations to have a feel of rich taste of our traditional food which had now become a matter of the past with the passage of time. "Now, it is a high time to revive the culture of traditional Food— 'The wisdom of our Grandmothers' i.e. Bebe di Rasoi", said Mr. Badal. He observed naturally grown and seasonal foods have always been intricately woven in our food culture, but unfortunately we have almost lost this.

Appreciating the initiative of Chandigarh Press Club and KVM for organizing this function, Mr. Badal said that such traditional food festivals should be organized from time to time to apprise our children especially with urban background about the rich nutritional value of traditional food like Makki Di Roti- Sarson Da Saag, Lassi, Bajre di Roti, Kheer and Makhan. He hoped that such food festivals would also help our younger generations to desist from taking up junk food like pizza, burger and noodles etc. because even the medical and nutritional experts have also recommended not taking junk food if you want to stay health and fit.

The society, besides bringing awareness amongst the masses about the importance of organic farming and also urged the them to consume vegetables produced by way of organic farming. □

Denmark in climate deal warning

Denmark's prime minister says he does not think a legally binding deal on climate change will be agreed upon at a December summit in Copenhagen. December's eagerly anticipated United Nations' Copenhagen Climate Summit will attempt to hammer out a new global climate treaty to replace the UN Kyoto Protocol.

But Mr Rasmussen said he did not believe a final deal on reducing greenhouse emissions could be reached at the meeting. "We do not think it will be possible to decide all the finer details for a legally binding regime," he said.

However, UN Secretary General Ban Ki-moon said that even if no treaty is signed in Copenhagen, he was confident a political agreement could be reached there.

"We are not lowering expectations," he said. "If we can agree on four political elements, then that could be a hallmark of success on climate change." We have a risk for a clear deadlock in the negotiations. At the Brussels summit, European leaders will try to iron out their differences over how much each EU member should pay to help developing nations fight global warming.

The European Commission has recommended EU nations pay up to 15bn euros (\$22bn; £13bn) a year from 2013 to developing nations to help them cope with climate change. But aid and environmental groups have said Europe should be prepared to pay more than twice as much. □

Asia recovering; but challenges ahead: IMF

The economic recovery in Asia is faster than the rest of the world and is projected to grow by 5.75 per cent during 2010, says the International Monetary Fund.

"The region (Asia) is out pacing other parts of the world, with the "green shoots" of recovery appearing earlier and taking firmer roots than elsewhere," the IMF said.

IMF forecasts suggest Asia will grow by 5.75 per cent in 2010, higher than the 1.25 per cent predicted for the G-7 economies, but short of the 6.66 per cent average recorded for the region over the past decade.

"Asian economies have been very strong in their stimulus from both monetary and fiscal sources," IMF Asia and Pacific Department Director Anoop Singh said.

Pointing out that Asia's outlook would be closely tied to the global economy, the report, however, warned that the continued weak global demand would have a considerable impact on the region's future growth because of heavy dependence on exports.

EU boosts aid for dairy farmers

Dairy farmers in the European Union are to receive 280m euros (£255m) in aid, says the EU's farm commissioner. The decision follows weeks of protests by thousands of farmers over the low price of milk, including the spraying of milk onto fields.

Most of the EU's member states - including France and Germany - had been pressing for aid after the global economic downturn reduced demand. Dairy farmers say milk costs more to produce than they can sell it for.

EU Farm Commissioner Mariann Fischer Boel said she was forced to "empty her pockets" to meet the demands of 21 of 27 member states seeking an emergency fund for dairy farmers.

The aid will be drawn from the bloc's 2010 budget. Last month, the EU announced it would change EU state aid rules to let member states pay each farmer up to 15,000 euros in temporary aid.

That decision followed the dumping by angry Belgian farmers of three million litres (660,000 gallons) of milk on fields. Germany and France are among those pressing for more EU price support.

French and German farmers have also dumped milk and blocked deliveries in frustration at the low prices for dairy produce. Farmers say they want the EU to freeze planned increases in production quotas, because boosting the supply on the market lowers prices further.

The EU plans to phase out milk quotas by 2015 and to limit market intervention that supports prices, with a view to scrapping it in the long term.

The Commission plans to extend EU special purchases of butter and skimmed milk powder to at least February next year, to help farmers. The European Parliament has backed the plan, but wants it to include cheese too.

Genetically modified crops succumb to bug infection

As the debate over the safety of genetically modified food continues to rage, biologists have found that GM squash plants – resistant to three major viral diseases – became more vulnerable to a fatal bacterial infection.

‘Cultivated squash is susceptible to a variety of viral diseases and that is a major problem for farmers,’ said Andrew Stephenson, Penn State University (PSU) biology professor, who led the study. ‘Infected plants grow more slowly and their fruit becomes misshapen.’

In the mid-1990s, the US Department of Agriculture approved genetically modified squash, which are resistant to three of the most important viral diseases in cultivated squash. However, while disease-resistant crops have been a boon to commercial farmers, ecologists worry there might be certain hidden costs associated with the modified crops.

‘There is concern in the ecological community that, when the transgenes that confer resistance to these viral diseases escape into wild populations, they will (change) those plants,’ said Stephenson. ‘That could impact the biodiversity of plant communities where wild squash are native.’

Stephenson and colleagues James A. Winsor, professor of biology, Matthew J. Ferrari, research associate and Miruna A. Sasu, doctoral student, all at PSU, crossed the genetically modified squash with wild squash native to the southwestern US.

Unlike a lab experiment, the researchers tried to mimic a real world setting during their three-year study. The researchers then looked at the effects of the virus-resistant transgenes on prevalence of the three viral diseases, herbivory by cucumber beetles, as well as the occurrence of bacterial wilt disease that is spread by the cucumber beetles.

‘When the cucumber beetles start to feed on infected plants they pick up the bacteria through their digestive system,’ explained Sasu. ‘This feeding creates open wounds on the leaves and when the bugs’ feces falls on these open wounds, the bacteria find their way into the plumbing of the plant.’

‘Since cucumber beetles prefer to feed on healthy plants rather than viral infected plants, the beetles become increasingly concentrated on the healthy — mostly transgenic — plants.’ ‘Wild and transgenic plants had the same amount of damage from beetles before viral diseases were prevalent in our fields,’ said Stephenson.

‘Once the virus infected the wild plants, the transgenic plants had significantly greater damage from the beetles,’ he added, according to a PSU release. These findings appeared in the Tuesday edition of the Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences. □□

Financial firms will pay for mistakes, not taxpayers: US

The US has unveiled new draft regulatory measures which aim to ensure that stakeholders, not tax payers would share the losses in case of big failure of financial institutions. Seeking to put in place stricter norms for big entities that pose a threat to the whole system, the Obama Administration has also proposed setting up financial services oversight council.

‘Large, highly complex financial companies that fail will do so in an orderly and controlled manner, ensuring that shareholders and unsecured creditors bear the losses, not taxpayers...,’ according to a draft legislation by the House Financial Services Committee and the Treasury Department.

Rattled by the ravaging financial turmoil, many large American companies especially those in the financial sector had to be rescued by the Federal government with taxpayers’ money worth billions of dollars. The legislation asserted that authorities would follow the ‘polluters pays model where the financial industry has to pay for their mistakes - not taxpayers’.

To strength the regulatory framework, the proposed bill would ensure that there is proper communication and co-ordination among various regulators. Moreover, the US Federal Reserve would have ‘back-up authority’ to step in if regulators fail to act quickly to address developing problems identified by the council.

The draft legislation pointed out that regulators’ inability to see developments outside their ‘narrow silos’ allowed the current crisis to grow unchecked. □

Canada asks WTO to settle U.S. Spat

The Canadian government has asked WTO for a dispute-settlement panel, as it seeks to resolve a dispute over the U.S.'s mandatory country-of-origin labeling, or COOL, law.

"The U.S. COOL requirements are so onerous that they affect the ability of our cattle & hog exporters to compete fairly in the U.S. market," International Trade Minister Stockwell Day said. "That is why our govt. has no choice but to request a WTO panel."

Agriculture Minister Gerry Ritz said Canadian farmers and ranchers are facing "unfair discrimination" because of the law, adding that Canada is confident it will succeed in the WTO challenge.

The request for a panel was made after two rounds of WTO consultations with the U.S. failed to resolve the issue. Mr. Day had said in July that he was optimistic the issue could be resolved without going to a dispute settlement panel.

U.S. Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack and Trade Representative Ron Kirk said they regret that formal consultations failed to resolve Canada's concerns over COOL. "We believe that our implementation of COOL provides information to consumers in a manner consistent with our WTO commitments," they said in a statement.

Joint bid to delay Russian WTO entry

Russia's bid to join the WTO alongside Belarus and Kazakhstan at the same time is likely to delay Moscow's entry significantly, the senior official steering the negotiations has said "Any simultaneous bid is likely to significantly delay the process and set back Russia's bid," Stefan Johannesson, who chairs the global trade body's key working group on Russia's membership efforts, told Reuters in an interview.

Russia has been trying for more than a decade to join the 153-member trade watchdog and is the largest economy to remain outside it, accounting for over half of the 4% of world trade not governed by WTO rules.

Russia, Belarus and Kazakhstan agreed in early June to form a customs bloc and seek joint accession to the WTO, a decision opposed by the European Union and the United States.

Uncertainty over Moscow's WTO aspirations has grown since Prime Minister Vladimir Putin announced Russia's withdrawal of its unilateral accession bid in June in favour of a joint effort as part of a customs union with his two ex-Soviet neighbours. Many WTO members, including the European Union and the United States, have poured cold water on the plan.

WTO to rule on China-EU metal fasteners dispute

The WTO decided to rule on a dispute between China and the European Union over anti-dumping measures imposed by Brussels on imports of Chinese-made screws and bolts.

China had sought consultations with the EU on the issue in July but Beijing said their discussions "failed to lead to a satisfactory resolution of the matter."

During a meeting of the WTO's dispute settlement body, China called on the organisation to set up a panel of experts to rule on the case. Its envoy also urged the EU to "promptly withdraw rules and measures inconsistent with the WTO and cease the disturbance to Sino-EC trade and impairment of China's interests."

The European Union agreed to WTO arbitration, as it had "no reason to be hopeful that a mutually agreed solution can still be found."

"The European Community is strongly convinced of the strength of its case. We stand ready to defend our measures that we consider to be fully consistent with WTO law," an EU diplomat told the meeting.

The dispute arose after a final European Commission decision in January to impose hefty tariffs on imports of some Chinese steel and iron fasteners, ranging from 26.5% to as high as 85%.

China is the world's biggest producer of screws, nuts, bolts and washers, while the European Union is its biggest market. The EU imported 575 million euros (762 million dollars) worth of Chinese fasteners in 2007, according to the Jiaxing Association of Chinese Fastener Producers. EU-China trade has exploded in recent years, making the EU the top destination for Chinese exports while China is Europe's biggest trade partner after the United States. □□

